

Transcript for Changes to Shropshire Compass Podcast 2019. Version 3 August 2019

1. In Shropshire if you have a concern about the welfare of a child, you can phone The First Point of Contact (FPOC), they are a customer call centre and are highly skilled and trained to deal with many council 'enquires'. They will help direct your call to the most appropriate service. Before you call FPOC it is important that you refer to the Threshold Document that's shown and speak to your Designated Safeguarding Lead.
2. In the Threshold Document, Early Help (in yellow) is where agencies don't need to contact anyone; they have gained consent and are working with and supporting the whole family.
3. At this stage agencies may be working by themselves with a family or together depending on the individual circumstances. Family support is not a one size fits all. Examples might include offering some level of additional support to the child or family such as including the child in a nurture group, or health offering a universal plus service to the family.
4. Where a multiagency response is required for the family at this level it may include for example, school, nursery, youth club, health visitor or housing officer and family meetings may be taking place. Importantly a Lead Professional will co-ordinate the multi-agency response, this ensures that families don't have to repeat their story to multiple professionals. This vital and important work helps to keep children safe.
5. Targeted Early Help (in orange) is where support for a family has been considered and it has been agreed with the family that they would benefit from a more targeted and intensive level of expertise, which again will include input from several agencies, coordinated by a lead professional.
6. The lead professional may be from a range of agencies for example, a targeted early help service, a school, a health service, housing provider or domestic abuse service. This will depend on the needs of the whole family.
7. The main route for support from Targeted Early Help is via the Early Help request for intervention, currently this is predominantly via ECINS. Further guidance around ECINS and Early Help can be found on the Early Help website.
8. Before progressing a request for intervention, it is important to gain consent covering all members of the family. You can phone FPOC for further guidance or to arrange a consultation with a member of the Early Help team. FPOC will offer advice and liaise with the relevant Early Help Family Hub, who may contact you for more information and will support you to complete an early help assessment and request for intervention, if necessary.
9. An Early Help Family Hub is where children, young people and their families can access services for help and support, not just from the local authority but from a range of providers offering holistic, early intervention services to a whole community. Early help services across Shropshire provide whole family support, dealing with all the issues a family faces, with their full involvement and consent. These services will be delivered through six Early Help Family Hubs across the county, which will also be designated Children's Centres.
10. Children who have complex and significant needs are shown in pink. Children's Social Care work with children who have these needs. For child protection referrals where it is suspected that a child may be suffering or be at risk of suffering significant harm, Children's Social Care do not always need consent of the parent or carer.
11. As a professional you must always consider consent before phoning FPOC, it is considered good practice to inform an adult with parental responsibility that you are making a referral unless to do so may either:
 - Place the child at increased risk of significant harm
 - Place any other person at risk of injury
 - Obstruct or interfere with any potential police investigationor
 - Lead to unjustified delay in making enquiries about allegations of significant harmIn all other situations consent is required and without it your contact into Children's Social Care cannot progress.
12. You can call FPOC when you have concerns about a child that you think requires Children's Social Care intervention FPOC will take basic details and concerns about the family and will put your call through to Compass. Compass will make a decision about the child's needs and whether or not your contact is a referral to Children's Social Care. In all situations where Children's Social Care do not consider a child to be at risk of significant harm, the child's parent or carer must consent to Children's Social Care being involved.
13. Children's Social Care send parents a letter telling them that your agency, organisation or place of work has contacted them and whether the contact has been accepted as a referral, as a professional you will be sent an email letting you know the outcome.

14. If parents or carers do not consent but you still have a concern it is okay to phone Compass via FPOC to have a professional discussion using the thresholds document. However be prepared for Children's Social Care to ask you to go back to family to gain consent if the thresholds for significant harm are not met.
15. There are several ways that concerns can be shared with Compass.
16. By going in person to Compass, Children's Social Care Offices at Mount McKinley.
17. Through secure email using the Multiagency Referral Form (MARF). The completed MARF is very helpful in evidencing professional concerns and how the situation meets the threshold for a referral and Children's Social Care intervention.
18. As already highlighted, through FPOC. If you've phoned FPOC you will still need to complete a MARF within 24 hours.
19. Through information that's been shared via Domestic Violence triage meetings which happen every weekday at Mount McKinley, Child Exploitation Panel meetings, MARAC (Multiagency Risk Assessment Conferences), and MAPPA (Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements).
20. So, to report concerns about a child that require Children's Social Care Interventions, Phone FPOC, you will then either be connected to Compass or the child's Allocated Team. If the child's social worker is not available you can leave a message or speak to a duty worker who will respond to any urgent matter.
21. If you know the family has a social worker call direct to either the Case Management Team, Disabled Children's Team, Initial Assessment Team or Looked After Children's Team. If the child's social worker is not available, again you can leave a message or speak to a duty worker who will respond to any urgent matter.
22. Here's the complete overview of how to report concerns about a child.
23. When a social worker is knocking at the door, if the parent is expecting the social worker and has given consent in recognition of their difficulties, the social worker will be welcomed and asked to come in and an open conversation will take place about the concerns for their child.
24. If the 'consent' conversation hasn't taken place when there were initial concerns there's often a damaged relationship with the referrer. Parents feel that the referrer has not been open and honest and are understandably defensive and uncooperative. The result is often that the parents do not fully engage with the assessment process and refuse any on-going support. Honest and open conversations are crucial to ensure that children are safeguarded and reach their potential.
25. To summarise, families should always know what information is being shared unless it increases risk for the children. You must always consider seeking consent and having these difficult conversations with parents and carers.
26. The MARF must be completed in every case by a professional who is seeking access to children's social care. Please make sure that the details you put in the MARF reflect the concerns that you've given verbally over the phone. If a child is at risk of significant harm, a phone call to FPOC in the first instance will be sufficient and consent is not expected in these situations. The MARF needs to be sent securely within 24 hours of making the initial phone call to FPOC. So you'll need to apply a password when sending the email.
27. Shropshire Safeguarding Partnership and all partner agencies are committed to open and transparent joint working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Raising questions, challenging, and escalating concerns where appropriate, quickly and clearly, is seen as a positive approach to practice and continuing improvement in how we protect and meet the needs of children in Shropshire. If you disagree with the outcome of your contact into Compass you need to follow this Escalation policy.
28. There is another route for support if you have an immediate or significant concern about a child or young person's mental health. Please contact the Children and Families Mental Health Service, Bee U.
29. And finally you will find useful information and resources on these websites. Thank you for playing this short video and please share these messages widely to professionals in Shropshire.

<https://shropshire.gov.uk/early-help/>

<http://www.safeguardingshropshireschildren.org.uk/>

<https://westmidlands.procedures.org.uk/>