## Notification under the North West Children’s Services Information Sharing Protocol

# Please note: The Issuing Authority must complete the information required in full. Any incomplete notifications may be returned for further information.

SECTION A: Issuing ISP

Issuing Local Authority

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Local Authority issuing ISP |  |
| Officer name & email |  |
| Officer telephone number |  |
| Date ISP issued to the provider  |  |
| Date ISP issued to Placements North West |  |
| Date ISP to be reviewed by the issuing authority (max 3 months) |  |

Information about the service

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Organisation Name |  |
| Company number |  |
| Address |  |
| Host Authority |  |

Indicate if this ISP relates to the organisation as a whole or a specific service:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Organisation |  | Service/establishment specific |  |
| Name of home/property/school (if applicable) |  |
| Ofsted URN (if applicable) |  |

Contract affected by this ISP:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Residential FPS |  | SaILs DPS |  |
| SEND FPS  |  | Fostering FPS |  |
| Off contract (Please specify type of service) |  |

Information being made available (initial notifications):

Local Authority concern (see guidance below on threshold for issuing)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Safeguarding concern |  | Quality concern |  |
| Current criminal investigation |  | Financial concern |  |

Placements North West monitoring concern

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Provider has failed to meet quality standards |  | Provider has not supplied up to date insurance following reasonable requests |  |
| Provider has failed finance checks |  | Significant business continuity risks (ie: administration) |  |
| Other (detail below) |  |  |  |
|  |

Action taken
Local Authority placement actions taken (select multiple if required)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Ending placement(s) |  | Actively reviewing placement(s) |  |
| Suspending new referrals |  | Action/Improvement Plan |  |
| No local action - Referral to PNW  |  | Other actions |  |

Please detail the actions taken to investigate the concerns and actions taken by the provider to resolve the issue identified above (providing factual information only)

If no action is being taken, please explain why:

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Contractual actions taken

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Temporary suspension of purchasing arrangements |  | Temporary restriction of purchasing arrangements |  |
| Permanent ending of contractual arrangements |  | Voluntary withdrawal from contract by provider |  |

Provider response to the ISP

Providers have been given the space below to respond to an ISP if they wish.

The issuing authority will send the completed Section A of the ISP notification to the provider to give them the opportunity to respond. If a response is received the issuing authority should send this to Placements North West for circulation.

Please include name, contact details and position of person providing ISP response

|  |
| --- |
|  |

SECTION B: ISP rescind

Details

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Date ISP rescinded |   |
| Officer name and email |  |

Outcomes

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Safeguarding concerns satisfactorily resolved |  | Quality concerns satisfactorily resolved |  |
| Criminal concerns satisfactorily resolved  |  | Financial concerns satisfactorily resolved |  |
| Satisfactory progress against action plan |  | Unable to find a resolution (please explain below) |  |
| Closed by PNW due to no further concerns (after 6 months) |  | Resolved by PNW Team |  |
| Comments: |

Contractual outcomes

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Lifting of suspension of purchasing arrangements |  | Lifting of restrictions on purchasing arrangements |  |

Placement outcomes

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| No actions |  | Placement reviews concluded |  |
| Reinstating referrals |  | Placement ended |  |
| Other actions (please detail below) |  |  |  |
|  |

Additional Information

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Notes on the Information Sharing Protocol (ISP)

Changes post 2022 review:

* **Action Taken** added; Action/Improvement plan, No local action - Referral to PNW.
* **Outcomes** added; Satisfactory progress against action plan, Unable to find a resolution, Closed by PNW due to no further concerns, Resolved by PNW.
* Removed section relating to Ofsted Judgements.

**Aim**

The Protocol aims to:

* Facilitate the timely sharing of information about providers between local authorities where there are events or concerns that may be relevant to their contractual relationship.
* Help authorities to monitor the quality of providers and protect the welfare of children and young people in care.
* Offer a straightforward and consistent approach to information sharing. The approach is intended to be open and transparent.

**Anticipated benefits**

The benefits of the ISP include:

* Local authorities will have information routinely provided which will inform their contracting with specific providers.
* Providers will benefit by having the reassurance of effective cross authority collaboration and information sharing.
* Service users will benefit because local authorities will receive information that will help to prevent contracts being made or continued with unsuitable providers.

**Limitations of the protocol**

This notification is provided for information only. It is the responsibility of each authority receiving this information to decide how to use it.

Potential actions receiving authorities may take, include:

* Contacting the authority that sent the notice for more information
* Contacting the provider for further information
* Obtaining further information independently
* Seeking legal advice

The information given above is for the exclusive use of the authorities receiving it.

The notice may impact future referrals, and this is at the discretion of each authority.

**Process summary**

The ISP process is administered by Placements North West.

1. Concern is identified by an authority. This may be the host or the placing authority.
2. Local authority raises an ISP notification by completing Section A of the ISP notification form.
3. Local authority shares the ISP notification form with the provider for their comments. (Note: The ISP will be circulated in the first instance without provider comments and an update circulated if a provider submits a response)
4. Local authority shares the ISP notification form with Placements North West for circulation to the ISP mailing list.
5. If provider comments are received the local authority will resend to Placements North West for recirculating.
6. Placements North West update the regional ISP spreadsheet. This is circulated once per month.
7. Placements North West update contract referral spreadsheets as appropriate. If a provider or home is removed from the contract the referral spreadsheet will be recirculated.
8. When the local authority is ready to rescind an ISP they complete Section B of the ISP notification form.
9. Local authority sends competed ISP notification form to Placements North West
10. Local authority sends completed ISP notification form to the provider for their records
11. Placements North West shares the completed form with the ISP mailing list.
12. Placements North West updates the regional ISP spreadsheet.
13. Placements North West update the contract referral spreadsheets as appropriate

**Roles and responsibilities**

Placement North West will act as the lead to co-ordinate the operation of the ISP.

This role includes:

* Updating mailing lists when mailboxes or member authorities change
* Dealing with proposed changes to the Protocol
* Circulating the ISP notifications
* Following up on ISP notifications that are awaiting review

**Operating guidelines**

These points form the operating guidelines:

1. If there are safeguarding, quality, criminal and or financial concerns, these will be required to be shared under the Protocol. There is no discretion for member authorities – if certain events occur and circumstances apply they must be communicated under the Protocol. This is essential if effectiveness and consistency are to be achieved.
2. Member authorities should consider the appropriateness of issuing an notification under the protocol and take steps to investigate concerns before issuing. Providers should be involved in these investigations as far as is appropriate.
3. Notifications under this protocol should not be issued in relation to contractual disputes in relation to IPAs.
4. Placements North West will maintain a mailing list of local authority nominated contacts, this will include a minimum of one contact per authority.
5. A copy of the notification will be sent to the provider involved. If, in **very** exceptional circumstances, it is not possible or appropriate, the fact that the provider has not been informed should be recorded on the notification form. Examples of this may include:
	* When a business has closed and the owner cannot be contacted;
	* Where the authority has initiated closure and to confirm this in another form would aggravate the situation further.
6. Any provider that is unhappy about any action taken under this Protocol has two sources of direct redress without resorting to legal action:
* The first is the procedure for dispute in the contract.
* The second is the Local Authority’s Complaints procedure if they wish to challenge any decision or action taken under this Protocol
1. Each authority is independently responsible for what, if any, actions or decisions it makes as a result of the information received.
2. No member authority can pass on to another authority or organisation, or third party other than those legally entitled to such information, any information obtained as a result of the protocol. If a receiving authority has concerns that another authority should receive information, they must refer the matter back to the original notifying authority.
3. It is the responsibility of all member authorities to ensure that any information issued or received under this protocol that is held on computer is registered under, and conforms to the requirements of the Data Protection Act.

**Information sharing**

In no circumstances should any authority receiving information pass this information to other authorities or agencies who are not named below. The issuing LA may decide to issue the ISP to other authorities where there are known placements with a provider. The issuing authority should notify the provider and PNW in advance of sending the notice to an authority not listed below.

**Member authorities**

Member authorities include those named on the North West regional contracts, primarily the 23 North West local authorities with responsibility for children services as listed below.

Blackburn with Darwen Council, Blackpool Council, Bolton Council, Bury Borough Council, Cheshire East Council, Cheshire West and Chester Council, Cumbria County Council, Halton Borough Council, Knowsley Borough Council, Lancashire County Council, Liverpool City Council, Manchester City Council, Oldham Borough Council, Rochdale Borough Council, Salford City Council, Sefton Council, St Helens Council, Stockport Borough Council, Tameside Borough Council, Trafford Council, Warrington Borough Council, Wigan Borough Council, Wirral Borough Council.

Additional participants include the White Rose Framework.

**Joining the ISP**

Prospective member authorities will be referred to the Lead Authority for membership into the scheme. Acceptance would require written confirmation from the Lead Authority and the identification of a nominated officer and a designated deputy to undertake the tasks required by the protocol. Prospective member authorities should inform providers of their intention to sign up to the Protocol. This may be part of on-going liaison or require separate communication.

It may be necessary to amend contracts, with other Service Providers’ consent, adding a clause that explicitly confirms the Authority’s commitment to the Protocol.

**Review and updates**

The protocol will be reviewed annually by the regional Commissioning Managers group to reflect any statutory or regulation changes that would affect the operation of the protocol.

Any member authority can propose a change to the protocol by putting this in writing to Placements North West placementsnorthwest@stockport.gov.uk.

This would then be circulated to all other members, requesting a written response indicating acceptance or rejection of the proposal. Any change agreed by all members will be implemented. Any changes that are not agreed, or significantly alter the nature of the Protocol, will be referred to the regional Commissioning Managers group.

**FAQs**

*Who raises ISPs?*

Ordinarily ISPs are raised by local authorities. Placements North West can only raise ISPs in relation to the Minimum Standards or due diligence, for example insurance or finance checks.

ISPs should raised by the most appropriate authority which would usually be the host authority for the service or a placing authority. It may be that the host and any placing authorities need to liaise to agree who is the most appropriate.

The Residential Governance Group have agreed that ISPs in relation to the Residential FPS should be raised by the host authority for the home, or the head office of the provider.

Where a provider is off contract the ISP can be raised by any local authority.

*Who rescinds ISPs?*

ISPs can only be rescinded by the authority that raised them.

*How long does an ISP last for?*

A review date is set for a maximum of three months following the date of the original ISP. An ISP may be extended if required.

*Does a provider have to complete the comments section of the ISP?*

There is no requirement for a provider to comment but the issuing authority must give the provider an opportunity to do so.

*What happens if two ISPs are issued for the same provider?*

If the ISPs are issued for the same concern the first notification received will be logged on the ISP spreadsheet. If subsequent ISPs contain additional information they will be circulated for information only. The issuing authority for the first ISP notification will be responsible for rescinding.

*How often is the ISP spreadsheet sent out?*

Placements North West will circulate the spreadsheet monthly.

*How are ISPs shown on the contract referral spreadsheets?*

Residential:

Homes that have received an ISP notification are marked in red on the cost spreadsheet.

Organisations that have received an ISP notification are marked in red on the referral spreadsheet.

SaILs:

Providers who have received an ISP notification are marked in red on the provider spreadsheet. When the List A/B process outlined in the SaILs contract becomes operational the provider will be moved to List B.

Fostering:

Providers who have received an ISP notification are marked in red on the provider spreadsheet.

*Are homes that receive an ISP removed from the contract?*

Homes on the Residential FPS that receive an ISP due to an inadequate Ofsted rating or, the removal of Ofsted registration, are suspended from the contract. Suspension means the home or provider can be quickly reinstated once the issue is resolved without waiting to go through a tender process again.

*What is the process relating to ISPs for off contract providers?*

ISPs for providers not on the regional purchasing systems should be raised and rescinded in the same way. These will only be recorded on the ISP spreadsheet.