TOGETHER for Children and Young People

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Multi-Agency Child Protection Team: Multi-Agency Huddles



Cheshire East Council

1. PURPOSE

1.1 The Multi- Agency Child Protection Team (MACPT) Huddle Model provides a structured multi-agency forum to strengthen safeguarding leadership, independent scrutiny, professional challenge and timely safeguarding action.
The model consists of two distinct huddle arrangements:

1.2 Rapid-Response Huddles

1.2.1 For urgent safeguarding situations requiring immediate multi-agency coordination.

1,3 Daily Safeguarding Huddles

1.3.1 For targeted multi-agency scrutiny where collective analysis may alter the protective response.
Both arrangements aim to:

- Improve safeguarding decision-making.
- Support timely information-sharing.
- Reduce drift and delay.
- Strengthen multi-agency analysis.
- Promote clear accountability.
- Improve outcomes for children.

1.3.2 The huddle model does not replace:

- Existing statutory safeguarding processes.
- Management oversight.
- Professional supervision arrangements.
- Child Protection Conference activity.
- Other statutory decision-making forums.

2. PRACTICE PRINCIPLES

2.1 Huddle discussions should:

- Be child-centred and informed by the child's lived experience.
- Distinguish facts, analysis, uncertainty and professional judgement.
- Promote constructive professional challenge.
- Focus on safeguarding outcomes rather than process compliance.
- Support timely action and risk reduction.
- Maintain clear accountability.
- Consider family strengths, protective relationships and wider support networks.
- Escalate safeguarding concerns without delay where immediate protection is required.

3. THE TWO HUDDLE ARRANGEMENTS

3.1 RAPID-RESPONSE HUDDLE

3.1.1 Purpose

3.1.2 To provide urgent multi-agency coordination where immediate information-sharing or protection planning is required.



3.1.3 Characteristics

- Convened urgently.
- Led by the Duty Lead Child Protection Practitioner (LCPP).
- Focused on immediate risk.
- Supports preparation for statutory decision-making.
- Facilitates rapid information-sharing and coordination.

3.1.4 Important Safeguarding Principle

3.1.5 A Rapid-Response Huddle supports urgent information-sharing and coordination. It does **not** replace a statutory Strategy Discussion and must **not** delay one where threshold criteria are met.

3.1.6 Typical Triggers

- Immediate safety concerns.
- Serious injury.
- Significant safeguarding incidents.
- Emergency protective action.
- Urgent safeguarding intelligence.
- Significant escalation in risk.

3.2 DAILY SAFEGUARDING HUDDLE

3.2.1 Purpose

3.2.2 To provide targeted safeguarding leadership, independent scrutiny and professional challenge where collective analysis may alter the protective response.

3.2.3 Characteristics

- Scheduled and time limited.
- Multi-agency.
- Risk-focused.
- Selective rather than comprehensive.
- Designed to support collective professional judgement.

3.3.4 Daily Huddle Operating Principle

3.3.4.1 The Daily Safeguarding Huddle provides a scheduled opportunity for targeted multi-agency scrutiny and safeguarding leadership.

3.3.4.2 Where no cases meet the agreed selection criteria, a substantive huddle discussion is not required.

3.3.4.3 Cases requiring urgent safeguarding action must be progressed immediately through the appropriate safeguarding arrangements and should not await the next scheduled huddle.



Attendance at a scheduled huddle does not in itself create a requirement to discuss cases that would derive no safeguarding benefit from collective scrutiny.

3.4 Typical Participants

- Duty LCPP.
- Police representative.
- Health representative.
- Education representative.
- FHLP and Operational Manager where required.
- Other professionals by exception.

4. CASE SELECTION PRINCIPLES

4.1 Selection Rule

4.1.1 A case should only be brought to the Daily Safeguarding Huddle where multi-agency intelligence, independent scrutiny or professional challenge is reasonably likely to alter the protective response.

4.1.2 A child should not be discussed solely because they are:

- Subject to a Section 47 enquiry.
- Subject to a Child Protection Plan.
- Open to multiple agencies.

4.1.3 Discussion should be driven by:

- Risk.
- Uncertainty.
- Emerging information.
- Barriers to progress.
- The need for collective professional judgement.

4.2 Appropriate Cases

4.2.1 The Daily Safeguarding Huddle may consider:

- Active Section 47 enquiries requiring collective scrutiny.
- Significant out-of-hours incidents.
- Emerging concerns regarding Child Protection Plans.
- Escalating risk.
- Professional disagreement.
- Significant new safeguarding intelligence.
- Barriers preventing effective intervention.
- Unresolved safeguarding actions.



4.3 Not Appropriate

4.3.1 The Daily Safeguarding Huddle should not become:

- A routine case management meeting.
- A general supervision forum.
- A performance meeting.
- An allocation meeting.
- A forum for discussing every active Section 47 enquiry.
- A forum for discussing every Child Protection Plan.

5. CASE NOMINATION AND PRIORITISATION

5.1 Cases may be proposed by:

- Family Help Lead Practitioners (FHLPs).
- Operational Managers.
- Lead Child Protection Practitioners (LCPPs).
- Police representatives.
- Health representatives.
- Education representatives.
- Other professionals involved with the child.

5.2 The Duty LCPP is responsible for:

- Prioritising cases.
- Determining whether discussion is required.
- Deciding whether the issue should instead be addressed through an alternative safeguarding forum or statutory process.
- Ensuring the agenda remains focused on safeguarding risk and impact.

5.3 Huddle Coordination and Administration

5.3.1 Case nominations should be submitted through established MACPT communication arrangements.

5.3.2 The Duty LCPP is responsible for determining whether nominated cases meet the agreed criteria for discussion and for setting the huddle agenda.

5.3.3 Business Support arrangements should be used to:

- Circulate invitations where required.
- Notify relevant attendees.
- Support scheduling arrangements.
- Maintain attendance records.
- Support communication of agreed actions and outcomes.



5.3.4 Existing MACPT inboxes, calendar arrangements and recording systems should be used. No separate referral process, administrative system or recording platform is required.

6. DAILY SAFEGUARDING HUDDLE AGENDA

6.1 Active Section 47 Enquiries Core Questions

- What is the child experiencing now?
- Have enquiries progressed as expected?
- Has risk increased or reduced?
- Are there significant evidence gaps?
- Are immediate safety arrangements sufficient?

6.1.2 Potential Outcomes and Required Actions

- Continue current enquiry arrangements.
- Request additional enquiry activity.
- Refer for Structured Section 47 Review.
- Escalate concerns through the appropriate safeguarding arrangements.
- Review and strengthen safety arrangements where required.

6.2. Significant Out-of-Hours Events Core Questions

- What happened?
- What is the impact on the child?
- What action has already been taken?
- What remains outstanding?

6.2.1 Potential Outcomes and Required Actions

- Continue with current safeguarding arrangements.
- Reassess risk.
- Progress to Strategy Discussion where required.
- Escalate safeguarding intervention.
- Strengthen protection planning.

6.3 Emerging Concerns Regarding Child Protection Plans Core Questions

- Is the plan working?
- Is the child's lived experience improving?
- Is risk reducing?
- Is there evidence of drift?
- Are agencies delivering agreed actions?



6.3.1 Potential Outcomes and Required Actions

- Continue the current plan.
- Strengthen intervention.
- Escalate through review arrangements.
- Refer concerns through legal planning or management arrangements where required.
- Convene additional safeguarding activity where appropriate.

6.4. Actions, Unresolved Issues and Escalation Core Questions

- Were previous actions completed?
- What barriers remain?
- Does professional disagreement remain unresolved?
- Does escalation need to occur?

6.4.1 Potential Outcomes and Required Actions

- Action completed.
- Action remains outstanding.
- Escalation required.
- Additional protective action required.

7. SECTION 47 ENQUIRIES AND REVIEW ACTIVITY

7.1 The Daily Safeguarding Huddle may provide an opportunity for structured multi-agency scrutiny of active Section 47 enquiries where:

- Multi-agency intelligence may alter the protective response.
- Professional challenge is required.
- Analysis, findings or recommendations would benefit from collective review.
- Risk or complexity requires additional scrutiny.

7.2 The Daily Safeguarding Huddle does **not** replace:

- Day-Five Initial Reviews.
- Structured Multi-Agency Section 47 Reviews.
- Day-Ten Reassessments.
- Statutory safeguarding decision-making.

7.2.1 Where deeper analysis is required, a separate Structured Section 47 Review should be convened.

7.3 Important Principle

7.3.1 The existence or timing of a Daily Safeguarding Huddle must never delay:

- Protective action.



- Statutory decision-making.
- Progression to ICPC where indicated.
- Conclusion of an enquiry where sufficient evidence already exists.

8. FAMILY AND NETWORK CONSIDERATIONS

8.1 When discussing safeguarding concerns, practitioners should consider:

- Family strengths.
- Trusted adults.
- Protective relationships.
- Wider family and support networks.
- Existing and potential sources of protection.

8.2 Where collective discussion identifies a potential safeguarding benefit, practitioners should consider whether additional family-network involvement could strengthen:

- Immediate safety.
- Ongoing support.
- Sustainable change.

8.2.1 This may include a Family Network Meeting where appropriate.

8.2.2 A Family Network Meeting is **not** required in every case. The focus should remain on improving protection and outcomes rather than creating additional process.

9. FACILITATION AND AGENCY CONTRIBUTIONS

9.1 Lead Child Protection Practitioner

Responsible for:

- Facilitating discussion.
- Providing safeguarding leadership.
- Ensuring independent scrutiny.
- Promoting professional challenge.
- Clarifying statutory pathways.
- Ensuring actions are allocated.

9.2 Family Help Lead Practitioner

Responsible for:

- Presenting relevant information.
- Explaining current assessment and analysis.
- Delivering agreed safeguarding actions.
- Maintaining direct work with the child and family.



9.3 Police

Responsible for:

- Sharing intelligence.
- Providing investigation updates.
- Identifying emerging risks.
- Delivering agreed actions.

9.4 Health

Responsible for:

- Contributing clinical information.
- Identifying safeguarding concerns.
- Sharing relevant health intelligence.
- Delivering agreed actions.

9.5 Education

Responsible for:

- Sharing attendance and welfare information.
- Identifying educational safeguarding concerns.
- Contributing contextual analysis.
- Delivering agreed actions.

10. DECISION-MAKING BOUNDARIES

10.1 The huddle supports:

- Multi-agency analysis.
- Information-sharing.
- Professional challenge.
- Safeguarding coordination.

10.2 The huddle does **not**:

- Replace Strategy Discussions.
- Replace Section 47 Reviews.
- Replace Child Protection Conferences.
- Replace supervision.
- Replace management oversight.
- Transfer case accountability.
- Create additional statutory powers.

10.3 Statutory authority remains with the appropriate decision-maker.



11. ACTION OWNERSHIP AND FOLLOW-UP

11.1 Every item discussed should conclude with:

- A clear outcome.
- Named action owners.
- Timescales for completion.
- Escalation arrangements where required.
- Review arrangements where appropriate.

11.2 The Duty LCPP should ensure that:

- Actions are clearly allocated.
- Responsibilities are understood.
- Timescales are recorded.
- Safeguarding concerns requiring escalation are identified promptly.

11.3 The FHLP and Operational Manager remain responsible for implementing safeguarding actions and progressing casework.

11.4 Communication of Outcomes

11.4.1 Following the huddle:

- Relevant outcomes should be communicated to the allocated practitioner.
- Operational managers should be informed of actions affecting their service.
- Partner agencies should receive actions allocated to them.
- Outcomes should be reflected within existing recording arrangements.

11.4.2 Existing systems and workflows should be used. The huddle should not create parallel recording arrangements.

11.5 Outstanding Actions

11.5.1 Outstanding safeguarding actions should be reviewed through the next appropriate forum. Where actions:

- Are delayed;
- Are not completed; or
- No longer sufficiently manage risk;

11.5.2 Escalation should occur through existing management and safeguarding arrangements.

12. RECORDING EXPECTATIONS

12.1 Use existing approved systems and recording arrangements.
Record:

- Significant new information.



- Relevant safeguarding intelligence.
- Agreed analysis.
- Outcomes.
- Actions.
- Owners.
- Timescales.
- Professional disagreement where relevant.

12.2 Avoid unnecessary duplication of existing case records.

13. WHAT GOOD HUDDLES LOOK LIKE

13.1 Good huddles are:

- ✅ Child-centred
- ✅ Focused on changing risk
- ✅ Analytical rather than descriptive
- ✅ multi-agency
- ✅ Time-limited
- ✅ Focused on safeguarding impact
- ✅ Respectfully challenging
- ✅ Clear about accountability
- ✅ Action-focused
- ✅ Outcome-focused

13.2 A good huddle should strengthen the safeguarding response rather than duplicate existing forums.

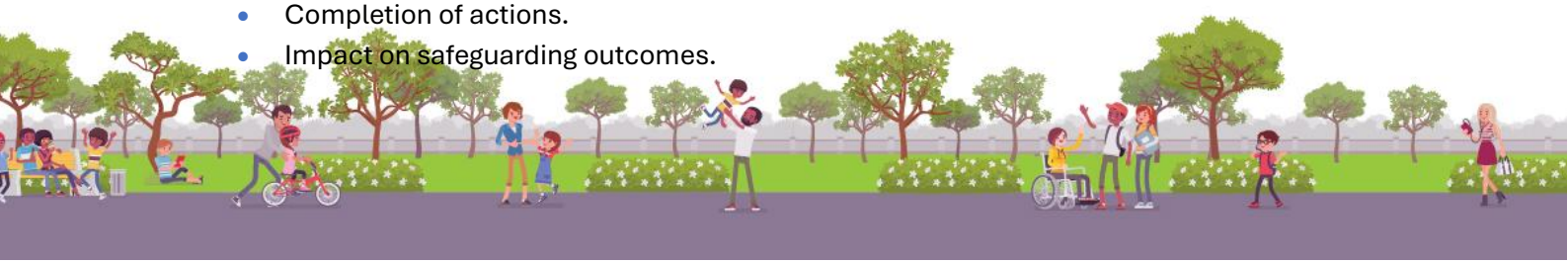
14. GOVERNANCE AND REVIEW

14.1 The operation of the huddle model should be reviewed periodically through:

- Supervision.
- Quality assurance activity.
- Partner feedback.
- Practitioner feedback.
- Learning reviews.
- Performance monitoring.

14.2 Review activity should consider:

- Attendance.
- Quality of discussion.
- Quality of analysis.
- Completion of actions.
- Impact on safeguarding outcomes.



FINAL PRACTICE QUESTIONS

Before concluding discussion, practitioners should be able to answer:

1. What are we worried about?
2. What is life like for this child today?
3. What has changed?
4. What evidence supports our analysis?
5. What are we missing?
6. Who is responsible for the next action?
7. When will progress be reviewed?
8. Is the child safer as a result of our intervention?

If these questions cannot be answered clearly, further analysis, challenge, enquiry or safeguarding action is likely to be required.

FINAL PRINCIPLE

The purpose of the MACPT Huddle Model is to provide timely, targeted multi-agency scrutiny that strengthens safeguarding analysis, improves professional decision-making, and supports effective action to improve safety and outcomes for children without duplicating existing statutory processes or responsibilities.

