**West Sussex – Practice Guidance**

IROs are qualified social workers with at least five years’ experience, and who have acquired the right skills to carry out this role.

**The Role of Appropriate Adult**

* Whenever a Looked After Child aged under 18 is arrested, WSCC should provide an Appropriate Adult to support the child, along with a Solicitor, at the police station. They should be present throughout the interview and as key stages of any investigation is conducted.
* Residential staff are often asked to act as the Appropriate Adult for a child who is looked after in the children’s home where they work. However, there are some circumstances where they cannot undertake this duty, for example, if they witnessed the offence.
* The decision as to whether staff from children's homes can fulfil this role will depend upon the circumstances and context as to why the young person is in police custody. Generally, the Registered Manager will make this decision in consultation with the young person’s social worker where possible.

**Roles and Responsibilities of the Appropriate Adult**

* An Appropriate adult is required at the following times:
* When the young person is informed of their rights;
During a strip or intimate search
* During police interview
* when fingerprints or samples are taken
* When the detained person is part of any identification procedure
* At the point of decision/disposal
* The responsibilities of the Appropriate Adult at the above times are:
* Ensure that the young person understands what is happening to them and why, and their rights, in line with their age and understanding
* Support, advise and assist the young person particularly while they are being questioned;
* Observe whether the police are acting properly, fairly and with respect for the rights of the young person and challenge when appropriate
* Request legal advice for the young person, even if they have declined it
* Support communication between the Police and the detained person
* It is **not** the role of the Appropriate Adult to provide legal advice. Conversations between the Appropriate Adult and the young person may need to be divulged as part of any subsequent legal proceedings. Appropriate adults should not sit in on the legal meeting between the solicitor and young person.

**Prior to Attending the Police Station**

* When it is agreed that a member of staff from the Home will act as Appropriate Adult, the following information needs to be established before leaving to attend the police station:
* Full details of the child arrested;
* State of the child - health and emotional;
* Name of custody officer and name of investigating officer;
* Details of the offence;
* Time and place of arrest;
* Others who have been notified;
* Why an Appropriate Adult is needed
* Whether a solicitor has been requested and their time of arrival;
* Estimated time of interview.

**Links to related documents:**

#  Notes for YOS staff attending as an Appropriate Adult at a Custody Suite

PACE form