**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.

**Use of Restraint and Physical Interventions**

* Any child with complex needs placed in a WSCC Children’s home will have a Positive Handling Plan which will detail their individual needs and agreed strategies for managing their behaviour.
* All staff are trained and experienced in supporting children with a range of needs and behaviours and will rely first and foremost on developing a positive relationship with a child, based on rapport, trust and empathy. Communication remains the primary route to de-escalating situations from reaching a crisis point, and staff are specifically trained and skilled in this area.
* However, on occasions, we accept that children may present behaviour that requires more direct intervention if avoidance, diffusion and diversion have not been successful. Restrictive Physical Interventions (RPI’s), also referred to as Physical Interventions (PI’s) form one element of a holistic behaviour management programme for children and are only used as a last resort when other less directive approaches have been unsuccessful.
* Staff teams aim to avoid situations from escalating by treating all children respectfully and involving them in decisions that affect their daily lives, in accordance with their age and understanding. By engaging children, staff aim to teach acceptable standards of social behaviour in a way the child can understand, with staff role modelling positive behaviours such as honesty, kindness, respect for others and establishing safe boundaries when unwanted behaviour occurs.
* Staff will work in a child-centred way and understand that there may be many different factors within the home which impact behaviour.

**Positive Handling Plans**

* In accordance with their age and understanding, each child will be supported to complete a Positive Handling Plan with staff on arrival, describing situations or events that are likely to cause them stress, the behaviours that might ensue and the best way of managing those behaviours. Alongside this, a behaviour risk assessment will indicate whether certain behavioural management techniques are appropriate for the child.
* The keyworker will liaise with the child and any appropriate professionals who know the child for their input into the Positive Handling Plan, facilitating a sense of ownership and personal responsibility. The Plan will include:
* the specific behaviour(s) to be addressed;
* known triggers for the behaviour;
* interventions which will address the behaviours;
* revision process for the plan;
* consequences for continued inappropriate behaviour.
* stages of a crisis
* Positive Handling Plans will be reviewed six monthly, or after any significant incident.

**Training**

* All staff working within WSCC Children’s Homes will be trained in Team Teach. This is mandatory and is refreshed annually. All staff will receive 2 yearly refresher training on the variety of techniques and strategies contained within the parameters of Team Teach; an intervention based behaviour modification programme that works on the basis of using the least restrictive method of physical contact to effect positive change.
* Staff must only use techniques that are approved and that they have been trained in. If a staff member uses a physical intervention or any deprivation measure that is not identified as being a legitimate handling technique of Team Teach or included within the child’s Support Plan or Positive Handling Plan, there may be cause to initiate a safeguarding or disciplinary investigation. Please refer to Team Teach guidelines for more information.
* All staff who work directly with children will receive training in Physical Interventions and will not lead in any intervention until they are confident about how to apply the strategies and techniques contained within Team Teach guidance.
* Support staff (cooks, maintenance staff etc.) will be trained in the use of breakaway techniques and responses to challenging behaviour as appropriate to their role.
* Team Teach proposes a holistic approach to behaviour management and staff attend a number of components in their training focussing on theoretical and practical elements.
* This encourages staff in their thinking about the ‘before, during and after’ of incidents of physical intervention. It includes understanding the origins and types of challenging behaviour, listening skills, de-escalation skills and underlying values.

**Following a Restrictive Physical Intervention**

* As specified within the National Minimum Standards, following a physical intervention, the child will be offered the opportunity to be examined by a registered nurse or medical practitioner within 24 hours. If the child declines, their decision will be recorded within the Incident report and revisited within the appropriate timeframe.
* WSCC Children’s Homes operate a debrief process following any incident where an RPI has been used within the home. This involves both the child and staff involved in the incident although this may be undertaken separately at the child’s request and will be in accordance with the child’s age and understanding. Staff will always have the opportunity to de-brief with the staff group to ensure there are no residual feelings towards the child after a serious incident and will be responsible for requesting this as necessary.
* At a debrief meeting, the staff member/s and the child will be encouraged to express their feelings about what happened and to receive support, to reflect on whether anything could have been done differently and to rebuild relationships. The staff may also use supervision or staff meetings to reflect on the situation. Where it is agreed that staff could have handled the situation differently, staff will apologise to the child and a discussion can proceed about how a similar situation could be approached and the child’s Positive Handling Plan can be updated.
* If a child prefers not to attend a debrief meeting, or is assessed not to have capacity to understand the context of the meeting, they will be encouraged to record their views in an alternative way with support from staff as necessary.

**Reporting**

* All incidents of RPI’s will be individually recorded on an Incident Report Form, copied onto the child’s file and systematically copied to the child’s parents (unless the placing authority confirms this is not appropriate) and the child’s allocated social worker. Individual reports may also be shared with other adults involved in the support of the child.
* All significant incidents that meet the criteria will be reported to Ofsted in accordance with Regulation 40.
* In the event that a ground hold is necessarily employed, staff must submit a full report of the incident to Behaviour Co-ordinator (Caroline Snowdon) for onward reporting to Team Teach.
* Where a staff member has received an injury, a ‘Violence at Work’ form (HSW3) must be completed and the line manager of the staff member will be responsible for ensuring their wellbeing and co-ordinating any support needed.

**Monitoring of incidents**

* All WSCC children’s homes welcome internal and external monitoring of RPI records as a part of their practice improvement and service development. Internally, the homes’ management team will review every incident and are likely to lead the debrief meeting to support learning and review practice.
* The Registered Manager will maintain a tracker of all Incidents including where RPI’s have been used and this will be scrutinised and monitored by managers and external quality assurance processes.
* Registered Managers regularly analyse and review patterns of incidents in consultation with the Behaviour Coordinator to identify potential remedies.
* Externally, independent Regulation 44 Visitors are encouraged to review records on a monthly basis and comment on the justifiability of any intervention used. These reports are sent to Ofsted as the regulator who will also inspect and review records up to twice a year.
* All significant incidents that meet Regulation 40 thresholds will be sent to Ofsted via the Notification procedure.
* If there are any concerns that inappropriate actions where used by staff, this may lead to a safeguarding or disciplinary investigation.
* In the event that the number of restrictive physical interventions is escalating to an unacceptable level, the Registered Manager will work alongside the Service Lead for Residential and other professionals with expertise in this area, to develop a RPI Reduction Plan which will identify practical ways in which the level of incidents will be actively reduced.
* Where there is Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) in place, there is regular scrutiny of video footage by managers, a Team Teach Instructor and/or the Local Designated Safeguarding Officer to ensure compliance with the regulations. All homes have clear guidelines about the use of CCTV footage.

**Links to related documents**