

# CHILD PROTECTION UNIT (CPU) AND REFERRALS POLICY<sup>®</sup>

## DOCUMENT SUMMARY/KEY POINTS

- **NSW Health workers** have a key role to play in the protection of children and young people. Health workers are uniquely placed to provide a comprehensive range of services that enhance the health and wellbeing of children, young people and their care givers and help to prevent abuse and neglect.
- In the Sydney Children's Hospitals Network there are two Child Protection Units, one at Randwick and one at Westmead. The Child Protection Units are multidisciplinary units.
- The Units provide support to staff and an assessment and therapy service to children and young persons (and their families) who are at risk of significant harm if current concerns exist for their safety, welfare or wellbeing from abuse or neglect.
- The Units provide a service 24 hours 7 days a week.
- **Referral to CPU** (See [Flowchart 1](#) in document)
- The Units receive referrals from a range of professionals including staff from SCHN, other Health facilities, family members and interagency partners including Community Services, JIRT and Police.
- Contact can be made to the intake worker as follows:

	Randwick	Westmead
In hours	Switch or 21412	Switch or 52434
After hours	Switch	Switch

- The child / family may be seen for assessment or the CPU may provide a consultation service.
- The CPU can assist with and support reports of Risk of Significant Harm to the Helpline (Community Services) and case planning
- **Community Services** is the statutory organisation which has the lead responsibility for providing and coordinating the community response to care and protect children and young people. It accepts and assesses reports about children and young people who are at risk of significant harm

<b>Approved by:</b>	SCHN Policy, Procedure and Guideline Committee	
<b>Date Effective:</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2017	<b>Review Period:</b> 3 years
<b>Team Leader:</b>	Manager	<b>Area/Dept:</b> CPU

**This policy should be read in conjunction with:**

- **Child Wellbeing and Child Protection Policies and Procedures:**  
[http://www0.health.nsw.gov.au/policies/pd/2013/pdf/PD2013\\_007.pdf](http://www0.health.nsw.gov.au/policies/pd/2013/pdf/PD2013_007.pdf)

## CHANGE SUMMARY

- The CHW version of this policy has been rescinded and is replaced by this SCHN version.

## READ ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

- All staff should be aware of this policy.
- All staff must undergo mandatory Child Protection Training (see HETI Online)

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1 The role of the Child Protection Units ..... 4**
- 2 The role of Health workers – (see Flowchart 1) ..... 4**
- 3 Services provided by the Child Protection Units ..... 4**
  - Crisis service ..... 4*
  - Sexual Assault ..... 4*
  - Physical abuse and Neglect ..... 5*
  - Assessment ..... 5*
  - Treatment ..... 5*
  - Review ..... 5*
  - Consultation ..... 5*
  - Education ..... 5*
  - Research ..... 5*
- Flowchart 1 – Process to refer to the Child Protection Units ..... 6**

## 1 The role of the Child Protection Units

The Child Protection Units are concerned with the prevention, assessment and treatment of all forms of child abuse and neglect. Our aim is to reduce the psychological, physical and emotional impact of abuse on the child and the family and support hospital staff to fulfil their roles and responsibilities in relation to child protection including reporting to Community Services.

The Units are multidisciplinary units, which provide a service to children and young persons (and their families) who are at risk of harm if current concerns exist for their safety, welfare or wellbeing from abuse or neglect.

## 2 The role of Health workers – (see [Flowchart 1](#))

- It is the responsibility of all Health workers to identify children or young people who are at risk of harm if current concerns exist for their safety, welfare or wellbeing from abuse or neglect. The Health worker should discuss their concerns with their line manager and may consult with the Child Protection Unit (Intake worker)
- Under Section 27 of the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 the Health Worker is **mandated to recognise and report** to Community Services children and young people who are at suspected risk of significant harm from abuse and neglect, and to provide preventative, therapeutic and educational interventions to improve the health and welfare of children and families.
  - Refer to NSW MoH [Child Wellbeing and Child Protection Policies and Procedures](#)
- It is also important to recognise that children in hospital are particularly vulnerable and diligence is required by all staff to ensure their safety and well-being.

## 3 Services provided by the Child Protection Units

### ***Crisis service***

The Units provide a service 24 hours 7 days a week. This includes telephone consultation, support to staff and response to crisis cases for both inpatients and outpatients. A social worker, paediatric medical officer and paediatrician are on-call. Contact should be made to the CPU on-call Intake Worker via Switch.

### ***Sexual Assault***

All cases of alleged sexual assault should be referred to CPU. Response will be determined on the forensic requirements, medical need, and the emotional wellbeing of the child and family. Emergency medical care should be provided as needed, but the medical officer in the CPU should perform all child sexual assault examinations.

### ***Physical abuse and Neglect***

Where there are concerns about physical abuse and neglect cases should be referred to CPU for discussion and formulation of a case plan. CPU may complete a full assessment including medical documentation; in other cases after consultation with CPU documentation of injury may be completed by the referring doctor.

### ***Assessment***

- risk
- medical
- psycho-social
- paediatric
- psychological
- parenting capacity

### ***Treatment***

A range of treatment interventions are offered including:

- Medical
- Sexual Assault Counselling Services

### ***Review***

The Units offer review to clients as required.

### ***Consultation***

A 24 hour telephone consultation service provides advice and information to members of the public, other departments within the hospital, doctors and other health professionals, the Department of Community Services and other government and non-government agencies.

Staff are available to provide consultation at case meetings and a complex case review can be arranged involving a panel of expert health professionals to discuss complex cases of suspected child abuse and assist in developing a case plan.

### ***Education***

All staff must undergo mandatory training (see HETI online).

### ***Research***

The Units conduct various research and quality improvement exercises to advance knowledge and practise in the area of Child Protection.

## Flowchart 1 – Process to refer to the Child Protection Units



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