

Practice Standards: When referrals to Children's Services are regarding the family of a member of Bedford Borough staff, or anyone they have a personal relationship with:

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| 1 | If a referral is made regarding a family member of a member of Bedford Borough staff, or someone with whom they have a personal relationship*, the referral must follow the same procedure as with any other referral to Children's Services |
| 2 | If a member of staff is allocated a case where they have a personal relationship of any kind with those being referred, they should make this known immediately to their Team Manager |
| 3 | The Team Manager responsible for the referral will not allocate the case to the staff member who has any personal relationship with the child or family |
| 4 | If the Team Manager feels that it would not be appropriate to allocate the case within their team then they should discuss the referral with the Head of Service for Social Work, who will decide if another team should take the case |
| 5 | When the referrer is both a member of staff and has a personal relationship with those being referred, the relevant team manager should always explicitly ascertain and record whether the referrer is acting in a professional or personal capacity. Members of staff can only make a referral in a professional capacity where they have a professional relationship with the children or family being referred |
| 6 | If a member of staff is making a referral about a family member in a personal capacity, this should be done through the usual channels available to members of the public and not through the staff member's professional network or connections. Members of staff should not have privileged access to senior managers to discuss matters pertaining to members of their family, or anyone they have a personal relationship with, who are service users |
| 7 | Members of staff should under no circumstance access the records of anyone they are not professionally working with. If the staff member has access to social care records of someone they have a personal relationship with, then consideration should be given to restricting access to those records to prevent any concerns arising about confidentiality |
| 8 | It would always be appropriate to agree anonymity for a member of the public who does not give consent, except in exceptional circumstances. These exceptional circumstances would be in line with the Local Safeguarding Children Board information sharing guidance (follow link) which is predicated on the principle that consent to share information can be dispensed with if it is in the public interest; i.e. that it is necessary to prevent harm to a child and is proportionate to the risk of harm arising from not sharing the information. The decision to share information without consent rests with the Team Manager. Locally there have been a number of cases where a court has requested full information, so when agreeing anonymity the member of the public needs to be aware that a court might order disclosure of their identity. It may also be appropriate to agree anonymity where there is evidence of intimidation or threats of violence towards the professional concerned |
| 9 | Any decisions made with respect to the situations above must be clearly recorded on the child's file |
| 10 | If members of staff have concerns about the service received by a family member, or how a referral they have made has been responded to, this should be addressed through the complaints procedure. Staff members should not have access to HR procedures to seek to resolve these concerns |
| 11 | If any of the above Practice Standards are not followed exactly as written, by any member of staff, they will be subject to disciplinary procedures |

* Personal relationship in these Practice Standards = Partner, Family, Friend, Neighbour, Colleague, Acquaintance