

Joint Investigation Response Team
Local Contact Point Protocol

JIRT

Local Contact Point Protocol

2014

A system for dealing with parental and community concerns when there are reports of child sexual abuse under investigation in an institutionalised setting

*This protocol has been developed by:
NSW Family and Community Services, NSW Police Force,
NSW Kids and Families, NSW Health*

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

In January 2013, the Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia, appointed a six-member Royal Commission to investigate Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. During the hearing, the Royal Commission identified a need, in cases involving institutional settings where a class of children is at risk, to address the concerns of parents of children who have and have not made a disclosure of sexual abuse.

NSW Police Commander for the Child Abuse Squad; provided evidence to the Royal Commission about a proposed future protocol for dealing with communication issues between child protection agencies and parents and community members.

As a result, this new JIRT Local Contact Point Protocol 2014 (*JIRTLCP Protocol*) has been developed in alignment with existing policy and procedures governing Family and Community Services, NSW Police, NSW Health and the Department of Education and Communities. This *JIRTLCP Protocol* system will include informing Local Area Command Police (LAC), the Child Protection Helpline, Principals of schools, the Department of Education and Communities (in its capacity as regulator of early childhood education and care) and other relevant parties of the existence of a Local Contact Point for information and advice¹. This document outlines the criteria to activate the Local Contact Point, establishment processes, and operational functions, within which an identified service is provided to families via a local telephone support line.

1.2 Objectives

The objectives of the *JIRT Local Contact Point Protocol (JIRTLCP Protocol)* are to provide clear operational guidelines for staff² on:-

- What matters warrant enactment of the *JIRTLCP Protocol*
- When and how to establish a Local Contact Point
- Outline the function and role of the *JIRTLCP Protocol* in the provision of information and support to:
 - parents and concerned community members
 - broader community groups and relevant stakeholders

¹ Rustja transcript 912 line 43

² JIRT staff, Local CS Community Services staff, Helpline, health staff and relevant stakeholders

1.3 Links with existing joint policies

Joint planning and information exchange regarding the safety, welfare and wellbeing of a child or young person is fundamental to the successful delivery of the JIRT intervention. The process by which JIRT practitioners maximise their capacity to protect children and young people, bring alleged perpetrators to justice and enhance the child/young person's recovery is articulated in *JIRT Local Planning and Response (LPR³) Procedures*.

For each referral accepted for a JIRT intervention, LPR procedures require field staff from the three (3) agencies to jointly plan the intervention. This involves sharing relevant information, planning the victim interview, identifying and facilitating access to immediate forensic medical and/or treatment needs, determining any mandatory notification requirements, allocating responsibilities and time frames while managing immediate risks to the child/young person and support needs of their protective carers. The agencies reconvene post the field response to determine subsequent action, time frames and responsibilities.

The *JIRT LCP Protocol* for responding to a report/s of child sexual abuse involving institutional settings should be considered during the LPR process.

³ Reviewed 2013

2. JIRT Local Contact Point Protocol

2.1 Criteria

JIRT Agencies will consider the need to implement the *JIRT LCP Protocol* where:

1. A report of child sexual abuse has been accepted by the JIRT Referral Unit;
And;
2. Initial investigation and assessment obtains sufficient evidence to indicate further children at risk or broader community concern;
And;
3. The alleged offender is over the age of 18 years and is working in a paid or a voluntary capacity for an Institution⁴ providing services to children and young people
Or;
4. Senior Officers determine that implementation of the *JIRT LCP Protocol* is warranted.

2.2 Assessment

- Where it becomes known that a report meets the *JIRT LCP Protocol* criteria, the JIRT local management team⁵ will brief their JIRT agency line managers⁶ and provide their recommendation in writing [*see Resource 1 – Activation Request/Approval*] on activating the *JIRT LCP Protocol*.
- Respective JIRT agency line managers will jointly assess the recommendation in consultation with the local JIRT management team and will:
 - i. Approve the recommendation in writing [*see Resource 1 – Activation Request/Approval*] to activate the *JIRT LCP Protocol* and;
 - ii. Approve the timing regarding the activation the *JIRT LCP Protocol* to ensure the integrity of the criminal investigation and the safety, welfare and well-being of the reported child/ren and young people⁷ and;
 - iii. Where required, assume responsibility for coordinating the establishment of a LCP.

⁴Any public or private body, agency, association, club, institution, organisation or other entity or group of entities of any kind (whether incorporated or unincorporated), however described, and includes, for example, an entity or group of entities (including an entity or group of entities that no longer exists) that provides, or has at any time provided activities, facilities, programs or services of any kind that provide the means through which adults have contact with children, including through their families; and does not include the family.

⁵ Police Team Leader, CS JIRT Manager Casework and JIRT Senior Health Clinician

⁶ CAS Inspector, CS JIRT Manager Client Services & JIRT Health Manager.

⁷ The LCP Protocol will only be enacted once sufficient evidence has been obtained to indicate further children at risk or broader community concern.

2.3 Planning

Following the decision and approval to activate the *JIRT LCP Protocol* the coordination of a number of LCP activities will run parallel to the joint response provided to a victim child/children and their families.

The following actions may need to occur:

JIRT local management team⁸:-

- i. Allocate responsibility to one JIRT agency representative⁹ to liaise with the nominated representative¹⁰ for the institution to brief them on the *JIRT LCP Protocol* [Note: it is preferred that both parties agree to enacting the *LCP Protocol*, this agreement and/or dissenting views in relation to enacting the *LCP Protocol* are to be recorded. Significant issues are to be raised with the line supervisors¹¹ *[see Resource 1 – Activation Request/Approval]*.
- ii. Jointly determine the most appropriate agency to undertake the role of the Local Contact Point (LCP), in most cases it is likely that the appropriate agency will be either CS or NSW Health;
- iii. Consult with managers¹² from the selected agency to identify a staff member that has both the experience and capacity to undertake the LCP role,
- iv. Brief the designated LCP and their supervisor on the role and responsibilities of the position¹³; provide a copy of this document and the *LCP Resource 2: Recording Template*.
- v. Jointly determine what information will be provided to the designated LCP regarding the details of the matter/s under investigation prior to them undertaking the role;
- vi. Local management team review and confirm information that is suitable for the institution to share to the broader community *[see LCP Resource 3: communication with parents/staff/stakeholders]*.
- vii. Provide the institution with the approved *LCP Resource 3: communication with parents/staff/stakeholders*
- viii. Promptly review drafted communication content provided by the institution to enable this to be sent to parents, staff and relevant stakeholders in a timely manner;
- ix. Once the LCP has been activated the JIRT Health Senior Clinician to coordinate and liaise with local health services, as required, to advise of possible increases in demand;
- x. Liaise, as frequently as is required, with the designated LCP and their supervisor to update them on the status of the investigation, or where there are changes to information;

⁸ Police Team Leader, CSJIRT Manager Casework and JIRT Senior Health Clinician or as required JIRT agency line managers

⁹ Either the CSJIRT Manager Casework, JIRT Police Team Leader, JIRT Health Senior Clinician

¹⁰ For example DEC School Principal, CEO of institution

¹¹ CAS Inspector, CSJIRT Manager Client Services & JIRT Health Manager

¹² Internal agency consultation re: allocation of staffing resources should occur between officers of similar delegation /authority ie: MCS to MCS etc

¹³ Refer to page 9

- xi. Contact the designated LCP weekly, or as required, to ensure that all relevant information held by either party is exchanged.

JIRT agency line management¹⁴:-

- i. Review and approve requests to activate *JIRT LCP Protocol* [see Resource 1 – Activation Request/Approval].
- ii. Provide internal agency communication and advice¹⁵ regarding the activation of the *JIRT LCP Protocol* and the details of the Local Contact Point (i.e.: LACs, CP Helpline Director and Helpline staff, CSC¹⁶ /JRU Staff, Child Wellbeing Unit, Child Protection Unit, Sexual Assault Services and other relevant Health staff)¹⁷;
- iii. If the institution subject to the investigation is an education and care service as defined under s.5 of the *Children (Education and Care Services) National Law (NSW)* (“National Law”) and the *Children (Education and Care Services) Supplementary Provisions Regulation 2004 (Supplementary Provisions)*, such as long day care, family day care, outside school hours care, home based, mobile or occasional education and care services then the Early Childhood Education and Care Directorate as the Regulatory Authority of NSW is to be notified of the activation of the *JIRT LCP Protocol*.
- iv. Consult, as required, on the content of joint media releases¹⁸;
- v. Review and approve requests to deactivate the *JIRT LCP Protocol*;
- vi. Where required participate in activities to evaluate the functionality of the *JIRT LCP Protocol*.

2.4 Engagement

- The allocated local JIRT agency representative will brief the nominated representative for the institution on the processes governing the *JIRT LCP Protocol*.
- It is preferred that the nominated representative for the institution together with the local JIRT agency representative agree to enact the *JIRT LCP Protocol*.¹⁹

¹⁴ CAS Inspector, CS JIRT Manager Client Services & JIRT Health Manager

¹⁵ For Community Services where available, communication and advice is to be sent to team/unit mailboxes as well as directly to relevant staff members

¹⁶ To include advice to other local CSCs that may receive calls from the community about the matter under investigation

¹⁷ It is essential that the Director of the CP Helpline communicates the activation of the *JIRT LCP Protocol* and the details of the Local Contact Point to Helpline staff in order to re-direct callers to this service, should it be required.

¹⁸ Media being released broadly will identify key agency contact points i.e.: Crime Stoppers, Triple 000, CP Helpline

¹⁹ agreement and/or dissenting views in relation to enacting the *LCP Protocol* are to be recorded and raised to line supervisors

2.5 Activation of the Local Contact Point (LCP)

Upon agreement between the local JIRT agency representative and the nominated representative for the institution to enact the *JIRT LCP Protocol*, the local JIRT agency representative will provide the institution with the template paragraphs for communicating with parents; staff and relevant stakeholders [see *LCP Resource 3 - communication with parents/staff/stakeholders*]. This template provides approved paragraphs for inclusion, advice and contact details for the LCP.

If the information subject to the investigation is related to an education and care service, then the Department of Education and Communities is to be notified of the activation of the *JIRT LCP Protocol*.

The local JIRT agency representative and the nominated representative for the institution must ensure that the LCP is operational before the letter/email or alternative communication message is sent out to parents, staff and relevant stakeholders.

The nominated representative for the institution will:-

- i. Determine the best process to inform parents and staff of the institution concerned and any other relevant stakeholders about the existence of the LCP i.e. in the form of a letter/email and/or alternative communication message;
- ii. If the institution is an early childhood education and care service, provide notification of the incident / complaint to the Department of Education and Communities within 24 hours;
- iii. Consult with the local JIRT agency representative prior to forwarding ANY communication to parents, staff and relevant stakeholders about the details of the matter/s under investigation to ensure the information that is provided does not compromise the integrity of the criminal investigation and/or breach the confidentiality, safety, welfare and well-being of the victim children and families;
- iv. Draft the communication to parents, staff and relevant stakeholders and forward this draft to the JIRT agency representative for review prior to sending;
- v. Once the content of the information in the communication to parents, staff and relevant stakeholders has been agreed, send the communication to parents, staff and relevant stakeholders ensuring that the details of the designated Local Contact Point staff member are easily identified;
- vi. Continue to liaise, as appropriate, with the local JIRT agency representative to ensure that all relevant information held by either party is exchanged.

The designated Local Contact Point staff member will:-

- i. Provide to callers, with information and support that meets their needs;
- ii. Where appropriate, provide callers with the approved information given by the local JIRT management team about the details of the matter/s currently under investigation;
- iii. Provide advice and support to callers such as information about child sexual abuse, the process of disclosure, protective behaviours, engaging children in conversations to explore/ elicit information on their experiences within the organisation or with staff/others from the organisation;
- iv. Provide the electronic link to callers to the ***Helping to Make it Better*** [Resource 5] <http://www.ecav.health.nsw.gov.au/online-shop/booklets-manuals/helping-to-make-it-better/> or send out printed material as required;
- v. Act as the centralised point for the collection and reporting of information by JIRT agencies which is relevant to the investigation;
- vi. Record and provide the local JIRT management team with daily reports, on caller data i.e.: volume of calls, caller identification details, issues reported, nature of callers concerns, action taken [see LCP Resource 2 - Recording Template];
- vii. Provide access to information / contact details of other local support services available including child sexual assault counselling services;
- viii. Ensure that reports of child abuse or neglect are recorded and reported to the CP Helpline²⁰, and that reporters (callers) are advised that the information they have provided to the LCP will be sent to the CP Helpline;
- ix. Ensure that any information relevant to the current criminal investigation is reported promptly to the local Police JIRT management and provide the Crime Stoppers number for any anonymous reporting of information 1800 333 000;
- x. Operate during business hours and will communicate / re-direct inquiries outside of these hours to the correct service / agency ie: Child Protection Helpline 132 111, Crime Stoppers 1800 333 000.

2.6 De-activation of the Local Contact Point (LCP)

- Throughout the investigation the JIRT local management team²¹ will maintain communication with the LCP staff member. Once it becomes apparent that the LCP is no longer required the local JIRT management team will liaise with the institution regarding the recommendation to deactivate the LCP. The JIRT management team will then brief their JIRT agency line managers²² and provide their recommendation in writing to de-activate the *JIRT LCP Protocol* [see LCP Resource 4 – Deactivation Request/Approval].

²⁰ where relevant obtain JIRT consent and from reporters (callers)

²¹ Police Team Leader, CS JIRT Manager Casework and JIRT Senior Health Clinician

²² CAS Inspector, CS JIRT Manager Client Services & JIRT Health Manager.

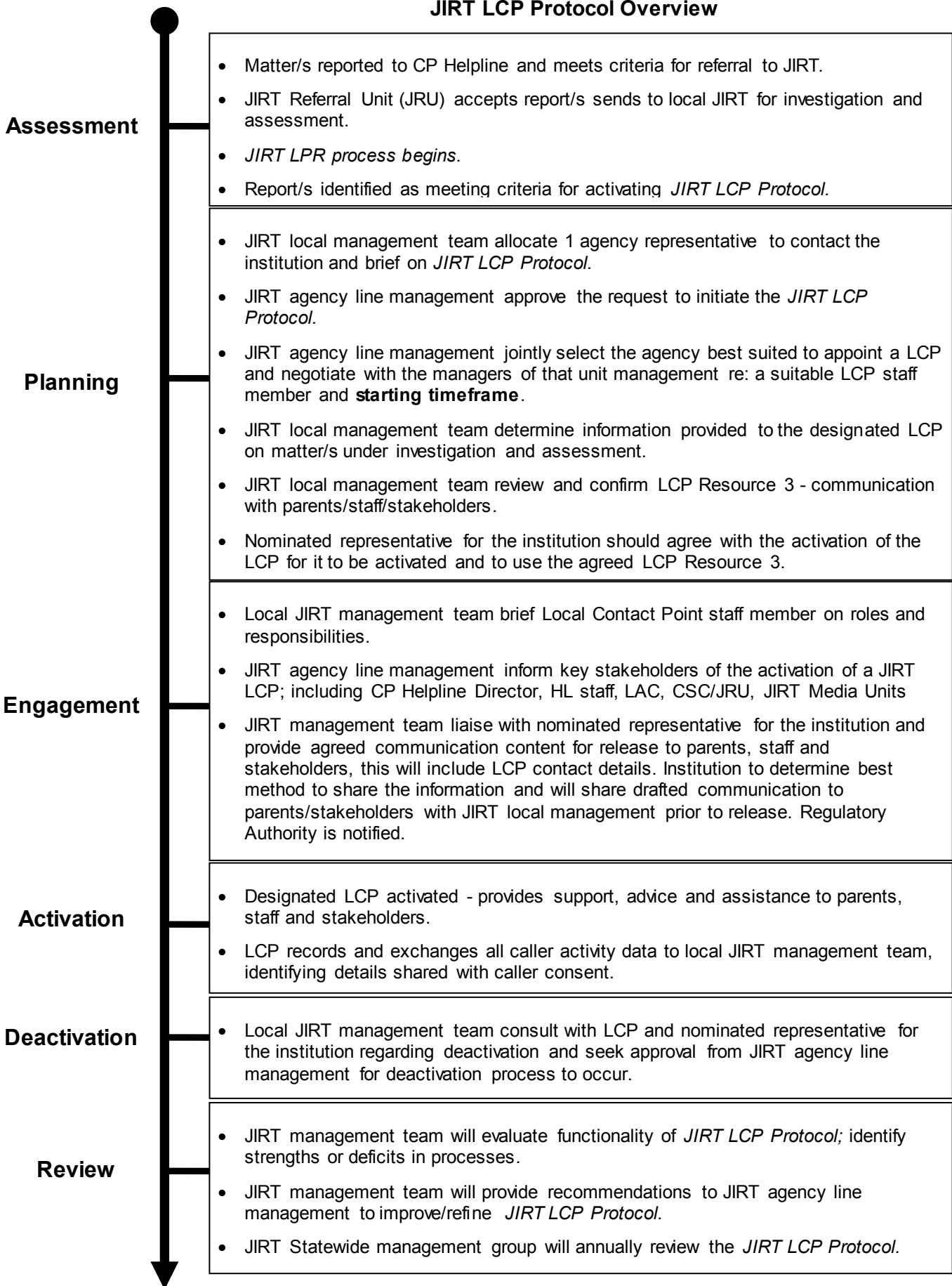
- Respective JIRT agency line managers will jointly assess the recommendation in consultation with the local JIRT management team and will:
 - i. Approve the recommendation in writing to de-activate the JIRT LCP Protocol [*see LCP Resource 4 – Deactivation Request/Approval*].
 - ii. Approve the timing of de-activating the *JIRT LCP Protocol*
 - iii. Liaise with internal stakeholders on the decision to deactivate the *JIRT LCP Protocol*
 - iv. Advise the LCP of deactivation and to liaise with any residual contacts as required and
 - v. Delegate the local JIRT agency representative to advise all relevant stakeholders of the approval to de-activate the LCP.

2.7 Monitoring & Review

1. The designated LCP will record all caller data [*see LCP Resource 2 - Recording Template*]
The LCP will provide regular updates to JIRT management team.
2. The local JIRT management team will contact the designated LCP weekly, or as required to ensure that all relevant information is updated and exchanged.
3. Once matter/s under investigation are finalised and the LCP has been deactivated the local JIRT management team and JIRT agency line managers will evaluate the functionality of the *JIRT LCP Protocol*. The Local JIRT Management Team will:-
 - Consult with the relevant nominated organisation involved to gather their feedback,
 - Consult with the Department of Education and Communities as appropriate;
 - Identify strengths and/or deficits in the processes;
 - Make recommendations to the JIRT agency line management team to refine/improve the system, templates.
4. The JIRT Statewide Management Group will annually review the *JIRT LCP Protocol*.

2.8 Protocol Overview

JIRT LCP Protocol Overview



3. Information for parents and concerned community members

Information provided by the designated LCP to callers will include:

- Approved information provided by the local JIRT management team on the details and or status of the matter/s under investigation;
- **Helping to Make it Better** – ECAV on-line resource [[see Information Resource 5](#)].
- Other resources included below will be made available, in addition to access to / information on local services as required.

4. Resources

Resource 1 – *Template: Local Contact Point Activation Request/Approval Form*

Resource 2 – *Template: Local Contact Point Recording Template*

Resource 3 – *Template: Local Contact Point Communicating with parents/staff/ key stake holders*

Resource 4 – *Template: Local Contact Point Deactivation Request/Approval Form*

Resource 5 – *Information Resource: Helping to make it better.*

<http://www.ecav.health.nsw.gov.au/online-shop/booklets-manuals/helping-to-make-it-better/>

Resource 6 – *Information Resource: NSW Health Website for access to local sexual assault services*

<http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/sexualassault/Pages/default.aspx>

Additional resource for parents, carers and stakeholders available to order online is:

Is This Normal? – Understanding your child's sexual behaviour by Holly Brennan and Judy Graham – available for purchase from Family Planning Queensland

http://www.fpq.com.au/publications/teachingAids/Is_this_normal.php