

7 Minute Briefing – New pre-birth IRD Process

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National Child Protection Guidance was launched in 2021 and means:

- Unborn babies are now fully integrated into the Interagency Referral Discussions (IRDs) process.
- Health professionals in the Vulnerable In Pregnancy (VIP) midwifery team can now raise pre-birth IRDs.

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From **25th September 2023**, all unborn babies deemed to be at risk of significant harm will be referred into the pre-birth IRD process.

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All agencies should continue to follow their child protection guidance and discuss any concerns with line managers or agency child protection teams if unsure.

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An IRD is a multi-agency meeting where children that meet a threshold of **significant harm** are discussed. These happen daily in Fife and can be raised by Health, Police or Social Work.

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There will be **three possible outcomes** to a Pre-Birth IRD:
1) Single agency response
2) Joint (Social work & Health) multi-agency assessment
3) Child Protection Planning Meeting (CPPM) with identification of Lead Professional and a safety plan if required.

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Multi agency representatives at IRD will share **relevant** and personal/sensitive information, provided it is necessary, **proportionate** and lawful to do so.

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Any agency can refer an unborn baby into this process by following their own single agency guidance. Pre-birth IRD meetings will be chaired by a senior midwife from the NHS Fife VIP team.

