

*Protection**Child centred**Justice*

Coordinator/supervisor role for Joint Investigative Interview (JII) Team within Scottish Child Interview Model

Introduction

Lanarkshire are the first area in Scotland to pilot the Scottish Child Interview Model for joint investigative interviewing.

Part of the early experience of Lanarkshire was the development of a role for a local manager to oversee the specialist team of interviewers. This was not something put in place at the outset of the pilot – it evolved from the early experiences of those directly involved in delivering the new JII model.

This document reflects some of the experience of Lanarkshire in terms of what they value about this post and is based on a staff survey, plus ongoing conversations, and reflections.

This document may be of particular interest to others undertaking a Co-ordinator/supervisor role in respect of the new model for JII in their local area.

Key Functions:

- Quick and effective allocation of joint investigative interviews that takes into account:
 - Severity of crime and how it is likely to be prosecuted (ie solemn or summary)
 - Other competing demands
 - Priorities of team workload
 - Equal opportunities for all interviewers to undertake interviews and to take the lead role
 - Availability of interview staff
- Provision of briefings and debriefings to interviewers
- Available to answer questions/provide guidance and advice
- Staff support
- Single point of contact

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- Liaison with partner agencies
- Identifying needs of interviewers and advocating on their behalf
- Supporting, either directly or indirectly, the management of each interviewer's overall workload
- Engagement in evaluation of interviewer practise

Qualities

Staff have fed back that they value the following qualities in the Coordinator:

- being on-site (proximity)
- readily available
- approachable
- able to answer queries promptly and knowledgeably
- consistent in their presentation
- being able to recognise and acknowledge workload demands, including competing priorities
- respectful in approach and demeanour

The Coordinator being knowledgeable in the new model of JII was viewed as very important (this may be particularly valuable during early stages of implementation when wider awareness of the new model across different agencies is at a less developed stage)

During initial implementation of the new model in Lanarkshire, the Coordinator undertook almost all of the briefings for interviews. This degree of consistency was experienced as very helpful by the cadre.

A dedicated coordinator was viewed as critical in the overall smooth operation of the new model, as well as protecting the specific roles and responsibilities of the specialist team.

Additional Aspects

The Coordinator was viewed as having a key role in responding to local context-specific influences on the implementation of the new JII model.

For instance, Lanarkshire went live in practice shortly before national lockdown measures were announced in response to COVID-19 in March 2020.

The decrease in child protection referrals and demand for JII's meant there was a risk that newly trained interviewers would not have sufficient opportunity to deploy their new skills in practice.

The Coordinator was in a good position to identify and mitigate that risk very quickly by identifying additional opportunities for child interviews.

An onsite Coordinator is in a good position to experience the physical working environment of the interviewer team and to identify factors that impede or facilitate the comfortable and effective operation of the team.

In addition, there are a range of administrative responsibilities attached to the new model for JII and a Coordinator helps ensure these responsibilities are approached consistently by all interviewers, undertaken jointly, and carried out to a high standard.

Data

In addition to the above, there has been a growing recognition in Lanarkshire of the potential role the Co-ordinator could fulfil in respect of data collection. Key functions here include:

- Maintaining record of key data (when interviewers are deployed; whether they have the lead or second interviewer role; length of time involved in planning and interviewing etc)
- Maximising the data recorded by interviewers (checking data capture forms are complete and data is accurate)

A final point

A key message from Lanarkshire is acknowledgement of the complexity of agreeing an effective management model involving staff from different organisations, coming together to deliver a joint service from potentially one shared office base. Connections with the originating organisations and service teams and the new arrangements for effectively managing a joint team need to be carefully thought through and the role of Coordinator must complement any final agreement made across the partners.

Written by Jillian Ingram, on behalf of the National JII Team, in collaboration with Lanarkshire JII Partnership.

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