From July 2014 separate arrangements have been put in place for Out of Hours response arrangements in Adults’ Services, Children’s Services and for responding to Mental Health Act assessment requests.

Revised arrangements for Children’s Services have been put in place with effect from 1st October 2014.

This guidance note provides details of the arrangements and advises on sources of further information.
✓ **Our policy approach to supporting West Sussex residents**

Our starting assumption is that people who live in West Sussex are expert in understanding their own needs and how best to achieve the social care support they need – both within their own homes and/or within the wider local community. Some customers of Adults’ Services will be supported by carers and some by children and young people who find themselves placed in a caring role. Our overall approach recognises the need to ‘think family’ and work holistically to ensure that people are safe and able to maintain independence as far as possible when in a crisis or ‘emergency’ situation.

✓ **Referrals to Adults’ Services outside office hours**

Our countywide Out of Hours service deals with adult social care emergencies when daytime staff are not available.

Our main partners include Sussex Police and the NHS – including GPs, hospitals (Accident and Emergency or Walk-in Centres), and paramedics working with the Ambulance Service. We provide a limited emergency-only service.

Requests for Mental Health Act assessment – again, originating primarily from Sussex Police and the NHS - are managed separately to the arrangements for dealing with adult social care emergencies. See page 3 of this guidance note.

✓ **What is the process for contacting the Out of Hours service?**

Any member of the public, with concerns about an adult who has social care issues, is in crisis, and needs support to live safely at home, should contact the Out of Hours service by phone:

**Telephone:** **01243 642121**

They are then provided with an additional number to call. This number will change each day, depending on who is the duty manager. The duty manager will screen the request and decide whether any action should be taken before the next working day.

Staff can also refer - during office hours only, and up to 5pm - by email. This should be sent to: ssoutofhours@westsussex.gov.uk

The service response is provided by a small group of staff who work on a rotation basis. This includes a number of very experienced staff who will undertake face-to-face complex assessments when required.

Duty managers and social workers are employed by the County Council in daytime roles, and they volunteer to join the Out of Hours service arrangements.
Duty managers are normally already employed at a team manager level and are not only knowledgeable about social care generally but also effective in managing risk situations. Duty managers work from home and access a detailed bespoke Out of Hours information database, along with the main customer information systems that are available in the daytime. Duty social workers are also on call from their own home.

✔️ What about work under the Mental Health Act?
Any member of the public, with concerns about someone (of any age) who has mental health issues and who is in crisis and needs support to live safely at home, should contact the Out of Hours service by phone.

Telephone: **01903 843239**

Statutory assessments under the Mental Health Act are the most frequently required face-to-face assessments for staff providing an emergency response outside office hours.

If a person has been picked up under the Mental Health Act by Sussex Police and held in a police station custody centre or alternative place of safety centre, an assessment by one or more specialist doctors and by an Approved Mental Health Professional will be organized.

Sometimes people are at home and in crisis and require a Mental Health Act assessment to determine whether they need to be admitted to hospital for specialist care and support.

[Referrals for Mental Health Act assessment that are made by telephone during working hours are dealt with by the Contact Centre. Staff in the Contact Centre will transfer the call to the Mental Health Act assessment referral coordinator on telephone 078 9458 9425 who in turn will complete a referral form. If necessary this information will be passed to the Out of Hours service by phone.]

Referrals for Mental Health Act assessment that are made by telephone outside working hours are initially dealt with by the Sussex Mental Health Line on telephone **01903 843239**. The information collated there will be passed to the on-call Approved Mental Health Professional for follow-up. The follow-up will usually involve an assessment by one or more specialist doctors and by an Approved Mental Health Professional.

✔️ What about children’s social care emergencies out of hours?
Separate out of hours arrangements have now been put in place by Children’s Services to deal with children’s social care emergencies.
Any member of the public, with concerns about a child or young person who has social care issues, is in crisis, and needs support to live safely at home, should contact the Children’s Services Emergency Duty Team by phone.

Telephone: **0330 22 26664**

From 1\(^{st}\) October 2014, a permanent Emergency Duty Team offers an emergency service to the children and families of West Sussex. The Team works closely with the existing staff in the Child Access Point and provides improved performance and efficiencies whilst also being a more sustainable service.

From 1\(^{st}\) October 2014 staff needing to alert the Children’s Services Emergency Duty Team to an urgent safeguarding matter should contact the Team by telephone. Alternatively the Team can be contacted by email via the Child Access Point (find the address in the WSCC Global Address List in Microsoft Outlook), putting ‘ALERT FOR EDT’ in the subject box.

✔ **Relevance of the Care Act 2014 to these arrangements**
The Care Act 2014 (implementation from April 2015) will fundamentally change the overall aims and approach to the provision of adult social care services organised by councils with social services responsibilities. Local authorities will still however be expected to provide an Out of Hours service to respond to those situations that cannot wait until the next working day.

✔ **Sources of further information**
Additional guidance for Adults’ Services staff on supporting customers and carers is on the West Sussex Connect to Support website (visit: [westsussexconnecttosupport.org/professionalzone](westsussexconnecttosupport.org/professionalzone)).

Information and guidance for the general public about adult social care services and providers in West Sussex is also available on the West Sussex Connect to Support website (visit: [westsussexconnecttosupport.org](westsussexconnecttosupport.org)).

The search engine on the county council’s website ([westsussex.gov.uk](westsussex.gov.uk)) can be used to find guidance and other information about supporting children, young people and their families.

The West Sussex Safeguarding Children’s Board has its own separate website. This contains a variety of information, including sections for parents and carers, as well as children and young people, providing guidance on a number of issues including how to cope with bullying and online abuse. The website also has advice on what to do if you are concerned about a child or young person that you know (visit: [westsussexscb.org.uk](westsussexscb.org.uk)).