

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY AND PROCEDURE

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SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY

1. POLICY STATEMENT

Family Action recognises the importance of its support services to families, children, young people and adults and its particular responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of those who are vulnerable or at risk.

This requires us to:

- Listen to, value, encourage and support those we work with
- Provide clear internal procedures for identifying and dealing with concerns about possible abuse, and ensure their implementation
- Provide effective management for staff, students and volunteers through supervision, support and training
- Quality assure practice and the effectiveness of our services; taking action swiftly when we need to
- Adopt a code of conduct for staff
- Include continuous assessment of risk and need within our work with families
- Act in the best interest of children
- Recruit safely and effectively, ensuring all necessary checks are made, applicants are tested rigorously throughout the recruitment process and appointed staff are able to do the job.
- Share information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, staff, students and volunteers
- Develop and maintain effective information sharing with statutory services and other agencies, involving children and parents as appropriate
- Work collaboratively with Safeguarding Children Partnership Boards and follow their local procedures

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everybody's business although our individual roles in the process may be different.

This policy applies to all trustees, staff, students and volunteers.

Any allegation or concern about abuse must be responded to.

All services will have a named person, usually but not always the manager, with particular knowledge and experience of child protection. Any concern for the welfare of a child must be discussed with the line manager and if necessary the named person, without delay and further action taken as necessary. *See Appendix 3 - Named Person Profile*

Family Action believes that the welfare of children is paramount and that ALL children have the right to protection from abuse, regardless of their age, culture, disability, gender, racial origin, language, religious belief or sexual orientation.

A child for the purposes of this policy, as defined by the Children Act 1989 & 2004, is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday.

Family Action staff, students and volunteers will follow the procedures of the Safeguarding Children Partnership for their area. These procedures will take precedence over Family Action's Safeguarding Children's Procedures, if there are any significant differences.

Every effort will be made to ensure that staff, students and volunteers recruited to work for Family Action are suitable to do so. Those who are responsible for appointing staff will be trained in safe recruitment practices. All references will be robustly scrutinised and other checks sought at the appropriate level e.g. DBS, Identity, qualifications etc.

Family Action is committed to training all staff, students and volunteers in this policy, procedure and code of behaviour, as part of the induction process. It requires all to complete the e-learning Child Protection Awareness course, and for front line practitioners to undertake Safeguarding Children Foundation Training (or the equivalent) within their probationary period. In addition they will be required to undertake either refresher training or more advanced training (as appropriate) every three years thereafter.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Quality, Performance and Safeguarding team.

2. THE LEGAL AND PROCEDURAL FRAMEWORK FOR SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

All of the following provide the legal and procedural framework for safeguarding children and young people.

The Children Act 1989

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (ratified by UK Gov.1991)

The Human Rights Act 1998

The Framework for Assessment of Children in Need 2000

The Sexual Offences Act 2003

The Children Act 2004

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

Protection of Freedoms Act 2012

What to do if you're worried a child is being abused: advice for practitioners 2015 (click [here](#) for full document)

Information Sharing for practitioners providing safeguarding services 2018 (click [here](#) for full document)

Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014

Serious Crime Act 2015

Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018

Disclosure and Barring Service guidelines

Children and Social Work Act 2017 which sets up Child Safeguarding Practice review Panel

For further information see *Appendix 1*; National Legislation Policy Frameworks Pages 5-6

3. FAMILY ACTION'S ACCOUNTABILITIES FRAMEWORK

Safeguarding is the responsibility of us all. When dealing with the concerns discussed in this policy the lines of accountability for responding appropriately apply to all staff, students and volunteers. *Appendix 2* provides an accountabilities framework for staff.

For any incident in which the Assistant Director for Safeguarding acting as the Designated Person for the organisation, provides an instruction on how to act in relation to safeguarding a child, this instruction must be followed; even if advice to the contrary is received from another senior manager, including Deputy Directors and members of the Executive group.

Nevertheless, if after consultation with a manager or the Assistant Director for Safeguarding, no instruction has been given to refer to Children's Social Care, then any member of staff remains free to act on their own concerns and make a referral to Children's Social Care if they believe that a child is at risk of significant harm.

Staff, students and volunteers are expected to consult their line manager/ supervisor when they have any concerns for the welfare of a child and to discuss any issue openly within supervision. These managers will consult, if needed, with their Operations Managers/Deputy Directors or Heads of Department.

If a staff member has concerns about the attitudes and/or behaviours of a Family Action colleague or volunteer, they have a duty to comply with Family Action's Whistle Blowing policy and procedures. Should any member of staff have concerns about the behaviour of member a member of staff or volunteer towards a child, including staff from other organisations, then please see Section 7 of this policy and follow the guidelines for reporting internally and to the Local Authority Designated Officer.

It is the responsibility of managers within each region to identify any differences between this policy and procedures and that of their Local Safeguarding Children Partnership (which will take precedence) and to ensure all staff, students and volunteers are fully aware and informed of them.

4. LINKS TO OTHER FAMILY ACTION POLICIES

All staff involved with safeguarding and child protection work, need to bear in mind the other organisational policies which support their work and provide guidance:

- Social Care Induction
- Diversity and Equality
- Supervision
- Whistle blowing
- Sharing information and confidentiality
- Safeguarding Adults
- Code of conduct
- Lone working
- Health and Safety
- Complaints

- Serious Incident Flowchart
- Anti bullying
- E-safety
- Escalation
- Recruitment



Appendix 1

National Legislation and Policy Frameworks

Children Act (1989)	<p>Emphasises the importance of putting the child first</p> <p>Key aspects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welfare of the child is paramount • Delay is not in the child's best interests and to be avoided • Children's wishes to be taken seriously 	<p><i>Promotes:</i></p> <p>Principles of working together and in partnership</p> <p>Skills enhanced by multi agency learning</p>
Sexual Offences Act (2003)	Sets out a new legal framework to protect children from sexual abuse, covers internet pornography, grooming & exploitation. Puts restrictions on convicted sex offenders.	<p><i>Promotes</i></p> <p>Internet Safety, successful prosecution in cases of grooming and safeguarding children from known sex offenders</p>
Children Act (2004)	<p>Emphasises reform within children services</p> <p>Key aspects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New role of children commissioner for England • Duty of local authorities to promote • Co-operation between agencies • Establish Local Safeguarding Children Boards to co-ordinate • Establish local arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children • Establishment of new post of Director of Children's Services 	<p><i>Promotes:</i></p> <p>Culture of co-operation and working together between agencies and organisations</p> <p>Development of common knowledge, skills and competences within the children's workforce</p>
Education Act (2002)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasises duty to make arrangements for the safeguarding and promoting of the welfare of children • Ensures training and pastoral support • Identifies designated staff to co-ordinate and manage child safeguarding practice 	<p><i>Promotes:</i></p> <p>Policies and procedures to safeguard children</p> <p>Work in partnership with other agencies</p> <p>Training and development</p>

Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014	Makes Forced Marriage a criminal act.	<i>Promotes</i> Equality and informed choice for women and girls; and the prosecution of offenders
Children and Families Act 2014	Reformed the systems for adoption, looked after children, family justice and special educational needs.	<i>Promotes</i> A commitment to strong services and systems for vulnerable children.
Serious Crime Act 2015	Updating and clarifying the offence of child cruelty to make it explicit that it covers psychological suffering or injury as well as physical harm. (Section 66) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new criminal offence of sexual communication with a child. • Amends existing sexual offences legislation so as to recognise children as victims rather than consenting participants • Extends the extra-territorial reach of female genital mutilation offences and providing anonymity to victims • A new offence of failing to protect a girl under 16 from the risk of female genital mutilation • A new duty on professionals to notify the police of acts of female genital mutilation. • A new offence criminalising repeated or continuous coercive or controlling behaviour perpetrated against an intimate partner or family member which has a serious effect on the victim. 	
Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015	Places the Prevent programme on a statutory footing. This means that from the 1st July 2015 every local authority (and other relevant 'authorities') will have a legal duty to, "when exercising its functions, have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. This duty is conferred upon organisations commissioned by Local Authorities and any other 'authority' named in the Act. Places a statutory duty on a range of organisations – including child care settings – to co-operate with local Channel arrangements/panels.	<i>Promotes</i> Increased reporting of individuals at risk of radicalisation. Multi-agency working when an individual is deemed to be at risk of radicalisation.
Working Together to Safeguard Children: a guide to inter-agency working.... (2018)	Statutory guidance for multi-agency working and the responsibilities of individual agencies. It Includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessing need and providing help • Organisational responsibilities • Local arrangements for safeguarding children led by Safeguarding Children Partnerships • Learning and improvement frameworks • Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and other statutory reviews 	<i>Promotes:</i> <i>Child's needs paramount</i> <i>Information sharing</i> <i>Use of professional judgement</i> <i>Regular reviews of outcomes</i> <i>Individual agencies are responsible for ensuring staff competence & confidence to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities</i>

Safeguarding Accountability within Family Action
Safeguarding is the responsibility of us all

<p>TRUSTEES</p>	<p>Trustees have a range of duties, including taking necessary steps to safeguard and protect children. They must act in children’s best interests and ensure that they take all reasonable steps to prevent any harm to them. Trustees also have duties to manage risk and to protect the organisation’s assets and reputation.</p> <p>Trustees’ duties involve ensuring that those benefitting from, or working with the organisation do not suffer harm as a direct result of contact with it.</p> <p>Trustees must ensure that there are appropriate Safeguarding Policies and that they are implemented effectively. They also have a personal duty of care in relation to Safeguarding.</p>
<p>CHIEF EXECUTIVE</p>	<p>Accountable to the Trustees for safeguarding within the organisation.</p> <p>Ensures a clear framework for the management accountability for safeguarding.</p>
<p>EXECUTIVE GROUP</p>	<p>Accountable to the Chief Executive for safeguarding within their departments.</p> <p>Jointly and collectively accountable for overseeing the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements in the organisation and driving improvements across all departments where required.</p> <p>Providing leadership on safeguarding as a corporate issue.</p> <p>Ensure that safeguarding is made integral to the Family Action Strategic Plan.</p> <p>Ensure that the corporate QA system takes account of safeguarding.</p> <p>Safeguarding is given regular consideration at Exec. meetings.</p> <p>Receives and requests reports related to safeguarding</p>

<p>DIRECTOR OF SERVICES AND INNOVATION</p>	<p>Accountable to the Chief Executive for safeguarding in all projects and services within the Operations Department.</p> <p>Line management responsibility for the safe delivery, quality and effectiveness of services.</p> <p>Commissions specific time limited work to address safeguarding issues.</p> <p>Together with HR ensure that safe recruitment practices are fully employed & that staff appointed have the necessary skills and experience in safeguarding appropriate to their role.</p> <p>Ensures that effective supervision supports safeguarding at all levels within the department.</p> <p>Ensure that a range of appropriate safeguarding training and budgets are available to meet the needs of the workforce.</p> <p>Commissions the auditing of specific areas of work.</p> <p>Receives internal reports as part of the Serious Case Review and Section 11 processes.</p> <p>Manages the Deputy Director for Quality, Performance and Safeguarding; and budget.</p>
<p>Deputy Directors of Services and Innovation/Operations Managers</p>	<p>Accountable to the Director of Services and Innovation for safeguarding in projects and services within their region.</p> <p>Together with the HR Department ensure safe recruitment practices are fully employed in the recruitment of both staff and volunteers and that they have the necessary skills and experience in safeguarding, appropriate to the role.</p> <p>Line management responsibility for the safe delivery, quality and effectiveness of the services within their region.</p> <p>Ensure all supervisors and managers within their region receive the level of safeguarding training appropriate to their role and responsibilities.</p> <p>Ensure effective supervision supports safeguarding in their region.</p>

	<p>Report on the practice and management of safeguarding in their region and respond to safeguarding audits, as required.</p> <p>Offer advice and support to staff on safeguarding issues when Project Managers are absent, as well as providing support to Project Managers, co-ordinators and others as necessary.</p> <p>Ensure the development of a safeguarding culture within the context of their services.</p> <p>Undertake management reviews when there are concerns about quality and effectiveness in relation to safeguarding and take corrective action where necessary.</p> <p>Cost new services to allow for the implementation of the safeguarding framework.</p> <p>Ensure that regional management meetings have safeguarding as a standing item on their agenda.</p> <p>Ensure that Operational Managers and other direct reports fulfil their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding and the framework for accountability.</p>
<p>Deputy Director Quality, Performance and Safeguarding (Designated person)</p>	<p>Accountable to the Director of Services and Innovation for the development of safeguarding within the organisation.</p> <p>Provide reports to the Trustees and the Executive Group</p> <p>Act as the designated person for the organisation.</p> <p>Regularly receive and collate information in respect of safeguarding activity to inform a corporate assessment of risk for the Executive Group.</p> <p>Oversee or undertake an annual review and update the Family Action Safeguarding policy, procedures and standards.</p> <p>Responsible for developing and reviewing strategic objectives relating to quality, performance and safeguarding</p> <p>Ensure, together with HR, that all new staff are inducted into Family Action's Safeguarding framework prior to the completion of their probationary period. Along with HR,</p>

	<p>oversee the quality of induction for new staff in relation to safeguarding practice and standards; highlighting any issues to the Director of Services.</p> <p>Review the quality and content of Family Action’s Safeguarding and related training to meet the needs of the organisation and to ensure any new learning can be fully integrated into working practices.</p> <p>Undertake, analyse and report on safeguarding and practice audits.</p> <p>Link Family Action into national safeguarding developments or networks.</p> <p>Circulate safeguarding information and updates.</p>
<p>Operations/Service/Project Managers</p>	<p>Accountable to their manager for safeguarding in their project or service.</p> <p>Together with the HR Department, ensure safe recruitment practices are fully employed in the recruitment of both staff and volunteers and that they have the necessary skills and experience in safeguarding, practice, management or other requirements, as appropriate to the role.</p> <p>Line management responsibility for the safe delivery, quality and effectiveness of services provided by their project/s.</p> <p>Responsibility to establish and maintain effective relationships with other agencies locally in relation to safeguarding and to challenge when appropriate.</p> <p>Ensure that safeguarding is integral to all Family Action processes for the assessment, analysis, planning and reviewing of outcomes, in our work with service users.</p> <p>Ensure all their staff receive safeguarding training and support commensurate with their need.</p> <p>Ensure that all files clearly identify where there are concerns for the welfare of a child and that files comply with organisational standards.</p> <p>Ensure that supervision is provided to staff in line with Family Action’s supervision policy taking into account any</p>

	<p>safeguarding issues, the complexity of the work and experience of the staff member.</p> <p>Ensure that supervision sessions record reflective practice and any decisions made are transferred to the case file – all records are signed and dated.</p> <p>Ensure that the assessment of risk and need, each case is regularly reviewed and an escalation process, implemented as necessary.</p> <p>Ensure that safeguarding practice is regularly discussed in supervision to identify any training needs and is included within the staff appraisal process.</p> <p>Ensure that there is a written Safeguarding Statement clearly displayed in each service.</p> <p>Ensure that Safeguarding is a standing item on team meeting agendas.</p> <p>Ensure that supervisors regularly read case files and counter sign them.</p> <p>Undertake periodic file audits.</p> <p>Make child protection referrals to Children’s Social Care, as necessary.</p> <p>Provide information on safeguarding activity to the regional manager and the safeguarding manager as required.</p> <p>Ensure that all direct reports fulfil their responsibilities in relation to this safeguarding policy, the framework for accountability and other relevant policies.</p>
Named persons	To offer consultation and advice locally, to staff together with their line-manager, on safeguarding issues. See roll profile on page 12 of this policy.
Front line Staff, Administrators, Students and Volunteers	<p>Accountable to their project or service manager for safeguarding within their work.</p> <p>Responsibility for the safe delivery, quality and effectiveness of the services they provide.</p> <p>Are alert to safeguarding issues in all aspects of their work.</p>

	<p>Keep accurate and timely records which are signed and dated and comply with Family Action's procedures in relation to file format and management.</p> <p>Remember that the welfare of the child is paramount and draw to the attention of line management any concerns they may have for the welfare of a child.</p> <p>Make referrals to Children's Social Care as necessary in consultation with their line manager.</p> <p>Use supervision and appraisal to reflect on practice in relation to safeguarding.</p> <p>Undertake safeguarding training as required.</p>
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Named Person Profile

Family Action requires all Operations Managers to identify people with the requisite experience to act as the named safeguarding person for each of their services. The named person will be required to offer consultation and advice on safeguarding matters to other staff members. The named person will often be the Project Manager, but where this is not the case, the named person must ensure that the line-manager is fully involved in the consultation.

It is for the line manager together with their staff member to make any decisions in respect of the case and to ensure that both the consultation and any decisions have been properly recorded.

If no such person exists within a service, Operations Managers will either allocate the role to someone in an adjacent service or undertake the role themselves. All staff within the regions must be formally notified by their Project Manager of the name and contact details of their named person.

Each Operations Manager must supply a list of their named persons indicating which project they cover, to the Deputy Director of Quality, Performance and Safeguarding and Director of Services and Innovation, annually.

A named person must have:

- A professional qualification in social work or other relevant discipline
- A minimum of five years post qualifying experience of working with child protection issues
- A thorough and current knowledge of safeguarding guidance and legislation
- Undertaken more advanced safeguarding training* which has been appropriately updated
- A sound understanding of their Safeguarding Children Partnership's procedures
- A comprehensive knowledge of local networks and services
- The confidence and ability to use sound professional judgement

* Advanced safeguarding training must include learning objectives related to multi-agency working, involvement in child protection processes. Basic and level 1 safeguarding training is not sufficient. Advanced safeguarding training can be sourced via Safeguarding Children Partnerships in your local area.

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PROCEDURES

The purpose of these procedures is to ensure a speedy and effective response for dealing with concerns about the physical, sexual and emotional abuse of children or their neglect.

Adherence to these procedures is mandatory for all Family Action staff, students and volunteers. All staff new to Family Action will be made aware of this policy and procedures through the induction process. All staff should complete the e-learning Child Protection Awareness and Protection of Vulnerable Adults courses during their induction period. For operations staff the Social Care Induction Programme, the Safeguarding Children Foundation Course will be completed during their probation period and they will be required to attend safeguarding training, at an appropriate level.

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All Family Action staff, students and volunteers will be expected to comply with the Code of Behaviour for [Safer Working Practices for Adults who Work with Children and Young People](#) and Family Action's Code of Conduct.

Appendix 5 (Serious Incident Flow Chart) will be clearly visible and will contain local contact numbers and be placed close to the telephone, in each team office.

Safeguarding, quality and performance will be considered at each OSLG, regional and team meeting as a standing agenda item and within each supervision session.

Safeguarding, quality and performance will be considered quarterly by the Executive Group

1. DEFINITIONS

1.1 Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children

This is defined as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing the impairment of children's health and development
- Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best life chances
- Acting in the best interests of children

Within 'Working Together' there is an increased emphasis on early help being more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. That means intervening at the earliest possible point in order to *support* parents in caring for their children and to *prevent* any concerns escalating. This is entirely consistent with Family Action's ethos and approach but does not override the principle that the child's welfare is paramount

1.2 Children in Need

Children, as listed within s17 of the Children Act 1989, whose vulnerability is such that they are unlikely to reach or maintain a satisfactory level of health or development, or their health or development will be significantly impaired without the provision of services by a local authority. This includes disabled children

1.3 Significant Harm

Some children are in need because they are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. The Children Act 1989 introduces the concept of significant harm as the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests of children. It places a duty on Children's Social Care to make enquiries to decide whether they should take action to safeguard or promote the welfare of a child who is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm.

There are no absolute criteria for significant harm. Sometimes a single traumatic event may constitute significant harm e.g. a violent assault. More often, significant harm is a compilation of significant events both acute and long standing, which interrupt, change or damage a child's physical or psychological development. The corrosiveness of long term emotional, physical, sexual abuse or neglect can cause impairment to the extent that it constitutes significant harm.

2. WHAT IS ABUSE AND NEGLECT

A form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

2.1 Physical abuse

A form of abuse which may include: hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or, otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent/carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

2.2 Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development.

It may involve:

- Conveying to the child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.
- It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate.
- It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on a child. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction.
- It may also involve seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another.

- It may involve bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children to feel frequently frightened or in danger or the exploitation or corruption of children.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child although it may occur alone.

2.3 Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves:

- Forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.
- The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing.
- This may also include non contact activities, such as involving children in looking at or in the production of sexual images or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).
- Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

NB: Child Sexual Exploitation is a form of sexual abuse

2.4 Neglect

Neglect involves:

The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical, and/or, psychological needs is likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur in pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment).
- Ensure adequate supervision; including the use of inadequate care-givers
- Failing to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger, or
- A failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

2.5 Complex forms of abuse – information and guidance

Organised or multiple abuse

This involves:

- Abuse involving one or more perpetrators and a number of related or unrelated abused children and young people.
- In some cases perpetrators act with others to abuse children, in others they act alone or they may use an institutional framework or a position of authority to access and groom children for abuse.
- Organised and multiple abuse occur both as part of a network of abuse across family or community, and within institutions such as residential homes or schools.

- Organised and multiple abuse can be a feature of Female Genital Mutilation, Child trafficking, Child Sexual Exploitation and other forms of sexual abuse

Contextual Safeguarding – a new way of understanding and responding to abuse

Contextual Safeguarding seeks to identify and respond to harm and abuse posed to children and young people outside of their home. Such harm can be caused by adults or other children and young people.

Contextual safeguarding has emerged due to the increasing recognition by professionals that assessments and the response to risk for children and young people, must focus on more than their home circumstances alone; and must recognise that coercion, exploitation, grooming and gang activity are often not understood by parents and carers and they are unaware of the risks their child faces in the community. Importantly, in many cases, they are unable to manage those risks and at times, can even face threats of harm if they try to intervene.

Traditional approaches to protecting children and young people from harm have focused on the risk of violence and abuse from inside the home.

This fails to address the time that children and young people spend outside of the home. This is a failure to contextualise the risks to the child the action required to reduce those risks. There are many examples of children and young people being made the subject of a child protection plan due to the degree of risk a child/young person faces outside of the home. Such plans place all of the onus of protection on parents. Yet, they are not responsible for the risk and/or are not complicit with the exploitation and harm that is happening in the community.

A Contextual Safeguarding approach aims to disrupt harmful extra-familial contexts rather than move young people away from them. Contextual Safeguarding recognises that parents and young people need professional help to fully understand the situation and the risks; whilst professionals are best placed to disrupt perpetrators and devise strategies for helping children and young people to remain safe whilst this happens.

Please visit the website of your local Safeguarding Children Partnership (SCP)/Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) for more information on contextual safeguarding and how it is embedded within multi-agency working in your area.

New Technologies and abuse

This can involve:

- Abuse through bullying and intimidation using texting and mobile phones.
- Exposure to inappropriate materials via internet sites and games e.g. violence, sex etc.
- Predators meeting children on- line through social networking sites.

Child Sexual Exploitation

(The statutory definition of CSE was revised and published in February 2017)

“Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.”

For all concerns relating to CSE, discuss the matter with your line manager and seek senior management support and guidance as required.

Please read the local CSE procedure and guidance on the Safeguarding Children Partnership website for your area; and if CSE is still suspected, follow the procedure taking all action required.

Criminal Exploitation

Children can be exploited into criminality in a number of ways, including:

- County Lines - a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas [within the UK], using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of “deal line”. They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move [and store] the drugs and money and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons
- Gang crime - children and young people involved with gangs and criminal exploitation need help and support. They might be victims of violence or pressured into doing things like stealing or carrying drugs or weapons. They might be abused, exploited and put into dangerous situations. Often children and young people are groomed to join gangs or can become involved due to fear and coercion
- Radicalisation - Children can be exposed to different views and receive information from various sources. Some of these views may be considered radical or extreme. Radicalisation is the process through which a person comes to support or be involved in extremist ideologies. Radicalisation can be difficult to spot. Signs that may indicate a child is being radicalised can be similar to normal teenage behaviours. They include:
 - isolating themselves from family and friends
 - talking as if from a scripted speech
 - unwillingness or inability to discuss their views
 - a sudden disrespectful attitude towards others
 - increased levels of anger
 - increased secretiveness, especially around internet use.

Children who are at risk of radicalisation may have low self-esteem, or be victims of bullying or discrimination. Extremists might target them and tell them they can be part of something special, later brainwashing them into cutting themselves off from their friends and family.

Please check the procedures of the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership or Local Safeguarding Children Board, relevant for your service.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for nonmedical reasons. It has no health benefits and harms girls and women in many ways. It involves removing and damaging healthy and normal female genital tissue, and hence interferes with the natural function of girls' and women's bodies. The practice causes severe pain and has several immediate and long-term health consequences, including difficulties in childbirth also causing dangers to the child.

Carrying out FGM procedures or failing to protect a child from any associated procedures, is a criminal offence.

Please also read more on the mandatory reporting duty in relation to FGM, for regulated professionals. This statutory document can be found here

For all concerns relating to FGM or a risk of FGM, discuss the matter with your line manager and seek senior management support and guidance as required.

Please read the local FGM procedure and guidance on the Safeguarding Children Partnership website for your area; and if FGM is still suspected or the child is deemed to be at potential risk of FGM, follow the procedure taking all action required.

Honour Based Violence

The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) definition of Honour Based Violence is; "A crime or incident, which has or may have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community."

Honour based violence is a violent crime or incident which may have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family or community. It is often linked to family members or acquaintances who believe that someone has brought shame to their family or community by doing something that is not in keeping with the traditional beliefs of their culture – for example, becoming involved with a boyfriend or girlfriend from a different culture or religion, or wanting to get out of a forced or arranged marriage.

Honour-based violence is a "collection of practices that are used to control the behaviour within families in order to protect perceived cultural and religious beliefs and/or honour." (www.bedfordshire.police.uk)

Violence can take place when perpetrators perceive that a relative has brought shame to their family and/or to their community by breaking their 'honour code' which is closely related to their religion.

Women are most often the victims of honour-based violence but this is not always the case. However, what marks honour-based violence is that it is usually committed with some kind of approval or collusion from family and/or community members.

Males can be caught up in honour-based violence if they are believed to be supporting the victim and sometimes because of their involvement in what are perceived to be inappropriate relationships such as being in a homosexual relationship.

What does honour based violence look like?

It is important for professionals and volunteers to be alert to the nature of offences associated with honour based violence. These can be indicators of what is happening to a person and we should all carefully consider individual's circumstances when offences such as those detailed below, are committed by close or extended family members.

Remember: offences can be committed directly by family members or they can be commissioned by members of the family and carried out by others outside of the family.

The kinds of offences that may be associated with honour-based violence are listed below:

- Common assault
- Domestic abuse
- Forced marriage
- Neglect and abandonment
- Failure to secure regular attendance at school.
- Theft (for example of a passport, other form of identity or the financial means to escape).
- Child abduction
- Abduction of an unmarried girls under the age of 16 from a parent or guardian
- Abduction of a woman by force or for the sake of her property
- Forced repatriation
- Rape
- Kidnapping
- False imprisonment
- Murder.

A child or adult who is at risk of honour based violence is not only at risk of the threat of physical harm but also of emotional harm as well as they may witness violence directed towards a brother, sister or other family member.

Honour crimes are not determined by age, faith, gender or sexuality.

Responding to concerns about Honour Based Violence

If you are concerned that someone is a victim of, or at risk of Honour Based Violence, it is important to have a conversation with a manager and the designated safeguarding lead for your setting (if this is a different person to the manager of the service). This conversation should occur as soon as you become concerned. Do not speak to any friends, relatives or acquaintances of the person you are concerned about.

If your own manager is not available, you should make contact with their manager. Highlight why you are concerned and decide on next steps. The Deputy Director of Quality, Performance and Safeguarding, Clare Lawson, is also available internally to discuss complex specific cases – 07515 429 421. It is important to document all contacts, concerns and discussions. Having a record over time, of smaller less worrying incidents or statements, can enable a picture to develop and help practitioners and managers to understand the bigger situation.

Family Action’s senior managers are available via telephone to offer advice and support to any service out of hours. If you need assistance call the Tier One number first on 0333 800 1208 and if you are unable to get a response, or if the situation requires it, please call the Tier Two number on 0333 800 1209.

Getting specialist help and advice – Karma Nirvana

Karma Nirvana is national organisation that exists to support and work with all victims of Honour Based Violence and Forced Marriage. They operate a National helpline to support victims in immediate danger: 0800 5999 247

Forced Marriage

A forced marriage is one in which either or both people involved don’t consent to the marriage. Victims can be forced into marriage in different ways – this may include physical, psychological, financial, sexual or emotional pressure.

Any marriage involving someone who lacks the capacity to give consent is a forced marriage. Forced marriage is illegal in the UK. [Read more about forced marriage.](#)

It can be hard to recognise when someone is being forced into marriage, especially when this involves psychological and emotional pressure rather than physical abuse. For example, some victims of forced marriage are pressured by being made to feel responsible for bringing shame to their family.

A forced marriage is where one or both people do not (or in cases of people with learning disabilities or reduced capacity, cannot) consent to the marriage as they are pressurised, or abuse is used, to force them to do so. It is recognised in the UK as a form of domestic or child abuse and a serious abuse of human rights.

The pressure put on people to marry against their will may be:

- physical: for example, threats, physical violence or sexual violence
- emotional and psychological: for example, making someone feel like they are bringing 'shame' on their family
- Financial abuse: for example taking someone's wages and preventing them from fleeing or having control over their life, may also be a factor.

Understand the legislation on forced marriage

The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 made it a criminal offence in England, Wales and Scotland to force someone to marry. (It is a criminal offence in Northern Ireland under separate legislation).

This includes:

- taking someone overseas to force them to marry (whether or not the forced marriage takes place)
- marrying someone who lacks the mental capacity to consent to the marriage (whether they are pressured to or not)

Forcing someone to marry can result in a sentence of up to 7 years in prison.

It is also possible for victims or those at risk to apply for a Forced Marriage Protection Order (FMPO). As a civil law measure, an application for a FMPO would be made in the family court. Read [guidance from the Ministry of Justice on taking out an FMPO](#)

Failure to comply with the requirements or terms set out in a FMPO granted by the Family Court, is a criminal offence and can result in a sentence of up to 5 years in prison.

In 2017 the government introduced lifelong anonymity for victims of forced marriage to encourage more victims of this hidden crime to come forward.

Responding to concerns about Forced Marriage

'Multi-agency practice guidelines: Handling cases of Forced Marriage' can be found [here](#)
Please see page 14 of the above guidance document to view a comprehensive list of indicators.

Statutory guidance on forced marriage states that all organisations should have "a nominated lead person with overall responsibility for safeguarding children, protecting vulnerable adults or victims of domestic abuse – the same person should also be the lead on forced marriage". The designated safeguarding lead for your service takes on this role locally. The Deputy Director of Quality, Performance and Safeguarding, Clare Lawson, is the overall lead for such matters across Family Action.

If you are concerned that someone is a victim of, or at risk of Honour Based Violence, it is important to have a conversation with a manager and the designated safeguarding lead for your setting (if this is a different person to the manager of the service). This conversation should occur as soon as you become concerned. Do not speak to any friends, relatives or acquaintances of the person you are concerned about.

If your own manager is not available, you should make contact with their manager. Highlight why you are concerned and decide on next steps. The Deputy Director of Quality, Performance and Safeguarding, Clare Lawson, is also available internally to discuss complex specific cases – 07515 429 421. It is important to document all contacts, concerns and discussions. Having a record over time, of smaller less worrying incidents or statements, can enable a picture to develop and help practitioners and managers to understand the bigger situation.

Family Action's senior managers are available via telephone to offer advice and support to any service out of hours. If you need assistance call the Tier One number first on 0333 800 1208 and if you are unable to get a response, or if the situation requires it, please call the Tier Two number on 0333 800 1209.

There may be occasions when a practitioner or manager will need to gather some information from the person to establish the facts themselves and assist the referral. This should only be done if it is safe to do so.

- See them immediately in a secure and private place where the conversation cannot be overheard.
- See them on their own – even if they attend with others.
- Explain all the options to them.
- Recognise and respect their wishes.
- Perform a risk assessment – there are already a number of risk assessment tools available, including CAADA/DASH, however it will be best to use a tool as guided by your specific agency
- Contact a trained specialist (forced marriage specialist) as soon as possible.
- If the young person is under 18 years of age, refer them to the designated person responsible for safeguarding children and activate local safeguarding procedures.
- If the person is an adult with support needs, refer them to the designated person responsible for safeguarding vulnerable adults and activate local safeguarding procedures.
- Reassure the victim about confidentiality where appropriate i.e. practitioners will not inform their family.
- Establish and agree an effective method of contacting the victim discreetly in the future, possibly using a code-word to confirm identity.
- Obtain full contact details that can be forwarded to a trained specialist.
- Where appropriate, consider the need for immediate protection and placement away from the family.

Getting specialist help and advice - The Forced Marriage Unit

The Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) is a joint Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Home Office unit which leads on the government's forced marriage policy, outreach and casework. It operates both inside the UK (where support is provided to any individual) and overseas (where consular assistance is provided to British nationals, including dual nationals).

The FMU operates a public helpline to provide advice and support to victims of forced marriage as well as to professionals dealing with cases. The assistance provided ranges from safety advice, through to helping a forced marriage victim prevent their unwanted spouse moving to the UK ('reluctant sponsor' cases). In extreme circumstances the FMU will assist with rescues of victims held against their will overseas.

The FMU undertakes an extensive training and awareness programme targeting both professionals and potential victims, and carries out a range of work to raise awareness.

Contact

- telephone: +44 (0) 20 7008 0151
- email: fmu@fco.gov.uk
- email for outreach work: fmuoutreach@fco.gov.uk
- Facebook: [Forced Marriage page](#)
- Twitter: [@FMUnit](#)

Please read the local procedures and guidance relating to Forced Marriage and Honour Based Violence on the Safeguarding Children Partnership website and the Local Safeguarding Adults Website for your area. If Forced Marriage or Honour Based Violence is still suspected, follow the procedure taking all action required.

3. CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE CONSIDERED PARTICULARLY VULNERABLE TO ABUSE

There are some children living in circumstances which may make them particularly vulnerable to abuse such as:

- All children deemed Children in Need
- Those living away from home in public or private care e.g. foster care, residential care, boarding schools, hospitals, prisons etc.
- Disabled children
- Children whose behaviour indicates a lack of parental control
- Children living within households where there is domestic abuse
- Children of substance misusing, mentally ill or learning disabled parents

- Children living in families where there are extreme religious, spiritual or cultural beliefs
- Children living in temporary accommodation
- Children who go missing
- Newly arrived or transient families
- Unaccompanied asylum seeking children
- Child victims of trafficking
- Historical abuse

4. ALERTING SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF ABUSE

There are a variety of ways that somebody in the organisation may become aware of the actual or likely occurrence of abuse of a child. These include:

- A child might tell them
- The nature of parenting, parental capacity or parental issues, suggests that the child is being abused or neglected
- Someone else might report that a child has told them or that they strongly believe that a child has been or is being abused
- A child might show some signs of physical injury for which there appears to be no satisfactory explanation
- A child's behaviour may indicate to them that it is likely that she or he is being abused
- Something in the behaviour of one of the workers or young person, or in the way that a worker or young person relates to a child, alerts them or makes them feel uncomfortable in some way
- Observing one child abusing another

Whenever anyone has concern that a child may be at risk of abuse they should follow Family Action's Safeguarding Procedures unless they have been superseded by those of the Safeguarding Children Partnership.

Most children do have accidental injuries occasionally e.g. when falling or playing with other children. Such injuries might include bruising to the knees, shins, arms, elbows, or if falling onto the face, nose, forehead cut lip etc.

However, there are injuries which are hardly ever caused accidentally and also warning signs which may indicate sexual, emotional abuse or neglect. The following is not an exhaustive list. It is designed to draw attention to the fact that a child might be being harmed in some way and in need of protection.

4.1 Physical Indicators

Bruises

Some types of bruises are often associated with non-accidental injury:

- Hand slap marks
- Marks from an implement
- Pinch or grab marks

- Grip marks on a baby (could indicate severe shaking)
- Bruised eyes (particularly when no other bruising to forehead)
- Any bruising on babies

Other Injuries

Sometimes children are injured accidentally by not having been provided with a safe environment, such accidents could for example include scalding, fractures and poisoning. But some types of injury are less likely to be accidental such as:

- Burns inside the mouth, inside of the arm and on genitals
- Some cigarette burns or burns with another object
- Scalds particularly on the feet and ankles
- Bite marks
- Evidence of old or repeated fractures
- Cuts to mouth or tongue
- Female genital mutilation (FGM)

4.2 Sexual abuse

- Bruising to breasts, buttocks, lower abdomen, thighs and genital or rectal areas which could indicate sexual abuse
- Injuries, bleeding or soreness to genital or rectal areas
- Persistent vulva reddening and or discharge
- Repeated urinary tract infections
- Pseudo- mature or sexually explicit behaviours
- Continual open masturbation or aggressive sexual play with peers
- Pregnancy

4.3 Signs of Neglect

A neglected child may show signs by being:

- Underweight or obese
- Often dirty and smelly
- Poorly and/or inappropriately clothed
- Often hungry
- Unduly solemn and unresponsive
- Under stimulated and not reaching developmental milestones
- Poor impulse control
- Inability to form relationships
- Dental problems

Neglecting a child's need for love, care, warmth, security and stimulation will affect their emotional and physical development over time. Some children may be left unattended without suitable arrangements for their care or with adults who for some reason (e.g. alcohol or drug misuse) are unable to be fully responsible for the child's care.

4.4 Behavioural Indicators

Children who are being neglected or abused often also have behavioural difficulties. Any signs should always be looked at in conjunction with other information about a child and their family circumstances.

Behaviour may be a starting point for further assessment. Indicators might include:

- Overly compliant or watchful attitude
- Acting out aggressive behaviour, severe tantrums
- Child only appearing happy in school, or is kept away from school
- Child isolated in school and without friends
- Child unable to trust anyone
- Tummy pains with no medical explanation
- Eating problems
- Sleep disorders
- Frightened child, overly anxious, frozen
- Child self harming
- Constantly running away from home
- Child showing signs of depression, anxiety, withdrawal etc.

4.5 Other Factors

There may be other indicators which could make someone concerned about the risk of abuse or neglect of a child such as:

- A history of a parents' abuse in childhood whether physical, emotional sexual or neglect
- A history of family breakdown, separations or disrupted care
- Parental isolation and lack of support
- Parental mental ill health, learning difficulties or disability which may impact negatively on a parents' perception of the child or ability to provide care
- Parental drug, alcohol or substance misuse
- History of transient or violent partners and exposure to domestic abuse
- History of criminal behaviour and imprisonment and in particular a conviction of a schedule 1 offence
- Parent lacking awareness of a child's development and needs
- Parents who hold extreme religious, spiritual or cultural beliefs
- Inconsistent adults within the household or rapidly changing adult relationships
- Chaotic families
- History of social services involvement or children being 'looked after children'

Remember: It is not your responsibility to confirm whether a child is suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm. This is the duty of Children's Social Care, the Police or the NSPCC. Discuss any concerns with your manager and named person, and follow the safeguarding procedures.

5. WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE CONCERNS ABOUT THE WELFARE OF A CHILD

(see Appendix 2, page 37 for What to do if... flowchart)

Remember that the welfare of the child is paramount. If a child shows signs that s/he is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, the first consideration must always be whether the child is in imminent danger or requires urgent medical attention. If so, the safety of the child and/or access to suitable medical treatment, need to be secured as a first priority.

If the child is in danger, keep the child with you and contact the Police. If the child requires medical attention call an ambulance and then inform your manager. Children's Social Care will need to be informed and a decision will need to be made, by the professionals involved at this stage, as to the timing and who will be responsible for informing the family of the situation.

If no emergency action is required, the staff member must discuss their concerns immediately with their manager and if necessary the named person for their service, to consider whether the concerns require a referral to Children's Social Care. If you have any doubts about this decision, remember you can always, without necessarily identifying the child, discuss your concerns with senior colleagues in both Family Action and another agency, or consult with Children's Social Care (via the children's services consultation line or duty team) or the NSPCC.

If you consider the child is or may be suffering or at risk of significant harm you should consult with your manager or their manager if they are not available. The named person for safeguarding, within your setting, if this is not your manager, should also be including in the discussion. This discussion should take place swiftly; as soon as possible after you become concerned and always on the same day. In instances where it is thought that significant harm is occurring or a child is at risk of significant harm, a referral to Children's Social Care must be made as soon as possible on the same day and confirmed in writing within 24 hours. Children's Social Care should acknowledge receipt of the referral within one working day. Staff must be assertive in ensuring an acknowledgement is obtained, to confirm that any concerns are being taken seriously and being acted upon. Staff should then cooperate with any investigation or assessment, as required. Children's Social Care should inform you, as the referrer, of the outcome of any investigation.

Please note: if you remain concerned that a child is suffering or at risk of significant harm and no manager supports you in your decision to refer to Children's Social Care, you remain free to act on your concerns and make the referral.

For any incident in which the Deputy Director for Quality, Performance and Safeguarding acting as the Designated Person for the organisation, provides an instruction on how to act in relation to safeguarding a child, this instruction must be followed; even if advice to the contrary is received from another senior manager, including Deputy Directors and members of the Executive group.

Nevertheless, if after consultation with a manager or the Deputy Director for Quality, Performance and Safeguarding, no instruction has been given to refer to Children's Social Care, then any member of staff remains free to act on their own concerns and make a referral to Children's Social Care if they believe that a child is at risk of significant harm.

Consent from parents and/or carers is not required when the threshold of significant harm is met; however, unless doing so would increase the risks to the child, parents/carers should be informed that you are required to make this referral to Children's Social Care and asked if they are willing to provide their consent. If consent is not obtained, you should continue as planned and make the referral as per your responsibilities to safeguard and act in the best interests of the child.

Changes to a child's or family's situation, whenever they may arise, will trigger an immediate review of the current assessment and/or risk assessment Any amendments should be made as necessary and discussed with your supervisor.

If the child is identified as a Child in Need (see earlier definition) then the staff member and their manager will agree how these concerns will be shared with the family.

If the family agree to a referral, then a referral form will be completed and Family Action will cooperate and contribute, as required, to any subsequent assessment or investigation.

Should the family fail to agree to a referral, then the manager must consider whether the refusal constitutes a risk of significant harm. If not, then the concerns for the child should be recorded, in line with Family Action's recording requirements, along with the parent's dissent and staff should continue to monitor the well being of the child.

NB: Should you encounter difficulty in getting an appropriate response to your safeguarding concerns, from Children's Social Care:

- Discuss with your line manager and be prepared to escalate as per Family Action's Resolving Interagency Disagreements/Escalation Policy.
- View the Safeguarding Children Partnership procedure for escalating your concerns. This will usually be called the 'Escalation Procedure' or 'Resolution of Professional Disagreement/Conflict' procedure.
- View locally agreed thresholds for intervention guidance – available on the website of the Safeguarding Children Partnership in your area

Historical abuse

Should a child disclose abuse which has occurred in the past but you are confident that they are currently safe e.g. an adopted child may disclose abuse whilst living with birth parents or whilst in care, this must be shared with Children's Social Care or the local Police force; and normal procedures followed. Other children may still be at risk and further enquiries or investigation may need to follow.

For disclosures of historical abuse by adults, please see the Safeguarding Adults Policy. Page 28 has specific information on such disclosures.

6. INFORMATION SHARING & CONFIDENTIALITY

It is important that concerns about children and young people are shared, as it is only when all the pieces of information are put together that a full picture of the situation can be obtained and proper judgements made. A key factor in serious case reviews has been a failure to record information, to share it, to understand the significance of the information shared and to take appropriate action in relation to known or suspected abuse or neglect.

It is critical that all staff working with children and young people are in no doubt that where they have a reasonable cause to suspect that a child or young person may be suffering or may be at risk of suffering significant harm, they should discuss those concerns with their line manager and make a referral to Children's Social Care.

While in general any concerns should normally be discussed with the family and where possible seek their agreement to make the referral, this should only be done where such discussions and agreement seeking will not place a child at increased risk of significant harm or lead to interference with any potential investigation. The child's interests must be the over-riding consideration in making any decision.

Family Action will:

- ensure that staff explain to children, young people and their families when first accessing a service, how and why information will be held and may, on occasions, be shared
- provide clear systems, standards and protocols for information sharing
- provide training on information sharing and confidentiality for its staff
- provide advice and support around information sharing issues.

Where there are safeguarding concerns information must always be shared. The Data Protection Act was not intended to prevent the sharing of this type of information.

See *Appendix 3, page 38* for (Information Sharing Protocol)

7. DISCLOSURES AND MANAGING ALLEGATIONS

7.1 Disclosures of abuse

If a child confides in a member of staff and discloses abuse

Remember:

- The safety of the child is paramount
- Be calm, reassuring and honest
- Do not make promises which can't be kept
- Do not interrogate the child, but listen carefully and gently clarify the facts, remain open in your manner and allow the child to continue at their own pace
- To tell the child what will happen next and with whom the information will be shared
- Consult with your manager and if necessary, your named person, immediately
- Keep the child informed of what is happening and of any decisions made or actions taken

- Accurately record the incident immediately or as soon as you can but definitely within 24 hours

If the child is in imminent danger then keep them safe and contact the Police and cooperate with the investigation. If the allegation involves a parent/carer or family member do not inform the family without first discussing the situation with Children's Social Care or the Police. If the allegation does not involve a family member inform the parents with the agreement of Children's Social Care and the Police. All staff are required to cooperate fully with any subsequent investigation or assessment.

7.2 Allegations against Family Action professionals and volunteers working with children and young people.

This section illustrates the statutory definition of allegations of this nature and how to respond. An allegation may relate to a person who works with children who has::

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children.

The criteria above, applies to all staff, volunteers and carers working with children and young people. The allegation could be in relation to the treatment or behaviour of the individual's own children.

The management of an allegation of abuse may involve one or all of:

- a police investigation of a possible criminal offence
- enquiries and assessment by children's social care about whether a child is in need of protection or in need of services
- consideration by an employer of disciplinary action in respect of the individual.

If you have concerns about a member of staff/volunteer, even very close colleagues, you must bring this to the attention of your manager. An allegation against a member of staff is different to a concern about the quality of practice or a complaint; however all of these must be relayed to your manager so that full consideration can be given to the nature of the allegation/concern.

If the concern or allegation is about your manager, please speak to their manager, your Regional Deputy Director or Human Resources.

Concerns or allegations about the behaviour of an adult may be brought to the attention of a manager in a variety of ways. For example:

- An allegation made directly by a child or parent;
- An allegation made by a colleague or member of staff;
- Information from police or local authority social care team;
- Information from a third party or the general public;
- Information disclosed anonymously or online; or

- Concerns generated through an employment relationship.

Consideration of the adult's behaviour must occur at the earliest opportunity following the concern or allegation arising.

Stage 1: The Manager's Initial Response

Managers need to understand which behaviours to address directly through their complaints or disciplinary procedures and under what circumstances they should contact the Local Authority Designated Officer.

What constitutes appropriate or inappropriate behaviour will vary depending upon the context and nature of the work undertaken. All employers have a responsibility to set personal and professional boundaries for their staff and to be explicit about what behaviours are illegal, inappropriate or unacceptable.

The Deputy Director for Quality, Performance and Safeguarding can be contacted to discuss any concerns/allegations and will provide support in determining whether the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) will be informed. HR must also be informed of the allegation and updated as the local Managing Allegations process is worked through.

Stage 2: When to contact the Local Authority Designated Officer

It is important to ensure that even apparently less serious allegations are seen to be followed up, and that they are examined objectively by someone independent of the organisation concerned.

Discussion should always take place between the employer and the Local Authority Designated Officer when the concern or allegation meets the criteria.

The LADO must be informed within 1 working day of the allegation being made or coming to the attention of any Family Action member of staff.

What to record

At this stage the manager should ensure that a factual account of the allegation is recorded, dated and signed, a chronology of events initiated and any other key information identified. No attempts should be made to investigate further before discussion with the Local Authority Designated Officer.

Employers may also seek the advice of the Local Authority Designated Officer where an employee's behaviour is a matter for concern to his/her manager because it compromises, or may be seen to compromise, the reputation and ability of the organisation to safeguard children and young people. Some examples of this may be where an individual has:

- Contravened or has continued to contravene any safe practice guidance given by his/her organisation or regulatory body;
- Exploited or abused a position of power;
- Acted in an irresponsible manner which any reasonable person would find alarming or questionable given the nature of work undertaken;

- Demonstrated a failure to understand or appreciate how his or her own actions or those of others could adversely impact upon the safety and well-being of a child;
- Demonstrated an inability to make sound professional judgements which safeguard the welfare of children;
- Failed to follow adequately policy or procedures relating to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children;
- Failed to understand or recognise the need for clear personal and professional boundaries in his or her work;
- Behaved in a way in his or her personal life which could put children at risk of harm;
- Become the subject of criminal proceedings not relating to a child;
- Become subject to enquiries under local child protection procedures and/or child subject to Child Protection Plan;
- Behaved in a way which seriously undermines the trust and confidence placed in him or her by the employer.

Please view the Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures for your area to ensure that you respond in line with locally agreed arrangements.

7.3 An allegation against a member of staff or volunteer outside Family Action

If a child confides in a member of staff and discloses abuse or makes an allegation of abuse against a professional, volunteer or carer outside of Family Action, it is important to inform the Local Authority Designated Officer for your area within 1 working day.

For support and advice, contact your manager and the Deputy Director for Quality, Performance and Safeguarding.

Remember:

- The safety of children is paramount
- Be calm, reassuring and honest
- Do not make promises which can't be kept
- Do not interrogate the child or individual bringing the concern to your attention, but listen carefully and gently clarify the facts, remain open in your manner and allow them to continue at their own pace
- Tell the child or adult what will happen next and with whom the information will be shared
- Consult with your manager and if necessary your named person, immediately
- Accurately record the incident immediately or as soon as you can but definitely within 24 hours

If the child is in imminent danger then keep them safe and contact the Police and cooperate with the investigation. If the allegation involves a parent/carers or family member do not inform the family without first discussing the situation with Children's Social Care or the Police. If the allegation does not involve a family member inform the parents with the agreement of Children's Social Care and the Police. All staff are required to cooperate fully with any subsequent investigation or assessment.

Remember:

It is important that everyone in the organisation is aware that the person who first encounters a case of alleged or suspected abuse is not responsible for deciding whether or not abuse has occurred. That is a task for child protection agencies following a referral to them of concerns about a child or an allegation against a professional, volunteer or carer; as defined above.

8. RECORDING CONCERNS

It is imperative that any concerns about a child are accurately recorded as the matter could go on to case conference and/or legal proceedings. This includes relatively minor concerns that could worsen or cumulatively cause harm to the child.

All recording of concerns, whether electronic or paper, must be placed on the case file within one working day. The record should include the context, a detailed account of the concerns, what was said or seen and by whom. It is important to record events and situations accurately; highlighting the difference between fact and opinion. If concerns arise due to a disclosure from a child or another person, actual words stated must be recorded. . The record should indicate who was present, what was observed and who was consulted, how any decisions were made and the reasoning behind them and by whom, and any actions taken. If a decision was made, to take no action, then the reasoning for that decision must also be recorded. All records must be clearly signed and dated.

All current services use electronic case recording. If a written document is to be uploaded onto a casefile tipp-ex or another correction fluid must never be used on such documentation. if a mistake is made or an amendment required, a line should be made through the original so that the wording remains clearly visible.

9. A REFERRAL TO CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE

(see *Appendix 7*, page 32 (What to do if...flowchart).

9.1 What to include

Some local authorities have their own specific referral form, others do not. Any referral to Children's Social Care or the Police must include:

- Full name of the young person (check all names are spelt correctly).
- Age of child or young person (check date of birth is accurate).
- Parent's name/s (check the surname of the parent is spelt correctly and that the person you think is the parent, really is. If they are not the parent, find out who they are and whether they are related to the child).
- Home address - including house number or name, and post code and telephone number if possible.
- Special circumstances e.g. community language, context of disclosure etc.
- What has prompted concern including dates & times etc.
- Any physical or behavioural signs need to be reported.
- Relevant case history relating to the concerns, including support provided to assist parents and children

- Say whether you are passing on your own concerns or those of a third party, if so record the details and clarify between fact and opinion.
- Has the child/young person been spoken to? If so, by whom and what was said.
- Have the parents been contacted? If so, by whom and what was said.
- Has anybody been named as the alleged abuser, if so record details.
- Has anyone else been consulted? If so record the details.

Remember to add your own name, position, contact details, time and date of referral and method by which referral was made. A referral should be countersigned by your line manager, whenever possible. Follow up in writing within 24 hours.

9.2 Information sharing and confidentiality

The legal principle that the welfare of the child is paramount means that the considerations of confidentiality which might apply in other situations in the organisation should not be allowed to override the right of children to be protected from harm. See *Appendix 3* (Information Sharing Protocols) and seek advice from your manager or another senior manager, if you feel unsure about what should be shared.

9.3 When should the family be informed?

Family Action, in consultation with Children's Social Care and the Police, will always inform the parents of such a referral, unless sexual abuse is suspected or another form of abuse which could be covered up or evidence interfered with, or if it would endanger the child or others, or if it was felt that the family would flee. A judgement will need to be made by those involved at the time and the reason behind any decision clearly recorded.

10. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT IN THE CHILD PROTECTION PROCESS

Once Children's Social Care receives a referral, they will need to determine within one working day, how they intend to proceed or whether they will take no further action, and they should inform the referrer of that decision.

If an assessment is required which identifies there are concerns for the child's immediate safety, emergency action may be necessary to protect the child.

A strategy discussion would be held between LA Children's Social Care, the Police and other agencies as appropriate. They would then make decisions about any immediate protective action and on information giving, especially to parents, having taken legal advice as necessary. If a decision is made to initiate an investigation under section 47 of the Children Act 1989, a social worker will lead on the on-going assessment. This may be done jointly with the Police. Any assessment has to be proportionate and timely.

If concerns are substantiated and there is a continuing risk to the child LA Children's Social Care will convene and hold child protection conference within 15 days of the strategy discussion.

The child protection conference will determine whether the child is at continuing risk of significant harm in which case the child will be made the subject of a Child Protection Plan and a core group established. The core group will be formed from professionals involved with the family plus family members. The core group must then meet within 10 working days to develop and implement the child protection plan and regularly thereafter. A Review Child Protection Conference must be held within 3 months of the initial conference and 6 monthly thereafter, until such time as there are no further concerns about harm and the child is no longer subject to a child protection plan.

Under section 47 of the Children Act 1989, only LA Children's Social Care, the Police and NSPCC have statutory powers to investigate concerns that a child is suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm. However, other agencies, including Family Action, may be required to contribute to strategy discussions, assessments, child protection conferences and core groups. Managers should ensure that their staff have the knowledge, skills and confidence to do so effectively and are offered appropriate training and support.

A CHILD IN NEED, BUT NO ACTUAL OR LIKELY SIGNIFICANT HARM

If an assessment concludes that the child is not suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, but is a Child in Need, Children's Social Care will discuss with the child, family and other colleagues, as appropriate, what to do next. This may result in services being offered by Children's Social Care and/or other agencies. A social worker, will then co-ordinate those services via a Child in Need plan and review the outcomes for the child, until such time as the case can be closed.

Such services are delivered under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, this places a responsibility on Children's Social Care to provide services to children in need but does not give them statutory powers to intervene in family life, against the wishes of the family.

11. NOTIFICATION OF A CHILD DEATH

When a member of staff becomes aware that:

- 1) a child known to Family Action has unexpectedly died or been seriously injured, or alternatively
- 2) a child from the immediate locality of the service but unknown to the service has unexpectedly died or been seriously injured

They must immediately notify their line manager or in their absence, their line manager's manager and implement the Serious Incident Policy See *Appendix 10 page 78, (Serious Incident Flow Chart)*.

The Director of Services and Innovation, having heard the detail of the case and any involvement we may have had, will advise as to whether the file should be secured. The Communications Department will produce a response on behalf of the organisation, for use should there be any approach from the media. Any media requests should be referred to the Communications Department.

Staff are expected to co-operate fully with any subsequent enquiries made by their Safeguarding Children Partnership or statutory agencies.

12. THE SUPERVISION OF SAFEGUARDING WORK

Supervision plays a critically important role both in our safeguarding work and in ensuring that Family Action remains a safe organisation. Regular supervision of good quality should be available to all staff to ensure proper accountability and best practice. The Family Action supervision policy outlines minimum standards required for staff and volunteers. However, the frequency of supervision should reflect the complexity of the work being undertaken together with the skills, knowledge and experience of the staff involved. Safeguarding must be discussed at each supervision session and risks for families regularly reviewed. These are to be properly recorded and any decisions transferred to the case file without delay. Supervision should identify any training needs and ensure that they are addressed.

It is the shared responsibility of both supervisor and supervisee to establish a relationship within supervision which enables an honest and open discussion of any safeguarding concerns or issues which arise either directly from the work or within the work place. Supervision should be a creative process which may, on occasions, require the robust challenge of the views and/or practice of colleagues and on rare occasions, if differences cannot be resolved, the possible involvement of senior managers.

All staff should read and be familiar with the Family Action Supervision Policy.

12.1 Supervisors

In addition, supervisors/line managers should ensure:

1. The welfare of the child is paramount.

2. S/he is acting on behalf of Family Action and should follow the procedures of both Family Action and the local Safeguarding Children Partnership (SCP)/Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and if there are differences those of the SCP/LSCB take precedence.
3. Issues of race, culture, disability and gender must be active components of any supervision session. There must be an awareness of the impact of these issues both within the supervisory relationship and in the work with service users.
4. Supervisors remain familiar with the law relating to children and with research and guidance in relation to safeguarding children.
5. The supervisor must be aware of the danger that anyone working closely with child protection may become part of the system and that there are inherent dangers attached to this. Known dangers will be addressed in training but there are two in particular that supervisors must take account of:
 - "The Rule of Optimism" - it is natural for a supervisee (and the supervisor) to want things to improve and go well for the family. Considerable effort will be made by the supervisee to achieve this; it may be painful for the family to make small steps at times. Therefore any progress, in an encouraging relationship, will be highlighted. Things that don't improve could then be diminished in the mind of the supervisee (and even the supervisor in an encouraging supervisory relationship). This can create a kind of blindness in which blatant safety issues can be overlooked or played down. Many child deaths occurred at a time when the professional networks were moving towards de-registering and/or reducing services. Therefore the supervisor must be prepared to go against the grain, to say 'those are the things that have improved which is great, but is there anything we are finding it difficult to think about in this family'. They must be prepared to be unpopular (briefly) with their supervisee or even with the whole team around the child.
 - "The prevailing dominant idea" - An individual supervisee or even a whole team around a child can develop a dominant idea about 'what is going on in this family' or 'this is what this mother is like'. Unchallenged or if not repeatedly questioned (in supervision and other safeguarding processes) this can create danger. It can produce "The Rule of Optimism" above, it can prevent other creative ways from developing about how to support the family, it can stigmatise and it can cause one part of the system to be ignored, for example, 'they are a family well known to social services for generations' may stop the system from exploring the strengths of grandparents as a protective resource for a child.

Therefore the supervisor must say 'let's step back', must question the beliefs behind the ideas about the family, and think through the actions that follow those beliefs

6. Ensure that workers understand that if they are working on a child protection case and they are denied access by the family or to the child (if that is their role) or an arranged meeting is cancelled without explanation or missed, that they notify Children's Social Care and record the circumstances accurately.
7. The importance of maintaining appropriate levels of consultation in the inter-agency network, particularly with Children's Social Care if there is a child protection plan and child protection conferences.

8. The importance of maintaining an awareness of the stages of work in individual child protection cases.
9. The supervisor is responsible and accountable for all major decisions that the worker is involved in which relate to the case, and for ensuring that any decisions are recorded on the case file.
10. The supervisor must make sure that all safeguarding cases are regularly discussed to ensure that the work being undertaken is in accordance with the child protection plan and child protection conference decisions; and ensuring that there is time to discuss and analyse if there is evidence that the child's circumstances and outcomes are improving.
11. The file and all records must be kept up to date with all child protection documentation placed on file swiftly following receipt. – see Family Action's recording standards.
12. Students on placement with Family Action will not be given sole responsibility for child protection cases but will work jointly with another worker.
13. Supervision needs to deal with issues relating to labelling, stereotyping, prejudice, direct and indirect discrimination, personal and institutional power and uses and abuses of authority. Supervisors must be prepared to challenge staff when dealing with such issues and to deal with any resistance/denial which may be encountered.
 14. Supervisors have a responsibility to ensure that they provide the right level of supervision for the complexity of the work undertaken and to meet the individual needs of the staff member holding the child protection case.
 15. Supervisors have a responsibility to ensure they are sufficiently experienced and trained to manage such cases and any gaps in knowledge or experience must be highlighted to your own manager and a plan developed to ensure appropriate professional development. Interim measures for oversight and supervision must be established.

12.2 Supervisees

Those working directly with children must be aware that:

1. The child's welfare is paramount
2. S/he is acting on behalf of Family Action and should follow the organisation's or Safeguarding Children Partnership's procedures.
3. Major decisions about the work should be made in consultation with the supervisor/line manager and recorded on the file
4. Maintaining appropriate levels of consultation in the inter agency network, particularly with Children's Social Care and through core groups, the child protection plan and conferences, is very important
5. Recording must be kept up to date. All related documentation must be placed on file. Missing documentation – such as social care assessment, child protection plan, core group minutes, Child Protection Conference minutes, must be requested from social care and a lack of available documentation must be escalated to the Child Protection Conference chair/Independent Reviewing Officer.
6. Supervisees have a responsibility to request the right level of supervision for the complexity of the work undertaken and to meet their individual needs. Any issues in receiving the right support should be discussed with the supervisor and reported to the relevant Operational Manager.
7. Safeguarding issues whether they relate to the direct work, the work environment or the impact on the supervisee, must be openly discussed within supervision. Supervisees must be prepared to have their views challenged and any block or resistance exposed
8. The supervision process should be used to monitor attendance at safeguarding training, and to identify and address any additional training needs.

13. TRAINING

Family Action recognises the complexity of the safeguarding work undertaken by staff and the emotional impact it can have on them. All staff as part of induction are introduced to 'Safeguarding' and their responsibilities in relation to it. In addition, all staff are required to undertake and successfully complete the Child Protection Awareness and Safeguarding Adults (e-learning) Courses within their induction period and the Safeguarding Children Foundation course (or equivalent) during their probationary period.

Operational staff are required to undertake refresher training or other specialist training, at least every three years, to ensure they are updated on changes to best practice and legislation. This can be training delivered by the Safeguarding Children Partnership or Family Action.

Managers must keep records of training attended and assess the training needs of staff continuously, ensuring that staff are trained to undertake their roles effectively. Training needs analyses for whole teams and individual staff must be informed by the learning gained via audit, reviews, national learning and developments, service level data and workforce intelligence. Additionally, managers will examine the Safeguarding Children Partnership Training Strategy for their area and identify the

prescribed levels and topics of training required by the Safeguarding Children Partnership. This will be incorporated into the training plans for individual staff and whole teams where relevant.

Staff should access a broad range of multi-agency safeguarding training, available through their Safeguarding Children Partnership\;please see the Training Strategy for your area to assess your training needs in line with the Partnership's expectations.

See Appendix 4, page 39 (Safeguarding Children Training Matrix)

14 VIP VISITS TO SERVICES

All VIP visits to services or service events must be discussed with and approved by the Operational Manager and Deputy Director; and Family Action's Marketing/Communications departments informed in advance.. It is important that all ID is checked and that visitors to a service are accompanied by a staff member at all times and given no unsupervised access to service users. Advice about photography should be sought prior to the visit and appropriate consents obtained. No confidential information must be shared with VIPs.

15 APPENDICES

1. Resolving inter-agency disagreements – escalation procedure
2. What to do if...referral flowchart
3. Information Sharing Protocols - p 38
4. Family Action Training Matrix - p 39
5. Serious Incident Flow Chart - p 40

Appendix 1

Resolving Interagency Disagreements

(Escalation Procedures)

Please view the relevant procedure of the Safeguarding Children Partnership for your area to understand who to contact and timescales for each stage of escalation.

Problem solving is an integral part of interagency working and particularly in relation to safeguarding children. Professional disagreements are to be expected as part of a dynamic process and only become dysfunctional if not resolved in a transparent, constructive and timely fashion.

Effective 'working together' can only be achieved when agencies establish an open and honest relationship based on a genuine commitment to partnership working. As part of this, there needs to be an agreement and an agreed system in place, to enable disagreements to be resolved promptly and hopefully to the satisfaction of all parties. The aim should be to resolve difficulties at the level at which they occur e.g. if two practitioners from different agencies disagree, in the first instance they should try and resolve the difficulty themselves. If this proves impossible, then the matter should be escalated until it is resolved.

Disagreements may arise in a number of areas, but often it can be in relation to thresholds and differing opinions about the need for action, communication difficulties between agencies and a lack of clarity about roles and responsibilities. It is really important to:

- Avoid professional disputes that put children at risk
- Ensure the focus on the child is not lost or becomes obscured
- Resolve difficulties within and between agencies quickly and transparently
- Identify problem areas in partnership working and amend, where necessary, any joint protocols or procedures

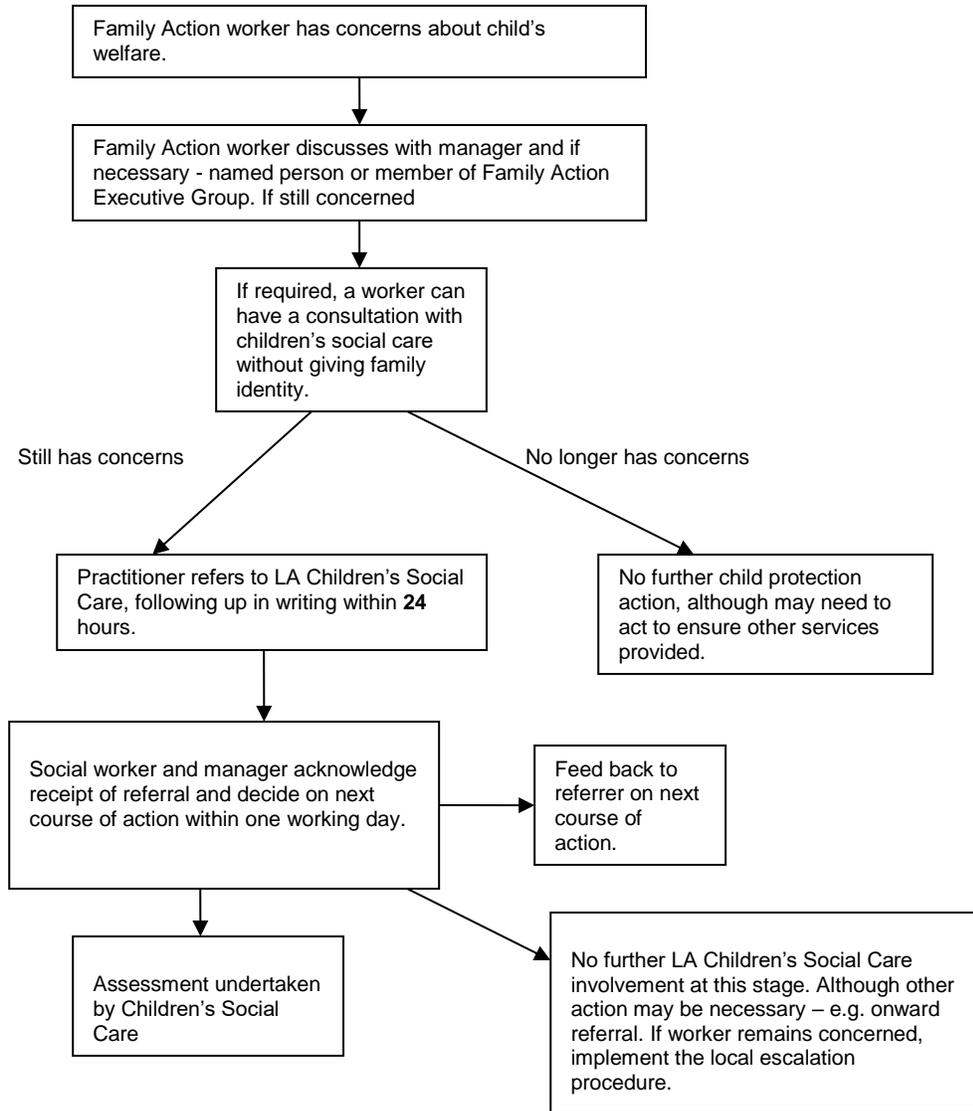
What to do when difficulties arise

When problems first arise, initial attempts to resolve the difficulty should be made by the people immediately involved. Differences in status and experience may impact on a worker's confidence to pursue this unsupported, in which case, it is imperative that they discuss the matter and get any necessary support from their line manager, in a timely manner.

If the matter remains unresolved then it should be referred to the line manager for resolution at the next level. It will then be necessary for that line manager to discuss the issue with their opposite number in the other agency in an attempt to achieve resolution. This may include a face to face meeting between the managers and workers involved in an attempt to explore the problem openly and transparently and to gain resolution. It is important to follow each step of the Safeguarding Children Partnership's procedure for Escalation/Resolving Professional Disagreements. If you remain concerned about a child, then you must act and implement this procedure.

Appendix 2

Flow chart 1: What to do if... Referral Flowchart



LOCAL NUMBERS

For Consultation:

For Referral:

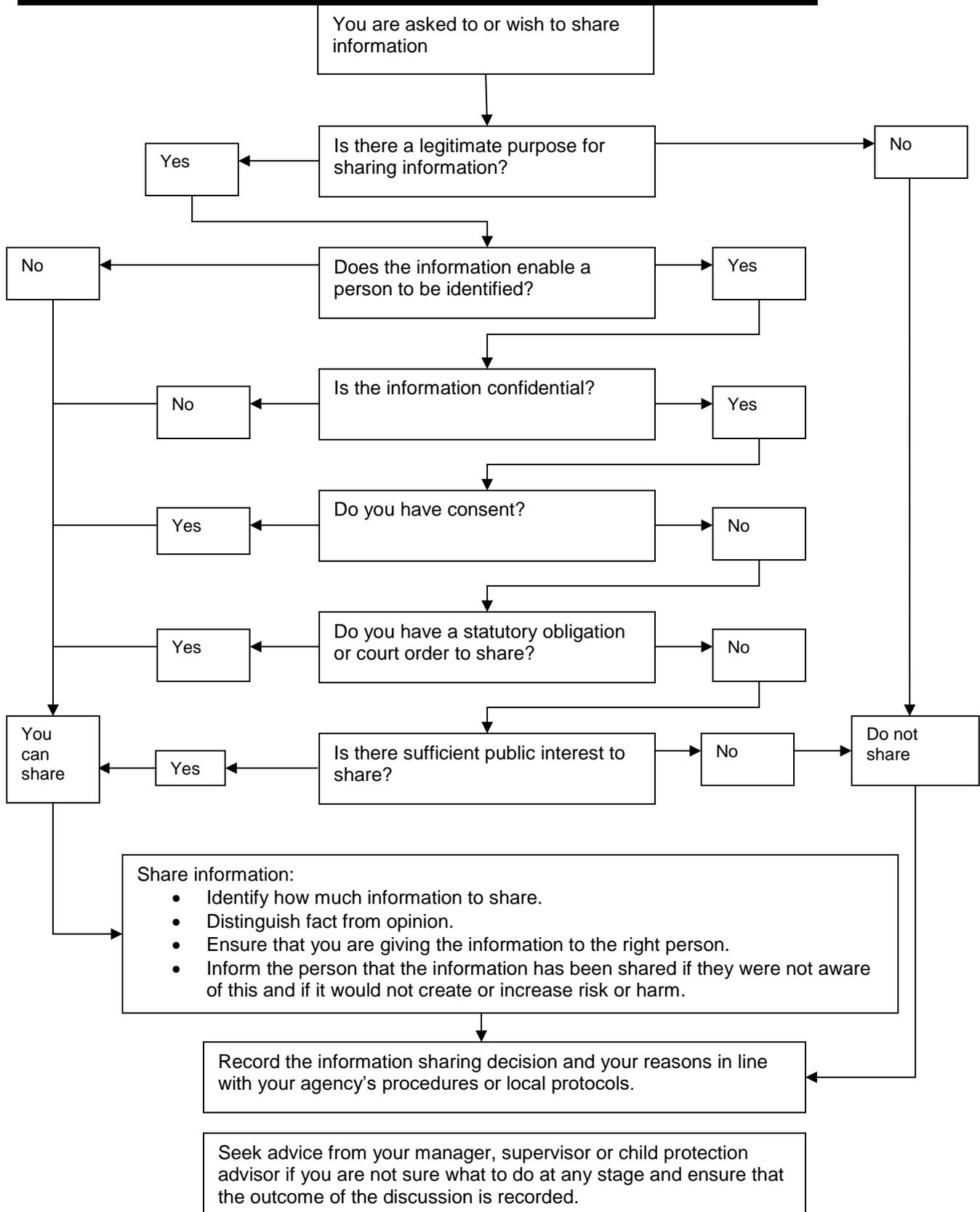
NAMED PERSON – SAFEGUARDING

Name:

Number:

Appendix 3 - Information Sharing Protocols

Flowchart of key principles for information sharing



APPENDIX 4 - SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN TRAINING MATRIX

Level 1

During 1st Month

All staff receive:

Local project and
Departmental Induction

PLUS Family Action
Corporate Induction

Review of Family Action
Safeguarding Policies,
Procedures and Standards

E-Learning Child Protection
Awareness, Protection of
Vulnerable Adults Courses
and Domestic Abuse
Awareness

Level 2 – Foundation

*Completed within 6 – 12
months*

All operations staff:

Social Care Induction

Child Protection
Foundation

Supervisees

Interagency
Safeguarding/Working
Together (*)

Domestic Abuse – Risk
Identification Training

Level 3

*Completed within 12
months*

Some operations staff:

Safeguarding Intermediate

Neglect

Recording & Report Writing

Assessment/Risk
Management

Level 4

Managers/Supervisors:

Supervision Skills

Safeguarding for Managers

Enabling Reflective
Practice

Safer Recruitment

Serious Case Reviews &
Research Updates

Frontline Staff:

Serious Case Reviews &
Research

Other topics/areas relevant to Safeguarding that individuals would benefit from training in (*):

- Safeguarding in a digital world
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Working with hostile families/conflict management
- Prevent (Extremism) Awareness
- Young expectant parents
- Attachment
- SEN/Disability
- FGM, forced marriage, spirit possession and honour based violence
- Child development
- Mental Health

*Safeguarding Children Partnerships provide a range of specialist training which can be accessed locally

**Further information available on the Safeguarding and Domestic Abuse pages of the Intranet

Appendix 5 - Serious Incident Flowchart

