

Independent Fostering Agency Safeguarding Children Policy

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Introduction

Achieving for Children (AfC) is committed to protecting and actively supporting children and young people so that they are able to live safe, happy and successful lives, Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and, in particular protecting them from abuse and harm, is everyone's responsibility and depends on effective joint working between all staff and carers, and relevant agencies and practitioners.

This policy is underpinned by the following legislation and statutory guidance:

- **Children Act 1989 and 2004**
- **Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011**
- **National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services**
- **Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023**
- **Keeping Children Safe in Education** (where relevant)
- **The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations 2010**

The fostering service works in partnership with the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP) and follows local safeguarding procedures.

This policy has been developed to help foster carers to understand their responsibilities, what they need to do, and what they can expect of one another to safeguard and protect the welfare of children. The policy also demonstrates a commitment to acting promptly and appropriately whenever a concern is raised about a child at risk of harm. This policy should be read in conjunction with Foster Carers Handbook - section 'Safeguarding Everyone in Our Household'

www.fosteringhandbook.com/achievingforchildren

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023' as:

- providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge
- protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the

home, including online

- preventing impairment of children’s mental and physical health or development
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- promoting the upbringing of children with their birth parents, or otherwise their family network through a kinship care arrangement, whenever possible and where this is in the best interests of the children
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes in line with the outcomes set out in the Children’s Social Care National Framework.

It is important that everyone working with children fully understands their responsibilities and duties as set out in primary legislation and the associated regulations and guidance.

The procedures in this chapter are mandatory and any failure to comply with them will be addressed through appropriate procedures.

Aims of the policy

This policy aims to:

- raise awareness that safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility
- help those working with children, young people and their families to be aware of the signs and symptoms of neglect and abuse
- raise awareness of practitioners' responsibility to follow local social care procedures
- promote multi-disciplinary and multi-agency-working
- promote a child-centred approach to safeguarding

By setting out our local multi-agency approach to safeguarding and responsibilities on all partners, this policy supports us to meet Standard 4 of the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services with the objective that ‘Children feel safe and are safe’, specifically Standard 4.7 that: ‘The fostering service works effectively in partnership with other agencies concerned with child protection, eg, the responsible authority, schools, hospitals, general practitioners and does not work in isolation from them’.

Objectives of the policy

This policy aims to ensure:

- foster carers have enough information to help them recognise child abuse and neglect, that they understand the overarching safeguarding children policy and how it impacts on their day-to-day operations
- foster carers understand their responsibilities, what they need to do, and what they can expect of one another, to safeguard and protect the welfare of children
- foster carers understand when and how to report allegations of neglect, abuse or the risk of harm to children and young people

By setting out key information on recognising child abuse and neglect, on all of our

responsibilities to safeguard and protect the welfare of children, and on the process of reporting concerns, this policy supports us to deliver the principles and standards of care of our operations as an independent fostering agency (IFA), specifically that:

- the child's welfare, safety and needs are at the centre of their care
- children should have an enjoyable childhood and benefit from excellent parenting and education, enjoying a wide range of opportunities to develop their talents and skills, leading to a successful adult life
- children are entitled to grow up in a loving environment that can meet their developmental needs

Implementing the policy

We will implement this policy by:

- ensuring our foster carers are aware of the safeguarding children policy and receive appropriate training and support, are able to recognise harm and know how to report any concerns in a timely and appropriate way
- ensuring that all foster carers providing services on behalf of Achieving for Children, understand and have formally agreed in writing to abide by the safeguarding children policy and receive appropriate training and support
- monitoring allegations of neglect, abuse or harm to children and young people made against our employees to understand how and why this has happened and ensuring that appropriate systems and processes are in place to prevent this happening in the future
- working with children, young people and their families to help develop, monitor and review our policies, practices, functions and services

This policy is translated into procedures through the online TRIX Children's Services Policy and Procedures Manual. Every Achieving for Children foster carer can access the manual via the following links:

- Kingston and Richmond: www.proceduresonline.com/achievingforchildren
- Windsor and Maidenhead: <http://rbwm.proceduresonline.com>

In Kingston and Richmond, the manual is integrated with the London Child Protection Procedures: www.londoncp.co.uk

In Windsor and Maidenhead, the manual is integrated with the Pan- Berkshire Child Protection Procedures: <http://berks.proceduresonline.com>

Information provided by the Local Safeguarding Children Boards can be accessed at:

- Kingston and Richmond: <http://kingstonandrichmondscb.org.uk>
- Windsor and Maidenhead: www.wamscb.org

A proactive approach to safeguarding:

The aim of the fostering agency is always to protect children and prevent abuse and neglect from occurring in the first place. This will be achieved by rigorous selection, assessment and training of carers, by appropriate matching and a high level of individualised support. Achieving for Children expects that foster carers will be provided with detailed information about the child to ensure they are able to provide appropriate and safe care. We have a detailed competency framework for foster carers alongside individualised professional development plans for all carers. This supports the service to ensure that carers have the skills and knowledge to meet the needs of the children in their care.

Achieving for Children sets high expectations to ensure that children feel safe and are safe, understand how to protect themselves and are protected from significant harm, including (but not limited to) neglect, abuse, sexual and criminal exploitation, accidents, bullying, self-harm, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, homophobic behaviour, racism, sexism and other forms of discrimination, and radicalisation. Any discriminatory behaviours are challenged and help and support are given to children about how to treat others with respect. Foster carers are prepared and supported to respond to children who may face these risks.

Achieving for Children promotes safe care, makes unannounced visits to foster carers twice annually and ensures that children have regular opportunities to speak to a trusted professional adult without their foster carers present. For our family link short break carers, unannounced visits are proportionate to the amount of care provided, with one unannounced visit per year and an additional planned visit by either the supervising social worker or the child's social worker. These visits must happen when a child is in placement, including at weekends if required.

We complete regular joint visits with the children's social workers in order to build these relationships and ensure the sharing of information. When children raise concerns, it is essential that the adults in whom they confide listen to them, take their concerns seriously and respond appropriately. Foster carers should liaise with their supervising social worker as appropriate if they are unsure on how to respond to any concerns.

Care and placement planning ensures that any risks associated with children offending, misusing drugs or alcohol, self-harming, going missing, being affiliated with gangs, being subject to sexual or criminal exploitation, extremism or radicalism are known and understood by the foster carers who look after them. This includes regular contact and planning with the child's allocated social worker and the supervising social worker. Care and placement planning must include the measures to be taken to safeguard any child in relation to contact with parent(s) of the child's network. Managers within Achieving for Children regularly review and act on any known risks to children, taking advice and guidance from

local partners and agencies as appropriate.

Children's safety and welfare is promoted in all fostering placements. Foster carers actively safeguard and promote the welfare of foster children. Foster carers make positive relationships with children, generate a culture of openness and trust and are aware of and alert to any signs or symptoms that might indicate a child is at risk of harm. Foster Carers use reflective supervision to discuss the children in their care, and the impact of abuse and neglect on children's behaviour and needs. Foster carers and children have access to a Family and Systemic Psychotherapist within the team, as well as the Emotional Health Service within Achieving for Children.

Foster carers are trained in appropriate safer-care practice, including skills to care for children who have been abused. All foster carers complete individualised safer caring plans for each child in their care. For foster carers who offer placements to disabled children, this includes training specifically on issues affecting disabled children. This includes carers who offer short breaks to disabled children as part of the Family Link service.

We are committed to providing a comprehensive and responsive training offer to our foster carers, recognising that every child has unique experiences, strengths and needs. Our training offer is designed to equip carers with the skills and knowledge to provide high quality care. However, we understand that not all needs can be anticipated within our training offer. Where child specific needs fall outside of our training offer, we will actively seek to identify appropriate additional learning opportunities to ensure our foster carers feel supported and confident in meeting children's individual needs.

Children must be helped to understand how to keep themselves safe, including when outside of the household or when using the internet or social media. Carers are supported to prepare children for independence at every age and stage of development.

Proactive and creative safeguarding practice means that all children, including the most vulnerable, have a strong sense of safety and well-being and they are unlikely to be missing from care on a regular basis. Children who do go missing experience well-coordinated responses that reduce the harm or risk of harm to them. The reasons why children may be purported missing are complex and reference also needs to be made to the KRSCP Joint Protocol for Safeguarding Missing children (<https://www.kingstonandrichmondsafeguardingchildrenpartnership.org.uk/media/kaxfickl/krsdp-joint-protocol-for-safeguarding-missing-children.pdf>), RBWM Procedures Online Children Missing From Care http://rbwm.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_sg_ch_go_miss.html#miss_home and the missing child policy within the Foster Carers handbook (www.fosteringhandbook.com/achievingforchildren)

Children should be supported to take age-appropriate risks as a normal and important part of growing up. These risks should be considered and discussed collaboratively between foster carers, children's social workers and, where appropriate, the children themselves. Achieving for Children adopts a tailored and proportionate approach to risk assessment, ensuring assessments are practical, purposeful and provide sufficient information to enable those involved in the child's care to support them safely and effectively. Individual risk

assessments and safer care plans must be current and regularly reviewed, addressing any known vulnerabilities for each child. They should clearly outline the actions required to manage and minimise risks, reduce potential harm and promote the child's safety and wellbeing.

Achieving for Children and foster carers work in close partnership with other agencies involved in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. Where our foster carers are caring for children from another local authority, we ensure close partnership working with the responsible local authority, schools, and health services. We ensure that we fully understand the needs of the child and that our foster carers are supported and trained appropriately to meet these needs. Safeguarding responsibilities are shared, and the fostering service does not operate in isolation from these partners.

Any allegations or suspicions of harm must be reported and managed promptly, fairly and in line with statutory guidance. The safety and wellbeing of the child remain paramount, and children must be supported and protected throughout any investigation. Appropriate support must also be offered to both the individual making the allegation and the person who is the subject of the allegation. Where allegations are made against a foster carer, Achieving for Children will make carefully considered and sensitive decisions regarding whether children should remain in the placement while the matter is investigated. This is further detailed within the fostering handbook.

Staff maintain effective working relationships with the Local Authority Designated Officers (LADO) and other safeguarding partners. Clear communication is maintained regarding safeguarding matters, including concerns about injuries, incidents or allegations involving foster carers. Where foster carers live outside of the local authority, contact will be made with the LADO for that area.

https://rbwmsafeguardingpartnership.org.uk/assets/bdd4aa8c/complete_allegation_management_procedures_for_achieving_for_children_-_includes_appendices_1.pdf .

Dealing with concerns

Many concerns about children and young people arise on a day-to-day basis and, in most cases, these can be dealt with quickly and easily through discussion between foster carers and their supervising social workers or managers. These discussions and actions must be recorded in the relevant children's services recording system and foster carer logs.

Sometimes concerns can be more worrying because it is clear that the child may be affected by what is happening to them. The child may be being harmed in some way. If this is the case employees should:

- collect as much information as possible about the situation - this may be from the child, parent, carer or other professionals and should include the date and time of the incident or disclosure, the parties that were involved, what was said or done and by whom, and any further actions
- report their concerns to their supervising social worker or manager immediately and at

the latest within the same working day

- Any concerns will be reported promptly to the child's allocated social worker. If the child has been placed by another local authority then the supervising social worker will contact that local authority.
- Outside office hours, the fostering Out of Hours team can be contacted on 0208 547 6009 for advice and guidance.
- Allegations that another child, a visitor, a person in the community, teacher, social worker, parent or any other person has harmed the child in placement should also be reported to the child's allocated social worker, foster carer's Supervising Social Worker or Out of Hours Service.
- Where a concern or allegation about historical or non recent abuse is made this must still also be shared with the child's allocated social worker and carer's Supervising Social Worker - there should not be an assumption that the concern has been dealt with.
- All actions should be recorded in full by the carer.

If a child or young person is disclosing information:

- listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief, accept what is being said without judgement and take it seriously
- reassure the child, but do not make promises that cannot be kept for example, 'everything will be alright now'. Assure them that they did nothing wrong and that their disclosure will be taken seriously, do not promise confidentiality, explain you have a duty to report your concerns. Acknowledge how difficult it must have been to talk
- let the child or young person explain in their own terms what has happened. Do not speculate or jump to conclusions. Do not investigate or interrogate or decide if they are telling the truth. Communicate in a way that is appropriate to the age of the child and the level of disability or where English is not the preferred language. Explain what you will do next and who you need to talk to
- take some very brief notes and write them up in more detail as soon as you can. Hold on to the original notes, they may be required by court. Record the date, time, place and words used by the child and how the child appeared to you. Be specific and keep it factual
- report their concerns to their supervising social worker or manager immediately and at the latest within the same working day. If you are unable to do this contact the Single Point of Access (in Kingston and Richmond) and the Multi-Agency Safeguarding and Early Help Hub (Windsor and Maidenhead)

Kingston or Richmond

T: 020 8547 5008

(020 8770 5000 for out of hours or weekends)

Windsor and Maidenhead

T: 01628 683150

(01344 786543 for out of hours or weekends)

If a child is in immediate danger you must always telephone 999.

Responding to a concern

The response to any concerns about a child are dealt with in line with the procedures set out in the Referral and Initial Contact sections of TRIX.

Emergency Action

Where there is an immediate risk to a child, foster carer(s) must take the immediate necessary steps they see fit to protect the child, which may include calling the Emergency Services e.g. the Police or Ambulance Service.

If the child is taken to hospital or the Police are called, the foster carer(s) must inform them of any concerns in relation to possible abuse or neglect.

Wherever possible, the child's allocated social worker and the carer's Supervising Social Worker should be contacted as soon as the foster carers become aware of the child's need for emergency attention. However the foster carers should not delay taking action in order to do so. If the child's allocated social worker and the carer's Supervising Social Worker is not contacted before the Emergency Services are called, they should be notified as soon as practicable afterwards.

For emergencies that arise outside of office hours, foster carer(s) should notify the fostering out of hours service in the first instance, or Emergency Duty Service.

Managing individuals who pose a risk of harm to children

The Children Act 2004 recognises that the identification and investigation of child abuse, together with the protection and support of victims and their families, requires multi-agency collaboration.

The multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA) provide a national framework for the assessment and management of risks posed by serious and violent offenders.

Information about MAPPA can be found here:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/multi-agency-public-protection-arrangements-mappa--2

In addition, the multi-agency risk assessment conference (MARAC) provides interventions for adult perpetrators of domestic violence and abuse. Information about MARAC can be found here: www.gov.uk/guidance/domestic-violence-and-abuse

Safeguarding particularly vulnerable children

Particularly vulnerable children

There are some groups of children who may be particularly vulnerable because of specific concerns in relation to their safeguarding and because of some specific issues in relation to promoting their welfare.

The list is not a comprehensive list of every vulnerable child, but highlights some specific groups:

- children living away from home
- children who are being bullied
- children whose behaviour indicates a lack of parental control
- children who are experiencing racism
- children experiencing violent extremism
- children experiencing parental domestic violence
- children with families whose whereabouts are unknown
- children who go missing from home or care
- children who go missing from education
- children of families living in temporary accommodation
- migrant children
- unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC)
- children who have special educational needs and disabilities

Procedures for dealing with allegations against foster carers and other adults or professionals

Achieving for Children has clear procedures in place for dealing with complaints and allegations made against any foster carers and other adults. Complaints about the quality of care being provided for a looked after child can be dealt with under two procedures.

Where there is a clear allegation that a child has suffered significant harm the local authority designated officer (LADO) procedure will be initiated if the concerns indicate the adult 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
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children
- behaved in a manner that discriminates against a child on the basis of one or more of their protected characteristics

More information is available of this [Link](#)

Where concerns do not reach this threshold a 'standards of care' investigation may be initiated - in some cases the LADO process may conclude by recommending a standards of care investigation. A standards of care investigation would investigate whether the care provided has breached National Minimum Standards.

Details of these policies can be found below.

Investigating standards of care procedure: [Link](#)

Complaints procedure:

https://drive.google.com/open?id=17_xQ2qqwhOPVashO3eLQzAfQSHYck7Y-

Induction and training

All new foster carers receive an induction that includes the organisation's procedures for safeguarding children.

Foster carers for Achieving for Children in Kingston and Richmond can access a range of training through the Kingston and Richmond Local Safeguarding Children Partnership, including Level 1 online safeguarding awareness, Level 2 shared responsibility and Level 3 child protection processes. Foster carers in Windsor and Maidenhead can also access training through the Windsor and Maidenhead Local Safeguarding Children Partnership. Other relevant training and workshops particularly for those who have a designated child protection responsibility can be accessed via the Workforce Development team.

The Foster Carers competency framework underpins our commitment to achieve the best possible outcomes for fostered children supported by skilled, motivated and appropriately rewarded foster carers. It is a requirement that all approved carers complete mandatory training and complete the Training Support and Development Standards (TSDS) portfolio within the timescales.

Foster carers development will be managed through an ongoing series of visits from their supervising social worker and through the annual review process. Throughout, foster carers will maintain a personal development plan. This will be reviewed and updated with their supervising social worker throughout the year, at least quarterly. Carers' annual reviews will include a review of their PDP, to make sure they are able to access training that helps develop their skills and that all completed training and newly acquired skills are recorded.

Online safety

Digital technology can expose children and young to new dangers and risks. The Local Safeguarding Partnerships in each area take strategic responsibility for improving the way in which children and young people are safeguarded online. The e-safety policies set out the:

- the resources available through partner agencies to raise awareness among children and young people, supporting the development of appropriate strategies to minimise exposure to risk
- procedures to be followed by all partner agencies in using online technologies with children and young people
- in the Kingston and Richmond policy, the procedures to be followed when handling an e-safety incident (see Appendix 1)

Social media

Foster carers should not engage in any form of social media communication (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc) with children or young people using their personal accounts. This includes using personal email accounts or mobile phones.

Where there is a need to communicate with young people using social media, only accounts set up by Achieving for Children should be used.

When communicating using social media, care should be taken to ensure that the material posted or shared is safe and is appropriate. Photographs of children must be consensual and information especially that which could put a child at risk must not be shared.

Appropriate security and permissions must be put in place. Material posted should not discredit the organisation in any way.

Any posts by children or young people which raise safeguarding concerns should follow the e-safety incident procedures set out in Appendices 1 and 2. Where there are immediate concerns, call the police on 999.

The Achieving for Children Social Media Policy sets out in more detail the behaviour that is expected from employees working in Achieving for Children and how to be alert to safeguarding concerns.

Whistle blowing

[The Achieving for Children Whistle Blowing Policy](#) sets out the process which allows employees and foster carers to express their concerns without fear of the consequences. Employees and foster carers have an individual responsibility to make their supervising social worker or manager aware of their concerns and this is especially important where the safety or wellbeing of children is concerned.

Information sharing and data protection

Foster carers will have access to confidential information about children and young people and their families in order to help them perform their roles. They may be privy to highly sensitive and confidential information. In some circumstances, this information may need to

be shared with other professionals, such as in a case of suspected neglect or abuse. In these circumstances, information must be passed on immediately.

Confidential information should not be shared with someone who does not have the right to know. Where there is any uncertainty, staff should discuss this with their supervising social worker.

When it is not necessary to disclose a child's identity, all information should be used anonymously. Private information should never be used for personal gain or for the advantage of others, including friends, family, relatives and or other organisations.

Ofsted notifications overview

Achieving for Children's social care services are regulated and inspected by Ofsted. Under Regulation 36 of the Fostering Services Regulations 2011, Achieving for Children's independent fostering agency must report the following incidents (sometimes called incident 'notifications' or 'events') to Ofsted:

- the death of, or a serious illness or serious accident happening to a child placed with foster parents
- if you have reported someone working for a fostering service to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and safeguarding referrals
- an infectious disease at the home of a foster parent that a registered medical practitioner considers serious enough to report to their local council or local health protection team
- if you know, or suspect, that a child placed with foster parents has been involved in or is subject to child sexual exploitation
- a serious incident with a child where the police have been called to the foster parent's home
- any serious complaint about an approved foster parent
- if a child protection enquiry has started or concluded

Responsibilities

The Director of Children's Services in both areas is responsible for ensuring that Ofsted is notified, without delay, of a death or serious injury of a child. The online notification form can be found here:

https://ofstedonline.ofsted.gov.uk/outreach/Ofsted_Serious_Notification.ofml

Ofsted

Piccadilly Gate, Store Street
Manchester M1 2WD
T: 0300 123 1231

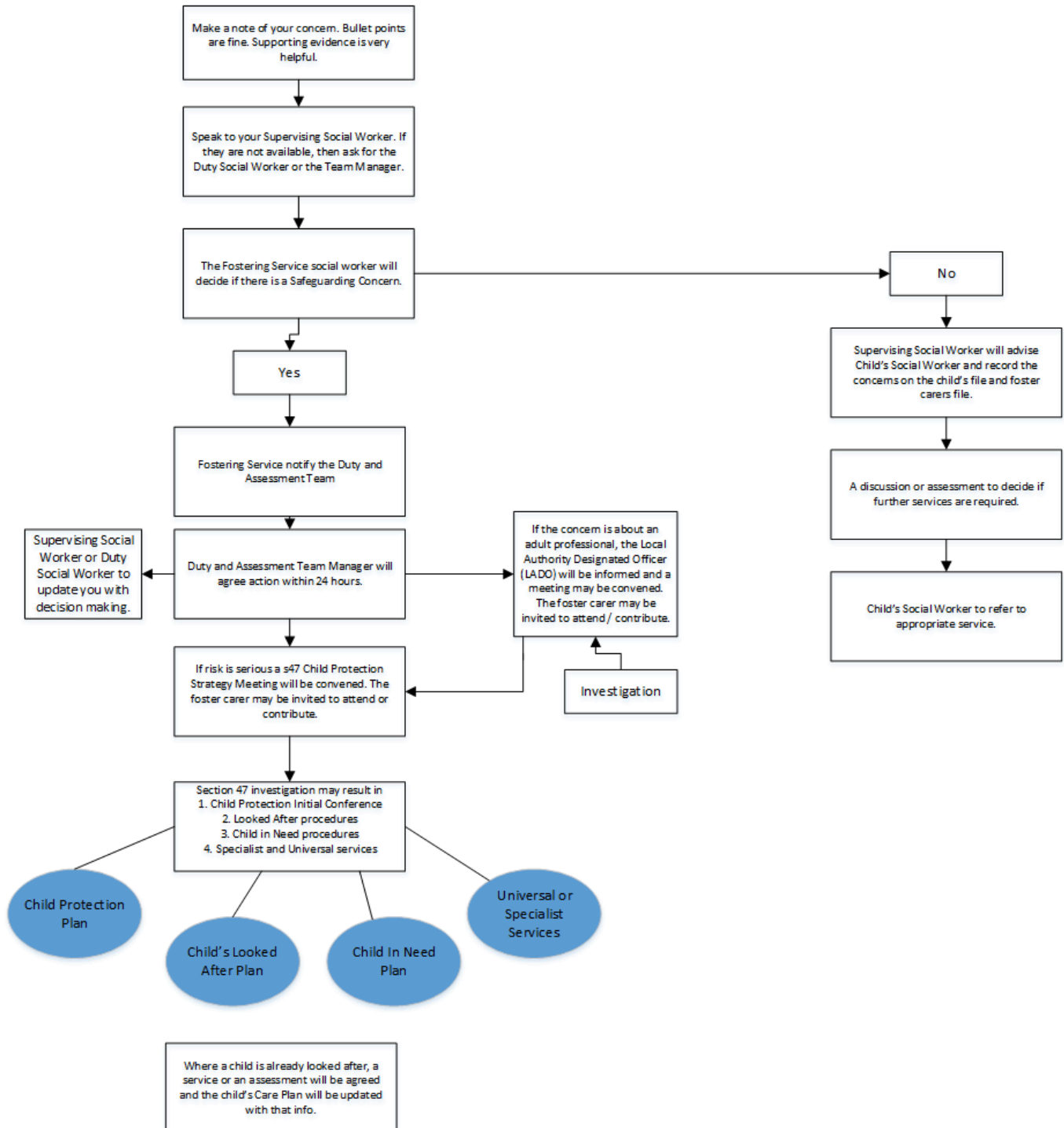
This policy was reviewed in March 2026 to judge its effectiveness, it may be updated sooner in accordance with changes in legislation.

Date created	19 February 2015
Revised	23 March 2026
Revisions	Updated: References to Working Together 2023, addition of a proactive approach to safeguarding, addition of Appendix 2 (definitions of abuse), Ofsted notifications overview, induction and training, emergency action.
Signed by:	Claire Hunt, Interim Head of Fostering and Kinship and Matthew Edwards, Associate Director, Provider Services, Achieving for Children
Equality analysis completed (yes/no):	Not applicable

Appendix 1

Where you have an ongoing concern about a child

If the risk is immediate,
call the Emergency
Services



Recognising child abuse and neglect

Whilst children and adults at risk may suffer abuse and neglect, the recognition of these may differ. Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 provides guidance as to what constitutes abuse and neglect and the categories of concern. However, this is not to be treated as the definitive list, as abuse and neglect can be multi-faceted and should be considered holistically.

Maltreatment

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or 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. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

Impact of maltreatment

The maltreatment of children physically, emotionally, sexually or through neglect can have major long-term effects on all aspects of a child's health, development and wellbeing. The immediate and longer-term impact can include anxiety, depression, substance misuse, eating disorders and self-destructive behaviour, offending and anti-social behaviour.

Categories of concern

There are many ways in which children can be harmed.

Physical abuse

Physical abuse may involve 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 or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child so that it causes severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children 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 children. 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 involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber-bullying), causing children to frequently feel 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, though it may occur alone.

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 a child's clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse, including via the internet or social media. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males; women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Sexual exploitation

Sexual exploitation of children and young people 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. It includes combinations of pull factors: children exchanging sex for attention, accommodation, food, gifts or drugs and push factors: children escaping from situations where their needs are neglected and there is exposure to unsafe individuals. 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.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during 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), protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger, ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers), or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Radicalisation

It is a requirement that all staff, volunteers and students within Achieving for Children comply with and be aware of the Prevent Duty under the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015. The act seeks to ensure that all individuals are alert to the risks of children and young people being drawn into terrorism and radicalism. Further information can be obtained from

the [Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales](#)

Concerns about a child's behaviour

Concerns about a child may come to the attention of foster carers in a number of ways.

- Through observation of the child where a child's behaviour may indicate that it is likely that they are being abused.
- The child may disclose abuse.
- Information may be given by parents, other people or agencies.
- A child may show some signs of physical injury of which there seems to be no satisfactory explanation.
- Something in the behaviour of one of the workers or a child, or in the way the worker relates to a child, alerts them or makes them feel uncomfortable in some way.
- Observing one child abuse another.

There may be barriers to children telling someone that they are being harmed, neglected or abused. The power of relationships between adults and children should not be underestimated, and nor should the deliberate and skilled way that abusers target their victims. Children may not tell because they:

- are scared because they have been threatened or are being sexually exploited
- believe they will be taken away from home
- believe that social care services are stigmatising
- think it is what happens to all children
- feel embarrassed
- feel guilty
- do not want to get the abuser into trouble
- have communication or learning difficulties
- may not have the vocabulary to explain what has happened to them
- are afraid they won't be believed
- believe they have told, possibly by dropping hints, but have not been believed so that they do not bother trying again

Child abuse thrives on secrecy and needs to be handled in a sensitive, accepting way. In order to achieve this, adults may have to overcome certain barriers also, as:

- sometimes it may be hard to believe what the child is saying
- it may be difficult that the suspicion may be about someone that is known;
- there is a fear of getting it wrong; the fear of what consequences there may be for 'getting it wrong' for the child, for the family and for themselves
- they worry that it may make it worse for the child

- they believe that social care services are stigmatising
- they simply do not want to become involved
- they do not have the necessary information on what to do or who to contact