



Connecting Neurodiverse Families – Safeguarding Policy and Procedure

Purpose and aim of the policy statement

We, Connecting Neurodiverse Families (CNDF), are committed to safeguarding the children and families that we work with, and to keeping children safe.

We work with families and carers of neurodivergent children to provide peer support, as well as provide events for families and their children. During the course of our work we may come into contact with safeguarding concerns for the children who attend our events, or we may have concerns about an adult who attends one of our sessions.

The Committee who oversee CNDF are responsible for upholding this policy and the relevant safeguarding procedures.

Scope of the policy statement

This policy applies to all children under 18, as well as all adults who would be at risk, as directed by The Care Act. All volunteers and helpers involved with Connecting Neurodiverse Families are expected to comply with it.

Context

The main areas of law that the CNF policy adheres to are the Children and Families Acts 1989 and 2004, Working Together to Safeguarding Children 2018, The Care Act 2014, the Mental Capacity Act 2005.

The Children Act 2004 places a duty on organisations to safeguard and promote the well-being of children and young people. This includes the need to ensure that all adults who work with or on behalf of children and young people in organisations are competent, confident and safe to do so. (Guidance for Working together to safeguard children July 2018)

Definitions

Safeguarding is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children and adults at risk, and protect them from harm.

Safeguarding means:

- protecting children and adults at risk from abuse and maltreatment
- preventing harm to children's health or development

- ensuring children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care, and adults at risk with care needs receive the support they need safely and effectively
- taking action to enable all children, young people and adults at risk to have the best outcomes.

For clarity a child is someone aged under the age of 18 .

Safeguarding duties apply to an adult who:

- Has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) and;
- Is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect; and;
- As a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of, abuse or neglect.

Our beliefs

We believe everyone has a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children, young people and adults at risk, to keep them safe and to practise in a way that protects them, and in the case of adults at risk empowers them to help keep themselves safe.

We will give equal priority to keeping all children, young people and adults at risk safe regardless of their age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation. However we also recognise that many of the children we work with are additionally vulnerable due to their additional needs.

How we aim to keep children, young people and Adults at Risk safe

All of our Committee, and anyone volunteering with us will have an awareness and understanding of safeguarding, follow our values, and be familiar with this policy and the reporting procedure.

We will ensure all staff and volunteers within our organisation understand their child protection and safeguarding responsibilities.

We recognise the importance of the safety of children, young people and adults at risk, who come into contact with our services.

We will act appropriately to any allegations, reports or suspicions of abuse. This may involve sharing concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately.

Note: Sub-contractors should have their own organisational policies and procedures in place for their staff to follow. These will be checked to ensure they meet our requirements and standards.

We will ensure appropriate training, advice and guidance are in place.

We will keep up to date with local and national safeguarding developments.

We have a named Designated Safeguarding Lead with significant safeguarding experience on the Committee who will ensure safeguarding policy and practice is upheld and who will be responsible for reporting concerns to the relevant statutory bodies.

We will ensure anyone volunteering with CNDF has a copy of this policy and the procedures and undertakes to follow them.

We will highlight to all the families, carers and young people that we work with that we have safeguarding policies and procedures and a copy will be available on our Facebook page including a contact for the Safeguarding Lead to report concerns.

Designated Safeguarding Lead

The CNDF Safeguarding Lead is Jo Holloway-Green.

The roles and responsibilities of the Designated Safeguarding Lead are:

To provide advice and support to volunteers who have concerns a child is at risk of, or is suffering from abuse.

To ensure all volunteers are aware of what they should do and who they should go to if they are concerned a child/young person is subject to abuse or neglect.

Ensure any concerns about a child/young person are acted on immediately and clearly recorded.

The DSL will make a decision as to whether to make a referral to the relevant Child or Adult Safeguarding Team, and either support a volunteer to complete, or complete the relevant referral form within 24 hours.

To ensure the referral is acted upon and issues are addressed in a timely manner.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will record any reported incidents in relation to a child/young person or adult at risk or a breach of safeguarding policies and procedures. This will be stored in the safeguarding file and its contents will be kept confidential and secure.

Refer any cases to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) about any child protection concerns relating to a staff member or other organisations.

Refer cases where a crime may have been committed to the Police as required.

Ensure safeguarding policies are known, understood and used appropriately by volunteers and parents/carers where relevant and reviewed annually. Ensure policies are available publicly.

Potential risk to children, young people and adults at risk

We recognise that children, young people and adults at risk are more at risk of neglect, physical, emotional and sexual abuse. We will ensure we understand the signs and indicators that might highlight that there are concerns, and ensure we act on these by reporting and recording.

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child, young person or adult at risk. Somebody may abuse or neglect 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 a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

Some signs that could alert staff and volunteers to the fact that a child, young person or adult at risk might be being abused include: -

- Unexplained bruising and injuries
- Sexually explicit language and actions
- Sudden changes in behaviour
- Something a child has said

- A change observed over a long period of time e.g. losing weight or being increasingly dirty or unkempt.

If a child, young person or adult at risk displays these signs it does not necessarily mean that they are being abused. Similarly there may not be any signs; you may just feel something is wrong. If you are worried, it is not your responsibility to decide if it is abuse but it is your responsibility to act on your concerns and do something about it by reporting it appropriately.

Additionally we understand there are further categories of abuse under the Care Act legislation, and will ensure we understand the signs and indicators that might highlight concerns which are:

- Domestic Abuse
- Modern Slavery
- Exploitation
- Organisational Abuse
- Self Neglect
- Discriminatory Abuse

Reporting Concerns

When we have a concern that a child, young person or adult might need to be safeguarding we, the committee, have a duty to share this with the statutory authorities and will report it within 24 hours. Where a crime is currently, or has been committed we will also contact either 999 in an emergency or 101 if non emergency.

To report a concern about a child/young person under 18 – Report via ringing 0300 131 2 131 or Out of Hours - 01609 780780 or make online referral here: You must complete the Universal Referral form (in the Safeguarding Folder on our Drive) within 24 hours.

To report a concern about an adult at risk Adults- Report via ringing 0300 131 2 131 or by completing the Adults Safeguarding referral form (in the Safeguarding Folder on our Drive) within 24 hours.

Reporting will usually be undertaken by the Designated Safeguarding Lead, however where this is not possible, another member of the Committee will ensure it is reported.

We will not investigate or undertake an investigation of concerns, as this may invalidate any police investigation.

Recording Concerns

Where concerns have been identified and reported, we must keep a record of what we have observed/what has been disclosed. This must be dated/timed and location stated, include the persons present and be signed by the person reporting/receiving the disclosure.

We recognise that it is important when recording information to note exactly what was said as soon as possible after any disclosure or allegation and that it is important to record the same language/words used by the child or individual, making a note of any signs or injuries and any behaviour and where possible to draw a picture to indicate location of injuries. We recognise the rights of children and young people to confidentiality unless we consider they could be at risk of abuse and/or harm. The person who receives the allegation or has a concern will complete the organisation pro-forma (see Appendix 3 for template) and ensure it is signed and dated on each page. We will respect confidentiality and file documents securely following guidance contained in:

- [-Data protection legislation](#)
- [Data protection 2017: 10 questions not for profit organisations should be able to answer](#)
- The Information Commissioner (ICO and General Data Protection Regulators) has produced a useful publication [Preparing for the General Data Protection Regulation \(GDPR\) - 12 steps to take now.](#)
- [Data protection resources](#)

Information Sharing

- In order to keep children, young people or adults at risk who come into contact with our service safe from harm, we may need to share information with other professionals, in particular, where the following comes to light:
 - A child's health and development, and exposure to possible harm;
 - An adult who is self neglecting, and may need additional support
 - A parent / carer who may need help, or may not be able to care for a child adequately and safely; and
 - Adults and other children who may pose a risk of harm to a child/adult at risk
- As a general principle, information will only be shared with the consent of the parent/carers and subject of the information, where relevant from the outset, about why, what, how and with whom information will, or could be shared, and seek their agreement, unless it is unsafe or inappropriate to do so, or there is a wider risk.

Further Contacts

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Jo Holloway-Green (Contact 07851 062475
[/johollowaygreen@gmail.com](mailto:johollowaygreen@gmail.com))

NSPCC – nspcc.org.uk or 0808 800 5000

Childline - 0800 1111 (for Under 18s)

Silverline (For older people) – 0800 4 70 80 90

North Yorkshire Safeguarding – 0300 131 2131/ <https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/adult-care/safeguarding/safeguarding-vulnerable-adults> (adults) or 01609 780780/<https://www.safeguardingchildren.co.uk/> (Children's)

Dated: 9th April 2023

Review Date: 9th April 2025.

Signed by Chair of Trustees and Safeguarding Lead

Angie Furminger

Chair of Trustees

Jo Holloway-Green

Safeguarding Lead

Date

APPENDIX 1

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT IN CHILDREN

Source: 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015' – A Guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, pages 92-94. Published by the Department for Education, latest edition March 2015.

What is abuse and neglect? Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, neglect 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 a stranger for example, via the internet. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

Children: Anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital or in custody in the secure estate, does not change his/her status or entitlements to services or protection.

Physical abuse: A form of abuse which 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: The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a 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 children. These may include interactions that are beyond a 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 frequently to 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: 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. 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). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE): Sexual exploitation of children and young people under 18 involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people (or a third person or persons) receive 'something' (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as

a result of them performing, and/or another or others performing on them, sexual activities. Child sexual exploitation can occur through the use of technology without the child's immediate recognition; for example being persuaded to post sexual images on the Internet/mobile phones without immediate payment or gain. In all cases, those exploiting the child/young person have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources.

Violence, coercion and intimidation are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised in the main by the child or young person's limited availability of choice resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability.

Neglect: 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 94
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

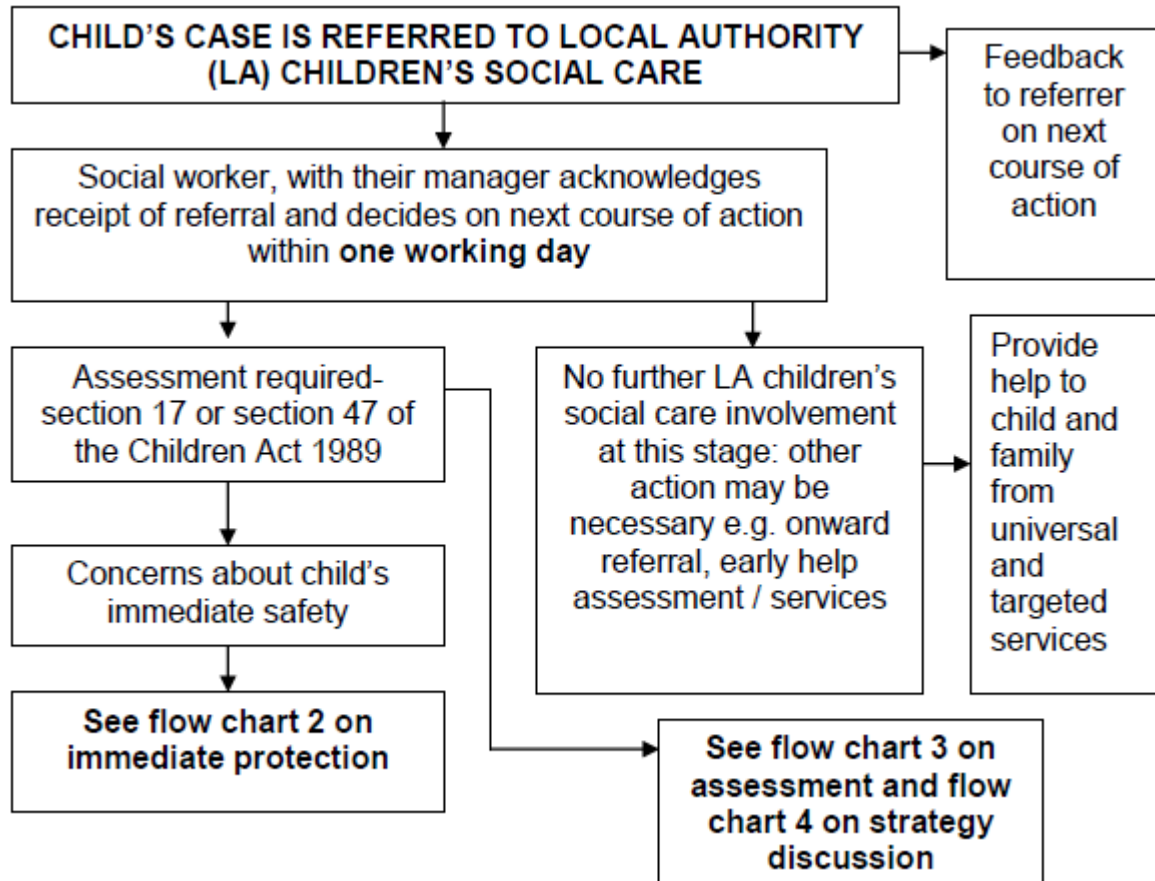
Female Genital Mutilation (FGM): FGM is a serious form of child abuse and violence against women and girls, and a violation of human rights. It has been illegal in this country since 1985 and there is a statutory duty to safeguard children and protect and promote the welfare of all women and girls. People guilty of allowing FGM to take place are punished by fines and up to fourteen years in prison.

FGM is defined by the World Health Organisation as "all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons". It can leave women and girls traumatised as well as in severe pain, cause difficulties in child birth, and in some rare cases it can lead to death.

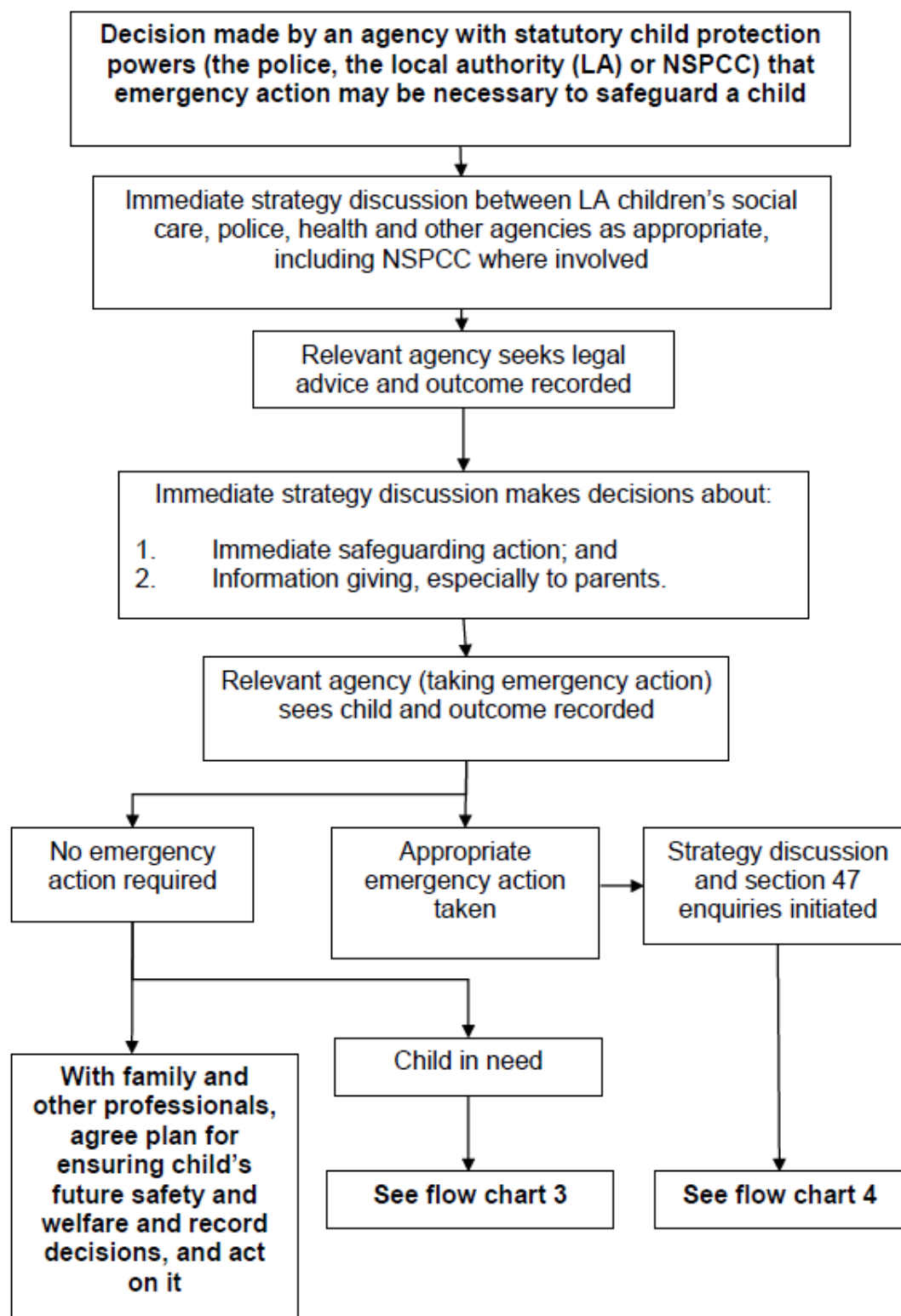
There is no cultural or religious justification for FGM.

Appendix 2: Referral Flow Chart

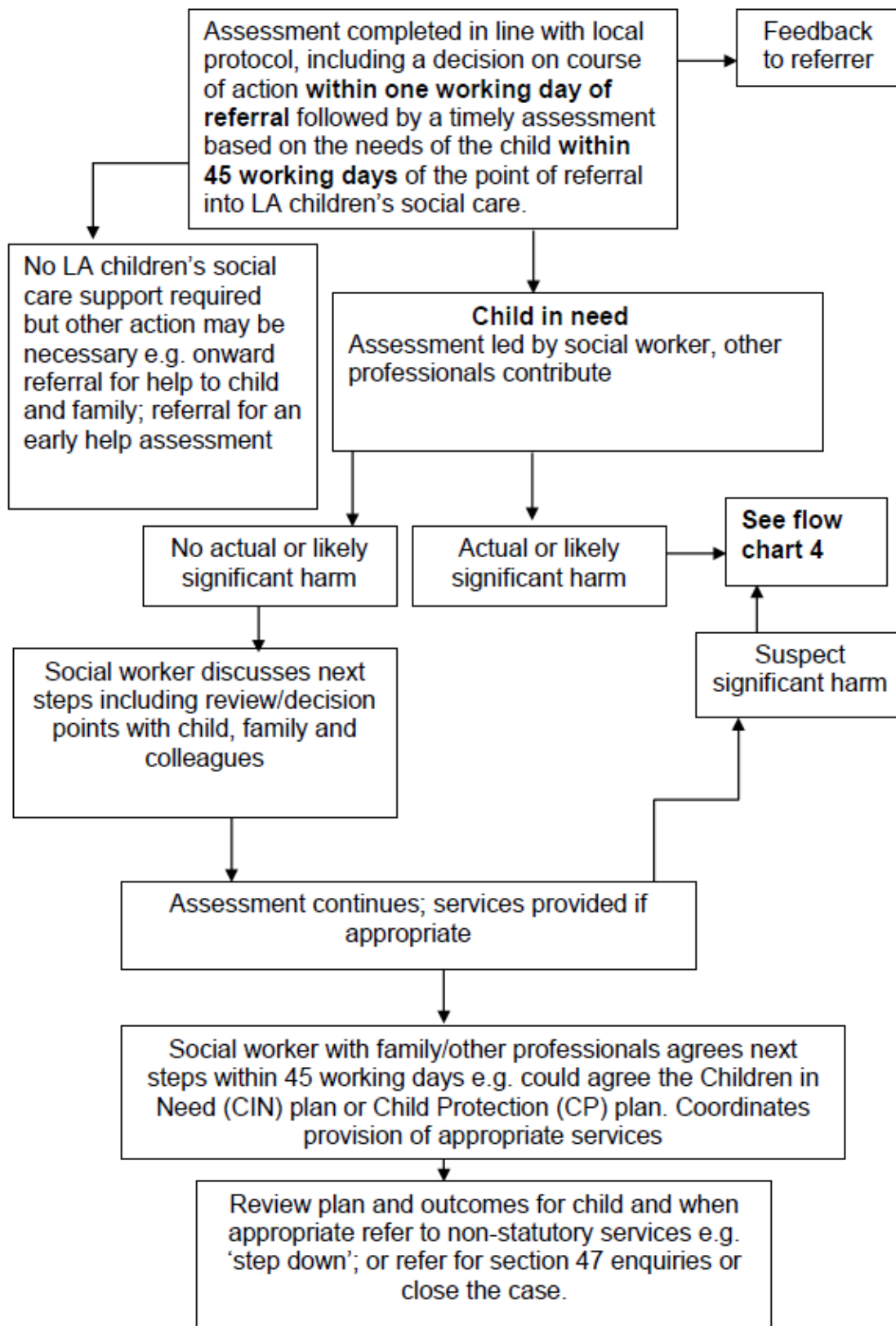
Flow chart 1: Action taken when a child is referred to local authority children's social care services



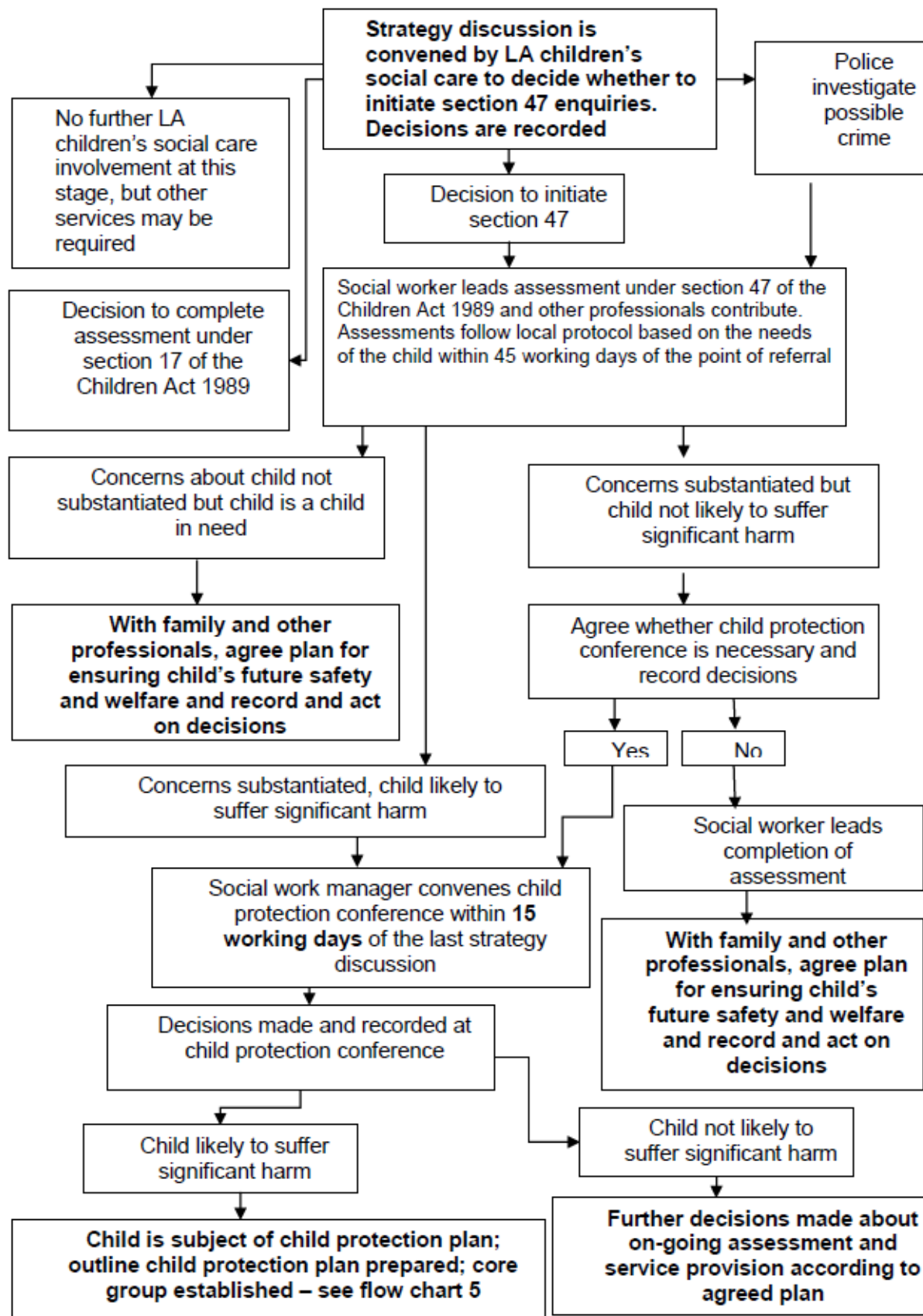
Flow chart 2: Immediate protection



Flow chart 3: Action taken for an assessment of a child under the Children Act 1989



Flow chart 4: Action following a strategy discussion



Appendix 3: Internal Safeguarding Recording Form

CONFIDENTIAL

Full name, including any aliases.	
Gender	
Date of Birth	
Address:	
Who Has Parental Responsibility (if applicable)?	
Details of disclosure or concern, include date, time, full names, actual wording used)	
Any special needs of the child/ren/adults	
Actions Required	

Consent Given by child/young person/parent: Yes/No If consent not given, please state clearly reason for overruling the need for consent.	
Follow Up	
Your Name	
Your Role	
Signature	
Date, time and place:	