

Action for Family Carers
Charity No. 1127164

**SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN
POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

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Policy Reference Information

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1.0 Scope of Safeguarding Policy

1.1 This policy outlines Action for Family Carers' approach to safeguarding children and young people aged 17 and under. Please see the separate Adult Safeguarding Policy regarding people aged 18 and over.

1.2 The intended outcome of these documents is to safeguard and promote the welfare of vulnerable children and young people who are in receipt of a service from Action for Family Carers. This policy acknowledges that the welfare of the child is paramount and that all children without exception have the right to protection from abuse regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, beliefs, sexual orientation or identity.

1.3 This policy will be read in conjunction with the following Action for Family Carers policy documents:

- Safer Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Whistle Blowing Policy and Procedure
- IT Security and Safety Policy
- Adult Safeguarding Policy

1.4 This policy is written in accordance with:

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)
- Southend, Essex & Thurrock (SET) Child Protection Procedures (2019)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (DE 2018)
- Effective Support for Children and Families in Essex (2017)

2.0 Safeguarding Policy Statement

2.1 Action for Family Carers aims to improve the outcomes of vulnerable children and young people through offering effective and efficient services to promote opportunity, prevent problems and act early when concerns arise.

Action for Family Carers believes that it is always unacceptable for a child or young person to experience abuse of any kind and recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people, by a commitment to practice which protects them.

We recognise that:

- the welfare of the child/young person is paramount
- all children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare

The purpose of the policy:

- To provide protection for the children and young people who receive Action for Family Carers services, including the children of adult members or users.

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- To provide staff and volunteers with guidance on procedures they should adopt in the event that they suspect a child or young person may be experiencing, or be at risk of, harm.

This policy applies to all staff, including service managers, Chief Executive Officer and the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers and sessional workers, agency staff, students or anyone working on behalf of Action for Family Carers.

3.0 Legal Framework

3.1 Action for Family Carers is committed to comply with

- the Children and Families Act 2014
- the Human Rights Act 1998
- Protection of Children Act 1999
- the Children Act 2004
- the Health and Social Care Act 2012
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012.

4.0 Background

4.1 All those working on behalf of Action for Family Carers have a responsibility to safeguard and promote the well-being of children and young people, by being responsible for the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of their work.

4.2 Under Working Together to Safeguard Children (DE 2018), safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- protecting children from maltreatment
- preventing impairment of children's health or development
- ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and
- taking action to enable all children to have the best life chances.

Effective safeguarding arrangements should be underpinned by two key principles:

1. safeguarding is everyone's responsibility: for services to be effective each professional and organisation should play their full part; and
2. a child centred approach: for services to be effective they should be based on a clear understanding of the needs and views of children.

4.3 Action for Family Carers' services for children and young people seek to operate within the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Our policies are written to ensure that our services enable children and young people to exercise their rights under the UNCRC.

Under the UNCRC, all children and young people have the right to:

- survive and grow
- participate and be heard
- fulfil their potential
- receive an education
- be healthy
- be treated fairly
- have a childhood

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4.4 Therefore, Action for Family Carers will:

- ensure all staff are committed to safeguarding children and young people
- be clear about people's responsibilities and accountability
- have a culture of listening to children and young people
- implement safe recruitment practices for all staff working with children and young people – see Safe Recruitment policy for details
- make checks against and referrals to the Disclosure and Barring Service in accordance with Department of Health guidance – see Safer Recruitment & Selection policy for details
- have protocols in place for safeguarding children and young people
- have protocols for dealing with allegations against and concerns about staff
- have agreements about working with other organisations, including information sharing
- work in accordance with local arrangements and systems for the protection of children as set out by the relevant Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB).

5.0 Definitions of Abuse

5.1 Abuse is defined as any form of physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that leads to injury or harm to a child or young person under the age of 18. Abuse can happen to any child or young person. This is regardless of their age, gender, race or ability. Abusers are usually known to (and trusted by) the child and family; they can be adults, male or female, or another young person.

The abuser may be a family member, or they may be someone the child encounters in a residential setting or in the community, including during sports and leisure activities. An individual may abuse or neglect a child directly, or may be responsible for abuse because they fail to prevent another person harming that child.

There are four main types of child abuse: physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect.

5.2 Physical abuse

This is when someone physically hurts a child or young person on purpose. Physical abuse can include:

- hitting
- shaking
- poisoning
- burning
- drowning
- suffocating
- making a child ill.

5.3 Sexual abuse

This is when a child or young person is told, asked or forced to take part in sexual activity. The ways in which a young person can be sexually abused include:

- making them do sexual things either to themselves or with other people
- involving them in the making of films or taking photos that involve sexual activity
- making them watch sexual behaviour.

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5.4 Emotional abuse

This abuse can damage self-esteem and severely affect friendships, school and home life. Examples of emotional abuse include:

- being made to feel worthless, wrong or unhappy
- being unfairly blamed
- being bullied
- being made to feel frightened or in danger
- seeing or hearing domestic violence within the home.

5.5 Neglect

This is when a child or young person is not properly looked after. This could damage their health or wellbeing. A child's basic needs include:

- food and shelter
- safety within the home
- proper clothing
- good cleanliness
- warmth
- receiving necessary medical treatment
- protection from physical and emotional harm or danger.

5.6 Some other forms of child abuse and child protection concerns include:

- **Female Genital Mutilation**

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is a procedure where the female genital organs are deliberately cut or injured, but where there is no medical reason for this to be done. FGM can be carried out on girls of all ages but may be more common between the ages of 5 and 10.

- **Child Sexual Exploitation**

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) 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. Action for Family Carers has a trained CSE Champion who is responsible for raising awareness and training other staff using the SET CSE

Toolbox: <http://cse-toolbox.uk/>

- **E-Safety**

Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. Staff should be alert to issues involving new technologies (online grooming, sexting, etc.). Advice is available:

<https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-centre/parents-and-carers>

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- **Prevent**

Prevent is the multi-agency set of arrangements aimed at preventing individuals and groups from engaging in violent extremism. *Prevent* is not aimed at suppressing freedom of thought and expression.

Early indicators of extremism may include:

- Showing sympathy for extremist causes
- Glorifying violence
- Evidence of possessing illegal or extremist literature
- Advocating messages similar to illegal organisations such as ‘Muslims Against Crusades’ or other non-proscribed extremist groups such as the English Defence League
- Out of character changes in dress, behaviour and peer relationship

- **Domestic Abuse**

The Government defines domestic abuse as: “Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence, or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial, or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality”. Domestic Abuse affects significant numbers of children and young people and their families with the potential to cause immediate and long-term harm. Arranged or forced marriage is a form of Domestic Abuse practiced in certain ethnic communities. Honour Violence and Killings are also included.

6.0 **Recognising the Vulnerability of disabled children**

6.1 Staff will be made aware that disabled children are at increased vulnerability of suffering significant harm because they are likely to:

- be in contact with more service providers than non-disabled children
- be in receipt of intimate personal care
- spend more time away from their families, for example in short break care or residential care
- experience social isolation
- be subjected to abusive practices that go unrecognised, such as behaviour management models, neglect and inadequate care
- not be consulted or listened to.

7.0 **Roles and Responsibilities**

7.1 The Trustees retain ultimate responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children supported by Action for Family Carers. They should be informed as to who the Designated Person is within the organisation by The Chief Executive Officer. Trustees will all have an Enhanced Disclosure check and fully meet the requirements; receive an appropriate briefing and /or training and development as appropriate for their role; appoint a Lead Trustee who will receive appropriate training; annually review the policy and procedure with the flow chart and receive an exception report from the Designated Person as appropriate.

7.2 All adults working with or on behalf of children have a responsibility to protect them. There are, however, key people within Action for Family Carers and the Local Authority who have specific responsibilities under child protection procedures. The names of those carrying out these responsibilities are on the final page of the Safeguarding Policy and Procedure.

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- 7.3** It is the role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure that all of the child protection procedures are followed within the organisation, and to support those making appropriate, timely referrals to Essex Children's Social Care in accordance with Action for Family Carers procedures. If for any reason the Designated Safeguarding Lead is unavailable, the Chief Executive Officer has been identified and will act in their absence. Additionally, it is the role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure all staff employed including volunteers within the organisation are aware of the organisation's internal procedures, to advise staff and to offer support to those requiring this.
- 7.4** The Board of Trustees and the organisation's leadership team are responsible for ensuring that Action for Family Carers follows safe recruitment processes. As part of Action for Family Carers recruitment and vetting process, DBS checks will be sought on all staff that have substantial and unsupervised access to children.
- 7.5** The role of the Nominated Trustee for Child Protection is to ensure that Action for Family Carers has an effective policy, that the ESCB Guidelines are complied with <http://www.escb.co.uk/> and to support the organisation in this aspect. Trustees must not be given details relating to individual child protection cases or situations to ensure confidentiality is not breached.
- 7.6** The Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Chief Executive Officer will provide an annual report for the board of Trustees detailing any changes to the policy and procedures training undertaken by all staff and governors and other relevant issues.
- 7.7** Advice may be sought by calling 0345 603 7627 and asking for the Children's and Families hub.
- 7.8** Where safeguarding concerns arise within the context of an educational environment the worker will follow the safeguarding procedures of both the institution and Action for Family Carers. Where a referral to the Initial Response Team is made by Action for Family Carers the worker will inform the institution's designated Safeguarding Lead/Child Protection Officer that a referral has been made.
- 7.9** Where facilitators are brought in from external agencies Action for Family Carers will ask for confirmation that all staff have current DBS checks completed. Staff who are not directly employed by Action for Family Carers will not work with Young Carers or Young Adult Carers without supervision.
- 8.0 Procedures**
- 8.1** Staff will be kept informed about child protection responsibilities and procedures through induction, Keeping In Touch (KIT) meetings and awareness training. There may be other adults in the organisation who rarely work unsupervised with children and young people, more usually working alongside members of the organisations staff or primarily with adult service users. However, their Service Manager will ensure they are aware of Action for Family Carer's policy and the identity of the Designated Safeguard Lead.
- 8.2** All Action for Family Carers staff must be vigilant regarding the welfare of all children and young people with whom their work brings them in to contact. Staff involved in any way with service provision, will be trained to recognise the early signs of abuse in relation to children and young people.

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- 8.3** Any member of staff, volunteer, trustee or visitor to Action for Family Carers who receives a disclosure of abuse, an allegation or suspects that abuse may have occurred must report it immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or in their absence, the Chief Executive Officer. In the absence of either of the above, the matter should be brought to the attention of the most senior member of staff.
- 8.4** Where the staff, volunteers or trustees are within an educational setting, they will also inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead or their Deputy for that setting, they will follow both the safeguarding procedures for that setting and those for Action for Family Carers. Appendix 2 sets out internal process for reporting concerns.
- 8.5** The Designated Lead or the Chief Executive Officer will immediately refer cases of suspected abuse or allegations to The Children's and Families Hub by telephone and in accordance with the SET procedures 2019.
- 8.6** The telephone referral to the Children and Families Hub will be confirmed in writing within 48 hours. Essential information will include the young person's name, address, date of birth, family composition, the reason for the referral, whether the child's parents are aware of the referral, the name of person who initially received the disclosure plus any advice given.
- 8.7** Action for Family Carers will always undertake to share our intention to refer a child to Children's Social Care with the parents or carers unless to do so could place the child at greater risk of harm or impede a criminal investigation. On these occasions advice will be taken from the Initial Response Team (IRT) or Essex Police.
- 8.8** Action for Family Carers Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedure will be made available on the organisation's website, informing parents and carers about Action for Family Carers duties and responsibilities under child protection procedures. Parents can obtain a copy of Action for Family Carers Children Safeguarding Policy and Procedure on request.
- 9.0 Allegations against staff**
- 9.1** All allegations should be brought to the notice of the Designated Lead immediately. In cases where the allegation is made against this person, the complainant should approach the Chief Executive Officer. The designated lead, Chief Executive Officer, trustees and managers will ensure that any allegations of abuse or neglect are listened to and taken seriously and are reported to the following:
- the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within Children's Services
 - the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) where a play scheme or service for children out of their own home is registered with Ofsted
 - the police if a crime may have been committed
 - the Action for Family Carers board of trustees
- 10.0 Learning and Development**
- 10.1** Managers will make sure that all staff have mandatory induction and ongoing training in safeguarding and child protection, for those who do not work directly with children

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and young people this will consist of mandatory online safeguarding training (level 1), as their role may bring them into contact with children or young people who are, for example, living or regularly visiting service users' homes. Those staff that work directly with children and young people will have mandatory, face to face safeguarding training (level 2). Equipping them to carry out their responsibilities for child protection effectively, all safeguarding training will be kept up to date by refresher training at three yearly intervals. Staff within the Young Carers team will complete mandatory PREVENT training.

10.2 The Designated Safeguarding Lead will undertake Designated Safeguarding Lead training, provided by the Essex Safeguarding Children's Board and attend refresher training every two years.

10.3 Support will be available for staff from the Designated Safeguarding Lead in the first instance, and from service managers and the Chief Executive Officer where there are concerns about queries about child protection.

11 Professional Confidentiality

11.1 Confidentiality is an issue which needs to be discussed and fully understood by all those working with children, particularly in the context of child protection. The only purpose of confidentiality in this respect is to benefit the child. A member of staff must never guarantee confidentiality to a young person nor should they agree with a young person to keep a secret, as where there is a child protection concern this must be reported and may require further investigation by appropriate authorities.

11.2 Staff will be informed of relevant information in respect of individual cases regarding child protection on a "need to know basis" only. Any information shared with a member of staff in this way must be held confidentially to themselves.

12.0 Records and Monitoring

12.1 Well-kept records are essential to good child protection practice. Action for Family Carers is clear about the need to record any concern held about a child or children within our organisation, the status of such records and when these records should be passed over to other agencies.

12.2 Any member of staff receiving a disclosure of abuse or noticing signs or indicators of abuse, must make an accurate record on an Incident form as soon as possible noting what was said or seen, putting the event in context, and giving the date, time and location. All records will be dated and signed and will include the action taken.

12.3 The Incident form must be added to the young person's file on the internal electronic database. There will also be a note made of the disclosure, referring to the completed Incident form on the young person's file in the record of interactions.

13.0 Review and Adoption by the Board of Trustees

13.1 Action for Family Carers' board of trustees is required to formally adopt this policy and to ensure that a documented record is kept of their decision to do so.

13.2 Full details of the policy and the date it was adopted will be documented in the minutes of the appropriate trustee board meeting as evidence of the decision taken. The minutes will be signed by the chair of the trustees on behalf of the board.

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Appendix 1

Key Contacts within Action for Family Carers

Designated Safeguarding Lead

NAME: Heather Beach

ROLE: Head of Carer Services

CONTACT NUMBER: 01621 851640

Chief Executive Officer

NAME: James Clarke

CONTACT NUMBER: 01621 851640

Nominated Trustee for Child Protection

NAME: Paul Osman

CONTACT NUMBER: 01245 476182

Key contacts at the Local Authority

Essex Children & Families Hub

Monday to Thursday 8.45am – 5.00pm **0345 603 7627**

Friday 8.45am – 4.30pm **0345 603 7627**

Out of hours:

Monday to Thursday 5.00pm – 8.45am, 4.30pm Friday to 8.45am Monday incl. bank holidays

Tel: 0345 606 1212

Southend First Contact Team 01702 215007. Out of hours 0345 606 1212

www.safeguardingsouthend.co.uk

Thurrock (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) MASH team 01375652802

Out of hours: 01375 372468

www.thurrocklscp.org.uk

If there is an immediate risk of harm to a child then contact the Police on **999**

Policy Reference Information

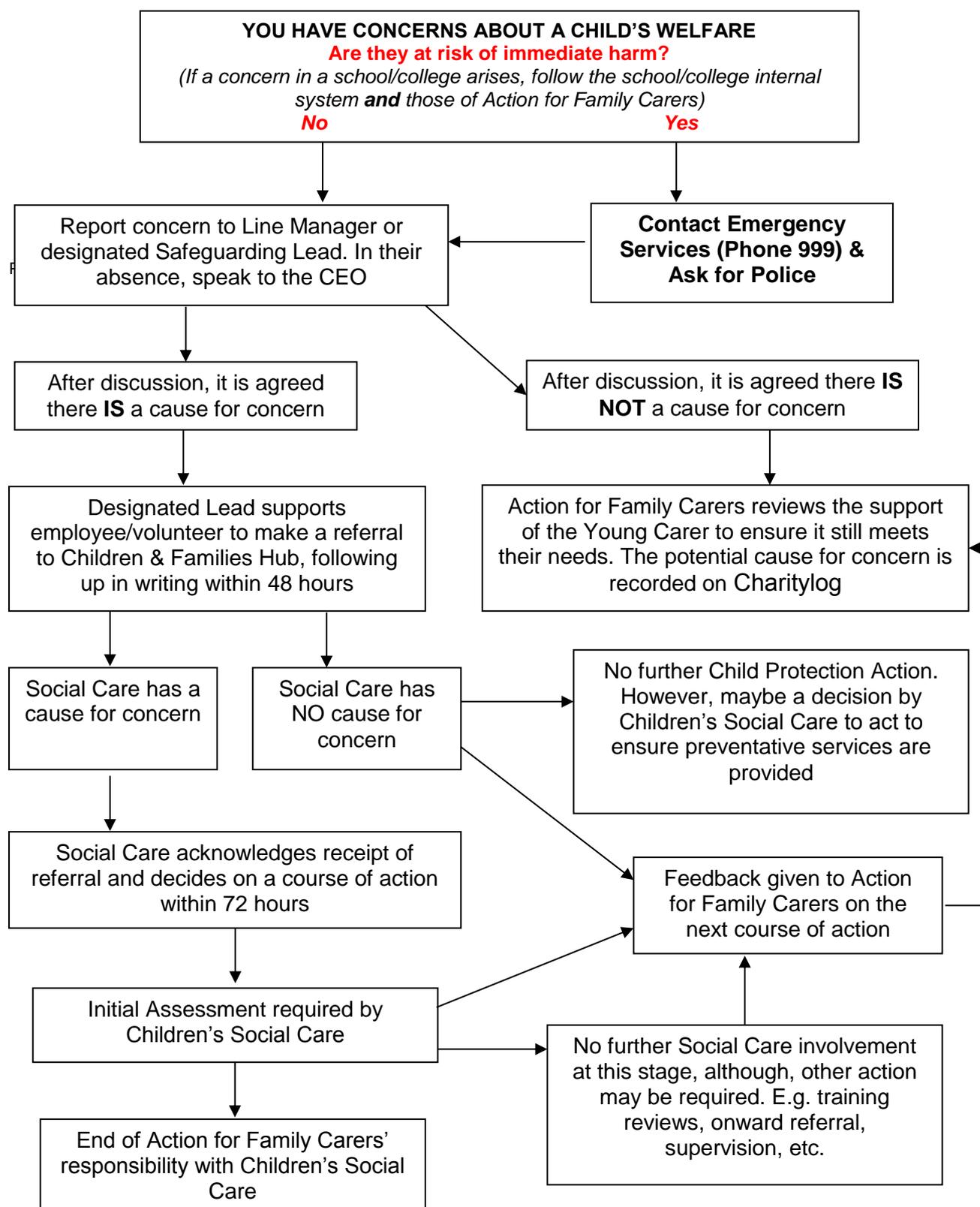
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Appendix 2

Flow Chart Reporting Child Protection Concerns



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