

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Foreword – Director Of Operations

This policy and procedure is a way of demonstrating that Compass understands our responsibilities towards keeping children safe from harm and that we have measures and systems in place to maximise the effectiveness of our practice.

We aim to ensure the highest standards of care and protection when working with children and young people. In line with statutory guidance, 'Working Together to Safeguard Children and Young People' (2015 2004), these procedures provide a clear framework for staff to work together to safeguard children and young people. This includes working together with foster carers, Local Authorities, other agencies and stakeholders.

Indeed, this policy and its intentions are relevant across all levels and positions within the service; with there being a clear accountability from each individual worker to the responsible individuals (as defined by regulations). With regards to working together, this policy is available to all Local Authority safeguarding boards (LSCB), supervising social workers, foster carers or any professionals working with children and families of looked after children within the agency.

The operation managers in conjunction with their designated manager for safeguarding should have access to copies of the local safeguarding procedures manual for each authority in which they operate, and make these available to each member of staff. They have the responsibility to familiarise themselves with their own procedures and those within the relevant LSCB procedures manual. These procedures are likely to reflect the focus of the agency's work and any agreement it may have in force with the Local Authority.

The designated managers for safeguarding are also responsible for; the strategic lead in the continued development of safeguarding procedures and ensure safeguarding is planned within all service development. They will liaise with the LSCB and ensure compliance. They will have responsibility for ensuring close liaison with the Local Authority and LSCB's; for effective inter-agency procedures for dealing with allegations against people who work with children and for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of these services.

The Local Authorities that we work with still remain the lead agency with statutory responsibility for safeguarding and protecting children through children services. However, working to protect children is not the sole responsibility of one agency. Safeguarding children depends crucially upon effective information sharing, collaboration and understanding between agencies and professionals at all levels who bring different roles and expertise. It is fundamental that we all work together to deliver robust, effective services that protect and safeguard children. Indeed, Working Together 2015 is clear that allegations and referrals relating to concerns about a child should be dealt with in a 'coordinated manner'.

Kathy Swift

Senior Designated Manager for Safeguarding

1.2 Compass Charter

Compass believes that:

“Safeguarding children and promoting their welfare is everyone’s responsibility”

This belief is grounded within and supports the key principles of the HM Government ‘Working Together to Safeguard Children’ (2015 2004).

Thus, this statutory guidance states that effective safeguarding arrangements should be underpinned by 2 key principles:

- Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility: for services to be effective each professional and organisations should play their full part: and
- A child centred approach: for services to be effective they should be based on a clear understanding of the needs and views of children.

1.3 Purpose of Procedures

The purpose of this procedure and policy is to familiarise those directly involved with children and young people with the wider context for safeguarding and the collaborative inter-agency working between statutory agencies at a local level.

These procedures therefore are relevant to all staff across different departments, external staff employed including; Form F assessors, sessional workers, foster carers, consultants panel members, support workers, psychologists.

- Anyone who has contact with children needs to know the principles contained in the Working Together Document;
- Their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding children and promoting the welfare of children
- They need to know the agency’s internal safeguarding procedures;
- Who to share information with when safeguarding concerns arise about a child
- The legislative framework for their work;
- Local authority protocols –information sharing across professional boundaries.
- Effective inter-agency communication.

1.4 Legislation and principles for our practice

This policy is informed by relevant legislation, statutory guidance and good practice guidance. In order to fulfil our commitment to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people we abide by the following principles:

- A clear commitment and line of accountability by senior management to the importance of safeguarding and promoting children’s welfare through both the commissioning and the provision of services;

- A culture of listening to and engaging in dialogue with children and young people – seeking their views in ways appropriate to their age and understanding, and taking account of those both in individual decisions and the establishment or development and improvement of services;
- When following procedures and processes, positive outcomes for children and young people are always the priority. All children and young people will have a child specific safe care plan in place that will take into account their individual needs and circumstances.
- Recruitment and personnel management procedures that take account of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children; including arrangements for appropriate checks on new staff, carers and volunteers and adoption of best practice in the recruitment of new staff, carers and volunteers;
- A clear understanding of how to work together to help keep children safe on-line by being adequately equipped to understand, identify and mitigate the risks of new technology;
- Procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against members of staff and volunteers;
- Arrangements to ensure that all staff and carers undertake appropriate training to equip them to carry out their responsibilities effectively, and keep this up to date by refresher training at regular intervals (not exceeding 3 years) and that all staff, including temporary staff and volunteers who work with children, are made aware of both the company's internal safeguarding procedures;
- Procedures that are in accordance with National Minimum standards and Regulations as well as the Local Authority and locally agreed inter-agency procedures (indeed we adhere to regulation 11 – duty to secure welfare and regulation 12 – arrangements for the protection of children on a daily basis).
- Arrangements are in place for effective information sharing and inter-agency collaboration to safeguard children and promote their welfare;
- Appropriate Whistle- Blowing procedures and a culture that enables issues about safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children to be addressed. This procedure reflects the principles of Sir Roberts Francis Freedom to Speak Up report (Working Together 2015)

Our Ethos is:

- The Welfare of the child is paramount;
- All children regardless of age, disability, sex, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity have the right to equal protection from all types of harm and abuse;
- Working in partnership with children, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential to safeguard children and young people and promote their welfare.

Our Practice is underpinned by REACH which is a conceptual framework based on resilience, attachment and aspects of social pedagogy which supports and underpins our practice approach, by

which children can be helped to move towards a sense of security and improve their emotional well-being. Thus:

- Resilience – Carers capacity to care and nurture a child even when they are hostile and rejecting. ‘Stickability’ of carers to provide trust, sense of self-worth and self-acceptance. Carers to be available both emotionally and physically;
- Education – Education of the carers. The process of changing the mind and behaviour of the child begins in the mind of the care giver. Carers need to understand their own behaviours and expectations and understand their parenting styles and how this may impact on children;
- Acceptance – Carers ability to accept children as they are. Aim is to build self-esteem and provide creative opportunities for children to ‘accept’ and love themselves;
- Child Centred – Carers to recognise and empathise with children’s feelings. To do this carers need to first accept, process and understand their own feelings and then reflect/manage and positively respond to the child’s behaviours and feelings;
- Holistic – Provide child with a sense of belonging to carer’s family, own birth family, wider and social community network. Support the child to accept who they are and manage their complex relationships.

2 DEFINITIONS AND SIGNS OF CHILD ABUSE

2.1 Key Definitions

What is a child in need? (S17 of the Children Act 1989)

Children who are defined as being ‘in need’ under the Children Act 1989, are those whose vulnerabilities is such that they are unlikely to achieve or maintain a satisfactory level of health or development, or their health and development will be significantly impaired, without the provision of services (s17(10) of the Children Act 1989) plus those who are disabled. The critical factors to be taken into account in deciding whether a child is in need under the Children Act 1989 are what will happen to a child’s health or development without services and the likely effect the services will have on the child’s standard of health and development.

What is significant harm? (S47 of the Children Act 1989)

Some of the children are in need because they are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. The Children Act 1989 introduced the concept of significant harm as the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention into family life in the best interests of the children. The Local Authority is under a duty to make enquires, or cause enquires to be made, when it has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm (s47 of the Children Act 1989). To make enquires involves assessing what is happening to a child. Where s47 enquires are being made, the assessment should concentrate on the harm that has occurred or is likely to occur to the child as a result of child maltreatment in order to inform future plans and the nature of the services required.

What is abuse and neglect?

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Maltreatment of children physically, emotionally, sexually or through neglect can have devastating long-term effects on all aspects of a child's health, development and well-being. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing 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. An adult or adults or another child or children may abuse them.

Statutory guidance offers four defined areas of abuse.

Physical Abuse:

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scolding, 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.

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 or penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothes. 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. In recent years there has been increasing awareness of sexual exploitation as an important dimension of sexual abuse. Compass Policy – Sexual Exploitation must be read in conjunction with this policy.

Emotional Abuse:

Emotional abuse is 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 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 the child. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's development capability, as well as over protection 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.

Neglect:

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in serious impairment of the child's health and 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);
- 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.

2.2 Common Indicators of Abuse

Physical Abuse:

Bruises, black eyes and broken bones are obvious signs of physical abuse.

Other signs might include:

- Injuries that the child cannot explain or explains unconvincingly
- Untreated or inadequately treated injuries
- Injuries to parts of the body where accidents are unlikely, such as thighs back, abdomen
- Bruising that looks like hand or finger marks
- Cigarette burns, human bites
- Scalds and burns.

Sexual Abuse:

- Pain, itching, bruising or bleeding in the genital or anal areas
- Genital discharge or urinary tract infections
- Stomach pains or discomfort walking or sitting
- Sexually transmitted infections.
- The child may refuse to attend school or start to have difficulty concentrating so that their schoolwork is affected
- The child may refuse to attend school or start to have difficulty concentrating so that their schoolwork is affected
- They may show unexpected fear or distrust of a particular adult or refuse to continue with their usual social activities
- They may start using sexually explicit behaviour or language, particularly if the behaviour or language is not appropriate for their age

- The child may describe receiving special attention from a particular adult, or refer to a new, 'secret' friendship with an adult or young person.

Neglect:

There are occasions when nearly all parents find it difficult to cope with the many demands of caring for children. But this does not mean their children are being neglected. Neglect involves on going severe failure to meet a child's needs.

Here are some signs of possible neglect:

- If the child seems underweight and is very small for their age
- If they are poorly clothed, with inadequate protection from the weather
- If they are often absent from school for no apparent reason
- If they are regularly left alone, or in charge of younger brothers or sisters.

Emotional Abuse:

This occurs when a child's basic need for love and praise, security and recognition go unmet, either through deliberate negative actions by parents/ carers or by a failure to act positively. It may also convey to children that they are; Inadequate, worthless, or unloved, or that they are only valued if they are able to meet the needs of the other person.

Physical indicators:

- Bed wetting and / or diarrhoea
- Psychosomatic complaints i.e. headaches and nausea

Behavioural indicators:

- Emotional development delay
- Behaviours inappropriate for age
- Overly complaint
- Extreme attention seeking behaviour
- Poor peer relations
- Run away attempts

It is important to be aware that some groups of children may be more vulnerable to abuse for a variety of reasons. Vulnerable children include disabled children; children living with parental adversity such as domestic violence, parental substance misuse or mental illness; unaccompanied asylum seeking children; trafficked children, children affected by gang activity; looked after children etc. Many of these children will have additional needs that require support and some may also be in need of protection.

3 PROCESS AND PROCEDURES FOR SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS

3.1 Roles and Responsibilities

It is not the responsibility of anyone working for Compass to decide whether or not a child is being abused or might have been abused. However, safeguarding is 'everybody's responsibility', therefore, there is a responsibility to act on concerns to protect children in order that appropriate agencies can then make enquires to take any necessary action to protect children.

The following procedures and guidance are to assist Compass employees when dealing with safeguarding concerns. This will be divided into the following sections:

- What process to follow if you have any safeguarding concerns about a child
- Advice to FC and staff members on what to do when a child makes a disclosure
- Process to follow when an allegation has been made against:
 - ❖ Foster carer/s
 - ❖ Member of staff

Designated Persons

Whilst everybody shares the responsibility for safeguarding within Compass we have designated managers for safeguarding and a senior designated manager. Compass has four regions and the Heads of Fostering (who are the Registered Managers) take the designated responsibility for their regions:

❖ Compass North	Head of Fostering
❖ Compass Central	Head of Fostering
❖ Compass London and Eastern	Head of Fostering
❖ Compass Fostering South	Head of Fostering

The senior designated manager is the Director of Operations

The Responsible Individual is the Managing Director

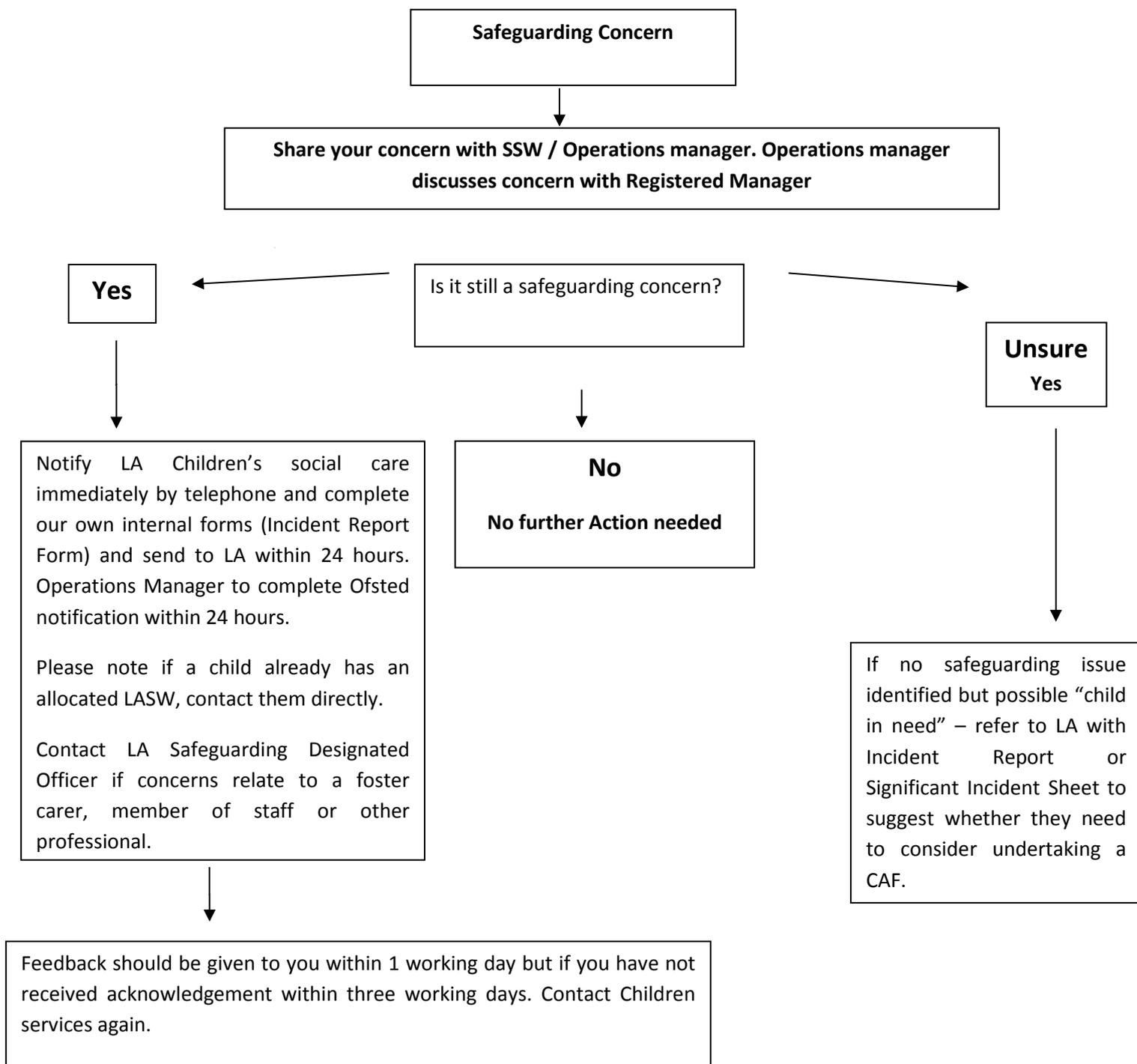
The designated managers and senior designated manager will ensure that the Compass deals with allegations and safeguarding concerns in accordance with these procedures. They will also:

- Ensure that all staff know the agencies procedures for safeguarding;
- Support Operations Managers with safeguarding and in conjunction with designated managers for safeguarding, ensure supervising social workers and advanced

practitioners and all other members of staff have access to copies of the Local Safeguarding Procedures for each authority in which they operate;

- Liaise with LSCB to ensure compliance;
- Resolve any inter-agency issues and ensure effective working collaboration with other agencies
- Take the strategic lead in the development of safeguarding procedures.

3.2 Flow Chart - If you have a Safeguarding concern about a child or young person follow the process below



3.3 Responding to a safeguarding concern made to Compass Community

- Any allegation or concern reported to a member of staff by the public should be immediately discussed with their line manager;
- If the Operations manager / Designated manager thinks there is a safeguarding concern they will adhere to the safeguarding procedures of the relevant Local Authorities and notify the Local Authorities children's social care team by telephone as a matter of priority. They will also notify Ofsted and the LA safeguarding Designated Officer if an allegation has been made against a foster carer or staff member;
- If the child has an allocated social worker the referral should be made to the social worker with responsibility for the child, or their team manager;
- Where the child does not have an allocated Local Authority social worker, a referral should be made to the children's social care team covering the area where the child usually resides but also contact the placing authority;
- Make a written record of the information received, sign and date the written record on Compass forms. These also need to be sent to the operations / designated manager immediately. All initial conversations and decision making must be logged;
- On-call referrals should be made to the children's emergency duty team and followed up the next morning by contacting the child's allocated social worker or children's social care team. The on-call worker must also immediately refer to Operations Manager / Head of Fostering (Registered Manager);
- The Local Authority will determine how to proceed. Staff may have to assist the Local Authority with investigation if required.
- Working Together (2015) advises that professionals should follow up their concerns if they are not satisfied with the Local Authority children social care response.

3.4 Advice to foster carers and staff members on what to do if a child discloses.

Careful management of disclosures or suggestions of abuse is necessary; because an appropriate response can affect both the legal outcome of any resulting investigation, and the emotional and psychological consequences for the child. Therefore please consider the following if a child discloses abuse or indicates abuse:

- If a child discloses to you, do not interview the child in depth but react calmly and assure them it is ok to tell you;
- Listen carefully and re-assure the child, thus:
 - ❖ React calmly so as not to frighten the child;
 - ❖ Take what the child says seriously, recognising the difficulties inherent in interpreting what is said by a young child/ or a child who has communication impairment and/or differences in language;
 - ❖ Tell the child they are not to blame and reassure them it was right to tell
 - ❖ Keep questions to an absolute minimum to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said;
 - ❖ Do not criticise the perpetrator;
 - ❖ Explain what has to be done next and who has to be told;

- ❖ Make a record of what has been said, heard and/or seen and sign and date the record
- Then follow internal Safeguarding procedures by notifying supervising social worker / manager (refer to flow chart on previous page);
- The child's immediate safety must always be considered a priority to ensure that they are safe and records must be made as soon as possible after the situation has been made safe;
- Where a child has suffered a possible injury medical attention may be needed and they may need to be seen by a paediatrician. Advice from the Registered Manager or senior manager should be sought but decisions should only ever be taken in discussion with the investigating Local Authority.

3.5 Allegations against Professionals (Staff and Foster Carers)

These procedures apply to all cases where suspicion or allegations arises in connection with:

- The individual's own work
- His or her own children
- Other children living outside of the family; and
- Whether the concerns is current or historical

Statutory guidance (2015 & 2004) provides a framework for managing allegations against members of the workforce. It applies to a wide range of allegations than those in which there is reasonable cause to believe a child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. It should be used in respect of all cases in which it is alleged that a person who works with children 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.

Within the 'Working Together' framework, there may be up to 3 strands in the consideration of an allegation against a person who works with children:

- A police investigation of a possible criminal offence;
- Enquires and assessments by children social care about whether a child is in need of protection or in need of services; and
- Consideration by an employer of disciplinary action in respect of the individual. With regards to foster carers a review of foster carers suitability to foster, and the recommendation of the fostering panel and decision maker, in accordance with Fostering Services Regulations.

In accordance with Working Together (2015) Local Authorities should ensure that allegations against people who work with children are not dealt with in isolation. Thus, allegations and referrals relating to concerns about a child/children should be taken without delay and dealt with in a 'coordinated manner'.

Local authorities will have a safeguarding designated officer or team of officers to be involved in the management and oversight of allegations against people that work with children. Professionals managing these allegations should be significantly experienced and a qualified social worker.

3.5a Process of responding to an allegation against a foster carer, member of their family or support network

Any allegation about a foster carer, member of their family or support network must be reported to the Operations Manager/Registered Manager without delay. If in doubt as to whether something warrants a concern you should always discuss with your manager. Priority over all other work should be given to any action needed to protect the child.

- Staff member receives/becomes aware of concerns/allegations from any source report to Operations Manager immediately
- Supervising social worker completes the incident form and sends to Operations Manager signed and dated;
- The Operations Manager will consult the same day with the Registered Manager and will decide on the significance of the information and whether the Local Authority and the LA safeguarding designated officer needs to be informed. It needs to be noted that the threshold for discussing with the LA safeguarding designated officer are lower than for general child protection. Thus, the level of harm does not have to be regarded as significant;
- If it is felt that there are concerns about a foster carer, their family member or support network, the Operations Manager will consult with the LA safeguarding designated officer / LSCB where the foster carers lives within 24 hours and the Local Authority for any child in placement within 24 hours. The Operations Manager checks and signs the significant incident sheet and then sends to LA within 24 hours/next working day.
- The Operations Manager is to complete Ofsted notification form within 24 hours.
- Following discussions with the Local Authority and LA safeguarding designated officer decisions will be made about the safety of any children in placement and a decision will be made by the Local authority if the children will remain in placement or moved to an alternative placement;
- Unless there is good practice reasons not to, supervising social workers will advocate with the Local Authority that carers are kept as fully informed as possible. Regarding payments for foster carers of allowances and fees during investigations will be decided on an individual basis;

- The Operations Manager or SSW will inform the foster carers of the outline of the situation, in person, or by telephone, as soon as possible and this will then be followed up in writing to the carers. It will be ensured that the foster carer/s receive information, including;
 - ❖ Outline of the situation (limited information will only be provided and the content of this will be in agreement with the investigating Local Authority)
 - ❖ Discuss who is best to support them and offer Independent support
 - ❖ Discuss Compass internal safeguarding procedures (what procedures are being followed and who will visit)
 - ❖ Details of Local Authority safeguarding procedures.

At this stage the LA may decide either:

- No further action from the Local Authority
- Or a S47 enquiry/investigation

If no further action from the Local Authority:

- Registered Manager decides whether a review of Foster Carers suitability is required. If not no further action;
- If yes due to practice issues a review is completed by supervising social worker or independent social worker and then taken back to Fostering Panel with recommendation of either termination of approval or continued approval with support and action plan;
- If termination of approval and recommendation to Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS) operations Manager/Registered manager complete referral to DBS;

If S47 enquiry/investigation:

- Strategy meeting and any further strategy meetings need to be attended by SSW and Operations Manager. The agency will provide a report for the strategy meetings.
- Operations manager to inform carers after strategy meeting and confirm any actions as per strategy recommendations;
- Registered Manager to decide if a foster carer annual review is required (if there are two concerns within 12 month period a review must be undertaken (see policy on Foster Carer reviews)
- If termination of approval and recommendation to DBS, SSW or Operations Manager to complete referral;

- Notify Ofsted and LA safeguarding designated officer of outcome of carer review and recommendations;
- Complete and conclude all agency paperwork.