

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Legislation and Guidance

The Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011, Regulation 11: Independent fostering agencies—duty to secure welfare states: The registered person in respect of an independent fostering agency must ensure that.

- (a) the welfare of children placed or to be placed with foster parents is safeguarded and promoted at all times, and
- (b) before making any decision affecting a child placed or to be placed with a foster parent due consideration is given to the child’s—
 - (i) wishes and feelings (having regard to the child’s age and understanding), and
 - (ii) religious persuasion, racial origin, and cultural and linguistic background

Regulation 12: Arrangements for the protection of children states:

- (1) *The fostering service provider must prepare and implement a written policy which—*
 - (a) *is intended to safeguard children placed with foster parents from abuse or neglect, and*
 - (b) *sets out the procedure to be followed in the event of any allegation of abuse or neglect*

Refer to Tutis Foster Care Allegations Procedure

- (2) *The written policy must include a statement of measures to be taken to safeguard any child before making parent and child arrangements with that foster parent.*
- (3) *The procedure under paragraph (1)(b) must, subject to paragraph (4), provide in particular for:*
 - (a) *liaison and co-operation with any local authority which is, or may be, making child protection enquiries in relation to any child placed by the fostering service provider,*
 - (b) *the prompt referral to the area authority of any allegation of abuse or neglect affecting any child placed by the fostering service provider,*
 - (c) *notification of the instigation and outcome of any child protection enquiries involving a child placed by the fostering service provider, to the Chief Inspector,*

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(d) written records to be kept of any allegation of abuse or neglect, and of the action taken in response,

(e) consideration to be given to the measures which may be necessary to protect children placed with foster parents following an allegation of abuse or neglect, and

(f) arrangements to be made for persons working for the purposes of the fostering service, foster parents and children placed by the fostering service, to have the address (including email address), and telephone number of—

(i) the area authority, and

(ii) the Chief Inspector,

for the purposes of referring any concern about child welfare or safety to them

(4) Sub-paragraphs (a) and (c) of paragraph (3) do not apply to a local authority fostering service.

(5) In this regulation “child protection enquiries” means any enquiries carried out by a local authority in the exercise of any of its functions conferred by or under the 1989 Act relating to the protection of children. The National Minimum Standards – Standard 4 states that the Outcome sought is:

Children feel safe and are safe. Children understand how to protect themselves and are protected from significant harm, including neglect, abuse and accident.

4.1 Children’s safety and welfare is promoted in all fostering placements. Children are protected from abuse and other forms of significant harm (e.g. sexual or labour exploitation).

4.2 Foster carers actively safeguard and promote the welfare of foster children.

4.3 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.

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- 4.4 *Foster carers encourage children to take appropriate risks as a normal part of growing up. Children are helped to understand how to keep themselves safe, including when outside of the household or when using the internet or social media.*
- 4.5 *The service implements a proportionate approach to any risk assessment.*
- 4.6 *Foster carers are trained in appropriate safer-care practice, including skills to care for children who have been abused. For foster carers who offer placements to children with disabilities, this includes training specifically on issues affecting these children.*
- 4.7 *The fostering service works effectively in partnership with other agencies concerned with child protection, e.g. the responsible authority, schools, hospitals, general practitioners, etc., and does not work in isolation from them.*

The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 4: Fostering Services (paragraph 3.66) highlights the importance of inter-agency working to safeguard children as set out in Working Together, and also links safeguarding considerations to a written health and safety policy and freedom from avoidable hazards (paragraph 3.82).

The Bichard Enquiry report in 2004 highlighted the need for all services involved with children to rigorously vet, recruit and select those who work with children, including taking up Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service checks (DBS). Requirements for eDBS checks on staff, foster carers and other adult members of the fostering household are set out in the Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011.

INTRODUCTION

Tutis Foster Care's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures are written in accordance with the Children Act 1989 and 2004, (as amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017) The Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 and National Minimum Standards, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 and the relevant Child Protection Procedures published by Local Safeguarding Children Partnerships.

Tutis Foster Care is committed to ensuring that children and young people placed in their care are kept safe and have a good experience of family life. This policy reflects the core values of Tutis that the child's welfare, safety, and needs are at the centre of care. Tutis Foster Care

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recognises its legal and ethical duty to safeguard the welfare of children, to protect them from harm and respond where we have concerns that a child is or may be suffering significant harm. We will seek to work in partnership with Local Authorities Children’s Services, Police, and other relevant agencies.

This policy is designed to ensure that Tutis Foster Care takes every possible measure to ensure the safety of and prevent significant harm to a child / young person. It aims to ensure that none of Tutis Foster Care’s employees or Foster Carers behave in a way which could allow significant harm to occur or engage in actions that could be misinterpreted by children, their families or other adults as constituting or leading to harm.

Tutis Foster Care understands that it is not always easy to recognise maltreatment, and therefore it is an expectation that all employees / Foster Carers seek advice if unsure, share information, and adopt and embrace this policy.

Definition of Safeguarding

Ofsted adopts the definition used in the Children Act 2004 (as amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017) and the Department for Education guidance document *Working together to safeguard children* (2023) which focuses on safeguarding and promoting children and young people’s welfare and can be summarised as:

Protecting children from Harm

- all professionals who come into contact with children and families are alert to their needs and any risks of harm that individual abusers, or potential abusers, may pose to children.
- all professionals share appropriate information in a timely way and can discuss any concerns about an individual child with colleagues and Local Authority Children’s Social Care.
- all professionals contribute to whatever actions are needed to safeguard and promote a child’s welfare and take part in regularly reviewing the outcomes for the child against specific plans and outcomes.

Ultimately, effective safeguarding of children can only be achieved by putting children at the centre of the system, and by every individual and agency playing their full part, working together to meet the needs of our most vulnerable children.

Tutis Foster Care acknowledge that in order to offer exceptional care to children and young people, stringent safe recruitment of staff and carers is essential, as is support; monitoring; training; enhancing skills and knowledge and creative thinking.

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Recognition of Maltreatment

Maltreatment is a term used to describe ways in which children suffer significant harm by someone. Children can be abused in a family, institutional or community setting by those known and trusted by the child, or more rarely a stranger. Occasionally children commit offences against other children or have behavioural difficulties which presents danger or risk to other children. Although children can harm other children, adults perpetrate most child maltreatment.

It is not our responsibility to decide whether a child is suffering harm, but we have a duty of care to pass any concerns to the relevant Placing Authority. Concern may arise in a number of ways:

- A child may make an allegation about maltreatment they have experienced.
- A third party (potentially another child) may share concerns with you.
- A bruise or injury which is unusual e.g. on a part of the body not prone to such injury.
- Noticing injuries which require but have not received medical attention.
- Actual witnessing of maltreatment taking place e.g. by an employee or Foster Carer
- The child appears to not trust certain adults e.g. parent, carer, or staff member with whom they once had a close relationship.
- Inappropriate sexual knowledge or behaviour for their age and understanding, for example, inappropriate sexual touching, kissing or masturbation.
- The child becoming unusually dirty or unkempt (relevant to age and development)
- Changes to eating patterns.
- The child developing a disturbed sleeping pattern e.g. nightmares, bedwetting.
- Self-harm or attempts to self-harm.

The above list is not exhaustive, and many children will display some of these behaviours at some time, but this should not be taken as proof that maltreatment is occurring. However, it is important that all concerns are reported and recorded, the information provided could prove crucial, and be a part of a much bigger picture. Maltreatment can affect children at any age, and the impact can be so damaging that the consequences are felt throughout a person's life.

What is Abuse?

It is generally accepted that there are four main categories of child abuse. The following definitions are taken from Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm.

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- **Physical Abuse:** *Any non-accidental physical injury or injuries to a child or adult. This includes inflicting pain of any sort or causing bruises, fractures, burns, electric shock, or any unpleasant sensation.*
- **Emotional Abuse:** *Verbal assaults, threats of maltreatment, harassment, humiliation or intimidation, or failure to interact with a person or to acknowledge that person's existence. This may also include denying cultural or religious needs and preferences.*
- **Sexual Abuse:** *Any sexual contact between an adult and child 16 years of age and younger; or any sexual activity with an adult who is unable to understand, has not given consent, is threatened, coerced, or forced to engage in sexual behaviour.*
- **Neglect:** *The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and psychological needs, which is likely to result in serious impairment to health and development.*

Although not categories of abuse, there are additional considerations to be considered when defining child abuse. There have been a number of studies, which suggest that children with special needs e.g. disabilities and emotional/behavioural difficulties, and children from minority ethnic groups are at an increased risk of maltreatment through various factors such as stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, isolation, and powerlessness to protect themselves, or to adequately communicate that maltreatment has occurred. Babies are also more susceptible to injury and harm.

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) also includes 'exploitation' when speaking about neglect and abuse.

[Prevent duty](#) Prevent duty guidance: England and Wales (2023) - GOV.UK

Children and young people can be drawn into violence, or they can be exposed to the messages of extremist groups by many means. Foster carers are able to prevent, recognise and support a child or young person who may be subjected to extremism and radicalisation. This duty is known as the **Prevent duty**. It applies to a wide range of public-facing bodies. The specified authorities are those judged to have a role in protecting vulnerable children, young people and adults and/or the national security.

[Child Criminal Exploitation \(CCE\)](#) Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines (accessible version) - GOV.UK

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) including county lines and modern slavery – Criminal exploitation of children is a geographically widespread form of harm that is a typical feature of county lines criminal activity: drug networks or gangs groom and exploit children to carry drugs and money from urban areas to suburban and rural areas, market and seaside towns. Key to identifying potential involvement in county lines are missing episodes (both from home and school) when the victim may have been trafficked for the purpose of transporting

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drugs. Children are often recruited to move drugs and money between locations and can easily become trapped by this type of exploitation as gangs create drug debts and can threaten serious violence and kidnap towards victims (and their families) if they attempt to leave the county lines network.

[Child Sexual Exploitation](#) Child sexual exploitation: definition and guide for practitioners - GOV.UK

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

[Honour based' abuse \(HBA\) Female Genital mutilation](#)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/multi-agency-statutory-guidance-on-female-genital-mutilation>

'Honour based' abuse (HBA) – Honour based abuse includes crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), forced marriage (some perpetrators use perceived cultural practices to coerce a person into marriage), and practices such as breast ironing. This type of abuse in the context of preserving “honour” often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators. All forms of so-called HBA are abuse (regardless of motivation) and will be handled and escalated as such. Professionals in all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities need to be alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of HBA, or already having suffered HBA.

[Child on Child Abuse \(sibling or otherwise\)](#)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

Child on child abuse (also known as peer-on-peer abuse) is behaviour by an individual or group of individuals which can be a one-off incident or repeated over time. Child on child abuse is behaviour that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally.

Chapter 2: Multi-agency safeguarding arrangements

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34. Protecting children from abuse, neglect and exploitation requires multi-agency join up and cooperation at all levels. Local organisations and agencies that work with children and families play a significant and often statutory role when it comes to safeguarding children.

Disclosure of Abuse

Maltreatment or suspected maltreatment of a child / young person may present in two ways; observation of an indicator of maltreatment or a disclosure from a child / young person.

Observation

Observation of an actual injury requires consideration of:

- Immediate action to protect the child.
- Immediate medical attention

In these circumstances, it may be necessary to make immediate contact with the Police and/or local authority, or emergency health services. Foster Carers are encouraged to consult with someone else if unsure, but to prioritise any medical attention.

Verbal Disclosure

Children / young people in care may disclose in confidence to their Foster Carers that at some stage in their lives, they have been abused. It is important that Foster Carers understand that young people cannot be given absolute guarantees of confidentiality in this situation. This would put Foster Carers in the vulnerable position being in possession of information that a crime may have been committed without the ability to report it. It would also make it impossible to protect the young person or other young people from future abuse. It is, therefore, very important not to make any promises to the child.

When a young person alleges abuse, a Foster Carer should listen to what they have to say. The emphasis should be on listening, rather than asking questions.

Foster Carers should:

- React calmly to avoid frightening the child / young person.
- Reassure the child that they were right to tell, and they are not the blame.
- Not stop a child / young person who is freely recalling events.
- Take what the child says seriously, recognising the difficulties inherent in interpreting what is said by the child.
- Keep questions to an absolute minimum to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said.

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- Only ask questions if you need to identify what the child is telling you – do not ask the child about explicit details.
- Not ask leading questions.
- Reassure the child that the information will be kept private but that you have to tell certain people to make sure action is taken, and also it is part of your job to make sure children are kept safe.
- Make a full record of what is being said, heard, and seen, as soon as possible.
- Not delay in passing the information on to the Fostering Manager/Responsible Individual.
- Not underestimate the effects and impact on you. Ensure you know where to go to get support, and whom you can talk to if needed.

Foster Carers should be aware that young people making allegations of abuse will often need a full interview by the Police and Children's Social Care staff trained in Child Protection interview techniques. Under no circumstances should an informal investigation be instigated by Foster Carers. Doing this may prejudice the strength and acceptability of future evidence in both criminal and civil proceedings.

Responsibility of Foster Carers

If a Foster Carer believes that a young person is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm they must inform the child's Social Worker and Tutis Foster Care Supervising Social Worker and record all relevant information.

Recording

Where a verbal disclosure has been made, Foster Carers should quote the actual words used by the child / young person. The report should indicate whether the abuse is current or refers to event(s) in the past. Foster Carers will need to sign and date any recordings in case these are required in court proceedings.

Reports should detail:

- Name of the child / young person
- Age and D.O.B of the child / young person
- Any details of the alleged abuser(s)
- Date / time of the alleged incident- if known
- Details of any witnesses
- Nature of any injury if applicable
- Any questions that were asked by the child / young person.

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- The child / young person’s actual words detailing the incident.

Reporting

Foster Carers have a major responsibility to report and pass information on. The suspected maltreatment of a child can only be investigated by the Local Authority Children’s Services or the Police. No employee of Tutis Foster Care can undertake their own child protection enquiries.

If a Foster Carer has any child protection concerns, they should report these to their Supervising Social Worker, if they are not available the Social Worker on Duty or the Registered Manager. The child’s Social Worker will also need to be informed. If offices are shut, contact the Tutis Foster Care Out of Hours number, and the placing authority’s Emergency Duty Team. Referral to the Local Authority should be made as soon as a problem, suspicion or concern becomes apparent, and certainly within 24 hours.

In an emergency, where there is an immediate risk to the child (such as the child at immediate risk of abduction) employees or Foster Carer(s) must take appropriate action through calling the Police for urgent assistance (999 or 101).

If a Foster Carer has suspicions that a young person is being abused, but no direct evidence exists and no allegations have been made, this should be discussed with the child’s Social Worker and the Supervising Social Worker. All discussions will need to be recorded by Foster Carer(s).

See Tutis Foster Care Child Protection Procedure Flow Chart Below

Co-operating with enquiries

It is an expectation of Tutis Foster Care that all its employees and Foster Carers co-operate fully with any child protection or criminal enquiries. This includes being available to make statements and if required appear as a witness in court. Tutis Foster Care will fully support any employees or Foster Carers during this time.

Allegations against a member of staff or Foster Carer

By their very nature, child abuse allegations are usually the most serious form of complaint which can be made against employees / Foster Carers. The Children Act 1989 gives direction to investigate allegations in the same way as child abuse allegations concerning birth families or institutions.

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Any allegation made by a child must be taken seriously and investigated, since it is of the utmost importance to keep children and young people safe. However, Foster Carers do face a risk of being the subject of false allegations and this can be extremely traumatic for those involved and their families.

Where Carers are subject to serious allegations, no further children will be placed with them until the matter has been fully investigated. The Local Authority responsible for the children accommodated by the Foster Carers will judge whether it is safe to leave the children with them, or whether those children should be removed. Care will be taken to consider the impact removing a child or young person from a placement will have on them; the views of young people able to understand the situation will be considered. Making the decision to remove children is not taken lightly.

Safeguarding Measures prior to Form F Assessments

Safer Recruitment

Tutis Foster Care aims to ensure that staff and Foster Carer recruitment takes place in a safe way and all the relevant safeguard checks and references take place.

See Tutis Foster Care Safer Recruitment Policy and Assessments and Approval of Foster Carer Policy

It is unfortunate that a working environment with vulnerable children can attract inappropriate workers with ulterior motives, therefore it is essential that Tutis Foster Care adheres to strict safer recruitment procedures.

Foster Carer Assessment

Form F Assessments must be undertaken by qualified Social Workers, who have experience in assessment work. All Social Workers undertaking assessment will receive supervision and support from Tutis Foster Care's Registered Manager. Throughout the Form F Process safeguarding will be promoted and the Assessing Social Worker is to ensure that any safeguarding issues/concerns are addressed appropriately.

Essential checks (DBS, Health, Local Authority) references and risk assessments will be undertaken as part of the Form F process.

Matching

See Tutis Foster Care Matching and Placement Policy

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When children and young people are being placed with Foster Carers, Tutis Foster Care have a strict matching system in place, considering the needs of the child or young person, and what the Foster Carer is able to offer.

When a referral is made by the Local Authority, the Supervising Social Worker on Duty will decide whether or not to gain more information. If it is felt that there are no Foster Carers available to meet the child / young person then the Placing Authority will be notified. If Tutis Foster Carer believe that it is a good 'match', the worker will contact Foster Carer's Supervising Social Worker and if it is felt appropriate, the Foster Carer. Tutis Foster Care will give the Carer all the information they have to help them decide whether they are able to accept / consider the placement. Foster Carers are under no obligation to accept a placement.

If the Foster Carer and the Social Worker agree that the placement is a good 'match', the Supervising Social Worker will send the carers 'Foster Carer Profile' to the placing authority for consideration.

On no occasion should a carer be approached regarding a referral if it is deemed inappropriate, Tutis Foster Care do not believe in making a placement only because they have bed space. Tutis Foster Care is aware that placement disruptions cause much unsettlement and instability for the child, so good matching is quintessential in respect of 'the best interests of the child.'

Within Tutis Foster Care, matching children with Foster Carers is based on the child's Care Plan and recent written assessments of both the child and Foster Carers. Matches will be agreed by means of information sharing and reflection involving all relevant professionals. Each fostering family will have a 'Safe Caring Plan', and when a child / young person is placed a 'Safe Caring Agreement' will be completed.

Parent and Child Placements

Where parents and child placements are made with Foster Carers, the following considerations need to apply:

- If the parent is under age 18, they are a child and therefore child protection principles apply to them as much as their child.
- If the parent is aged over 18, they should be seen as an adult member of the household. There is no requirement for a DBS check to be completed prior to them joining a foster household. However, Parent and Baby placements do carry unique risks due to the vulnerability of the often very young children being placed, and the necessity of having an adult in a carers' home undertaking parenting tasks. Prior to

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the onset of any such placement a Placement Risk Assessment form will need to be completed to try and identify and thus reduce and manage such risks.

- Where the Foster Carers role is to monitor the quality of parenting, if there is any indication that this is so poor as to be placing the child at risk of harm, the foster carer must report this at once to their Supervising Social Worker and/or the child's social worker.

Bullying

See Tutis Foster Care Bullying Policy

Tutis Foster Care will not tolerate deliberate hurtful behaviour that is directed at children / young people in any form. Allegations and incidents of bullying require a clear and consistent response and any interventions that are applied to bullying situations must focus on making the victim feel safe, stop the bullying, change the behaviour of the bully, and make it clear that bullying is unacceptable.

Foster Carers will report any suspected or actual incidents of bullying to their Supervising Social Worker within 24 hours and discuss it within their next supervision.

Any incident of a Foster Carer bullying a child or young person will invoke the Child Protection and Safeguarding procedures. It is the responsibility of all to treat one another with dignity; respect and fairness.

Behaviour Management

See Tutis Foster Care Behaviour Management Policy and Procedure

An increasing number of children and young people in Foster Care have behavioural issues. Behaviour management is an important issue for Foster Carers, to ensure that both children and Foster Carers are kept safe, and that appropriate methods are used in coping with behavioural issues. Carers should respond positively to behaviour that is regarded as unacceptable, in a constructive and acceptable manner, and know the approaches to behaviour as approved by Tutis Foster Care.

Tutis Foster Care authorises acceptable ways of working with children and young people. They do not condone non-acceptable ways of dealing with children and young people.

Internet Safety

See Tutis Foster Care Use of Internet Facilities Policy

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The internet is a rich source of information and generally regarded as essential in today's world for accessing information, entertainment, and networking. However, it can also pose significant hazards to children and young people, particularly in relation to exposure to inappropriate materials, harassment, and cyber bullying. Increasingly we know from child protection investigations that paedophiles make use of the internet and new media to access vulnerable children, gain their trust and groom them for abuse. Foster Carers will be supported by their Supervising Social Worker to establish Internet usage policies for their household. Setting up a written agreement with older children about usage must be considered.

Foster Carers must be made aware of a range of online resources available to help parents and carers to help children stay safe online, such as www.childnet.com. Foster Carers will be provided with information about how to keep themselves safe on the internet and observe confidentiality.

Children Missing from Placement

See Tutis Foster Care Children Who Go Missing from Home Policy

Children and young people may go missing from their placement for various reasons e.g. wanting to stay out longer (which isn't absconding) or wilfully running away. On occasion, the child may put themselves at serious risk of harm, therefore staff and carers should be knowledgeable as to what course of action should be taken and when. The child's age: maturity and history will play a vital part in this.

Each Local Safeguarding Partnership will have guidance on the '**Responsibilities of Agencies who work with Children who are at Risk of Running Away.**' This document should be adhered to.

Monitoring Foster Placements

Each Foster family will be allocated a Tutis Foster Care Supervising Social Worker, who will oversee any placement(s). It is the role of the Supervising Social Worker to ensure that the placement is meeting the needs of the child / young person, and this will be accomplished by monthly supervisions, regular telephone contact, support visits, activity days, support groups, training days and annual reviews.

Supervising Social Workers will ensure that the child / young person will be regularly seen. It is of utmost importance that children are listened to and respected.

Every child/ young person in placement with Tutis Foster Care will receive a Children's Guide, this guide will offer advice on who to speak to if they are unhappy about anything and informs

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them of their rights. Tutis Foster Care will develop Young Persons Groups giving children and young people the opportunity to discuss their view in a group or have the opportunity to discuss any issues or concerns.

Unannounced Visits will take place on an annual basis and workers will arrange this at a time that it is thought that the child will be present. Consultation documents will also be requested periodically.

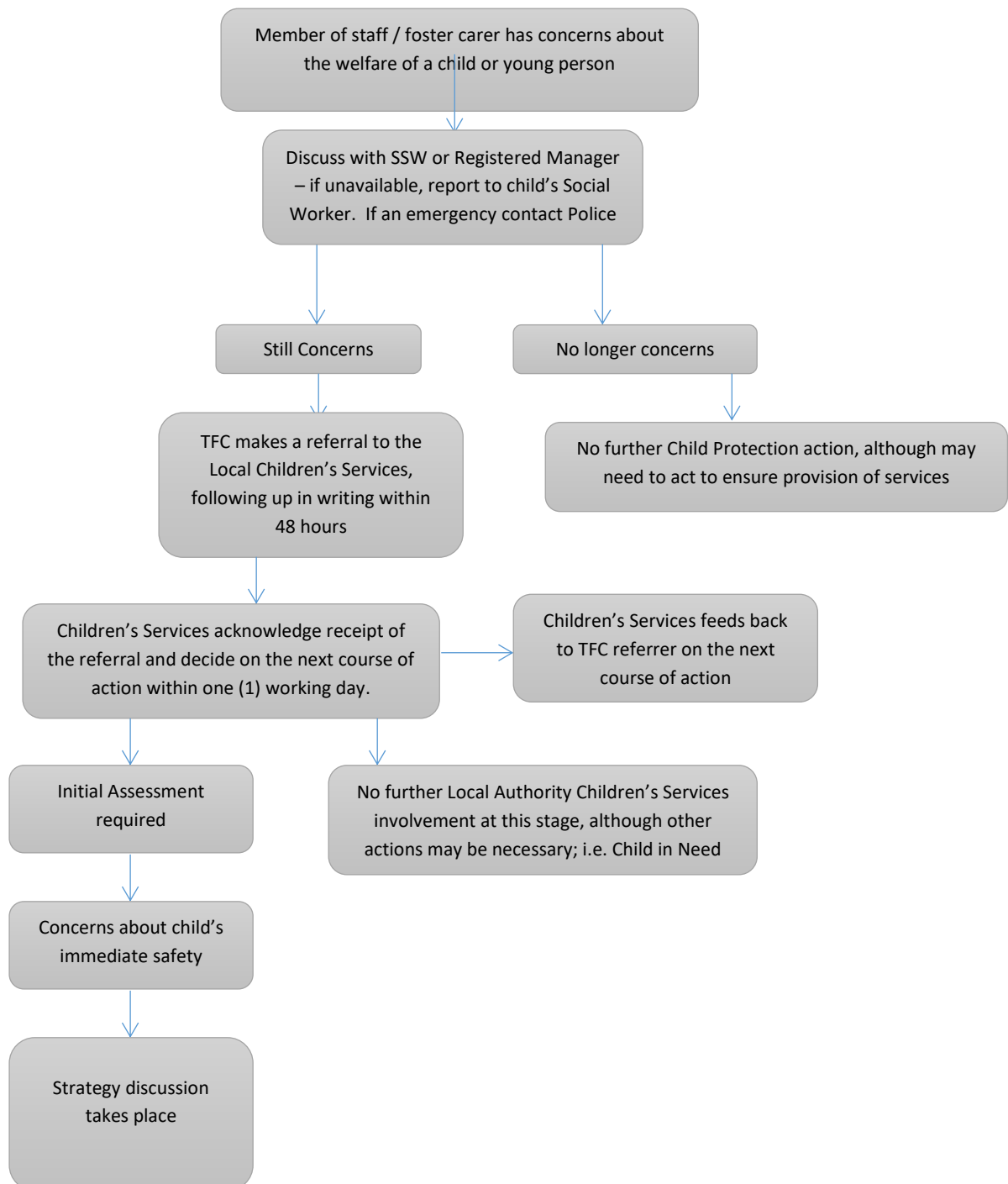
As outlined above, in Ofsted’s definition of safeguarding and promoting children and young people’s welfare, the expectation of Tutis Foster Care’s Foster Carers is to support and encourage positive progression of the child’s health and development; adhere to safe caring practice and enable optimum life chances and promote independence. There are many aspects involved to suitable delivery of care and this needs to be evidenced within Supervision sessions with the Carer and discussions with the child. It is not acceptable for Foster Carers to only offer ‘bed and board’ or undertake the bare minimum.

This Policy and Procedure document confirms Tutis Foster Cares commitment to promoting the welfare and safety of children.

All employees and carers are expected to become familiar with this document and to apply it in practice.

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Child Protection Procedure Flow Chart



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