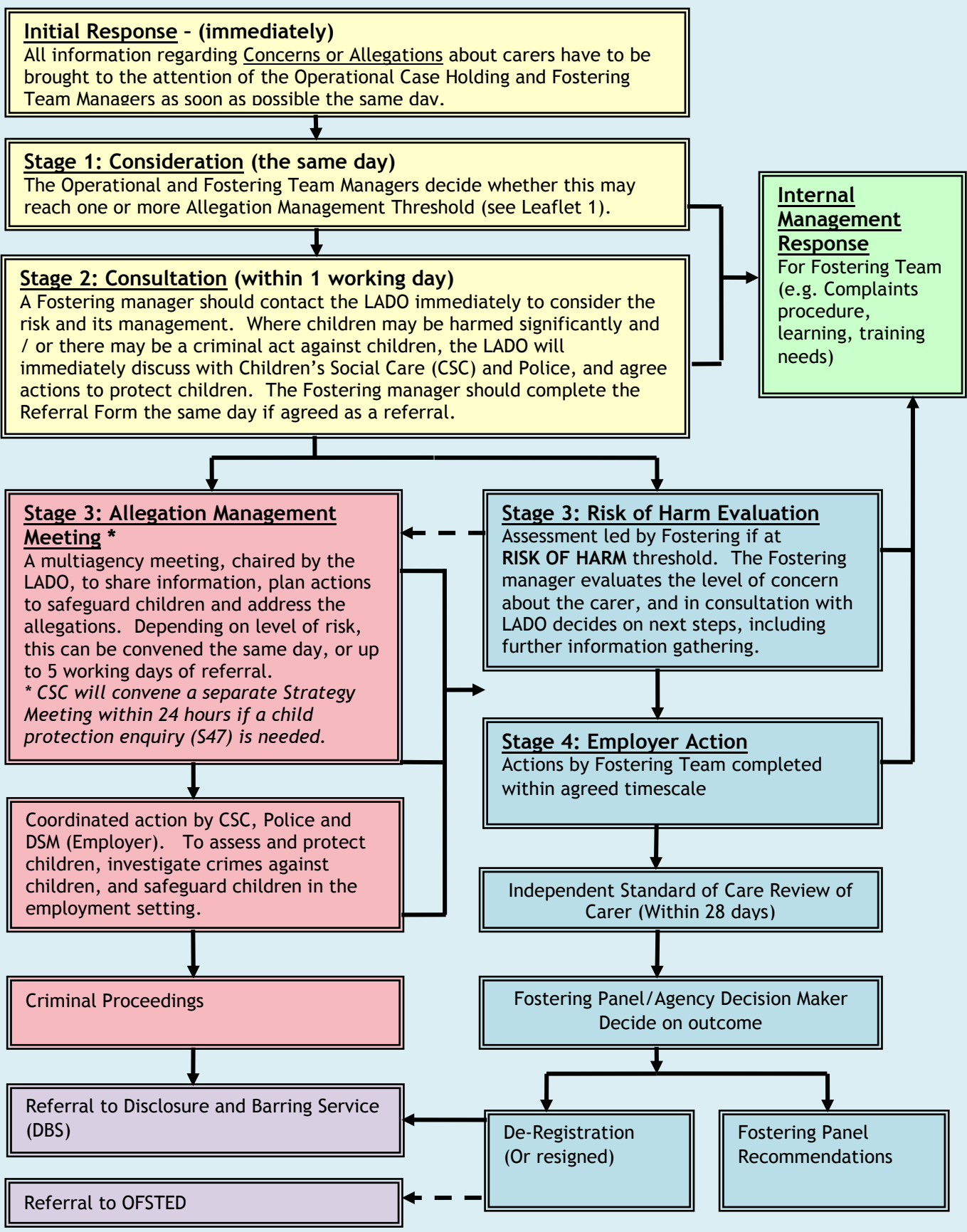


SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

The Management of Allegations against Carers who work with children

Leaflet No 3: Flow Chart (Carers)



Initial Response - When a potential concern about a carer arises, it is the responsibility of the staff member to inform the Case Holding and Fostering Team Managers (TM) immediately, and in their absence or unavailability, the information must be passed to an Assistant Team Manager to ensure a prompt and objective consideration is carried out on the same day.

Stage 1 - Consideration (the same day):

- Initial consideration by TMs (or in their absence by the ATM), and to contact the LADO if the allegation appears to be at one or more of the Management of Allegation thresholds (see Leaflet 1).
- If it clearly does not reach any of the Management of Allegation thresholds, the Fostering Team should deal with any issues arising (See **Internal Management Response**).
- Any 'grey area' issue should be treated as needing a Stage 2 consultation.

Stage 2 - Consultation (within 1 working day):

- The Fostering TM (or ATMs) should contact the LADO for advice and to consider the risk to children and the management of the foster carers. Where agreed, they will complete a written referral.
- The LADO will give a timely response and lead on the coordination of action, consulting and agreeing on the management of the allegations and protecting children, including agreeing any immediate protective action on the day of the referral.
- The LADO will immediately consult with CSC (including MASH if the carers have children) and Police where children may be significantly harmed and / or there may be a criminal act against children. The Case Holding and Fostering TMs (or ATMs) should inform their respective Service Managers of the concerns or allegations.
- The Case Holding Team Manager should consider the immediate protection of CLA children in placement, including moving them.
- CSC will consider any immediate action regarding the protection of children, including CSC convening a Strategy Meeting within 24 hours to decide if a child protection enquiry (S47) should be instigated.
- The LADO will inform the IRO for the child in placement, and the FPRO for the placement.
- A decision will be made the same day by the LADO, as to whether the allegation:
 - Indicates Significant Harm to children / Crime to children / Significant Safeguarding Risk to the placement of children. If so, a **Stage 3: Allegation Management Meeting** should take place, chaired by the LADO, to share information, plan actions to safeguard children and address the allegations.
 - At a Risk of Harm threshold, a **Stage 3: Risk of Harm Evaluation** should be followed by Fostering with advice from the LADO.
 - The allegation doesn't meet any threshold, the referrer should complete an **Internal Management Response**.

Stage 2 Specific Issues - If the carer live outside of RBC area:

- If the carer lives in another Local Authority area, that local authority must be consulted first, so that they can make a judgement about the threshold of significant harm of the incident(s) in their area.
- If the concern is considered to be at a Significant Harm / Crime threshold, that Local Authority CSC Team and Police must lead, and convene a Strategy Meeting. The Swindon Fostering Team and Case Holding Team participate.
- If that LA does not consider it a child protection matter, but it is at a threshold for a **Stage 3: Allegation Management Meeting** the LADO will arrange and chaired the meeting, to share information, plan actions to safeguard children and address the allegations.
- If the concern is considered to be at a Risk of Harm threshold, the Swindon Fostering Team lead the **Stage 3: Risk of Harm Evaluation** process, and the Swindon Case Holding Team are included in the because of their responsibility to safeguard the welfare of the child in placement.
- If the carers are with an IFA, the supervising agency for the carers lead the **Stage 3: Risk of Harm Evaluation** process, and the Swindon Case Holding Team should be kept informed to ensure the safety and welfare of the child in placement.

Internal Management Response by Fostering Team (e.g. NFA, complaints procedure, practice change, training need):

- If below any Standards of Care consideration, but still needs to be dealt with and noted on file.
- This can be as a result of a decision at Stages 1, 2, 3 or 4.
- If any additional concerns arise during this Internal Management Response, this should be reconsidered by formally registering with Team Managers for the Fostering Team and Case Holding Team, and LADO for a further **Stage 2: Consultation**.

Child Protection - Strategy Meeting convened by Children Social Care:

- If the carer lives within the Swindon area, the Swindon LADO will attend the Strategy Meeting convened by CSC. A social worker in the Case Holding Team leads the CP enquiries - ideally not the allocated SW, or line manager, for independence.
- If the carer lives in another Local Authority, that area LADO, police and social work team progresses the CP enquiries.

Stage 3: Allegation Management Meeting or Risk of Harm Evaluation:

- If appropriate, a **Stage 3: Allegation Management Meeting** should take place, chaired by the LADO, and include the Fostering Team, Case Holding Team, and other relevant professionals (e.g. IRO and FPRO).
- At the conclusion of the above, or if not relevant, a **Stage 3: Risk of Harm Evaluation** should be led by the Fostering Team, to formally evaluating the person's risk to children, and assess whether they should be the role of foster carer.

Stage 4: Employer Action - Carried out by Fostering Team:

- If the **Stage 3: Allegation Management Meeting** or **Stage 3: Suitability Evaluation** indicates a Standards of Care concern, this should be considered by the Fostering Team, including considering whether an Independent Review of the Carer should take place.
- Any review would be taken to the Fostering Panel and a recommendation made to the Assistant Director about continued use of the foster carer.
- The outcome of the process and reasons should be recorded by the Fostering Team (and LADO) and shared with the foster carer.