

1. Statement of intent

FOCUS is committed to safeguarding the welfare of all young people, and will take all reasonable steps to protect them from neglect and physical, sexual or emotional harm. Paid staff, volunteers and trustees will, at all times, show respect for and understanding of the rights, safety and welfare of the young people accessing our services, and conduct themselves in a way that reflects the principles of FOCUS.

FOCUS' Safeguarding Policy arises from the following principles:

- The young person's welfare is paramount.
- All young people, regardless of age, disability, gender or ethnic origin have a right to be protected from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation.
- It is everyone's responsibility to report concerns, but it is the responsibility of Children and Young People's Services and/or Police to determine whether or not abuse has taken place.
- Confidentiality will be upheld at all times and in line with the Data Protection Act.
- There is a consistent understanding of acceptable behaviour of young people towards other young people within any organised activity, service or programme.
- Discrimination, prejudice and oppressive behaviour or language is unacceptable within all our activities, programmes or services.

This policy and associated procedures have been produced in line with The Children Act 1989 & 2004, and in accordance with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013 and Children & Families Act 2014. It is approved and endorsed by the Board of Trustees, and will be adopted by FOCUS employees, volunteers, trustees, the young people involved in our activities, as FOCUS works to promote a safe environment for all involved.

2. Aim of this Policy

The aim of this policy is to outline the practice and procedures for all paid and voluntary staff within FOCUS, in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of young people accessing our services and activities. It is aimed at protecting the young person and the worker, recognising the risks involved in working with children and young people.

This policy relates to children and young people under the age of 18 and to vulnerable people over the age of 18. The term 'young people' will be used to include those under 18 years old and vulnerable adults.

3. Responsibilities

FOCUS will:

- Implement procedures to provide a duty of care for young people, safeguard their well-being and protect them from abuse.
- Respect and promote the rights, wishes and feelings of young people.
- Ensure that all our paid staff and volunteers are carefully selected, trained and supervised, including completing a Disclosure and Barring Service check.
- Carefully assess all risks that young people encounter, and taking all necessary steps to minimise and manage such risks.
- Let parents/carers and young people know how to voice concerns or complaints about anything they might be unhappy about.
- Give parents/carers, young people and fellow professionals information about what we do and what can be expected of us.

4. Facts about abuse

Child abuse occurs when a child or young person has suffered from, or is at significant risk of suffering from, ill-treatment or impairment of development, by any person who knowingly colludes with or fails to prevent the ill-treatment of the child or young person by not ensuring reasonable standards of care and protection.

- All staff and volunteers should be aware that abusers are not just strangers. They can include parents, carers, family members, friends, people in positions of trust and authority, other children or young people, or anyone who has contact with children and young people.
- Children and young people who are abused are often abused by an adult they know and trust.
- Disabled children and young people are more vulnerable to abuse; they are more dependent on intimate care and occasionally they may be less able to tell or escape from abusive situations.
- Misunderstandings and misinterpretations of different cultural and religious beliefs often mean that children and young people from these communities and families may be more vulnerable to abuse going undetected.
- It is important to remember that, although most abusers are men, women also abuse, and that abusers come from all social and ethnic backgrounds and professions.

5. Types of abuse

There are different types of abuse, which may include:

Physical Abuse

May involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent fabricates the symptoms or deliberately induces illness in a child.

Sexual Abuse

Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic materials or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Emotional Abuse

The persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve:

- Telling a child they are worthless, unloved or inadequate
- Valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person
- Age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on a child
- Overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning
- A child seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another
- Serious bullying
- Causing a child to frequently feel frightened or in danger
- Exploitation or corruption of a child

Neglect

Persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health and development. Neglect may occur:

- During pregnancy as a result of substance abuse
- Failure to provide adequate food and clothing
- Failing to provide shelter including exclusion from home or abandonment
- Failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger
- Failure to ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers)
- Failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment

Discriminatory Abuse

Discriminatory Abuse includes racist, religious, sexist, homophobic, and disabilist abuse.

Bullying **See FOCUS' Anti-Bullying Policy.**

5. Indications of abuse

There are certain signs of abuse, both in a young person's appearance and behaviour, which may alert an individual to the possibility that abuse is occurring. Some of these signs are common to all types of abuse; others are more specific.

Knowing the signs to be aware of is essential for recognising a real or potential problem. However, the presence of any one sign in itself may not necessarily mean abuse is occurring, and conversely, a young person who is being abused may show none of the obvious signs. Such factors make the issue of child abuse more complex, but all concerns and suspicions should be reported and acted upon accordingly.

Indications that a young person may be being abused include:

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries.
- An injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent
- The young person describes what appears to be an abusive act involving him or her
- Someone else (young person or adult) expresses concern about the welfare of another young person
- Unexplained changes in behaviour or emotions such as becoming very quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden bursts of temper
- Inappropriate sexual awareness
- Engaging in sexually explicit behaviour, sexually explicit talk inappropriate to the young person's age
- Distrust of adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship would be expected
- Difficulty in making friends
- Uncharacteristic eating disorders, depression and suicide attempts
- The young person may become withdrawn, introverted and depressed and have low self-esteem and lack of confidence

It is not your responsibility as members of FOCUS to decide whether or not child abuse is occurring, but it is your responsibility to act on those concerns and do something about them.

Safeguarding Procedures

1. Designated Safeguarding Lead/ Officer

There will be a named person for safeguarding young people who will be responsible for dealing with any concerns about the safeguarding of young people. This person is currently Gavan Wilmot, Director. Of Programme Development

The role of the designated person is to:

- Ensure that FOCUS' Safeguarding Policy and Procedures are followed.
- Ensure they, and other staff members know how to make contact with social care and police staff responsible for dealing with safeguarding children concerns both during and after office hours.
- Act as a source of advice on safeguarding young people matters within FOCUS, and seek further advice and guidance from Leicestershire Safeguarding Children Board as appropriate.
- Ensure that a record is kept of any concerns about a young person or adult and of any conversation or referrals to statutory agencies.
- Ensure that any such record is kept safely and securely.

2. Staff and volunteer recruitment and selection

FOCUS recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse young people in some way and that all necessary steps are taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with them.

Due to its work with children, FOCUS is exempt from regulations governing the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Therefore, all staff and volunteer applicants for positions within FOCUS are required to disclose on their Application Form all previous criminal convictions, even if they are "spent" convictions. Any information provided will be treated in the strictest confidence.

1. All potential candidates for both paid and voluntary positions within FOCUS will be asked to complete a FOCUS application form.
2. All potential candidates will be interviewed by a panel consisting of a minimum of two FOCUS staff members and/or directors.
3. If a person is thought to be suitable for a role, a minimum of two written references will be taken up and may be confirmed by telephone.
4. All staff, volunteers and trustees offered a role within FOCUS will be subject to an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. If staff, volunteers and trustees are in possession of a clear DBS check that was carried out in the 6-months prior to their appointment with FOCUS and are willing and able to present the original disclosure certificate, FOCUS will allow them to begin work, whilst another check is carried out.
5. Employees and volunteers will have an Enhanced DBS check every 3 years.
6. If a DBS disclosure reveals a criminal record, this will not automatically ban the person from working at FOCUS. FOCUS will discuss the offence with the applicant and take into consideration the circumstances of the offence, the type of offence, when committed, etc. and assess fairly to ensure fair appointment and selection.
7. All paid positions are subject to a probationary period within which time the effectiveness of the delivery, performance and suitability for the post shall be monitored by FOCUS.

3. Staff and volunteer training

All staff and volunteers working within FOCUS will receive information and basic training in safe conduct and what to do if they have concerns about a young person. This will include information on recognising where there are concerns about a young person, and where to get advice.

Training levels should be appropriate to the employee's contact with young people and their responsibilities for child welfare within FOCUS:

- Employees working directly with young people must attend recognised safeguarding children awareness training (e.g. training run by the local Safeguarding Children Board) as soon as this can be arranged following their appointment. This training must be updated every 2 years.
- Employees who may have indirect contact with young people during the course of their work e.g. Office Manager must receive advisory information and Safeguarding Children awareness training from the Safeguarding Officer.
- For sessional workers and volunteers, such as the Inspire Residential Core Team, Challenge Programme Team Advisors, and volunteers attending residential projects in a supporting role, safeguarding children will be part of their induction training.

4. Staff and Volunteer Code of Conduct

Always remember that while you are caring for young people you are in a position of trust and your responsibilities to them and the organisation must be uppermost in your mind at all times.

Do Not:

- Use any kind of physical punishment or chastisement such as smacking or hitting.
- Give lifts in your own car, unless prior arrangements have been made with all relevant people, i.e. parents/carers, your line manager, and there is appropriate business insurance on the car.
- Use non-prescribed drugs or be under the influence of alcohol.
- Allow a young person to use discriminatory, demeaning or offensive language unchallenged.
- Behave in a way that frightens or demeans any young person.
- Use racist, sexist, discriminatory, demeaning or offensive language.
- Invite young people to your house or arrange to see them outside the set activity times.
- Disclose your personal address, personal email address or telephone number to a young person
- Engage in a sexual relationship with a young person.
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a young person.
- Engage in rough or physical games, including horseplay.
- Let allegations a young person makes go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
- Rely upon your good name to protect you or believe "it could never happen to me."
- Give young people presents or personal items*.

*Exceptions could be: buying a young person a small birthday token or leaving present. Any gift should come from FOCUS and be given in a professional capacity and be agreed with a senior staff member. Similarly do not accept gifts yourself other than small tokens for appropriate celebrations (e.g. birthdays, Christmas), which you should mention to your line manager.

Do:

- Exercise caution about being alone with a young person. In situations where this is unavoidable, ensure another worker or volunteer knows what you are doing and where you are (see FOCUS' Lone-Working Policy).
- Ensure that any physical contact is open and initiated by the young person's needs, e.g. for help with personal care. Always prompt young people to carry out personal care themselves and if they cannot manage ask if they would like help.
- Talk explicitly to young people about their right to be kept safe from harm.
- Listen to young people about their right to be kept safe from harm.
- Listen to young people and take every opportunity to raise their self-esteem.
- Work as a team with your colleagues. Agree with them what behaviour you expect from young people and be consistent enforcing it.
- Remember if you have to speak to a young person about their behaviour you are challenging 'what they did' not who they are'.
- Make sure you have read the Safeguarding Policy and Procedure and that you feel confident that you know how to recognise when a young person may be suffering harm, how to handle any disclosure and how to report any concerns.
- Where possible encourage parents/carers to take responsibility for their own children.

5. Dealing with accidents, misunderstandings or other incidents

It is imperative that a note be kept of all complaints, injuries or behaviours that cause concern and that these are recorded on the Incident Report Form (Appendix 3).

An Incident Report Form should be completed, if a young person:

- Suffers any form of accident whilst with a FOCUS staff member or volunteer
- Becomes distressed in any way or misunderstands or misinterprets something that has been said or done whilst attending a FOCUS project or activity.

This form should then be passed to the Safeguarding Officer or other FOCUS senior staff member, who will, where appropriate, inform the young person's parents/carers.

6. What you should do if a young person makes a disclosure

1. Stay calm. Do not let your shock show.
2. Explain to the young person that you will have to share the information, that you cannot keep it secret.
3. Listen very carefully to what is being said without interrupting, and allow the young person to speak at his or her own pace.
4. Make it clear to the young person that you are taking what they say seriously.
5. Do not press the young person, ask leading questions or probe for information.
6. Reassure the young person that they were right to tell and recognise that it is difficult to talk about these things.
7. Let the young person know what will happen next, who you will report the information to, and what will happen once it has been reported.
8. Do not make any promises to the young person.
9. Act immediately – do not delay.
10. Do not take sole responsibility - seek advice as soon as possible.
11. Keep a detailed record of the incident and your concerns by completing an Incident Report Form (see Appendix 3). Make sure that you record exactly what happened and what was said in the young person's own words, without interpreting it into your own words.

7. Procedures to follow when making a referral

It is important that all FOCUS staff and volunteers are aware of the reporting procedures if they have a concern about child protection or a young person's welfare.

They should:

1. Refer their concerns to the Safeguarding Officer.
2. In the absence of this officer, then refer their concerns to the most senior employee available, who will be responsible for making the phone call to children's social care.
3. If no FOCUS staff members are available, the person discovering or being informed of the abuse should immediately inform children's social care.

Referrals should be made to the social care service where the young person lives (see useful contacts list, Appendix 4).

When contacting children's social care:

1. Make it clear you are making a referral about child protection.
2. Make a record of:
 - The name and position of the member of staff in children's social care or police officer to whom the concerns were passed
 - The time and date of the call, in case any follow-up is needed.

Referrals made by telephone to social care must be followed up in writing within 24 hours.

See Appendix 1 – A Quick Guide to Procedures

When you are making a referral regarding child protection concerns, it is important to have the following information wherever possible readily available for the duty social worker:

- Name, date of birth, ethnic origin, gender of the young person, address and telephone numbers;
- The reasons for your concern;
- Injuries and/or other indicators observed;
- The young person's first language;
- Details of any specific needs of the young person e.g. disability;
- Details of family members, if known;
- Other agencies, professionals involved;
- Family doctor

Lack of any of the above should not delay referral if concerns are immediate.

The Incident Report Form can be found in Appendix 3. This form will enable employees to record the important information as highlighted above.

Following the referral of a child, the referrer and the Social Care Service must be clear about who will be taking what action.

Not all young people are able to express themselves verbally. In this instance, where there are concerns, an Incident Report Form (Appendix 3) should be completed and the same procedures for making a referral followed.

The same approach should be taken if the disclosure, suspicion, or allegation comes from an adult.

8. If in doubt

If you are not sure what to do, contact the FOCUS' Safeguarding Officer or another FOCUS senior staff member.

In addition there are several sources of advice available. These are:

- The duty social worker of the relevant social care service (see Appendix 4).
- The NSPCC 24-hour free phone Helpline on 0808 800 5000

9. Confidentiality

Confidentiality should be maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a "need to know basis" only. This includes to the following people:

- The Designated Safeguarding Lead/Officer.
- Social care/police.
- The young person making the allegation's parents/carers.
- The parents or carers of the young person who is alleged to have been abused.
- The person making the allegation.
- The alleged abuser (and their parents/carers if the abuser is a child)*.

*Where there is any possibility that a criminal act may have been committed, e.g. physical or sexual abuse, do not pass on any information before contacting the police and/or children's social care. Care should be taken not to take any action that may jeopardise any subsequent criminal investigation, this includes contacting the alleged perpetrator.

Information should be stored in a secure place with access limited to designated people, in line with FOCUS' Confidentiality Policy and Data Protection legislation.

10. Support

For the reporting of suspected abuse

It is acknowledged that feelings generated by the discovery that a member of staff or volunteer is, or may be, abusing a young person, will raise concerns among other staff or volunteers. This includes the difficulties inherent in reporting such matters.

FOCUS assures all staff and volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone who, in good faith (without malicious intent), reports his or her concern about a colleague's practice or the possibility that a child or vulnerable adult may be being abused.

For the person against whom an allegation is made*

To be the subject of an allegation can be very stressful. While FOCUS has a duty to ensure that all allegations are thoroughly investigated it also has a duty to its staff and volunteers. While an investigation is being carried out, it is important that there is a senior member of staff who is tasked to maintain contact with the person (whether suspended or not) and keep them informed of the progress of the allegation and what steps are being taken. No information should be given about the detail of the allegation without careful consultation with the investigating agencies.

(*only if this person is a staff member, trustee or volunteer of FOCUS)

11. Types of Investigation

Where there is a complaint of abuse against a member of staff, there may be three types of investigation:

- A criminal investigation (undertaken by the police)
- A child or adult protection investigation (undertaken by social care/police)
- A disciplinary investigation (undertaken by FOCUS). See FOCUS Disciplinary Policy and Procedures.

Civil proceedings may also be initiated by the person/family of the person who alleged the abuse.

Internal Enquires and Suspension

- FOCUS can and will make immediate decisions on whether or not any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended from duty.

If an allegation or suspicion of abuse is made or exists about a staff member or volunteer, they will be asked, without prejudice, to leave the project if young people are still present.

- Irrespective of the findings of the relevant Local Safeguarding Children Board or Police enquiries, FOCUS will assess all individual cases under its misconduct/disciplinary procedures, to decide whether or not a member of staff can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled with other staff or volunteers.

This may be a difficult decision, particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases, FOCUS will make an informed decision based on available information that could suggest, on a balance probability, it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of all young people participating in all FOCUS activities or services is and will always remain paramount.

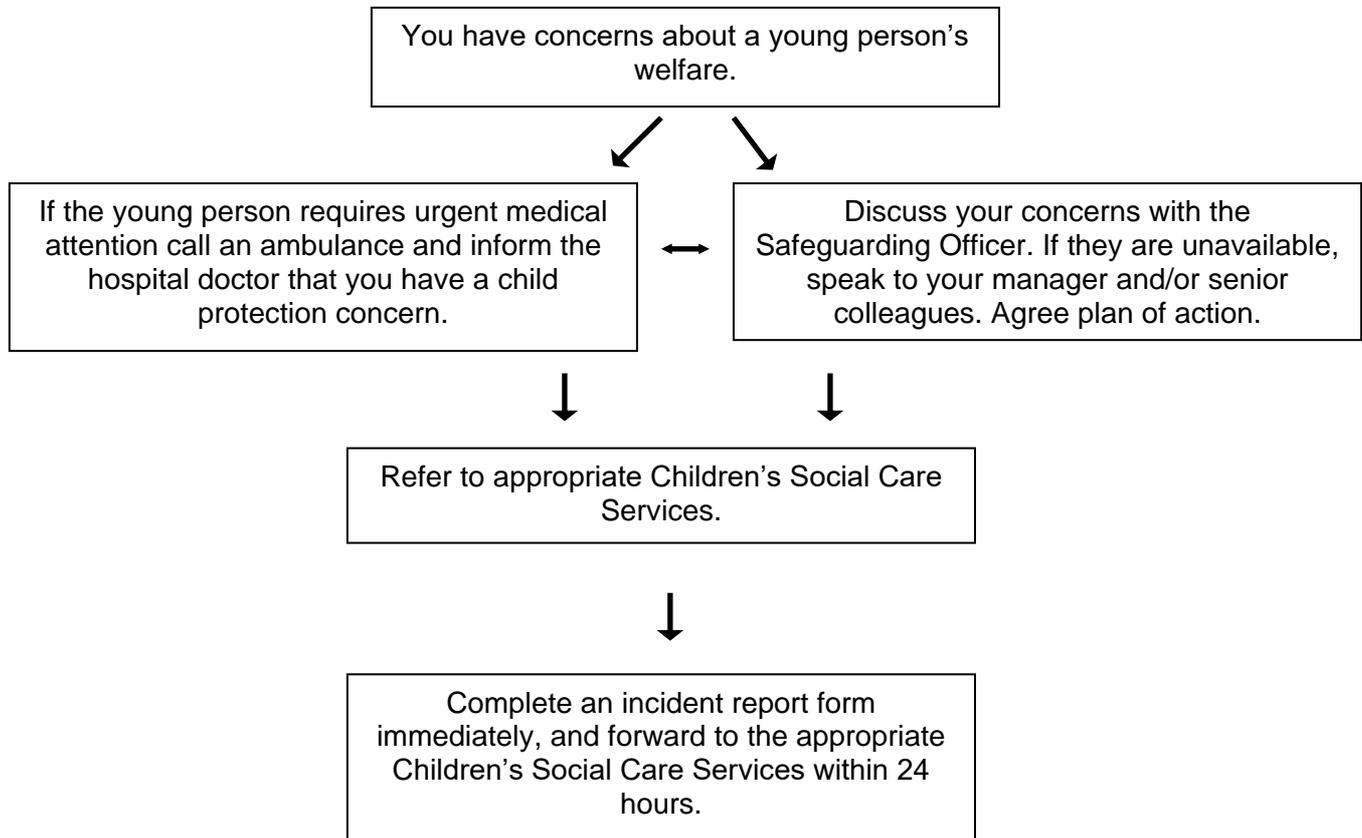
References

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Confidentially policy
- Disclosure and Barring Service policy
- Data Protection Policy
- How We Keep You Safe Leaflet
- Health and Safety Policy
- Safety Statement
- Staff & Volunteer recruitment policy
- Volunteer Disciplinary policy

APPENDIX

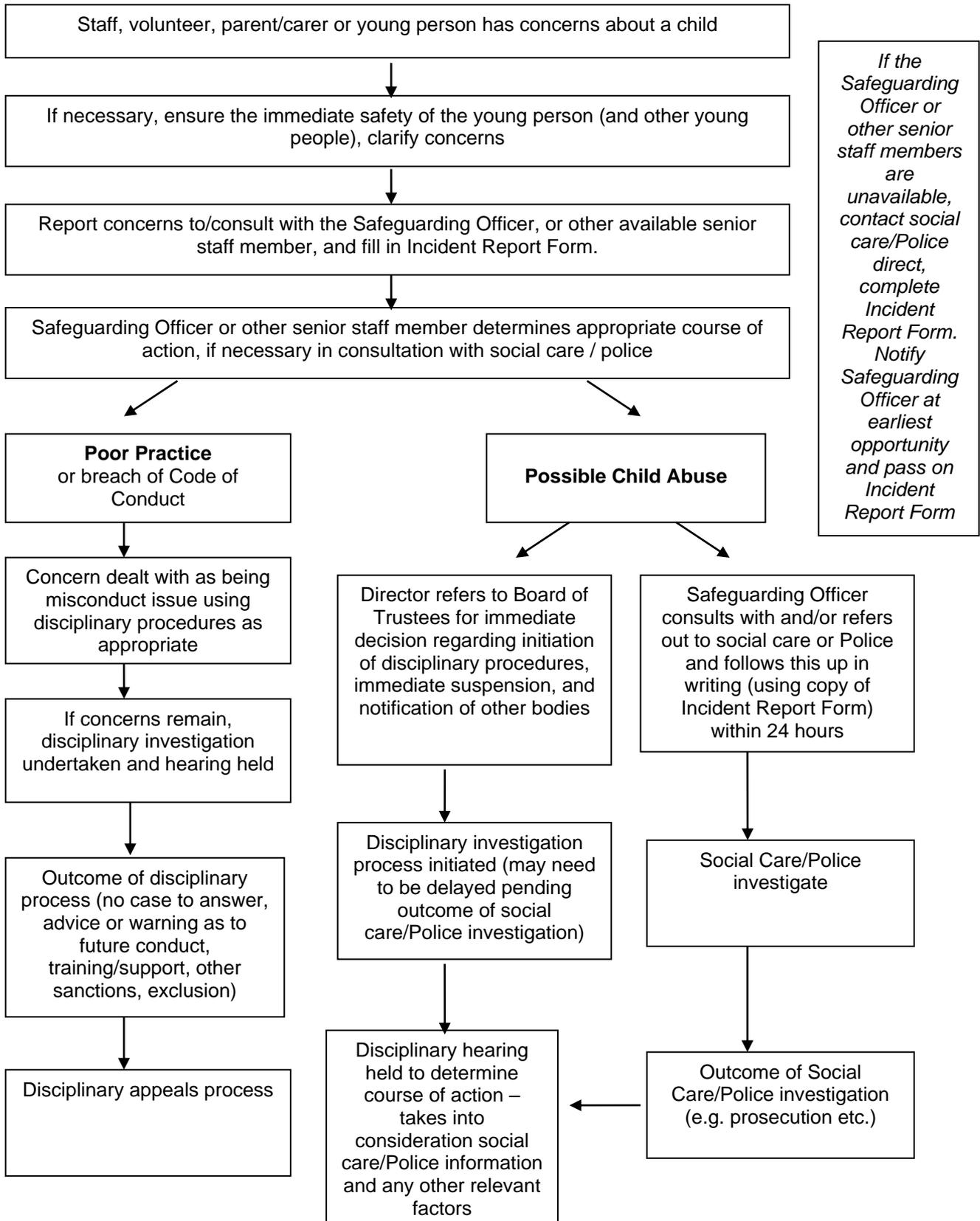
Appendix 1 - A Quick Guide to Procedures

Action to take when concerns about a young person are raised through direct disclosure or observation, or a young person discloses to you.



Appendix 2 – Dealing with concerns about staff and volunteers

This guide is designed to inform the most appropriate action in relation to concerns about the behaviour of FOCUS staff members or volunteers.



Appendix 3 - Incident Report Form

All accidents, complaints, misunderstandings, or allegations or suspicions of abuse should be recorded as close as possible to the time of the incident. Details of incidents should be recorded in as much detail and as accurately as possible. Any disclosures of abuse being made by young people should be a reflection of what was actually said. Do not try and interpret any of the information, just record what was said or witnessed.

1. YOUR DETAILS	
Your name:	
Your Position:	Contact No:

2. YOUNG PERSON'S DETAILS	
Young person's name:	Date of birth:
Young person's address:	
What is the young person's ethnic origin?	
Has the young person got any special needs, e.g. a disability? If yes, please give details:	

3. PARENT/CARERS DETAILS	
Parent/Carers name:	Contact no:
Parent/Carers address:	
Relationship to young person:	

4. DETAILS OF THE INCIDENT / DISCLOSURE OR SUSPICION OF ABUSE
Name of person disclosing information:
Time and date of incident / disclosure:
Name of person about whom allegation has been made (if given):
Details of the incident, allegation or disclosure. Please ensure the account is factual; DO NOT include opinions/assumptions of either yourself or others. Include dates, times, incidents and any other potentially useful information. If the disclosure has come from a young person, use their words. Continue on a separate sheet if necessary.

--

6. ACTION TAKEN

Details of actions taken so far:

Details of actions you intend to take:

Name and contact details for witnesses to the incident:

7. DETAILS OF WHOM THIS INFORMATION HAS BEEN PASSED TO

Name:	Position:
-------	-----------

Organisation:	Contact no:
---------------	-------------

Date and time that the information was forwarded:

Agreed action:

7. DETAILS OF WHOM THIS INFORMATION HAS BEEN PASSED TO

Name:	Position:
-------	-----------

Organisation:	Contact no:
---------------	-------------

Date and time that the information was forwarded:

Agreed action:

Your signature:	Date:
-----------------	-------

Appendix 4 – Useful contacts

If you do make the decision to contact Children's Social Care, you will need to know in which area of Leicestershire or Nottinghamshire he/she lives.

Leicester City 24 hours a day service	
Early Help – Children & Young People's Services	0116 454 1004

Leicestershire 24 hours a day service	
First Response Children's Duty	0116 305 0005

Rutland Mon-Thur 8.30am-5pm, Fri 8.30am-4.30pm	
Out of Office Service	0116 305 0005
Rutland Children and Families Duty Worker	01572 722577 Ext. 8407

Police	
Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland	0116 222 2222
Non-emergency	101
Emergency	999

(Contacts Updated 28/4/2017
+)