Procedure in respect of allegations of abuse against professionals, members of staff or volunteers in contact with children.
Procedure to be followed for all professionals, members of staff and volunteers working in contact with Children.

Note: This procedure should be read in conjunction with the All Wales Child Protection Procedures available online at:

<http://www.childreninwales.org.uk/areasofwork/safeguardingchildren/awcpprg/proceduresandprotocols.html>

Part I of this document sets out the process that should be followed in every case.

Part II of this document sets out the extra considerations to be taken into account in specific situations.
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Part I

Introduction

This section applies to all professionals, members of staff and volunteers working for, or accredited by, a public, voluntary, or private agency, place of worship, faith organisation or independent contractor, whose work brings them into contact with children. It includes those working in prisons, secure training establishments, and escort driving services for children. For the purposes of this document the term individual employee will be used to describe a professional, member of staff and volunteer.

Allegations of abuse may be made against an individual employee in either their private life or their working capacity. In the event of an allegation of abuse being made against an individual employee in their work or private life, child protection enquiries should be conducted in accordance with the following procedures.
1. **Action to be taken**

1.1 All referrals regarding suspected professional abuse (i.e., abuse that could result in a child suffering significant harm) should be reported immediately, and certainly within 24 hours, to the duty manager, Intake and Assessment. If out of hours this should be reported to the Service Manager, Emergency Duty Team who should follow the standard procedures as for any child protection concern out of hours.

Where there are cross-border issues the Strategy Meeting should be called where the child is found or where he/she makes the complaint. The decision making process for which of these applies can be found in section 3 of the All Wales Child Protection Procedures.

1.2 Staff within Children’s Services should normally report suspected professional abuse through their own line manager and the Service Manager, Intake & Assessment. However, this should not cause any delay in reporting the matter to the Designated Child Protection Officer.

If necessary, the staff member may approach the Designated Child Protection Officer directly. The Designated Child Protection Officer will ensure that the relevant Team Manager and Duty Manager for Intake and Assessment are also made aware of the referral.

1.3 All referrals about suspected professional abuse that are passed on verbally within Children’s Services should also be followed up in writing and faxed within 24 hours to the manager to whom the matter is being reported.

1.4 Where the allegation relates to the staff member’s line manager, the matter should be reported directly to the Designated Child Protection Officer.

1.5 The Designated Child Protection Officer should be informed immediately, by Intake & Assessment, of the referral. A Strategy Discussion should take place, between the Designated Child Protection Officer and the Manager who has received the referral, within two working days of receipt of the referral.

The discussion should ensure that:

- The child’s social worker is or has been informed if allegation is made;
- The relevant senior manager and/or HR department in the employing agency is, or has been, informed;
- The employing agency must inform their regulatory body if relevant
- The referral is or has been discussed with the police;
- A strategy meeting has been convened if necessary;
- Any necessary preliminary information gathering/assessment is undertaken prior to the strategy meeting.
1.6 A strategy meeting will be convened in all cases of suspected harm and where an act of harm has occurred against an adult. If there is imminent action needed to safeguard the child/ren then a strategy discussion should take place. Discussions should not be delayed until a meeting is held.

1.7 The employing agency should consider, with the police and the Designated Child Protection Officer, whether immediate suspension of the individual employee may be required in order to safeguard any child/ren. If this course of action is thought to be necessary, the Designated Child Protection Officer will advise the relevant senior manager in the employing agency without delay. Any other necessary immediate protective action will also be considered by the Service Manager, Intake & Assessment and the police as soon as the referral is received. This should include whether or not to inform the child’s parent(s) at this stage (see section 6 below).

1.8 The Designated Child Protection Officer should decide who are the relevant agencies required at the strategy meeting. Responsibility for any investigation remains with the police and Social Services.

Membership of the strategy meeting should include:

- Designated Officer/Operational Manager/Head of Service;
- Detective Inspector;
- Line Manager or employer of the staff member;
- Human Resources representative from the employing agency;
- Regulatory body where appropriate;
- Case manager(s) of the child/ren making the allegation (if appropriate)
- Designated professionals (where allegations relate to health professionals)
- Any other person with relevant information.

Consideration should be given to attendance of Legal Services if appropriate

Those invited to attend the strategy meeting should be reminded of the need for investigations to be undertaken in strict confidence.

1.9 If the meeting cannot take place within the required timeframe a strategy discussion can address some, or all, of the items for consideration in 2.1 and 2.2 (see proceeding section)
2. **For consideration by the Strategy Meeting**

2.1 The immediate priorities will be to ensure the protection and safety of any children, and to manage the issues in respect of the individual employee. If a strategy meeting cannot be convened within 2 working days of the referral, minutes of the meeting should include the reasons for the delay. The strategy meeting should be chaired by the Designated Child Protection Officer or a senior manager from Children's Services.

2.2 There are two main areas for consideration by the strategy meeting. These are set out below.

i) To decide whether S.47 Enquiries and/or a criminal investigation are required.

If such action is required, the following should be addressed in the strategy meeting:

- Consider what action may be required to protect the child in question and/or any other children the individual employee has contact with;
- Convene a strategy meeting in respect of any other children to consider the likelihood of harm to other children with who the individual has contact with at work;
- Decide who will conduct the enquiries/investigation (those involved should be suitably trained and experienced as well as independent);
- Designate the manager who will be responsible for managing the investigation;
- Designate the case co-ordinator;
- Decide who is to be interviewed, by whom and where;
- Consider what information should be given to the individual employee against whom the allegation has been made, by whom and when;
- Decide who will contact the parents/carers and obtain consent for interviewing the child, any video recording or medical examination;
- Consider whether any special factors need to be taken into account (e.g. the child’s developmental level, any disability, language of choice);
- Agree whether a medical examination (clinical and forensic) is required and, if so, by whom and where;
• Make arrangements to provide an advocate for any child who is looked after;

• Consider what support should be provided for the individual employee;

• Decide how, when and to who the investigating officers will report and how they will review progress;

• Include discussions with legal if, and when, necessary. These discussion will take place as, and when, necessary;

• Record, clearly, the reasons for no further action under child’s protection;

• Consider the need for a media strategy where there is likely to be press interest.

The strategy meeting should also set a time scale for enquiries, at least for the initial stages.

When the allegation concerns an individual employee from Social Services or the Police, consideration must be given to involving an independent element to the enquiries/investigation.

ii) To consider whether there are disciplinary issues to be followed up.

• Consider whether the employer needs to be advised of any action needed immediately to protect any children or the individual employee under investigation;

• Agree at what stage in the process the disciplinary issues should be followed up;

• The employing agency should consider, with the police and the Designated Child Protection Officer, whether immediate suspension of the individual employee may be required in order to safeguard any child/ren. The strategy meeting can only recommend suspension; the authority to suspend an individual employee rests with the employer.

In the event of an employer deciding not to suspend an individual employee, the employer should be encouraged to undertake a risk management assessment that should be shared through further strategy meetings/discussions, and/or consider the redeployment of an individual employee to a position where he/she has no contact with children.

Suspension is considered a neutral act and should be considered:

a. Where an allegation has been made which, if proven, would lead to a dismissal or prosecution;
b. Where a child could be placed in danger if the individual employee were not removed from duty;

c. Where it is necessary to allow full and proper child protection section 47 enquiries and/or criminal investigation and the taking of statements for criminal proceedings;

d. Where child protection enquiries are to be initiated to ensure that they are not prejudiced or undermined (e.g., by the continued presence at work of the employee or volunteer).

- Consultation with the employer should not be allowed to compromise the independence of the child protection enquiries.

- Any disciplinary investigation against an individual employee, in respect of allegations of abuse, should not begin without the knowledge of the Children's Services and the police.
3. **Outcomes from the Strategy Meeting/Discussion**

3.1 These may include one or more of the following:

- Section 47 Enquiries resulting in no further action;
- Section 47 Enquiries resulting in an initial child protection conference;
- Section 47 Enquiries resulting in continued support for the child and family;
- Criminal Investigation resulting in no further action;
- Criminal Investigation resulting in prosecution of the member of staff;
- Disciplinary investigation resulting in no further action;
- Disciplinary Investigation resulting in suspension of the member of staff;
- Disciplinary investigation resulting in a disciplinary hearing;
- Referral to WAGIS/POCA/LIST 99 or referral to POVA Team.

3.2 Where a criminal investigation results in no further action but a disciplinary investigation is to take place subsequently, a request can be made to the police for permission to use the information gained from the criminal investigation in the disciplinary investigation. The police will consider any request on a case by cases basis.
4. **Initial Child Protection Conference**

4.1 The findings of the enquiries/investigation should be discussed with the appropriate manager for a decision as to whether to carry our further enquiries/investigation and/or convene a child protection conference(s) in relation to:

- The child or children concerned;
- Other children who have contact with the alleged perpetrator (individual employee);
- The alleged perpetrator’s (individual employees) own children.

4.2 The decision as to whether or not to convene an initial child protection conference should be considered at the investigation outcomes review meeting (See section 8 below).
5. **Criminal & disciplinary proceedings**

5.1 Once the police investigation is complete a decision as to whether or not the case should be forwarded to the Crown Prosecution Service is the responsibility of the police.

5.2 Child Protection agencies should assist with any disciplinary process against an individual employee, in respect of allegations of abuse, to the extent that this may be done without breaching other duties (e.g. by providing relevant evidence).
6. **Informing the child’s parents/carers**

6.1 In all cases where abuse is alleged, the child’s parents/carers should be informed at an early stage by Social Services of details of the allegations and procedures to be followed unless to do so may

a. further endanger the child, or

b. compromise any investigation.
7. **Information to individual employee**

7.1 At the earliest opportunity, after consultation with the police and provided it does not prejudice the criminal investigation, the individual employee should be informed by their line manager verbally and in writing, that an allegation of abuse has been made. However, the allegation should not be discussed and direct questioning should be avoided if the police wish to interview the individual employee. It should be decided at the strategy meeting who should do this and when.

7.2 The individual employee should be informed that the investigation will be carried out in accordance with Child Protection Procedures, and that they have a right to be accompanied at any resulting disciplinary meetings by a friend, trades union nominee or solicitor, and to receive minutes of such meetings.

7.3 The individual employee should be informed that the Child Protection enquiries/investigation would, so far as is possible, be confidential but that information gained which is relevant to disciplinary or criminal proceedings may be disclosed for those purposes.

7.4 At the conclusion of the Child Protection investigation, the individual employee will be given a written statement of the allegation, together with the conclusion of the investigation. Where Human Resources have been directly involved in the investigation, they will write to the individual employee and place a copy of the letter on the employee’s personal file. Where Human Resources have not been involved other than in the strategy meetings, the chair of the strategy meeting will write the letter and it will also be placed on the employee’s personal file.

7.5 Where any individual employee is dissatisfied with the enquiries/investigation, or the outcome reached by their own agency, they should be informed of grievance, complaints or appeals procedures that may be applicable.
8. Investigation outcomes review meeting

8.1 When the child protection section 47 enquiries and/or criminal investigation has been concluded an investigation outcome meeting should be convened within 5 working days.

8.2 The Designated Child Protection Officer will convene an investigation outcome meeting within five working days of the completion of the child protection section 47 enquiries. The meeting will determine whether an allegation continues to be dealt with under these procedures. The meeting will be attended by those involved in the strategy meeting, plus relevant others who have been directly involved in the investigation process, and the child’s advocate if appropriate (see Section 9 below).

The investigation outcome meeting will:

- Evaluate the information gathered during the enquiries;
- Decide, on the balance of probability, whether there is substance in the allegation;
- Decide whether any further action is needed, in the light of the information gathered;
- Ensure support and services are available for the child or children where indicated;
- Decide whether to recommend that the employer make a referral under the POCA and POVA procedures, and List 99 (and future arrangements brought in by the Welsh Assembly Government);
- Offer advice to the police regarding any entry on the Police National Computer taking particular care to ensure that the outcome of the investigation is clearly recorded;
- Agree reporting arrangements to CSSIW, if involved, on the investigation and action taken or to be taken;
- Discuss and make recommendations to the employing manager in relation to employees who may have been temporarily suspended or redeployed for the duration of the investigation;
- Advise on support for employees where concerns are substantiated/ are not substantiated;
- If the allegation is deemed to be unsubstantiated, record the reason for this decision.
9. **Role of the Advocate (children looked after)**

The Advocate will represent the child's views at all stages of the process. However, the Advocate would not usually attend the initial strategy meeting unless s/he had information relating to the allegation (for example, had observed the incident or was the person to whom the child had disclosed). The Advocate would be expected to participate in the investigation outcomes review meeting but not be part of the decision-making.
10. **Arrangements for record keeping**

10.2 All records will be kept for the appropriate durations laid out within each agencies legal guidelines in respect of data retention periods.

10.1 **Where there is an identified child**

The following procedures will be followed for allegations relating to an identified child:

- Children’s Services Records:
  
a. Minutes of all Strategy Meetings/Discussions will be held on the child’s file.
  
b. These minutes will only include the initials of the individual employee.

- Human Resources Records:
  
a. Minutes of all Strategy Meetings/Discussions will be held on the individual employees file.
  
b. These minutes will only include the initials of the child.

Minutes will be indexed by cross-reference to both the child’s name and individual employees name. This index will be held at the Safeguarding and Reviewing Unit.

10.2 **Where there is no identified child**

The following procedures will be followed for allegations where there is no identified child, i.e. downloading of indecent images:

a. Minutes of all Strategy Meetings/Discussions will be held only on the individual employees personnel file.

An index record of the individual employees name and the strategy meeting/discussion will be held at the Safeguarding and Reviewing Unit.

10.3 **Letters to individual employees**

- At the outset of an investigation

  a. Subject to the provisos noted in section 7, the immediate line manager should inform the individual employee, both verbally and in writing, at the earliest opportunity.
  
b. A copy of this correspondence will be stored on the individual employees personnel file.

- At the conclusion of an investigation
a. When Human Resources have been directly involved in the investigation, they will write to the individual employee. A copy of this correspondence will be stored on the individual employees personnel file.

b. In all other cases, the chair of the strategy meeting will write to the individual employee. A copy of this correspondence will be stored on the individual employees personnel file.
Part II

Introduction

Allegations of the abuse of children by professionals/staff members should be managed in accordance with the child protection process. There are some differences that reflect the nature of the setting in which the employee works.

The following circumstances are addressed:

1. Allegations of child abuse by staff in residential homes;
2. Allegations of abuse against a foster carer;
3. Allegations of abuse against private foster carer;
4. Additional guidelines on childminders;
5. Allegations of abuse of children in custody;

For all of these sections the following applies:

- In the event of an individual employee being dismissed or moved to another position as a result of child protection enquiries and/or a criminal investigation, the investigation outcome meeting should advise the employer of the duty to submit their details under the Protection of Children Act 1999 (POCA) or Protection of Vulnerable Adults (POVA) protocols, and any other subsequent directions by the Welsh Assembly Government. No employing agency should accept a resignation from an individual employee subject to child protection enquiries and/or a criminal investigation but should follow disciplinary procedures to ensure a formal employment record of the investigation and its outcome and any disciplinary measures taken are clearly recorded.

- The LSCB should be informed about any recommendations made by the investigation outcome meeting for the employing authority to refer to the barring lists and / or to the relevant professional regulatory bodies.

- The agency should be required to confirm in writing to the LSCB that this action has been taken.

- The LSCB should monitor the implementation of any such recommendations.
1 Allegations of child abuse by staff in residential homes

1.1 In the event of an individual employee in a residential home being reported for alleged abuse, the child protection procedures for allegations against professionals must always be followed. A criminal offence must be reported to the police. An allegation may also result in an organisation’s disciplinary procedures being invoked.

1.2 The implementation of the All Wales Child Protection Procedures will always take precedence over a residential home’s disciplinary process.

1.3 Child Protection enquiries into allegations of abuse of children in residential settings will follow the procedures in Part I of this document. They must also consider the likelihood that other children may have been abused, and that there may have been a pattern of historical abuse. Therefore social workers and police officers undertaking the enquiries must be familiar with the procedure for the management of organised abuse.

1.4 Staff members will usually report concerns about the alleged abuse of a child by an individual employee to the head and/or deputy of the establishment, and follow the establishment’s own procedures and guidance.

1.5 Immediate consideration should be given to postponing any new or pending placements of children at the establishment.

1.6 The head of the residential home is required to report all allegations of abuse to CSSIW in accordance with the Children’s Homes (Wales) Regulations 2002 (Regulation 29 (1) (Schedule 5).

1.7 When the staff member has reported the alleged abuse to the head/deputy of the residential home, the head/deputy will inform the referring staff member about the actions taken to address the allegation and protect the child. If the referring staff member:

- Has concerns that the actions taken by the head and/or deputy have failed to protect the child and other children from continuing harm; or

- Is unable to discuss concerns with the head and/or deputy; or

- Suspects that the head and/or deputy is involved in or colluding with the abuse;

The staff member must report their concerns directly to the Designated Child Protection Officer in the local authority in which the establishment is situated, and/or to the police.
1.9 In the event of the allegation being directly or indirectly made about the head and/or deputy, the staff member should promptly report the allegation to the Designated Child Protection Officer in the local authority in which the establishment is situated, and/or to the police.

1.10 Where the children’s home is managed by or on behalf of the local authority:

- There should be someone independent involved in the child protection enquiry from the outset;
- The person managing the investigation should not have immediate line management responsibility for the establishment.

1.11 At the strategy meeting/investigation outcome meeting a decision is required about the following additional matters:

- Arrangements for social services to inform the child’s parents at an early stage of the details of the allegation and the procedure to be followed;
- Offer an independent advocate (e.g. Children Rights Service or Advocacy Service) to the child;
- Agree any action needed to protect the child making the referral and/or the child who is the subject of the allegation and any other children in the residential unit;
- Transfer the child to another placement if this is in the child’s best interests;
- Consider what disciplinary measures should be invoked even when there is insufficient evidence for prosecution.

1.12 Additionally, in cases of alleged abuse in independent schools, the senior manager responsible for child protection in social services should at an early stage notify the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) or the registrar of independent schools as appropriate.
2 Allegations of abuse against a foster carer

2.1 Identifying the Risk of Harm

2.1.1 This section applies to foster placements arranged by a local authority, independent fostering agencies and voluntary organisations.

2.1.2 Children looked after in foster care are often the most vulnerable in society. The majority of foster carers provide children with good quality and safe care. However the fact that foster care is undertaken in the privacy of a caregivers home may make it difficult to identify abuse taking place and for children to voice their concerns. A child in placement may have experienced abuse previously.

2.1.3 It is important for both the child and caregiver that all concerns are fully and rigorously investigated. An allegation against a foster carer has serious implications for them and their families.

2.1.4 Any allegation or concern about abuse or suspected abuse in relation to a foster carer or any member of the foster carer’s household must be referred to the Designated Child Protection Officer and the manager responsible for looked after children and fostering.

2.1.5 Child protection enquiries should not be carried out by anyone who has been involved in assessing the foster carer or who has operational responsibilities for the family placement/fostering service in the area. However, fostering staff can be important sources of information and may provide support to the foster carer, although consideration should always be given to the provision of independent support for the foster carer.

2.1.6 Handling of the referral will follow the procedure set out in Part I of this document, with the following additional measures:

- Inform the case manager of any looked after child placed in the household;
- Take any immediate steps necessary to ensure the protection of all children in the household;
- Take any immediate steps necessary to ensure the protection of the foster carer's own children;
- Ensure that no further placements are made pending the child protection enquiry;
- Inform CSSIW of the allegations.

2.2 Strategy Meeting
2.2.1 Consideration should also be given to attendance by:

- The foster carers’ social worker;
- A legal representative for the authority;
- CSSIW;
- LAC clinical nurse specialist / named or designated child protection health professional;
- Other relevant agencies e.g. education representative;
- The person with details of the referral.

2.2.2 The tasks of the strategy meeting should include the following, in addition to the tasks of all strategy meetings described in Section 2 of Part I of this document

2.2.3 Consider the safety and needs of all children currently in the placement as well as previously in the placement

- Consider each child individually and make recommendations as to whether the foster child/children should remain with the foster carers pending child protection section 47 enquiries. The views of the child should always be taken into account;
- Plan additional safeguards, if the child is to remain in the foster placement while the enquiries take place;
- The approval of the senior manager should be sought if it is recommended that the child remains in the placement;
- Appoint an advocate for the child/children, who may be a social worker, family member or independent person. There are particular benefits to involving an independent advocate who can represent the child at all stages of the process. However, the advocate would not usually be part of the strategy meeting unless they had information to share;
- Consider the safety and welfare of the foster carers’ own children and any other children with whom they have regular contact;
- Consider any other employment or voluntary activity of the foster carer, which brings them into contact with children and may place a child at risk;
- Identify all children previously placed and whether there may be concerns in relation to them;
• Identify what information will be given to the foster carers, when and by whom, regarding the allegation and section 47 enquiries. The chair of the strategy meeting to confirm this information in writing to the foster carers;

• Identify who will support the foster carers during the process of investigation and how they will be kept informed. If the strategy meeting gives a staff member this role, their status must be made clear to all parties to avoid confusion;

• Make arrangements to advise the foster carers that no further placements will be made during the course of the child protection enquiries;

• The child’s parent(s) should be informed at an early stage of the allegation and of the procedures to be followed, and should be offered support and advocacy. The disclosure of information to parents of other children in the placement should be carefully considered, particularly when a child has to be moved as the result of an allegation;

• Agree the manager who will receive the information on the outcome of child protection enquiries and the criminal investigation;

• A full record of the meeting will be made, including the reasons in the event of a decision to take no further action.

2.3 The Foster Carers

2.3.1 The person supporting the foster carers should ensure that the foster carers:

• Understand the concerns being expressed and arrange for the foster carers to verify and comment on the factual information given, unless this compromises any criminal investigation;

• Are informed of the child protection procedures that will be followed;

• Are informed of time scales set for the process;

• Are told what support is available to them and how to contact the Fostering Network and any other external support arrangements for foster carers made by the local authority;

• Are clearly informed of the outcome of the child protection enquiries/criminal investigation;

• Understand that witnesses, including support workers may be called to give evidence, in the event of a court hearing.

2.3.2 Following any child protection section 47 enquiries, or a significant incident or complaint, the fostering panel should always consider the foster carer’s
approval status. A record of the allegation and the outcome of the child protection enquiries and/or criminal investigation should be placed on the foster carers file.

2.3.3 The Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) who is responsible for the review of the case of any child in the placement should be informed about the child protection enquiries and the outcome.

2.3.4 Foster carers subject to allegations may decide to give notice of their intention to cease fostering. The regulations allow foster carers to provide 28 days’ notice of their intention to resign after which the resignation becomes effective. It is likely that in the event of a foster carer deciding to resign at an early stage of child protection enquiries that the investigation will not be complete before it takes effect. In the event of the foster carer having already resigned, the fostering panel should receive a report concerning the outcomes of the child protection enquiries and/or criminal investigation, and ensure a record of the panel discussion together with any advice or recommendations are placed on the foster carer’s agency record. In the event of a request being made at a later date from other agencies for a reference, any response must include comment about recommendations or advice and make clear the foster carer resigned before the agency made a decision concerning their approval status.

2.3.5 The child protection section 47 enquiries and/or criminal investigation must be completed regardless of a resignation.

2.3.6 Social services must ensure that details about a foster carer removed from local registers as a direct result of the allegations, whether substantiated or not, are submitted for inclusion under the POCA and POVA protocols, and any other subsequent requirements directed by the Welsh Assembly Government.
3 Allegations against private foster carers

3.1 A private fostering arrangement is a private agreement without the involvement of a local authority for the care of a child under the age of 16 (under 18, if disabled) with someone other than a parent or close relative with the intention of it lasting for 28 days or more.

3.2 A private foster carer may be a friend of the family, the parent of a friend of the child, or someone previously unknown to the child or their family but who is willing to privately foster the child.

3.3 Both the private foster carers and the persons with parental responsibility are required to notify the local authority of the arrangement.

3.4 All professionals have a duty to notify the local authority if they become aware of a private fostering arrangement.

3.5 The risk of abuse of children subject to private fostering arrangements was highlighted by the death of Victoria Climbié in 2000. The Children Act 2004 establishes duties on all local authorities to promote awareness about the need to notify the authority about any privately fostered children living in their area.

3.6 The procedures to be followed when making enquiries about allegations concerning private foster carers follow the same sequence as described for other foster carers with some important distinctions:

- A strategy meeting should involve the social worker who has undertaken statutory visits to the private foster carer and child;

- If the child is a non UK national the appropriate embassy should be contacted;

- Consider support for the private foster carer following the completion of the enquiries.
4 Additional guidelines in respect of childminders

4.1 The Registration and Inspection Regulations apply to all childminding arrangements. The membership of the strategy meeting should therefore include:

- The Registration and Inspection Officer (Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW));
- A senior social services officer responsible for day care services.
- In addition to the guidance in Part I of this document, the strategy meeting will also:
  - Consider action that may be taken by the CSSIW with regard to the suspension of the childminder’s registration;
  - Identify children currently and previously cared for by the childminder;
  - What information should be shared with other parents currently using the service of the childminder;
  - Consider the circumstances and welfare of the childminder’s own children and any other children with whom they have significant contact;
  - Agree the information to be given to the childminder about the allegation and child protection enquiries; the chair of the strategy meeting will provide this in writing to the childminder;
  - Decide what information will be given to parents/caregivers; the chair of the strategy meeting will send this in writing to the parents/caregivers;
  - Identify the nature and levels of support, which should be offered to the children, their parents and the childminder.

4.2 During the course of the enquiries, the childminder should be encouraged to seek support from the National Childminder Association. The childminder will be kept informed as far as possible without prejudicing the effectiveness of the ongoing enquiries.
5 Allegations of abuse of children in custody

5.1 Responding to Allegations of Abuse Involving Children in Prison

5.1.1 Individual staff members or professionals visiting children in custody have a responsibility to refer any concerns regarding the safety or well being of a child in custody to social services. The concerns may arise from disclosures made by the young person, observed signs or symptoms of abuse, or third party disclosures. The concerns may arise from allegations or suspicions regarding abuse from other prisoners or allegations concerning staff.

5.1.2 Individual staff members or professionals who have concerns or evidence about the safety and well being of a child in custody should bring their concerns to the attention of the designated child protection co-ordinator within the establishment without delay. Consideration should be given to whether the concerns merit referral to the local social services duty team. If the allegation concerns abuse by a member of staff a referral should be made in all cases and the procedures described in Part 1 followed.

5.1.3 Individual staff members or professionals visiting a child in custody who become aware or have concerns or specific information regarding allegations of abuse must ensure that a referral is made to the social services duty team in whose area the establishment is located. It is good practice for the designated child protection co-ordinator within the establishment to be informed of the concern or allegation as soon as practicable.

5.2 Action Required

5.2.1 The procedures described in Part I and Part II Sections 1-3 apply to children in police custody, prison, secure training centres or youth offender institutions, who are subject of court warrants or orders.

5.2.2 The strategy meeting should follow the guidance in Part I of this document with the additional considerations:

- Decide whether the allegations or suspicions have implications for the safety and needs of other or all children in the establishment;

- Make recommendations as necessary as to whether the child/children should remain within the establishment pending child protection section 47 enquiries. Welfare and safety considerations as well as the views of the child should be taken into account, subject to the requirements of maintaining the physical security of the child;

- Plan additional safeguards as necessary if the child is to remain in the establishment while enquiries take place. If the allegations concern other children in custody the meeting should agree what arrangements will be made to prevent further abuse or intimidation occurring;
• Seek approval for the child to move to another establishment if considered necessary and practical;

• Appoint an advocate for the child/ren. It is beneficial to appoint an independent advocate who can represent the child at all stages of the process. However, the advocate would not usually be part of strategy meeting unless they have information to share;

• If the allegations concern an individual employee consider the circumstances of their own children and whether any further child protection section 47 enquiries are necessary in respect of them;

• If the allegations concern other prisoners consider their family and social networks and whether any further child protection section 47 enquiries are necessary to assist with enquiries or safeguard other children;

• Determine if there is a need to identify other children previously placed and whether there may be issues in relation to them;

• Identify what information will be given to the individual employee(s) concerned, when and by whom, regarding the allegation and child protection section 47 enquiries;

• Identify who will support the alleged perpetrator during the process of investigation and how they will be kept informed. If the strategy meeting gives a staff member this role, their status must be made clear to all parties to avoid confusion;

• Decide who should give what information to the parents of the child. The child’s parent(s) should be informed at an early stage of the allegation and of the procedures to be followed. They should be offered support and advocacy. The chair of the strategy meeting should confirm this in writing to the parents. The disclosure of information to parents of other children in the placement should be carefully considered, particularly when a child has to be moved as the result of an allegation;

• Arrange for staff to verify and comment on the factual information given;

• Appoint a case co-ordinator within the establishment, who will receive the information on the outcome of the child protection enquiries and the criminal investigation.

5.2.3 A full record of the meeting will be made, including any reasons for no further action if appropriate.