

Safeguarding Children and Young People - Policy and Procedures



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Approved:

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Scope: Housing Solutions

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Review:**

29.8.2017

Legislation:

Human Right's Act 1998
Disability Discrimination Act
Safeguarding Children and Young
people Policy paper 2014
Children's Act 1989
Working together to Safeguard
Children 2013
Equality Act 2010
Housing Act 1996
Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and
Policing Act 2014
Mental Capacity Act 2005
The Public Interest Disclosure Act
1998
Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
Every Child matters

Related Policies:

Hate Crime Policy
Domestic Abuse Policy
Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy
Data protection Policy
Confidentiality Policy
Complaints Policy
Mental Capacity Policy
Whistleblowing Policy
Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
Email and IT Policy
Recruitment Policy
Code of Conduct

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1 Aims

- 1.1 To provide a clear statement that Housing Solutions will not tolerate or collude with any form of neglect, maltreatment or abuse of any child or young person.
- 1.2 To promote and safeguard the welfare of all children and young people of whom Housing Solutions comes in to contact with and will be proactive in responding to any allegation or suspicion of abuse.
- 1.3 To empower our customers by ensuring they are fully aware of what constitutes as neglect, the maltreatment and abuse of children and young people and how to report it.
- 1.4 To ensure that everyone, is clear about their individual and corporate roles and responsibilities in preventing and responding to neglect, maltreatment or abuse of children and young people.
- 1.5 Support the rehabilitation of perpetrators to reduce reoffending.
- 1.6 Provide appropriate training and support for our staff to enable them to identify the types and causes of abuse, the role they play in prevention and how to respond to neglect, maltreatment and abuse.
- 1.7 Provide a team of trained safeguarding champions who are able to provide support and guidance to staff and customers, whilst promoting safeguarding across the organisation.
- 1.8 Work in partnership with our partners and stakeholders to promote and safeguard the welfare of children and young people and proactively work with them in responding to allegations or suspicions of abuse.
- 1.9 Procedures will ensure that allegations are dealt with promptly and that information is shared appropriately where there is potential risk to others.
- 1.10 Investigations relating to Housing Solutions employees and or representatives will be carried out promptly and with sensitivity, and appropriate action will be taken.
- 1.11 Regularly review our approach and performance in safeguarding children and young people with our customers and partners, and will focus on continuous improvement.

2 Scope

- 2.1 Our policy relates to all of Housing Solutions customers, including tenants, leaseholders, shared owners, other household members and their visitors and members of the community.
- 2.2 This policy is for all Housing Solutions staff, agency staff, visitors, volunteers, placements, board members, contractors and persons representing Housing Solutions.
- 2.3 This Policy sets out how Housing Solutions will approach the prevention, management and reporting of the neglect, maltreatment and abuse of children and young people.
- 2.4 We will promote this policy and its approach with our partners and stakeholders.
- 2.5 The Community Service's Housing Manager is the designated Safeguarding Lead and with the Safeguarding champion team and Director of Customer services, is responsible for Adult and Child Protection.
- 2.6 For the purpose of this policy it is possible that children and young people may be:
 - customers in their own right
 - the children of customers
 - visitors to customers residing in a Housing Solutions property or service.
 - known to customers but not a visitor to Housing Solutions premises.
- 2.7 This policy applies to all individuals aged 18 and below whom Housing Solutions staff or representatives may come into contact with in the course of carrying out their work.

3 Definitions

Safeguarding children and young people	<p>A term used to describe the actions taken to promote the welfare of children and young people and to protect them from harm.</p>
Child or young person	<p>In regards to child protection, a child or young person is anyone up to the age of 18 years.</p>
Perpetrator(s) OR Accused	<p>The perpetrator(s) or the accused means the person(s) accused of causing harm, neglect, maltreatment or abuse.</p>
Child Abuse (the term “child” includes young people)	<p>Child abuse is any action by another person – adult or child – that causes significant harm to a child.</p>
Neglect	<p>Neglect is a form of Significant Harm which involves the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.</p>
Significant Harm	<p>The Children Act 1989 introduced Significant Harm as the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests of children.</p> <p>Physical Abuse, Sexual Abuse, Emotional Abuse and Neglect are all categories of Significant Harm.</p> <p>Harm is defined as the ill treatment or impairment of health and development. This definition was clarified in section 120 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (implemented on 31 January 2005) so that it may include, "for example, impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another".</p>
Hate crime	<p>Any crimes that are targeted at a person because of hostility or prejudice towards that person's;</p> <p>Disability; Race or ethnicity; Religion or belief; Sexual orientation; Transgender identity.</p> <p>This can be committed against a person or property. A child does not have to be a member of the group at which the hostility is targeted.</p>

<p>Concern</p>	<p>A Concern is identified as an expression of concern, suspicion or allegation that a child or young person is or may be a child of abuse, maltreatment or Neglect. A Concern may be as a result of an incident, disclosure or other signs or indicators.</p>
<p>Alerter</p>	<p>An Alerter is the person who raises a concern that child or young person is being, has been, or is at risk of being abused, maltreated or neglected. Anyone can be an Alerter including the person themselves. Alerters can also be paid staff, volunteers, a carer, friends, family, neighbours or members of the public/community.</p>
<p>Local Safeguarding Children’s Board (LSCB)</p>	<p>The Local Safeguarding Children Board is the successor to the Area Child Protection Committee. The Board is made up of representatives from a range of public agencies with a common interest and with duties and responsibilities to children in their area. It has responsibility for ensuring effective inter-agency working together to safeguard and protect children in the area. The Board has to ensure that clear local procedures are in place to inform and assist anyone interested or as part of their professional role where they have concerns about a child.</p>

4 What is safeguarding Children and why does it matter?

- 4.1 The government document ‘Working Together to Safeguard Children’ (2013) states: “a child is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. ‘Children’ therefore means ‘children and young people” for the purpose of this Policy.
- 4.2 Safeguarding children is the action we take to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. It is everyone’s responsibility and everyone who comes into contact with children and families has a role to play.
- 4.3 ¹Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined by Government as:
- protecting children from maltreatment;
 - preventing impairment of children's health or development;
 - ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and

¹ Working together to safeguard children 2013

- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.
- 4.4 For children who need additional help, every day matters. Academic research is consistent in underlining the damage to children from delaying intervention. The actions taken by professionals to meet the needs of these children as early as possible can be critical to their future.
- 4.5 Children are best protected when professionals are clear about what is required of them individually, and how they need to work together.
- 4.6 The child's needs are paramount, and the needs and wishes of each child, be they a baby or infant, or an older child, should be put first, so that every child receives the support they need before a problem escalates.

5 Principles of safeguarding work

- 5.1 Housing Solution's Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy is based on the following principles:
- ensuring suitable and appropriate staff are recruited
 - ensuring effective management of staff through regular supervision, support and training
 - sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, including social services and the safeguarding authority
 - involving and supporting children appropriately and, wherever possible, respecting their choice in the range of agencies they may wish to work with.
 - where the perpetrator, or alleged perpetrator, is another Housing Solution's customer, providing them with appropriate support to enable them to engage with the investigation and to understand and comply with the outcome and any subsequent action plan
 - sharing information about child protection and good practice with customers, staff, partner organisations and carers.
 - ensuring that partner organisations (e.g. suppliers of agency staff, voluntary organisations) apply child safeguarding practice when operating from Housing Solution's premises
 - ensuring action is sensitive to and takes account of the child's gender, age, disability, stage of development, religion, culture and race

6 Forms and Types of child abuse, maltreatment and neglect

- 6.1 ²Abuse is the “Violation of an individual’s human or civil rights. Any or all types of abuse may be perpetrated as the result of deliberate intent, negligence or ignorance.”
- 6.2 The abuse may be the result of a direct act, or omission of an act, or both. Abuse can take a number of forms, and it may be the case that two or more types of abuse are occurring simultaneously. Furthermore, staff should not be constrained in their view of what constitutes abuse or neglect, and should always consider the circumstances of the individual case.
- 6.3 ³**Forms of child abuse include:**
- 6.3.1 **Physical Abuse:** Physical Abuse is a form of Significant Harm which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child or young person. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.
- 6.3.2 **Sexual Abuse:** Sexual abuse is a form of Significant Harm which involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the Internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.
- 6.3.3 **Emotional/Psychological Abuse:** The use of threats, humiliation, bullying, swearing and other verbal conduct, or any other form of mental cruelty, that results in mental or physical distress. It includes the denial of basic human and civil rights, such as choice, self-expression, privacy and dignity.
- 6.3.4 **Neglect and acts of omission:** Neglect is a form of Significant Harm which involves the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food and clothing, shelter including exclusion from home or abandonment, failing to protect a child from physical

² Berkshire Adults Safeguarding Procedures

³ Care and Support Statutory Guidance, Issued under the Care Act 2014- Department of Health

and emotional harm or danger, failure to ensure adequate supervision including the use of inadequate care-takers, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

- 6.3.5 **Online abuse:** Online abuse is any type of abuse that happens on the web, whether through social networks, playing online games or using mobile phones. Children and young people may experience cyberbullying, grooming, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or emotional abuse. Children can be at risk of online abuse from people they know, as well as from strangers. Online abuse may be part of abuse that is taking place in the real world (for example bullying or grooming). Or it may be that the abuse only happens online (for example persuading children to take part in sexual activity online).
- 6.3.6 **Domestic abuse:** including psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse; so called 'honour' based violence, forced marriage and female genital mutilation. Witnessing domestic abuse is child abuse, and teenagers can suffer domestic abuse in their relationships. Domestic abuse can seriously harm children and young people.
- 6.3.7 **Child sexual exploitation:** Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a type of sexual abuse in which children are sexually exploited for money, power or status. Children or young people may be tricked into believing they're in a loving, consensual relationship. They might be invited to parties and given drugs and alcohol. They may also be groomed online. Some children and young people are trafficked into or within the UK for the purpose of sexual exploitation. Sexual exploitation can also happen to young people in gangs.
- 6.3.8 **Female genital mutilation (FGM):** A collective term (also known as genital cutting and female circumcision) for all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for cultural or non-medical reasons. Female Genital Mutilation is a criminal offence in the United Kingdom. It is also a criminal offence for UK nationals or permanent UK residents to carry out Female Genital Mutilation abroad, or to aid, abet, counsel or procure the carrying out of Female Genital Mutilation abroad, even in countries where the practice is legal.
- 6.3.9 **Forced marriage:** A marriage in which one or both spouses do not (or in the case of some adults with learning or physical disabilities or children, cannot) consent to the marriage and duress is involved. Duress can include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure. The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 made it a criminal offence (which can result in a sentence of up to 7 years in prison) to force someone to marry.
- 6.3.10 **Child trafficking:** Child trafficking is child abuse. Children are recruited, moved or transported and then exploited, forced to work or sold. Many children are trafficked into the UK from abroad, but children can also be trafficked from one part of the UK to another.

6.3.11 **Bullying and cyberbullying:** The intentional hurting of one person by another, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. It is usually repetitive or persistent, although some one-off attacks can have a continuing harmful effect on the victim. It can take many forms, but the 3 main types are physical e.g. hitting, kicking, theft; verbal e.g. racist or homophobic remarks, threats, name calling and emotional e.g. isolating an individual from social activities / acceptance of her/his peer group. Bullying that happens online, using social networks and mobile phones, is often called cyberbullying. A child can feel like there's no escape because it can happen wherever they are, at any time of day or night.

6.3.12 **Grooming:** Grooming is when someone builds an emotional connection with a child to gain their trust for the purposes of sexual abuse or exploitation. Children and young people can be groomed online or in the real world, by a stranger or by someone they know - for example a family member, friend or professional. Groomers may be male or female. They could be any age. Many children and young people don't understand that they have been groomed, or that what has happened is abuse.

6.4 **Types of abusive behaviour:**

6.4.1 **Complex abuse:** (organised or multiple abuse) may be defined as abuse involving one or more abusers and a number of related or non-related children. The abusers concerned may be acting together to abuse, sometimes acting in isolation or using an institutional framework or position of authority to recruit children for abuse. This includes neglect and poor care practice within specific care settings, and may range from isolated incidents to continuing ill-treatment.

6.4.2 ⁴**Patterns of abuse:** vary and include;

- **serial abusing** in which the perpetrator seeks out and 'grooms' individuals. Sexual abuse sometimes falls into this pattern.
- **long-term abuse** in the context of an ongoing family relationship such as domestic or persistent psychological abuse.

7 **Who abuses and neglects children and young people and where can it happen?**

7.1 Children can suffer abuse by a range of possible perpetrators including relatives, carers, friends, acquaintances, other children, 'trusted adults' (for

⁴ Care and Support Statutory Guidance, Issued under the Care Act 2014- Department of Health

example a professional who works with them), neighbours, other customers, and strangers.

- 7.2 Abuse can happen anywhere: for example, in someone's own home, in a public place, in hospital, in school/nursery, in a care home, in a youth offenders institute or in college.

8 Signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect

- 8.1 Whilst allegations of abuse may be raised directly by the child through them disclosing abuse to a staff member, there may be occasions where the child is unwilling or unable to disclose. All staff must be aware and mindful of possible indicators of abuse, such as:

- doesn't cry or respond to parent's presence or absence from an early age
- reaches developmental milestones late, such as learning to speak, with no medical reason
- wets or soils the bed
- becomes secretive and reluctant to share information
- reluctant to go home after school
- unable to bring friends home or reluctant for professionals to visit the family home
- nervousness or watchfulness
- inappropriate relationships with peers
- inappropriate sexual language
- attention-seeking behaviour
- changes in appearance or hygiene
- scavenging or compulsive stealing
- persistent fatigue
- running away/absconding
- injuries inconsistent with an explanation of Injuries at different stages of healing given
- unrealistic expectations of the abilities of the individual
- lack of consideration or respect for factors such as race, age, gender or sexuality of the individual
- controlling relationships between staff and child
- repeated acts of poor professional practice
- malnutrition resulting from poor diet
- untreated medical problems
- talks of being left home alone or with strangers.
- poor bond or relationship with a parent
- acts out excessive violence with other children
- lacks social skills and has few if any friends
- substance misuse

(This is not intended to be an exhaustive list, but an illustrative guide to signs and symptoms of child abuse.)

9 Safe working practices

- 9.1 In order to ensure that children are protected, any child or young person visiting a customer at a Housing Solutions service must be accompanied at all times by the customer who they are visiting and/or by an adult approved by their parent or guardian.
- 9.2 Staff working with vulnerable families and children must avoid placing themselves in positions that may cause children or parents to feel uncomfortable and which could lead to questions and/or false accusations of abuse.
- 9.3 In particular, Housing Solution's staff must not:
- meet with customers outside of work/organised activities
 - smack or discipline children
 - restrain children
 - make unnecessary physical contact with children. In cases where physical contact is unavoidable (for instance providing comfort/reassurance for a distressed child, physical support or contact in sports) this should only take place with the consent of the child and parent/guardian.
 - engage in sexually provocative or rough physical games
 - do things of a personal nature for children
 - engage in or tolerate any bullying either by adults, young people or children
 - allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged
 - engage in favouritism or in singling out of "trouble-makers"
 - make sexually suggestive remarks or discriminatory comments about or to children
 - trivialise or partake in child abuse
 - let allegations made by a child go unrecorded or unaddressed, including any made against themselves.
- 9.4 Housing Solutions expects its entire staff to abide by the safe working practices in order to avoid situations where their actions could be mistakenly interpreted and perhaps lead to allegations of abuse. Good practice will reduce the possibility of anyone using their position to gain access to children in order to abuse them. Staff must also ensure their actions are sensitive to customer needs.
- 9.5 Housing Solutions staff will always:
- listen to children
 - value and respect children as individuals, regardless of their gender, ethnicity, disability or sexual identity
 - as appropriate, involve children in decision-making processes
 - empower customers with the necessary information to make informed decisions.

10 Use or distribution of child pornography

- 10.1 Staff and volunteers must comply with Housing Solutions Email and IT Policy which states that they must not access inappropriate material. Equally, they must not use email to distribute pornographic material or use the internet to access it.

11 Whistleblowing

- 11.1 If a member of staff suspects that children are being abused by another member of Housing Solutions staff, they should immediately speak to their line manager, the designated safeguarding officer, the Head of Service, or the Human Resources Department.
- 11.2 Where there is a failure to respond appropriately to allegations of abuse, or where staff have concerns that a colleague or superior is responsible for the abuse, staff must follow Housing Solutions Whistleblowing Policy. The Public Interest Disclosure Act (1998) protects workers from detrimental treatment from their employer if they blow the whistle on wrongdoing, such as the abuse of customers. Staff who whistleblow can remain anonymous. However, this cannot necessarily be guaranteed if it results in a criminal investigation.

12 Support for those reporting abuse

- 12.1 All those making a complaint or allegation or expressing concern, whether they be children, staff, volunteers, customers, carers or members of the general public, should be reassured that:
- they will be taken seriously
 - their comments will usually be treated confidentially but their concerns may be shared if they or others are at significant risk
 - if customers, we will work with relevant partners to give immediate protection from the risk of reprisals or intimidation
 - if staff or volunteers, they will be given support and afforded protection if necessary
 - they will be dealt with in a fair and equitable manner and;
 - they will be kept informed of action that has been taken and its outcome
 - Employees and volunteers who speak out (whistle blow) against their employers/ manager/directors in such circumstances are protected by law from being discriminated against as a result (The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998), please refer to the Whistle blowing Policy.

13 Confidentiality and Capacity

- 13.1 Due attention must always be paid to confidentiality when working with children and customers. All staff must be familiar with Housing Solution's Data Protection Policy and Confidentiality Policy.
- 13.2 In accordance with the Children Act, staff should always try to discuss the raising of a Safeguarding Concern with the child or young person, and their parent(s)/ guardian(s) as long as doing so will not place the child or young person in further danger.
- 13.3 The reasons for their concerns should be discussed, and agreement sought from the parties involved for raising the concern.
- 13.4 However, there may be instances where the child or young person, their parent(s) or guardian(s) do not want a concern to be raised. In these circumstances staff must be mindful of the capacity of the child or young person to make decisions on their own behalf.
- 13.5 Where a child is less than 16 years of age, if staff become aware of abuse, or the possibility that abuse may be occurring, a concern must be raised regardless of the child's wishes.
- 13.6 For young people aged 16 or 17, if it is believed that they are suffering, or at risk of suffering, significant harm an concern should be raised whether they consent to it or not and whether or not they have the capacity to make informed decisions. This should be explained to them and the local authority must be informed of the child's wishes when the safeguarding concern is raised with them.
- 13.7 The Mental Capacity Act (2005) was created to enable people receiving support to make their own decisions, and to offer protection for those individuals charged with making decisions on the behalf of those lacking capacity.
- 13.8 The Act has 5 main principles:
- Every individual has the right to make their own decisions unless it can be shown they are incapable of doing so.
 - Individuals should be supported to make their own decisions where possible.
 - A person has the right to make decisions even if others regard the decisions made as being inappropriate or 'unwise'. A decision deemed as inappropriate does not in it self mean the client should be deemed incapable.
 - A person making decisions on behalf of someone lacking capacity must do so in their best interests.

- Decisions made by a third party on behalf of someone lacking capacity should always be the option which is least restrictive on their basic rights and freedoms.
- 13.9 Where staff have concerns about a customer's ability to make an informed decision that relates to an abuse allegation or concerns around abuse, they must request that social services, the local CMHT or NHS Trust arrange for an assessment to take place. Where the customer has an allocated social worker or care coordinator they should be contacted in the first instance. This assessment will consider:
- The individual's views.
 - Their past and present wishes, feelings, beliefs and values.
 - Any written statement they've produced.
 - Anyone they have requested to be consulted.
 - The views of family, friends or support staff who have an interest in their welfare.
- 13.10 All staff must ensure they provide appropriate support to the customer during this process, and contribute to the assessment as required.

14 Information sharing

- 14.1 Working in partnership with statutory and other relevant agencies is a key element of investigations into suspected abuse. The wishes of the child or family in relation to what information should be shared, and with whom, should be respected where possible. However, where there is a concern that the child may be suffering or is at risk of abuse or neglect, their safety must be the over-riding priority. Information must be shared with statutory authorities where there is any indication of abuse. The following points must be considered as part of this process:
- 14.2 It should be explained openly and honestly to the child and/or parent what information will have to be divulged to statutory authorities and any other third parties, how it will be divulged and to whom.
- 14.3 Information should not be shared with other non-statutory third parties where it would increase the risk to the child or undermine the prevention, detection or prosecution of a crime.
- 14.4 Information shared must be accurate and up-to-date, necessary for the purpose for which it is being shared, and shared only with those who need to know.

15 Recording and reporting

- 15.1 If an allegation or suspicion of abuse is discovered by a member of staff or Housing Solutions representative or contractor, they should inform the designated safeguarding officer or a safeguarding champion, as soon as possible.

- 15.2 Where a child is seen to be at risk of serious/immediate harm, the Police must be contacted immediately. Information is to then be shared with the designated safeguarding officer or a safeguarding champion, as soon as possible.
- 15.3 Anyone can report abuse and complete a safeguarding concern. Housing Solutions supports this practice, but asks that the designated safeguarding officer or a safeguarding champion is informed in advance, where possible. They may take on the responsibility of raising a concern with the relevant safeguarding team or may delegate this duty.
- 15.4 Staff's role is to respond and record, unless specifically asked to do so you should not carry out an investigation of the incident. This will be carried out by the relevant local authorities safeguarding team or Housing Solutions designated safeguarding officer, where directed by the local safeguarding children's board.
- 15.5 The persons reporting the alleged or suspected abuse should make a written record of the allegation or suspicion of abuse, including a detailed personal record of what has been seen, heard or been told about the incident/allegation and report this to the designated safeguarding officer or a safeguarding champion.
- 15.6 If the child or young person is suspected to have experienced physical abuse/harm and there are visible marks, bruises, scratched, cuts or any other signs of physical harm, these should individually be recorded on the relevant body map. Staff must note that they should only record what they see and never ask a child or young person to remove clothing. When using the body maps to record visible marks, the staff member should give an accurate indication of where the marks are located and a description of what has been seen.
- 15.7 The person reporting the abuse should complete Housing Solutions Safeguarding Concern Form. The form is to be handed to the designated safeguarding officer or a safeguarding champion. The information provided will need to be accurate, as an edited version may be used in the event of criminal prosecution. The concern form will be stored securely in a locked cupboard, with the safeguarding risk register by the designated safeguarding officer or a safeguarding champion.
- 15.8 It is not the organisation's responsibility to decide whether abuse has taken place or not, however it is the organisations responsibility to pass on information to the appropriate authority immediately.
- 15.9 Making and retaining records is important at all stages of the process. All records/notes must be retained. This includes any information obtained during an investigation and copies of any information passed to outside authorities. All material will be kept in a secure file by the designated safeguarding officer or a safeguarding champion.

15.10 Everyone should also be aware of the need to ensure that any relevant evidence is preserved.

15.11 The written record of the abuse should be completed to the best of the person's knowledge. Do not interrogate the child but if possible aim for the report to contain the following;

- Known details including name, date of birth address and contact numbers
- Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else.
- Date, Time, Place
- What happened - Precise details in Adult's or Child's own words
- Did anyone else witness it, if so their contact details?
- Did the Individual /Child go to hospital
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries (To be recorded on a body mapping sheet – Appendix 1 and 2).
- Were there any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes.
- Were the police called?
- How often have the assaults taken place?
- Does the Individual/Child know the name of the person who assaulted or abused them?
- Does the Individual have any dementia or other impairment and if so could this have affected their recollection?

15.12 You must make a distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay.

15.13 If a staff member/volunteer has been told about the allegation of abuse in confidence, they should attempt to gain the consent of the child or child's guardian to make a referral to another agency. However, the gaining of the consent is not essential in order for information to be passed on.

15.14 Consideration needs to be given to:

- The scale of the abuse
- The risk of harm to others
- The capacity of the child to understand the issues of abuse and consent
- If there is any doubt about whether or not to report an issue to Social Services then it should be reported.
- Where the alleged abuser is a member of staff/volunteer, the Disciplinary procedure will be followed, commencing with removal from active duty where there is a risk to others.

15.15 Full details on the process of raising a safeguarding concern with a local authority can be found in section 22.4 of this policy and procedure.

15.16 Housing Solutions operates a Safeguarding register, which is managed by the designated safeguarding officer and the safeguarding champions. Every safeguarding concern/concern will need to be recoded in the register, including the outcome of the concern. The safeguarding register will be

stored in a secure cupboard with restricted access and can only be shared in line with our confidentiality and data protection procedures.

16 Disincentives to reporting abuse

16.1 Housing Solution's recognises that it is often difficult for victims of child abuse to disclose or report instances of abuse. This may be for a number of possible reasons, such as:

- fear
- stigma
- not realising it is abuse
- not knowing how to report it
- thinking they won't be taken seriously
- learned helplessness
- not being able to see any solutions
- feeling ashamed
- not wanting to get someone else into trouble
- lacking capacity or experiencing poor mental health

16.2 Overcoming these barriers is key to ensuring that no abuse goes unnoticed or unaddressed, and Housing Solution's aims to achieve this by:

- Regularly exploring barriers to reporting abuse with customers during House Meetings, information sharing events and Key working sessions. This includes discussing example cases and promoting awareness and reporting processes.
- Using Team Meetings, training and supervision to ensure staff are aware of how to recognise and respond to abuse, and how to empower and encourage customers to report it.
- Encouraging services to learn from each Safeguarding Concern by including the need for service improvements, including overcoming barriers, to be recorded as part of every safeguarding investigation.

17 Recruitment

17.1 Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

17.1.1 The Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) have merged into the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). CRB checks are now called DBS checks.

17.1.2 The Disclosure and Barring Service aims to ensure that unsuitable people do not work with Adults at risk, whether in paid employment or on a voluntary basis.

17.1.3 The Vetting and Barring Scheme includes two barred lists maintained by the Disclosure and Barring Service. One list comprises persons barred from working with children and the other is for persons barred with working with Adults. A person who is barred from working with children or Adults at Risk will be breaking the law if they work or volunteer, or try to work or volunteer with those groups. An organisation which knowingly employs someone who is barred to work with those groups will also be breaking the law.

17.1.4 Regulated Activity is work which involves close and unsupervised contact with vulnerable groups including children and adults and which cannot be undertaken by a person who is on the Disclosure and Barring Service's Barred List.

17.1.5 The definition of 'Regulated Activity' has been narrowed so as to reduce the type and number of activities falling within it. It is now designed to cover those activities which provide the highest levels of risk arising from the nature of the post and access to children and young people.

17.1.6 Housing Solutions will carry out standard DBS checks on all staff or volunteers who will be carrying out regulated activities with children or adults within their role. Work listed as a regulated activity will not be carried out by any staff or volunteers who have not successfully completed a DBS check. It is the responsibility of Housing Solutions Human resource department to carry out DBS checks in advance of any regulated activity being carried out by individuals.

17.2 Regulated activity relating to children

17.2.1 The new definition of regulated activity (i.e. work that a barred person must not do) in relation to children comprises, in summary:

- unsupervised activities: teach, train, instruct, care for or supervise children, or provide advice/ guidance on well-being, or drive a vehicle only for children;
- work for a limited range of establishments ('specified places'), with opportunity for contact: e.g. schools, children's homes, childcare premises. Not work by supervised volunteers.

17.2.2 There is a duty on a 'regulated activity provider' to ascertain whether a person is barred before permitting that person to engage in Regulated Activity.

17.2.3 It is a criminal offence for a barred individual to take part in Regulated Activity, or for an employer/voluntary organisation knowingly to employ a barred person in a Regulated Activity role.

17.2.4 Further information on regulated activities for children can be found at;

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/377519/D_BS_referrals_guide_summary_of_regulated_activity_with_children_v2.2.pdf

18 Regulatory framework

18.1 When an allegation of abuse is made the designated safeguarding officer or Head of Housing must notify the appropriate commissioning body as contractually obliged. This will usually be either the local authority, CQC or the local NHS Foundation Trust.

18.2 In services where care is provided, staff must work in compliance with the Health and Social Care Act (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2010 and the CQC (Registration) Regulations 2009 and notify CQC as soon as possible of any of the following in accordance with Regulation 18 (Outcome 20):

- If any serious injury occurs to a customer
- Any applications made to deprive a person of their liberty
- Abuse or allegations of abuse
- Events that stop or threaten to stop the service from carrying out a regulated activity safely and to the appropriate standard
- Incidents reported to or investigated by the police.

18.3 All staff must ensure that they respond in accordance with the relevant regulations of the commissioning and governing bodies in all cases of abuse. Details of who to contact must be readily available in all services.

19 Monitoring and reviews

19.1 We will carry out an annual health check to ensure that we remain compliant with our policy and procedure, industry best practice and local safeguarding procedures. We will carry out regular audits on cases, to promote best practice and continuous learning.

19.2 Performance information will be collated and shared with relevant stakeholders. Performance data will be monitored by;

- Partnership panels
- Housing Solutions management teams

20 Complaints

- 20.1 Housing Solutions operates a complaints policy and procedure. This is accessible for any persons who are dissatisfied with the level or quality of service being received.

21 Review

- 21.1 This policy will be reviewed on a yearly basis or in response to changes in legislation, regulatory guidance, good practice or changes in other relevant Housing Solutions policy.

22 Safeguarding Children and Young People – Reporting procedures

22.1 Housing Solutions are committed to stopping abuse or neglect wherever possible, prevent harm and reduce the risk of abuse, maltreatment or neglect to children. We will ensure that everyone, is clear about their individual and corporate roles and responsibilities in preventing and responding to abuse, maltreatment or neglect.

22.2 Housing solutions operates within a number of different counties and works in partnership with a large number of local authorities. Each local authority has its own Safeguarding Children Partnership Board and local safeguarding policy and good practice guides. The various boroughs and areas of operation include;

- Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead
- Slough
- Reading
- Wokingham
- Bracknell Forest
- Basingstoke and Dean
- Marlow
- Abingdon
- Beaconsfield
- Aylesbury
- High Wycombe
- Milton Keynes

22.3 When a Safeguarding concern is raised, it is essential to establish which local authority the concern relates to and what their reporting procedures are. Below you will find a breakdown of each local authority and a hyper link to their Safeguarding children procedures;

22.3.1 Local safeguarding children policies and reporting procedures;

Local authorities	Hyper link to relevant Safeguarding policy and procedures	Contact details for safeguarding information/referrals
Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead	The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead - Safeguarding Children procedure	Office hours Tel; 01628 683 150
		Out of hours duty service (5pm – 9am & weekends) Tel; 01344 786543
Slough Borough Council	Slough Borough Council - Safeguarding Children procedure	Office hours Tel; 01753 875 362
		Out of hours duty service (5pm – 9am & weekends) Tel; 01344 786 543
Reading Borough Council	Reading Borough Council - Safeguarding Children procedure	Office hours Tel; 0118 937 3641
		Out of hours duty service (5pm – 9am & weekends) Tel; 01344 786 543
Wokingham Borough Council	Wokingham Borough Council- Safeguarding Children procedure	Office hours Tel; 0118 908 8002
		Out of hours duty service (5pm – 9am & weekends) Tel; 01344 786 543
Bracknell Forest Council	Bracknell Forest Council- Safeguarding Children procedure	Office hours Tel; 01344 352005
		Out of hours duty service (5pm – 9am & weekends) Tel; 01344 786 543
Basingstoke and Dean	Hants - Safeguarding Children procedure	Office hours Tel; 0300 555 1384
		Out of hours duty service (5pm – 8.30am & weekends) Tel; 0300 555 1373

Buckinghamshire; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marlow • High Wycombe • Beaconsfield • Aylesbury 	Buckinghamshire County Council - Safeguarding Children procedures	Office hours Tel; 0845 460 0001
		Out of hours duty service (5pm – 9am & weekends) Tel; 0845 460 0001
Milton Keynes Council	Milton Keynes Council - Safeguarding Children procedure	Office hours Tel; 01908 253 169
		Out of hours duty service (5.15pm – 9am & weekends) Tel; 01908 253 169
Abingdon Town Council	Oxfordshire County Council - Safeguarding Children procedure	Office hours Tel; 0845 050 7666
		Out of hours duty service (5pm – 9am & weekends) Tel; 0800 833408

22.3.2 Where the child is seen to be in immediate danger or at immediate risk, immediate action must be taken to safeguard/protect the child. This can include but is not limited to;

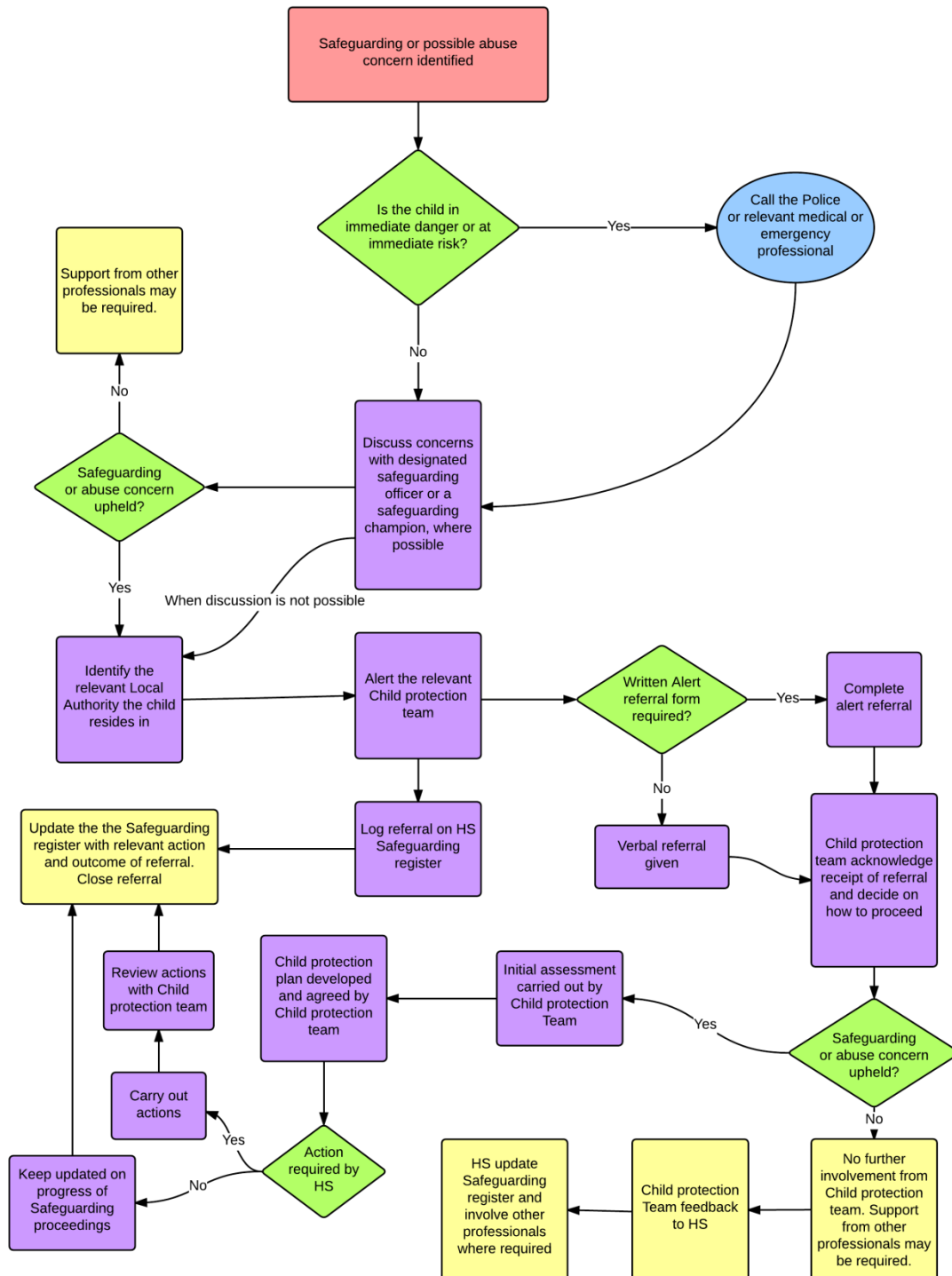
- Police interventions
- Emergency medical assistance
- Removing the child from the immediate danger or risk where possible

22.3.3 Once the relevant Local Authority Safeguarding team has been established, it is the responsibility of the alerter to contact the Safeguarding team and inform them of the suspected abuse, maltreatment and or neglect.

22.3.4 If the child is in immediate danger or at risk, it is the alerter's responsibility to report this immediately, explaining what danger and or risks are present and what interventions have been put in place to remove/safeguard the child from the identified danger or risk.

22.3.5 It is alerter's responsibility to give a detailed report of events, which include all of the relevant information, as outlined in section 15 of this policy.

22.4 Safeguarding Children referral process map



22.4.1 The safeguarding children referral process map above, provides a guide to the processes and procedures, which need to be followed when suspecting abuse, maltreatment and or neglect of a child. Please note this is a guide and each local authority may use a different process/procedure.

24 Advice and support

The following organisations can provide expert advice and support on issues of abuse;

Organisation	Telephone	Website	Notes
Children's Commissioner	020 7789 8330	www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk	Resources and information on safeguarding children and young people
Public Concern at Work	(020) 7404 6609 (Monday-Friday, 9.00am-6.00pm).	www.pcaw.org.uk	Initial enquires can be made anonymously.
Ann Craft Trust	0115 9515400	www.anncrafttrust.org	Support for people with learning disabilities who have been abused.
Mind	0300 123 3393	www.mind.org.uk	Help and advice for people with mental health needs.
Women's Aid	0808 2000247	www.womensaid.org.uk	Domestic abuse support for women and children
Childline	0800 1111	www.childline.org.uk	Help and advice on a wide range of child related issues
NSPCC	0808 800 5000	www.nspcc.org.uk	Help and advice line for children who are victims of abuse
Broken rainbow	0300 999 5428	www.brokenrainbow.org.uk	National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Domestic abuse helpline
Samaritans	08457 90 90 90	www.samaritans.org.uk	Help and advice line for persons experiencing suicidal thoughts

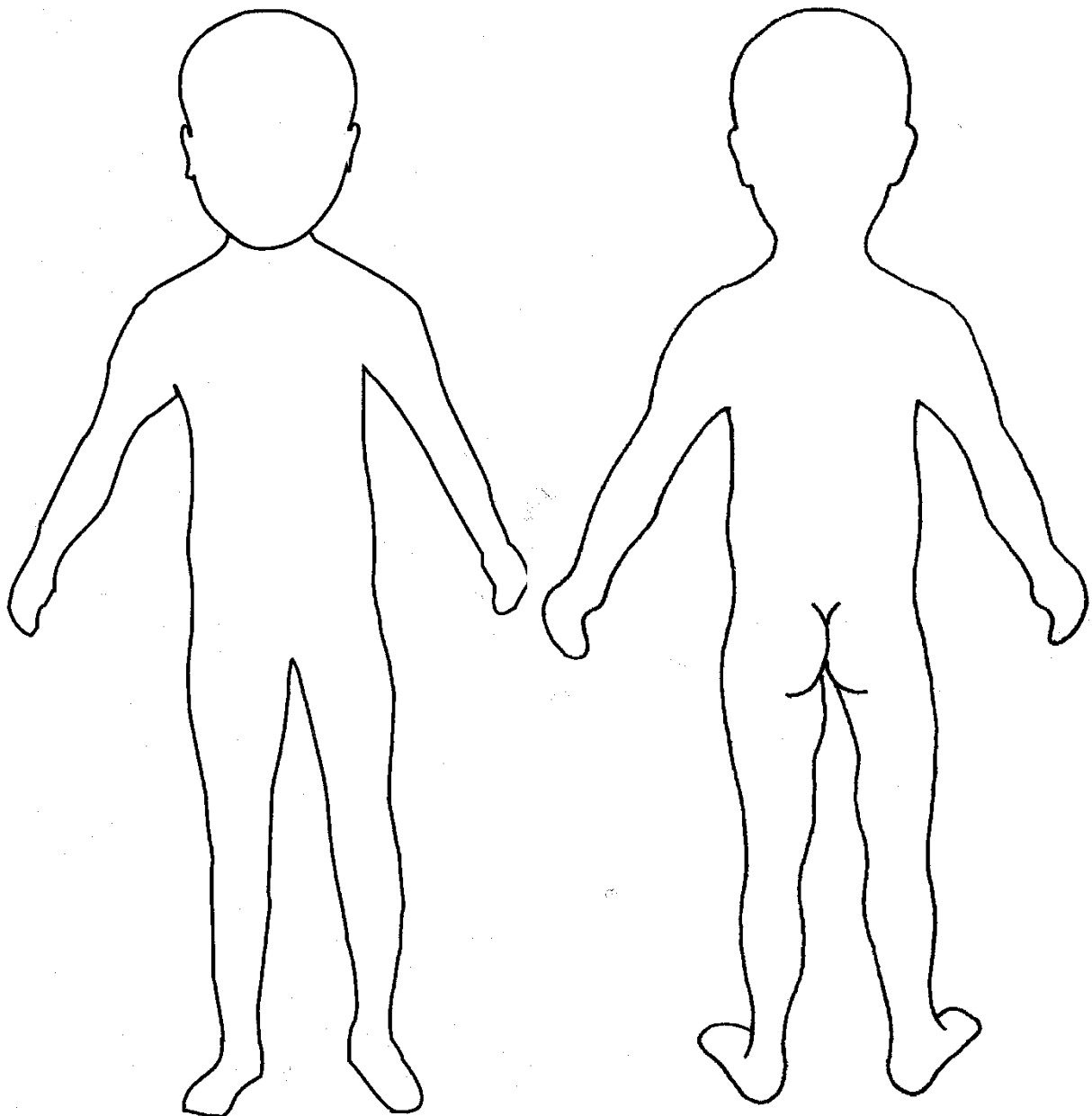
Appendix 1 – Child body map

(This must be completed at time of observation)

Names for Child: _____ Date of Birth: _____

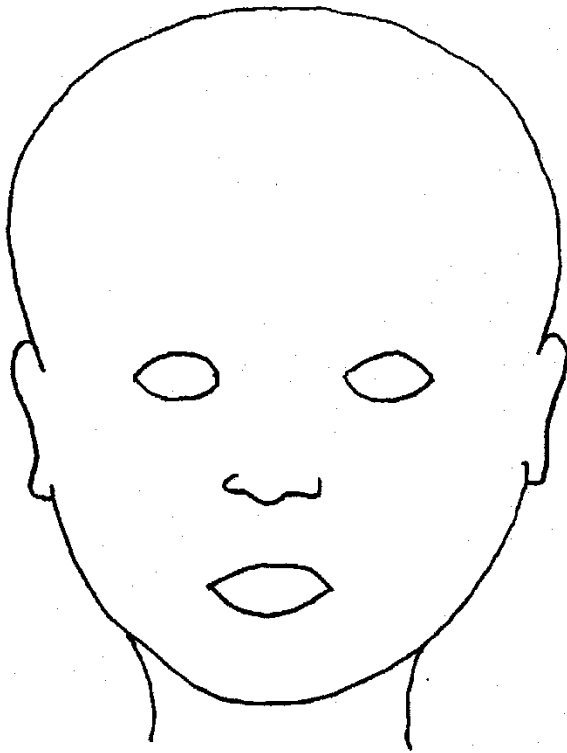
Name of Worker: _____ Agency: _____

Date and time of observation: _____

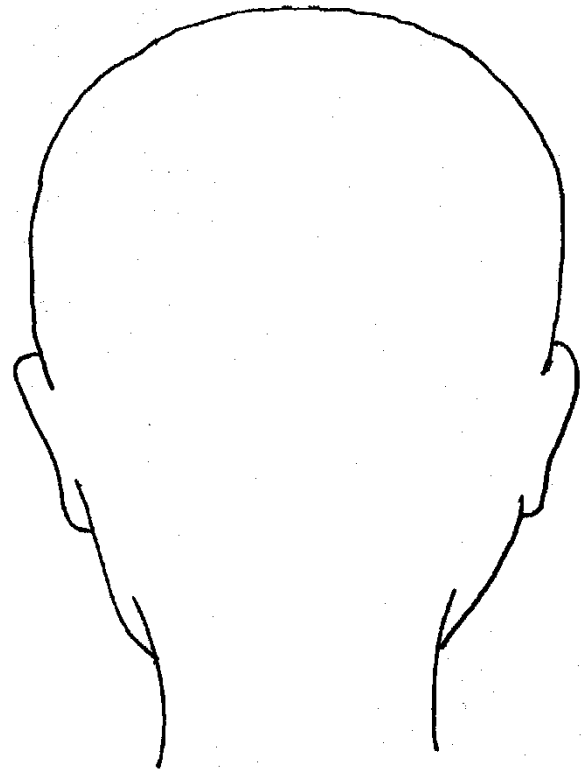


Name of Child: _____

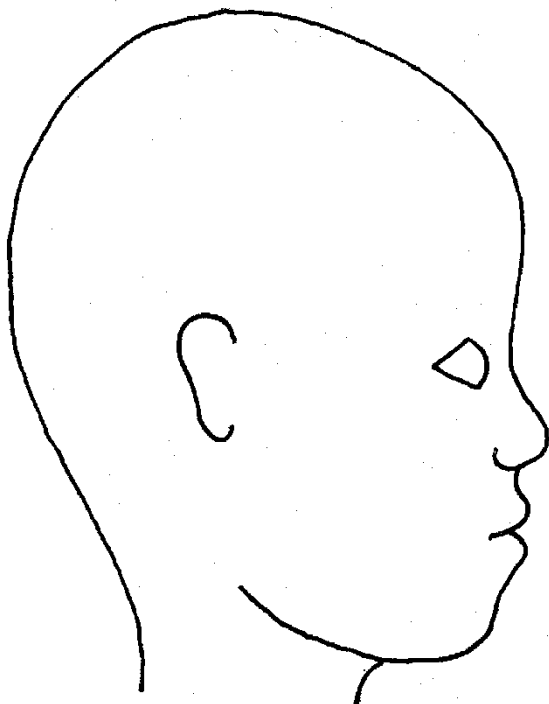
Date of observation: _____



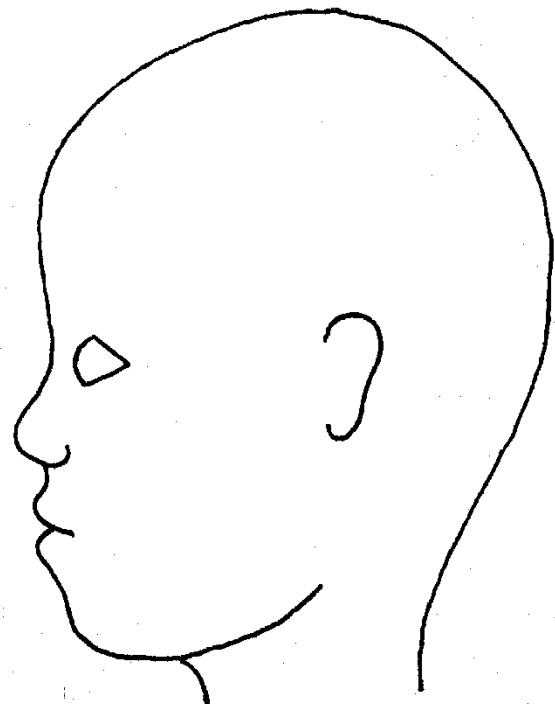
FRONT



BACK

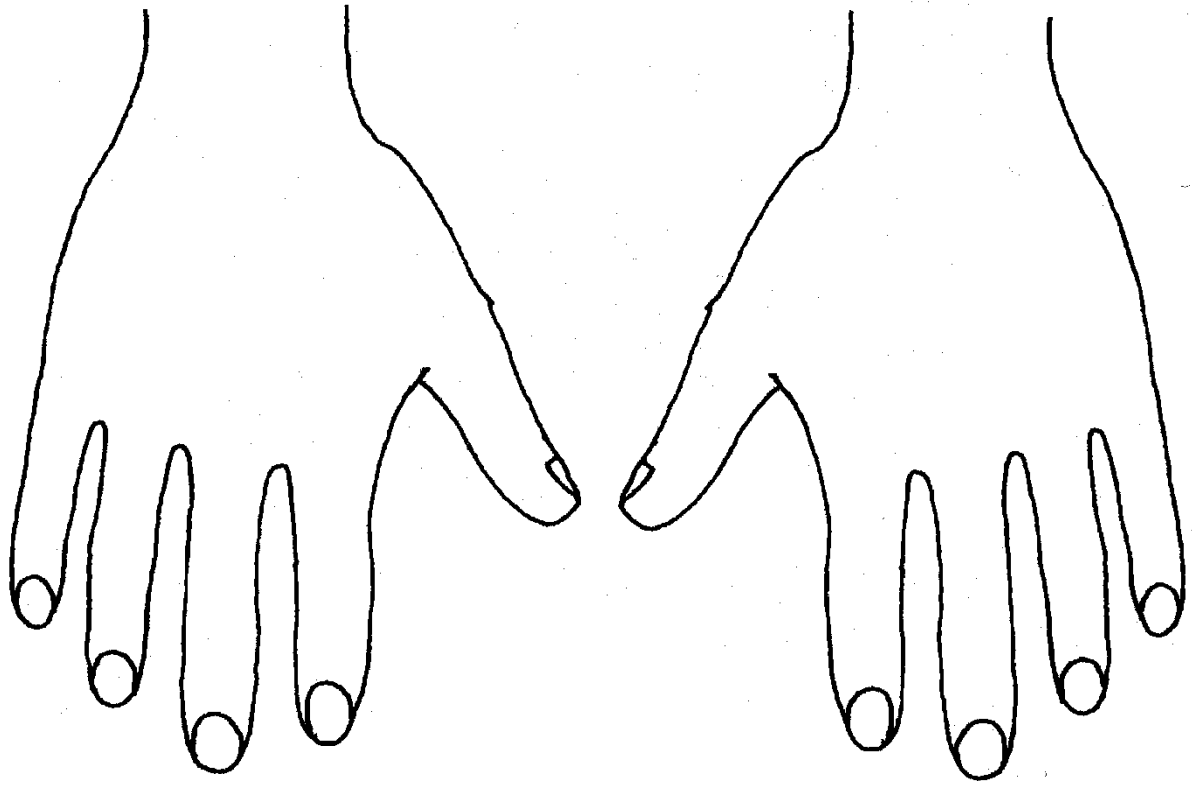


RIGHT



LEFT

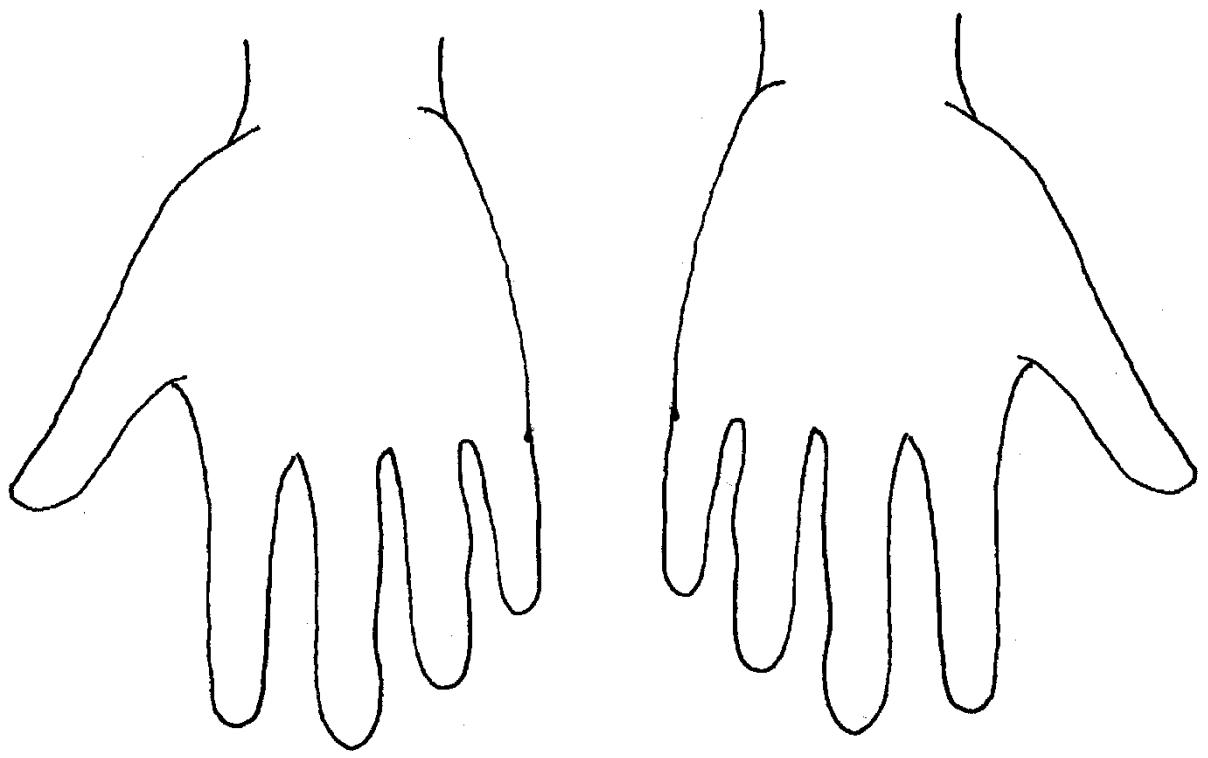
Name of Child: _____ Date of observation: _____



R

L

BACK

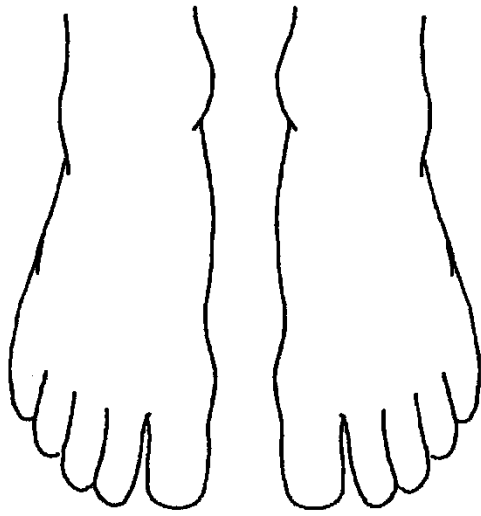


R

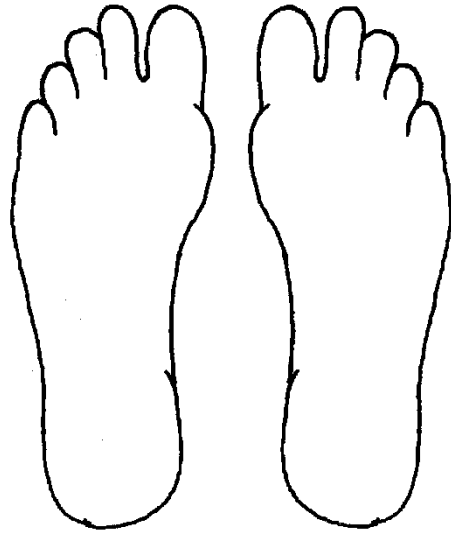
L

PALM

Name of Child: _____ Date of observation: _____



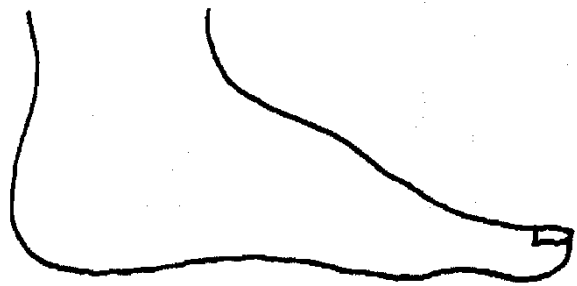
R TOP L



R BOTTOM L

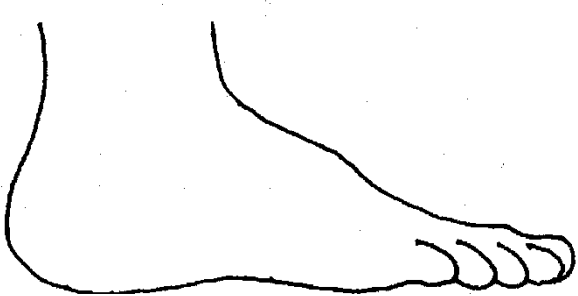


R

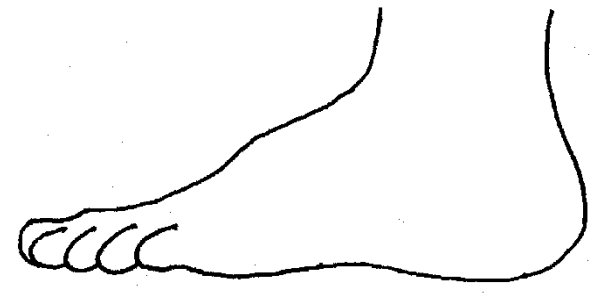


L

INNER



R



L

OUTER

Printed Name and Signature of worker: _____

Date: _____

Time: _____

Role of Worker _____

Other information: _____

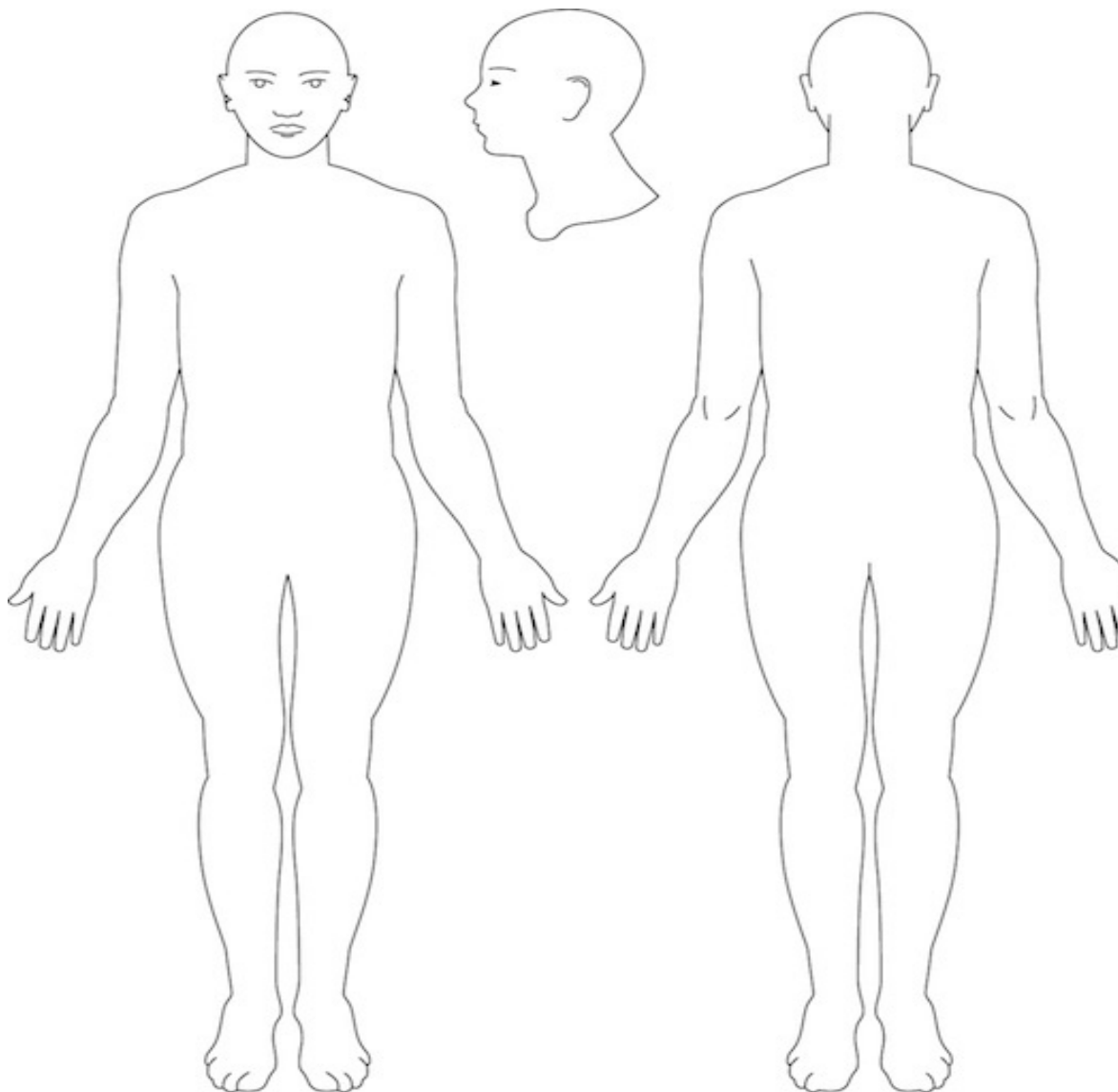
Appendix 2 – Young person Body Map

(This must be completed at time of observation)

Names for Young person: Date of Birth:

Name of Worker: Agency:

Date and time of observation:



Signature of worker: