



**Diogelu Gwent
Gwent Safeguarding**

Adult Complex Abuse Protocol



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1. Introduction

Definition

An Adult Complex Abuse Investigation will take place when;

- A number of adults at risk have allegedly been abused or neglected either within a single care setting or served by the same service provider (regardless of which agency commissions care or whether it is privately arranged), **or**
- A group of adults at risk appear to have been abused by one individual or group of individuals in an organised and targeted manner, **or**
- A pattern or themes of potential abuse or neglect from a single care provider is emerging from safeguarding or contract monitoring data.

Purpose

The purpose of the adult complex abuse protocol is to;

- Ensure the safety and well-being of all adults at risk involved, individually and collectively
- Arrange and co-ordinate multi-agency responses to reduce risk of harm and protect all other potential adults at risk

It will be necessary to differentiate between poor practice, which should be addressed via the commissioning and contract monitoring and provider performance process. If the Local Authority has reasonable cause to suspect significant harm to a number of individuals or adults at risk, this would be investigated under the adult complex abuse protocol. However, as there is a significant over-lap in the two processes, there will need to be effective communication between the Lead Multi-Agency Group and the Adult Large Scale Safeguarding Investigation ALSSI, as action under both processes may be occurring simultaneously.

Every individual adult safeguarding concern will be dealt with following a person-centred safeguarding procedure compliant with the Social Services & Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 and Gwent Adult Safeguarding procedures. The ALSSI protocol does not replace these procedures, but is intended to enhance multi-agency communication, co-ordination and ensure availability of appropriate resources when large-scale abuse is suspected. The immediate safeguarding of individuals and investigations into individual incidents should continue in the usual way.

2. General Principles

Each complex abuse investigation requires thorough planning, good inter-agency working, and attention to the welfare needs of the victims involved.

Some investigations become extremely complex because of the number of places and people involved, and the timescale over which abuse is alleged to have occurred. In these circumstances a specialist Joint Investigation Group as well as a Strategic Management Group may be set up.

Each investigation is different and complex abuse may occur in day services, in families and in community provisions such as sports clubs, voluntary and faith groups. The full extent and complexity of the abuse may only emerge during the course of investigations. Practitioners need to be mindful of this from the onset of the investigations. Due consideration should be given to agencies that need to be involved in the investigation including cross boundary issues.

The complexity is heightened where, as in historical cases, the alleged victims are no longer living in the situation where the incidents occurred and/or where the alleged perpetrators are no longer linked to the setting or employment role. Such cases should be responded to in the same way as any other concerns. It is important to ascertain if the alleged perpetrator is still working with or caring for adults or children.

Where an allegation involves a post-holder who has a specified role within these procedures, the referral must be reported to an alternative (more senior) manager in line with Section 5, (allegations against practitioners and those in a position of trust) Wales Safeguarding Procedures 2019. <https://www.gwentsafeguarding.org.uk/assets/document-library/Protocols-and-Procedures/Safeguarding-allegations-and-concerns-about-practitioners-and-those-in-a-position-of-trust-protocol.pdf>

In all investigations of organised abuse, it is essential that practitioners involved maintain a high level of confidentiality in relation to the information in their possession, without jeopardising the investigation or the welfare of the adults involved.

Subsequent information generated throughout the investigation should only be shared with practitioners who are relevant to the investigation or if it is in the best interest of the adult at risk.

The protection of any adult at risk identified, remains paramount. The investigation should give due consideration to the duty of care and well-being support needs of the alleged perpetrator, this is usually the responsibility of their employer.

An investigation of organised abuse will be carried out under the auspices of the Gwent Safeguarding Board which should be kept informed of its progress. It should be the role of the Strategic Management Group to liaise regularly with the Gwent Safeguarding Board. However, the Gwent Safeguarding Board should not take any direct role in the management of the inquiry. The lead agency would be the Police while any criminal investigation is taking place, however any non-criminal investigation will be conducted by lead coordinators and guided by partner agencies regarding any wider safeguarding and support matters.

For further guidance see <https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/operation-hydrant/>

3. Referrals - Working with Complex Abuse

Where there is suspicion of complex abuse, the person receiving the referral should immediately inform their line manager.

If there is any suspicion that any managers currently employed by a Social Care agency are implicated, or a member of the Police, the matter should be referred to a senior manager and the Designated Safeguarding Person (DSP) in line with the Gwent Safeguarding Board Procedure Section 5 (allegations against practitioners and those in a position of trust) of the Wales Safeguarding Procedures 2019.

<https://www.gwentsafeguarding.org.uk/assets/document-library/Protocols-and-Procedures/Safeguarding-allegations-and-concerns-about-practitioners-and-those-in-a-position-of-trust-protocol.pdf>

Further advice is available from senior managers. If managers agree that the referral constitutes a complex abuse allegation, the senior Safeguarding Manager and the Detective Inspector should be informed and consulted.

Investigations of complex abuse will be carried out under the auspices of the Gwent Safeguarding Board which should be kept informed of its progress.

This protocol describes the process of events in responding to concerns about potential complex abuse.

4. Initial Strategy Discussion

The strategy meeting, chaired by a senior manager of Adults Social Care, must take place within 24 hours of receipt of the referral(s) and must be formally recorded.

The strategy discussion must:

- assess the information known to date
- decide what further information is required at this stage and arrange for its gathering
- establish whether, and to what extent, complex abuse has been uncovered
- undertake an initial mapping exercise to determine the scale of the investigation and possible individuals implicated
- consider a plan for the investigation to be presented to the Strategic Management Group, including resource implications
- consider any immediate protective action required
- emphasise the importance of confidentiality and that information should only be shared through the agreed communication channels

This strategy discussion may include the referrer, if appropriate, a legal adviser and anyone else relevant to the discussion.

Having considered and discussed the information, those involved in the discussion must, if in their view the suspicion is confirmed, pass the information onto the Head of Adult's Social Care and the Detective Chief Inspector, Gwent Public Protection Unit.

If the meeting decides that the case is sufficiently complex and resource intensive, then a meeting of the Strategic Management Group should be convened.

Deciding whether the Adult Complex Abuse Protocol should be triggered

If it appears that the criteria for initiating the complex abuse protocol might be met, the local authority safeguarding lead and the decision maker in Public Protection Unit must discuss the concerns and decide whether the protocol should be triggered or not. In either event, the local authority safeguarding lead will keep a record of the decision made and the rationale for it.

The safeguarding lead in each agency will ensure that appropriate resources are deployed, and that staff will receive the necessary support. The decision as to whether this protocol will be invoked will be based on whether the definition is met.

If the case does not meet threshold to be considered under this protocol, then the investigation will be managed under the usual safeguarding arrangements. Should further information which indicates complex abuse becomes available during investigation then re-consideration of this protocol is needed.

Where the extent of the complexity is unclear, there should be a further meeting arranged to review the progress of the case.

5. Professionals who need to be informed

Once the decision has been taken at the initial strategy meeting to initiate a complex abuse investigation, the Detective Chief Inspector, Public Protection Unit and Head of Service for Safeguarding for Adult's Social Care (members of Strategic Management Group) must be informed. They must inform the Gwent Safeguarding Board Chairperson, the Director of Adult Services, Head of the media/press office and senior managers of relevant agencies e.g., designated safeguarding person(s).

6. Subsequent Strategic Management Group Meetings

Core Membership of the Strategic Management Group

- The Local Authority Safeguarding Lead in whose area the alleged abuse has occurred (usually the Chair of the Strategic Management Group)
- Local Authority Head of Adult Services
- Local Health Board Head of Safeguarding
- Police Detective Inspector or Detective Chief Inspector for Gwent Public Protection Unit
- Local Authority Commissioning Manager
- Local Health Board Commissioning Manager
- Care Inspectorate Wales/HealthCare Inspectorate Wales
- Care Management service managers for the Local Authority
- Gwent Safeguarding Board Business Unit representation
- Other agencies/professionals to be co-opted as required

The designated Adult Safeguarding Lead from the Local Authority in which the alleged abuse has occurred will have overall co-ordination responsibility throughout

the ALSSI and will:

- Liaise with Gwent Safeguarding Board Business Unit to arrange an initial Strategic Management Group meeting within 2 working days of the decision to invoke this protocol and will then require regular meetings, no less than every 6-week intervals, to ensure robust inter-agency communication, co-ordination, and progress reporting. A suggested agenda is attached as Appendix 1. The Gwent Safeguarding Board Business Unit administrator will take and circulate minutes of each meeting and will hold a central record of all meetings related to the ALSSI.
- Request S.126 enquiries are undertaken and consider any Part 5 management and professional concerns. Identify any barriers to progress and work with partners to secure additional resources if required
- Act as a central point of communication about the ALSSI
- Report to the Business Planning Group
- The Strategic Management Group should be chaired by the designated Adult Safeguarding Lead from the Local Authority in which the alleged abuse has occurred.

A template for the Terms of Reference for the Strategic Management Group is attached as Appendix 2.

Role of the Coordinator

An individual must be designated to act as coordinator between the Strategic Management Group and the Joint Investigation Group, usually the Police Senior Investigating Officer or the Adult Social Care lead manager.

The responsibility of the coordinator is to ensure the flow of relevant information between the operational and strategic groups and manage the overall process within the Strategic Management Group.

Role of the Strategic Management Group

The Strategic Management Group meeting must consider a wide range of issues and agree a plan that includes:

- How safeguarding measures can be put in place whilst investigations are underway.
 - A decision on the scale of the investigation and the staff required for a Joint Investigation Group.
- The number and nature of concerns already known and how those cases have been, and continue to be, managed.
- Whether there are other adults at risk who may also be experiencing or at risk of experiencing abuse and how to manage any wider public interest.
- Which agency will take responsibility for liaising with next of kin, nearest

relative, Lasting Power of Attorney's and/or other family members/advocates once the group has determined what is appropriate to be shared in accordance with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

- Consideration of any cross-boundary issues and planning of appropriate liaison and sharing of resources.
- Identification of practitioners to manage the investigative process (appropriately trained detectives including Senior Investigating Officer and Adult Social Care/Operational Manager)
- Development of a communication strategy specifying what information can be shared, with whom and at what stage (this should also include the arrangements for urgent communications during out of hours. A confidentiality agreement must be signed by the Strategic Management Group, the Joint Investigation Group and, where appropriate, any subsequent partner involved.)
- Organisation of adequate accommodation, including a dedicated incident room, where possible, and facilities for interviewing and recording interviews
- Arrangements for medical staff to conduct assessments
- Arrangements for sufficient administrative staff and information technology resources to support the investigation
- Legal advice including consultation with the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) for criminal proceedings
- Sufficient resources to ensure that adult(s) are protected from further abuse and that their welfare remains paramount (this should include appropriate day services, respite or residential placements, medical, Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) services, and therapeutic, and practical services)
- Consideration of the therapeutic needs of adults
- Sufficient support, supervision and de-briefing of staff involved
- Availability of expert advice where necessary
- Liaison arrangements for inter-agency working
- Timescales for the stages of the investigation
- Allocation of specific tasks to personnel involved in the investigation, together with line management responsibilities
- Management of public relations and media interest in the case
- Witness support, if relevant.
- Management of community impact
- Disclosure policy/information sharing
- Helpline for victims/information line
- Financial compensation for victims
- Exit strategy
- Data security and retention and appointment of disclosure officer

A member of the Strategic Management Group must be identified to update the Case Review Sub Group with significant developments and issues.

The Strategic Management Group will also agree lines of communication and accountability for each agency to the Gwent Safeguarding Board: this will include consideration of the need for media statements and an escalation process should issues emerge that cannot be resolved by the Group. Each Strategic Management Group will produce a specific terms of reference for the particular ALSSI, which incorporates all of these points and also sets out an agreed initial timetable for meetings.

The Strategic Management Group must make arrangements to convene regularly during the investigation to:

- monitor the progress, quality, and integrity of the investigation
- review risk indicators for the Adults involved
- review the communications strategy
- consider resource requirements
- consider the appropriate timing of the termination of the investigation

plan a de-brief meeting with the Joint Investigation Group to identify lessons learnt.

A dedicated team of Police Officers may be formed to deal with a cross-boundary enquiry, or any other partnership (Social Care, Health, etc) to liaise with other Police forces, local authorities, and health commissioners etc.

The Strategic Management Group should convene until the CPS has made a charging decision and appropriate long-term safeguarding measures are in place for victims.

The Strategic Management Group must report in writing to the Case Review Sub Group, so that the group can consider whether a Case Practice Review should be initiated.

A Strategic Management group will only be convened once a complex abuse investigation has been agreed, and in such cases, there will always be some form of criminal investigation. Given this, the Police will take responsibility for the dissemination and storage of Strategic Management Group minutes. Alongside the agreement of the Strategic Management Group terms of reference, there should be discussion to clarify these arrangements to those involved.

The minutes should be arranged in the following format:

- Time, date, location of the meeting
- Terms of reference
- Person's present
- Apologies
- Details of all individuals subject of the enquiry (genogram)
- Facts and circumstances known to date
- Identified actions
- Parameters of investigation
- Resource and management issues
- Media issues
- Miscellaneous
- Exit strategy
- Date of next meeting
- Decisions and explanatory reasoning should be recorded in the policy book, a document used by the Senior Investigating Officer to record strategic and tactical decisions, who will supervise the investigation in line with Police policies and protocols for investigation of serious and complex crime.

The Strategic Management Group must inform the Gwent Safeguarding Board of the investigation outcome and consideration given to the need for an adult practice review.

7. Joint Investigation Group

The role of this group is to carry out a thorough and transparent investigation and discharge safeguarding procedures and should include:

- A forum for information sharing and to monitor the investigative progress
- Determining victim interviewing strategy
- Investigative updates to Strategic Management group
- Resource updates to Strategic Management Group
- Consistent support provisions for victims and their families
- Support provisions for investigation team staff
- Sharing information with agencies not represented on Strategic Management Group
- Compliance with information sharing and confidentiality protocol
- Instigate this protocol and implement the policies and procedures laid out by Strategic Management Group

This group led by the Police Senior Investigating Officer, or their deputy should include representative from Adult's Social Care, Health, and Local Authority legal services. Other agencies should be invited as appropriate.

The size of the group will depend on the scale of the investigation. Membership may also be drawn, as necessary, from appropriate Health professionals, CPS, Legal Services, Probation, and victim support services.

Any breach of confidentiality (deliberate or unintended) must be reported immediately to the Strategic Management Group so that they can address this issue and manage the actual or potential impact on the investigation.

8. Operational Group

The Operational Group will be responsible for:

- planning the overall investigation, including record checking, evidence gathering, planning, and undertaking a series of interrelated interviews, and any surveillance required
- considering the implications of crossing geographical boundaries
- maintenance of written records of regular strategy and operational meetings
- holding planning meetings for individual pieces of work, e.g., video interview of an adult and/or action to protect an adult
- gathering other evidence including forensic evidence, interviews with alleged abusers and witnesses, and other corroborative evidence. Communication and liaison with other agencies on a need-to-know basis. There should be no deviation from the Strategic Management Group's existing communication strategy without the prior approval of the Strategic Management Group.
- convening inter-agency meetings
- coordination and timing of therapeutic services

- regularly updating the Strategic Management Group on the progress made and recommending when to close the investigation
- consideration of arrangements for court hearings and support to victims and their families

Any breach of confidentiality (deliberate or unintended) must be reported immediately to the Strategic Management Group so that they can address this issue and manage the actual or potential impact on the investigation.

The team members must be independent from any of the parties that are the subjects of the investigation.

Personnel seconded to the Operational Team should be dedicated to the investigation and have no other responsibility.

Communication with Providers, Service Users and their Families/Advocates

Communication with care providers will be via the individual safeguarding process and the Escalating Concerns process. The Strategic Management Group will consider at each meeting whether any additional communication with the Provider is necessary.

Individual service users and their families or advocates will be central to the large-scale investigation. They will be kept up to date with progress in investigations and outcomes for perpetrators by the Safeguarding Lead Co-ordinator (Designated Lead Manager) who has had responsibility for managing their case.

9. Access to records

One of the most difficult issues in complex abuse investigations relates to the locating, use, management, and disclosure of documentary information relevant to the investigation. The investigative team should consider what information is required and take steps to secure it within each agency.

Agencies should be made aware that they should share files in line with statutory duties, legal requirement, or data protection, this includes information on personal files, personnel files, e-mails, general establishment records and registers.

Where vital information may have been lost, damaged, or destroyed, consider alternative methods to obtain information from known or potential witnesses and victims. Record findings on a database.

10. Information sharing

These investigations rely critically on sensitive or highly confidential information being made available, including any information known about alleged perpetrators identified in the investigation. The principles of Information Sharing should be applied to all complex abuse investigations and team members should be familiar with its provisions.

The need to maintain the integrity of shared information is vital, and all investigative staff must be aware and comply with the principle and proportionality of GDPR. Consideration should be given to the use of confidentiality agreements regarding individuals employed to undertake the investigation.

In addition to the issues regarding access to files and information sharing, consideration must be given for the need to share information about any known or suspected offender identified in the investigation.

Whenever a complaint is received in respect of an alleged perpetrator, a risk assessment must be immediately undertaken with regard to what current risk that person may pose to other adult's, (vulnerable people)

Where members of the investigation team receive such information the appropriate duty to report form should be submitted for multi-agency safeguards this should be for the area in which the victim(s), potential victims and offender and offenders reside.

Further detailed guidance in this issue, together with advice on disclosure of material is contained in <https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/child-abuse/complex-investigations> for further advice and guidance see <https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/child-sexual-exploitation/>

11. Crossing geographical and operational boundaries

It may be recognised at the outset or during the investigation that there are suspected or potential victims and offenders in more than one geographical area.

At the outset, the responsibility for managing the investigation lies with Police in the area where the abuse is alleged to have occurred – where the alleged perpetrator/s are alleged to operate – who will make necessary contact with other affected areas through the Strategic Management Group (unless exceptional circumstances apply, e.g., online offences or kidnapping).

Once it is recognised that there are suspected or potential victims outside of Gwent, the decision will be made by the Joint Investigation Group as to which agencies are informed and as to how evidence is gathered.

The initiating Joint Investigation Group and Operational Team should undertake the investigation on behalf of the other geographical areas.

If the number of victims outside the geographical boundaries of the original Joint Investigation Group increases to the extent that it cannot respond, negotiations should take place for a Joint Investigation Group with Police and Social Care in the new geographic area.

It is essential that there is a joint Strategic Management Group to provide overall planning. If it is necessary to have more than one Joint Investigation Group, there must be close working between coordinators and processes for full information sharing.

The Local Authority with responsibility for the complex abuse case would be the Local Authority in which the abuse takes place.

A senior manager from each additional area should join the Strategic Management Group to discuss and agree any resource implications involved.

12. End of Enquiry or Final Strategic Management Group meeting

There will be a final ALSSI strategy meeting once all investigations (including criminal) are concluded. The purpose of this meeting will be to consider the outcomes of criminal and outcomes of the 126 enquiry and to consider whether any other actions are necessary. This meeting will decide whether the ALSSI can be closed.

Whilst there will be protection plans for the individuals affected, other actions may be required such as:

- Multi-agency actions e.g., changes in policies, procedures, or practices.
- Contract and commissioning actions, via Escalating Concerns or service improvement action plans.
- Consideration of whether an Adult Practice Review is needed.
- Ongoing action by the Regulator
- Further police investigation or ongoing 126 enquiry.

The meeting will also evaluate the process by considering;

- What was managed successfully in this investigation?
- What could we have done better and what should be done differently next time?
- Did the ALSSI Protocol help?
- Does the Protocol or the Terms of Reference for the Strategic Management Group need to be reviewed?
- Are there any cross-boundary issues or any outstanding local issues that can only be resolved by the Safeguarding Adults Board?

This meeting will also be minuted by the Gwent Safeguarding Board Business Unit and an evaluation report will be produced for the Gwent Safeguarding Board. This report will be shared with practitioners via a Multi-Agency Practitioner Forum (MAPF).

There must be a clearly defined exit strategy not only in relation to the closure of investigation, but also with regard to victims and witnesses, who may require on-going support at the conclusion of any trial or investigation.

Practitioners involved directly in the investigation as well as other operational staff who have kept day to day services running where colleagues have been seconded into the investigation team, need to be thoroughly debriefed and welfare considerations approached.

The Strategic Management Group should have a final meeting where concluding information and debriefing can be shared. An overview report should be compiled and presented to the Gwent Safeguarding Board.

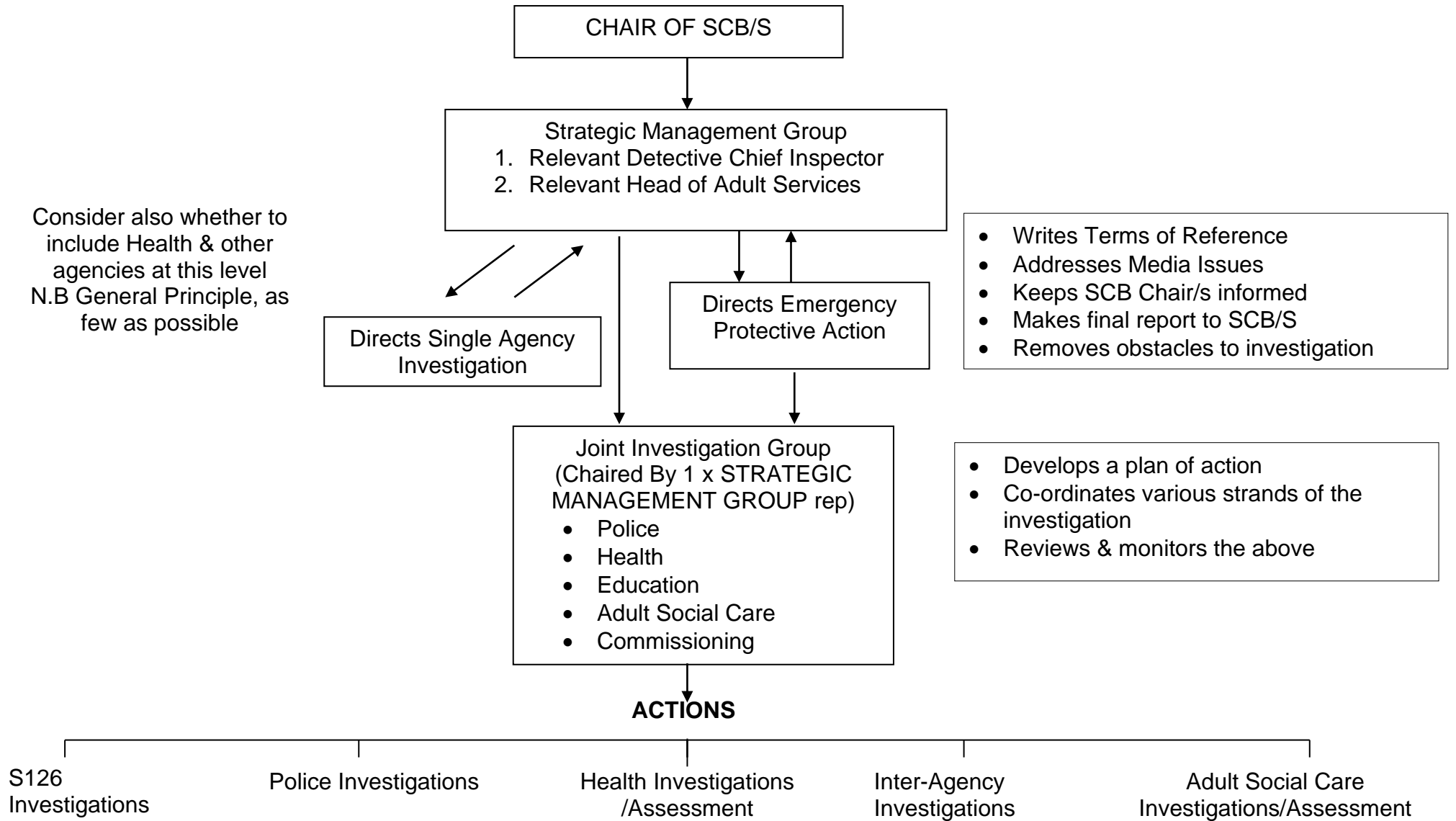
The storage, security and retention of the files relating to the investigation must be detailed. Access to such records may well be necessary in relation to any on-going appeals, civil proceedings, or applications for compensation. This must be compliant with Management of Police Information and General Data Protection Regulations.

At the conclusion of an enquiry/investigation, the Strategic Management Group should consider whether an evaluation of the investigation should take place so that lessons learned can be identified. Such a review will complement any Adult Case Practice Review that may be concurrent or have been completed.



Appendix 1

PROCESS FLOWCHART FOR COMPLEX INVESTIGATIONS



Appendix 2

PROGRESS REPORT TEMPLATE *(To be completed by the Joint Investigation Group to inform Senior Management Group)*

Summary of Evidence - this should include a relationship matrix of who has done what to whom and what the relationship is, examples of which could be genograms, I2 charts, eco map, family systems and connections

Summary of Corroboration

Additional Victims/Perpetrators Identified

Actions taken to date and date of completion

Identify next steps and actions to take

Strategic Management Group for Adult Large-Scale Safeguarding Investigations

AGENDA TEMPLATE

Confidentiality Statement

In signing the attendance sheet, all present agreed to abide by the following confidentiality statement:

“The issues discussed are confidential to the members of the meeting and the agencies they represent. They will only be shared in the best interests of the adults at risk.

Minutes of the meeting are circulated on the strict understanding that they will be kept confidential and stored securely.

In certain circumstances it may be necessary to make the minutes of the meeting available to the civil and criminal courts, solicitors, psychiatrists, other Local Authority social workers or other professionals involved in the care of adults at risk”.

1. Confidentiality statement
2. Welcome and Apologies
3. Terms of Reference and Membership
4. Overview of case for consideration:
 - a. Number and nature of concerns already known and management arrangements
 - b. Identify other adults at risk and agree how this can be managed
 - c. Agree on safeguarding measures to be put in place
5. Timescales, milestones and reporting arrangements
6. Communications arrangements:
 - a. Media
 - b. Providers
 - c. Service Users, Family, Advocates
7. Dates of future meetings

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Strategic Management Group for Adult Large-Scale Safeguarding Investigations

1. INTRODUCTION

This document has been produced to support the function of the Strategic Management Group established under the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Protocol for Managing Adult Large Scale Adult Safeguarding Investigations (ALSSIs). The Strategic Management Group will develop a bespoke Terms of Reference for each ALSSI that is specific to the circumstances and requirements of that investigation.

2. AIM OF THE STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT GROUP

The overall aim of the Group is to ensure that large-scale investigations into allegations of adult abuse or neglect are co-ordinated and include all relevant agencies and officers of sufficient seniority to make decisions on behalf of their agency.

3. OBJECTIVES

- a. To ensure that each agency's responsibility in a large-scale investigation is clear and that there is no duplication of function or gaps in the process.
- b. To ensure that all relevant agencies are involved and kept up to date with the investigation's progress and outcomes
- c. To manage the flow of information between agencies
- d. To manage communication with adults at risk, their families and the wider public.
- e. To ensure that Senior Police, Council and Health Board Officers are kept informed, along with Council and Board Members.
- f. To ensure that resources are made available within each agency to ensure that investigations are concluded in a timely way.
- g. To review and evaluate the course of the ALSSI and learn lessons.

4. ACCOUNTABILITY

Every professional nominated to attend and participate in the Strategic Management Group will be accountable to their own agency and to the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board

5. MEMBERSHIP

As stated in the Protocol.

6. FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS

Once the Adult Large Scale Safeguarding Investigations Protocol is triggered, the first Strategic Management Group meeting will take place within 2 working days. After this, the Group will meet at least every 6-8 weeks and more often if necessary. This will continue until the Group decides to close the ALSSI. At closure, the process will be evaluated, and the Chair will produce a report for the Safeguarding Board.

7. REVIEW

These terms of reference will be reviewed following the conclusion of every ALSSI or annually.