

**Procedures Governing the Placement
Of
Children and Young People
In
Secure Care**

1.0 Introduction/Context

- 1.1. The last few years have seen significant change to the way in which Social Work Services are designed, developed and delivered. There is now greater emphasis on the establishment of partnership working and the need to ensure that information is shared across the key agencies involved in supporting vulnerable children and young people. Inquiries into the deaths of children have identified a number of failings in the current system that protects children leading to a call for improvement on the part of public services, charged with the protection of children.
- 1.2. Over the last five years the Scottish Executive have focussed on reforming the child protection system and introducing a range of measures designed to raise professional standards of practice. Such measures include, the launch of a framework for standards governing the delivery of childcare services, the piloting of an integrated assessment framework, the introduction of new legislation to ensure agencies share information, a review of the Children's Hearing System in Scotland, the introduction of inspection agencies and the registration of the social care workforce. The central focus has therefore been on ensuring that the quality of service afforded to vulnerable children and young people is improved and that agencies co-operate to ensure that interventions are targeted and effective.
- 1.3. To this end, mechanisms have been established in East Dunbartonshire to support the decision making process, particularly in cases where children and young people may meet the criteria for secure measures or where significant concerns or risks are evident. These fora provide advice, guidance and direction on cases where there is a considerable degree of complexity and are concerned with supporting staff to more effectively minimise and manage risk.
- 1.4. Secure screening is specifically designed to consider only those children and young people who may meet the criteria for secure care or a movement restriction condition. The new screening mechanism for cases of significant concern considers cases that may not necessarily meet the criteria for secure measures but where there is a high level of concern in respect of welfare or safety.
- 1.5. These two groups support and compliment the existing mechanisms, namely staged intervention and case progression. The establishment of a comprehensive multi-agency screening arrangement which provides advice, guidance and support to staff will enhance the existing arrangements.

2.0 **Secure Screening**

- 2.1. The Head of Social Work, in his role of Chief Social Work Officer, is the only officer holding the authority to implement secure measures for a young person outwith the Children's Hearing System.
- 2.2. The Secure Screening Group provides advice, guidance and support to staff working with young people placing themselves or others at risk and who may meet the criteria for secure measures. This group considers individual cases and makes recommendations to the Chief Social Work Officer. All cases where the criteria for consideration of secure measures are evident should therefore be referred to this group.
- 2.3. The criteria for consideration of secure measures are as follows:
 - *A child or young person, having previously absconded, is likely to abscond unless kept in secure accommodation, and, if he or she absconds, it is likely that his or her physical, mental or moral welfare will be at risk, or*
 - *Is likely to injure himself or herself or some other person unless he or she is kept in such accommodation.*

3.0 **The Secure Screening Group (SSG)**

- 3.1 The Secure Screening Group is a multi-agency panel of senior officers from Social Work, Education, Psychological Services and Health.
- 3.2 The panel is chaired by the Senior Manager for Children and Families. Minutes of the meetings, noting decisions, are referred to the Chief Social Work Officer for approval.
- 3.3 The SSG meets on a monthly basis and also considers strategic issues associated with secure care arrangements.

4.0 **The Referral Process**

- 4.1. Depriving a young person of their liberty is a very serious matter and should not be considered lightly. In this regard, the Council is required to operate within the legal framework governing social work practice. Secure measures therefore, should only be pursued when all other avenues have been explored and rejected.
- 4.2. In order to ensure rigorous assessment and screening arrangements are in place, a number of actions require to be taken prior to referring a young person to the Secure Screening Group for consideration. Such actions include:
 - A comprehensive assessment of the child's/young person's circumstances
 - Identification of the key areas of risk

- Completion of a risk assessment
- A multi agency meeting, chaired by the Fieldwork Manager for Children and Families, to consider the range of supports necessary to protect the young person and whether referral to SSG should be made.
- The Fieldwork Manager for Children and Families should ensure that any formal dissent in respect of the decision of the multi agency meeting regarding referral to the SSG is minuted and notified to the Senior Manager for Children and Families.
- Referral should be made to the screening group for cases of significant concern in all cases where, following the multi agency meeting, the Fieldwork Manager for Children and Families is of the opinion that secure measures are not appropriate but risks are still present.

4.3 When referral to SSG has been agreed as an outcome of the above process, it is the responsibility of the allocated Social Worker to contact the Social Work Headquarters administration team to arrange an appointment time for attendance at the SSG and, subject to discussion with their Team Manager, to arrange attendance of other professionals who can contribute to presentation of the case.

4.4 Once these steps have been completed, the SSG referral form (appendix i) should be submitted electronically. The referral form should be accompanied by relevant supporting information as detailed in the information checklist (appendix iii). All written information to be considered by the SSG should be submitted to the Social Work Headquarters administration team no later than one week prior to the date of the SSG.

5.0 **Emergency Referrals**

5.1 On some occasions, circumstances will be present where there is an urgent and immediate need to consider whether secure measures are required. When such circumstances apply, an emergency SSG can be convened.

5.2 In the absence of a multi agency meeting, the relevant Team Manager should discuss the presenting circumstances with the Fieldwork Manager for Children and Families.

5.3 Once authorisation has been obtained from the Fieldwork Manager for Children and Families, the Team Manager or Social Worker should immediately contact the Headquarters Children and Families Duty Social Worker by telephone to advise of the presenting circumstances and the potential need for secure measures. The appropriate supporting documentation (see appendix iii) should also be submitted electronically at this stage.

5.4 The Headquarters Duty Social Worker should immediately advise the Resources Manager of the potential need for secure accommodation. The Resources Manager will then liaise with other senior managers to convene an emergency meeting of the SSG.

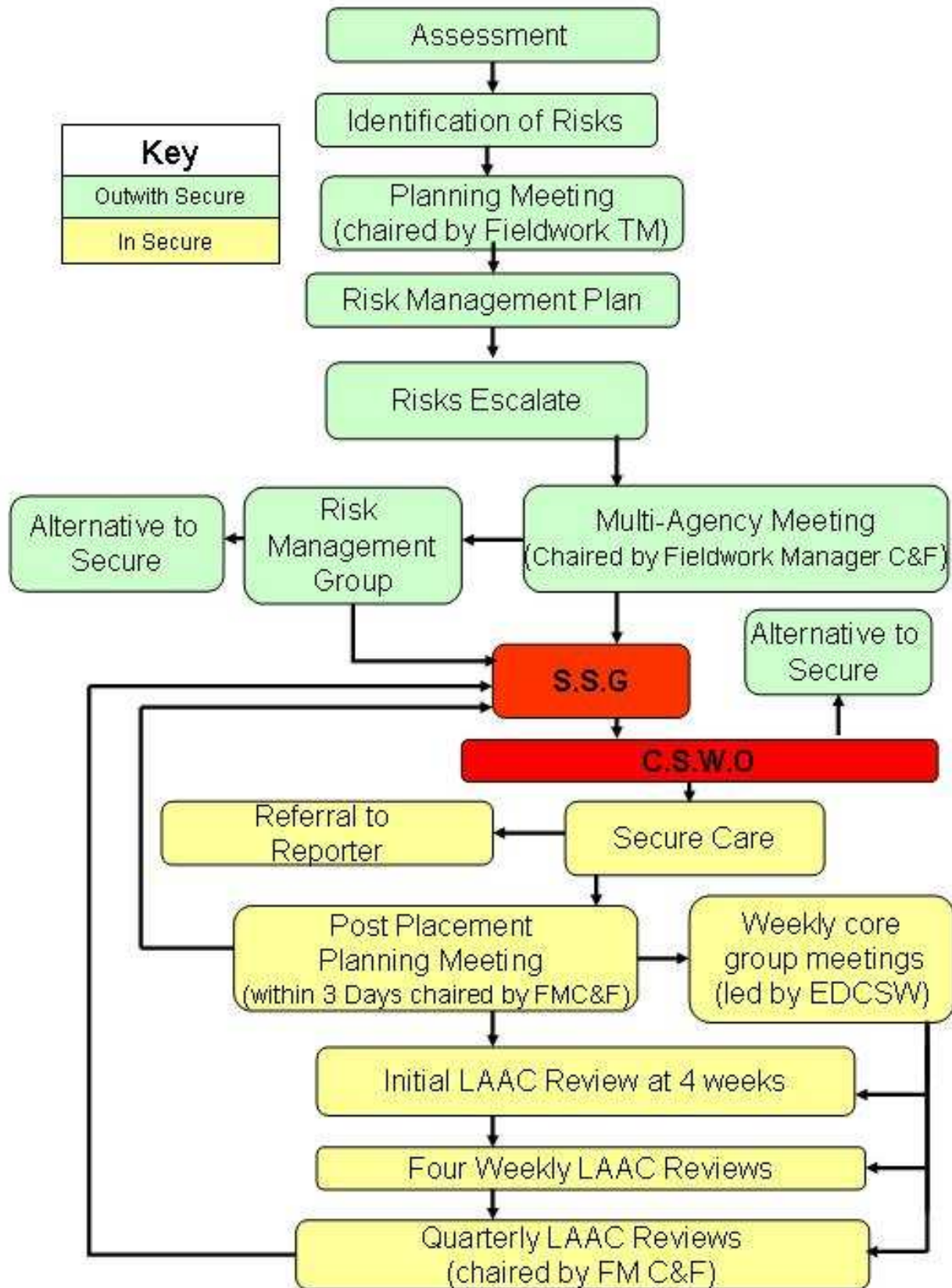
6.0 **Review of Secure Measures**

6.1 Any child or young person who is the subject of secure measures has been made so as a result of serious concerns and a decision taken at the most senior level of Social Work management. It is crucial, therefore, that once a child or young person has been admitted to secure care, the situation is closely monitored and reviewed.

- 6.2 Convening regular review meetings seeks to ensure that all relevant departments of the council and external agencies share the responsibility for the young person and are appropriately involved in providing the necessary support. This is essential if the young person is to be effectively assisted in addressing the behaviours that led to his or her admission to secure care and in expediting an appropriate exit plan.
- 6.3 In order to ensure effective monitoring of the situation the following arrangements require to be followed:
- A post placement planning meeting should be convened within 3 working days of admission.
 - This meeting should be chaired by the Fieldwork Manager for Children and Families.
 - An interim report completed by the social worker should be provided to the planning meeting.
 - The appointed social worker, alongside residential staff, should ensure that the young person is prepared for the meeting.
 - The meeting should agree a detailed care plan in respect of the young person.
 - The care plan should be recorded on the LAAC materials format and presented at the four week review.
 - The minute of the meeting should be circulated within 10 days of the meeting taking place.
 - Core group meetings, led by EDC Social Work, should take place on a weekly basis following the post placement planning meeting. The core group will be directed by and accountable to the LAAC review.
 - A LAAC review meeting should be convened within a four week period and the care plan amended accordingly.
 - LAAC review meetings chaired by the relevant Team Manager should take place on a monthly basis.
 - Three monthly LAAC reviews should be chaired by the Fieldwork Manager for Children and Families.
 - Decisions in respect of a young person's mobility should only be made in a LAAC review chaired by the Fieldwork Manager for Children and Families.
 - Implementation of changes to any previously authorised mobility arrangements should only take place following authorisation by the Chief Social Work Officer.
 - The decisions from reviews should be referred to the Secure Screening Group and copied to the Chief Social Work Officer for approval.
 - Recommendations in respect of a young person's move to a non secure resource, including a resource such as a close support unit, should only be made in a LAAC review chaired by the Fieldwork Manager for Children and Families.
 - Such a recommendation should only be implemented following ratification by the SSG and authorisation by the Chief Social Work Officer.

FLOWCHART

Appendix i



**EAST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL
SOCIAL WORK SERVICES
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

REFERRAL TO SECURE SCREENING GROUP

Name of Child:		Carefirst no.	D.O.B.
Social Worker:			
Children & Families Team		Tel no:	
Current Placement:			
Current Legal Status:			
1	Parent/Carer's Name: Home Address:		
2	Family Composition:		
	Name:	Age:	Relationship:
3	Synopsis of Current Family Situation:		

4	Care History of Young Person:			
	Name of Unit / Carers:	Date of Admission:	Date of Discharge:	Comments
5	Child's Current Whereabouts: <i>If child is missing, have missing children procedures been followed? Attach LAACMI and 2 and a timeline of missing incidences where relevant.</i>			
6	Why is consideration of secure criteria being sought? <i>Areas covered to include significant health concerns, including mental health, sexual health and substance use; offending behaviour; going missing; significant education issues. Nature and degree of risk should be made explicit.</i>			
7	How was the decision to refer to the Secure Screening Group reached? <i>(e.g. Multi agency meeting, Children's Panel. Please attach minute or Panel report).</i> <i>Date of decision:</i>			

8	What is the involvement of other agencies and what is their view in respect of secure measures?
9	What are the views of the young person, in respect of secure measures?
10	What are the views of the parents/carers in respect of secure measures?
11	What are the key elements of the current care plan? (Please attach a copy).
12	If secure care is provided: a) How will this help the implementation of the care plan? b) How long is it expected that secure care will be needed?
13	What alternatives to secure care have been considered and how far have they been pursued?

Name of Social Worker:		Signature:	Date:
Name of Team Manager:		Signature:	Date:
Fieldwork Manager, Children & Families		Signature:	Date:

**REFERRAL TO SECURE SCREENING GROUP
SUPPORTING INFORMATION CHECKLIST**

DATE OF SCREENING GROUP:

NAME OF YOUNG PERSON :

- REPORT TO SSG
- MINUTE OF MULTI AGENCY MEETING
- PANEL REPORT
- CARE PLAN
- LAACM1 / 2
- MISSING INCIDENCE TIMELINE
- ISMS ASSESSMENT