

## Adverse Incident Policy and Procedures

Little Hiccups recognise that sometimes things can go wrong. Little Hiccups is committed to ensuring the safety of Little Hiccups Trustees, volunteers, contractors families and visitors and this is taken seriously at every level in the organisation. Little Hiccups supports open and transparent systems of safety, and it is unacceptable to prioritise other objectives at the expense of safety. The organisation actively supports the promotion of a positive and fair blame approach to incidents and near miss reporting in a culture of openness and learning, which is fundamental to effective risk management and quality improvement. The organisation supports the view that the response to incidents should not be one of blame but of organisational learning to encourage participation in the overall process. The organisation is committed to developing a just culture, encouraging a willingness to admit mistakes without fear of punitive measures. Every incident report is seen as a learning and quality improvement opportunity. Incident reporting is more likely to take place in an organisation where there is a well developed safety culture and where there is strong leadership.

The completion of an incident report does not constitute an admission of liability. The organisation believes that incident investigation and reporting should only trigger or contribute to any disciplinary procedure where one of the following applies:

- Where there are repeated occurrences involving the same individual
- Where the incident results in a police investigation
- Where, in the view of the organisation or any professional registration body, the action causing the incident is far removed from acceptable practice
- Where there is a failure to report an incident in which a Little Hiccups representative was either involved or about which they were made aware.

In these cases a full investigation will be undertaken to determine the appropriate action. It is the policy of this organisation to record all incidents that have resulted in harm or loss or have the potential to do so, and Little Hiccups representatives are to report these incidents to the appropriate person and in a timely manner. This applies to incidents affecting families, Trustees and others including visitors, contractors and volunteers who are visiting or working on the premises. This policy and procedure describes the organisation's approach to the recording, reporting and the management of incidents and is the first step in the process. It also defines the types of incidents that may occur



and clarifies the process of classification of incident severity.

The organisation's approach to incident management is designed to achieve the following objectives:

- A standardised approach to incident management
- To ensure that learning from incidents is an integral part of the organisation's culture
- To provide an analysis of trends which may identify the further need for intervention
- To improve safety by addressing systematic errors
- To promote a culture of accountability with 'fair blame'.

## PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy describes how the organisation intends to ensure that all incidents, whether they have caused actual harm, or where a near miss, are reported by Little Hiccups representatives in a timely manner.

This policy covers all adverse, serious incidents and near misses and the following reporting systems:-

- Adverse Incidents
- RIDDOR reportable incidents
- Violence and Aggression
- Serious Incident Reporting Policy

The policy applies to all Little Hiccups representatives, contractors, volunteers, families and visitors to Little Hiccups services where injury, damage, loss or harm occurs in connection with Little Hiccups and the services it provides.

This policy describes how incidents will be identified, managed and investigated and ultimately used to learn lessons and promote future best practice.

## WHAT IS AN INCIDENT?

An adverse incident is any event or situation that results in, or has the potential to result in, harm to the health, safety, or wellbeing of our members, volunteers, staff, or to the reputation of Little Hiccups. This includes, but is not limited to, acts of aggression, breaches of policy or law, and any behaviour deemed inappropriate or unsafe.

Adverse Incidents are defined as:

- personal accident
- fire
- violence/abuse/harassment
- security
- incidents involving a vehicle
- ill health
- infection control related incident

'Near miss', means any incident, which could have lead to harm but did not, because intervention or



evasive action was taken.

'Harm' means, "injury, ill-health, damage, theft or loss relating to persons, property, income or reputation".

## **Serious Incident**

Some incidents have serious outcomes that require formal investigation and are reportable to the Charity Commission. These are known as serious incidents.

In the interest of clarity a serious incident is defined as:

### **Protecting people and safeguarding incidents**

- A beneficiary or other individual connected with the charity's activities has/alleges to have suffered serious harm
- Allegation that a staff member has physically or sexually assaulted or neglected a beneficiary whilst under the charity's care
- The Chief Executive of the charity has been suspended pending the outcome of an investigation into their alleged sexual harassment of a fellow member of staff
- Allegation that a trustee, staff member or volunteer has been sexually assaulted by another trustee, staff member or volunteer
- A staff computer is found to contain images of child pornography
- An internal investigation has established that there is a widespread culture of bullying within the charity
- A beneficiary or individual connected with the charity's activities has died or been seriously harmed;
- a significant contributory factor is the charity's failure to implement a relevant policy
- Charity failed to carry out DBS checks which would have identified that a member of staff or trustee was disqualified in law (under safeguarding legislation) from holding that position
- Charity discovers that an employee or volunteer coming into contact with children or at risk adults is on the sex offenders register

### **Fraud, cyber-crime and money laundering**

- Charity's Chief Executive and Treasurer produced false invoices for charity services
- A bogus fundraising scheme is being promoted online, using charity's name
- Charity funds lost due to an online or telephone 'phishing scam', where trustees were conned into giving out bank account details
- Attempted fraud by a member of charity staff but intercepted by internal financial controls
- Any actual/alleged fraud or money laundering should be reported.
- Any actual/alleged cyber-crime should be reported with attempted cyber-crimes that are blocked by the charity's computer network security systems, except where the attempted cyber-crime is unusual in nature and the charity wants to bring it to the attention of the Commission

### **Theft**

- Each month, between £100-£200 goes missing, suspected stolen. It has been going on for six months and has been reported to the police.
- Charity office has been broken into and computers, holding personal details of beneficiaries and donors, stolen



### **Unverified or suspicious donations**

- A significant amount over £25,000 is donated to the charity from an unknown or unverifiable source

### **Other significant financial loss**

- Significant loss of charity funds in a poor investment scheme, commissioned by trustees, without professional advice
- Sudden loss of 20% or more of charity's income (e.g. due to termination of major donor contract); charity has no reserves, meaning staff will be laid off and services stopped
- Substantial loss of charity funds due to legal costs incurred in a court case; excludes those charities routinely undertaking budgeted litigation on behalf of beneficiaries
- The charity's main premises is severely damaged in a fire and the charity is unable to deliver services to its beneficiaries

### **Links to terrorism or extremism**

- Charity discovers that an overseas partner has passed money to a member of charity's personnel who is a designated individual, subject to financial restrictions
- A member of charity staff or volunteer has been arrested for terrorism related offences
- A visiting speaker has used a charity event to promote extremist messages, via live speech or social media

### **Other significant incidents - Disqualified person acting as a trustee**

- Any person acting as a trustee or senior manager while disqualified

### **Charity subject to investigation by a regulatory body**

- Charity is subject to official investigation by another regulator e.g. Fundraising Regulator, Police, UK Visas & Immigration, Ofcom, Information Commissioner, Care Quality Commission or Care Inspectorate Wales

### **Major governance issues**

- Mass resignation of trustees, leaving the charity unable to function
- Evidence that trustees have routinely signed blank cheques

### **Fundraising issues**

- Suspicions of unauthorised public collections in the name of the charity
- Charity hasn't complied with law on requirements for solicitation statements or professional fundraising agreements
- Significant funds, due under a fundraising arrangement, have not been paid by the professional fundraiser, or commercial partner to the charity
- Incident has taken place involving a fundraising agency which will incur serious damage to the charity's reputation

### **Data breaches or loss**

- Charity's data has been accessed by an unknown person; this data was accessed and deleted, including the charity's email account, donor names and addresses
- A charity laptop, containing personal details of beneficiaries or staff, has been stolen and there is no encryption or other security measures that would prevent the perpetrator from



- accessing this information
- A Data Protection Act breach has occurred and been reported to the ICO

### **Incidents involving partners**

- A delivery partner of the charity is alleged to have links to terrorism and extremism
- A delivery partner of the charity has ceased to operate and this has prevented the charity from providing assistance to its beneficiaries
- The charity's subsidiary trading company has gone into liquidation and this has resulted in financial difficulties which place the future of the charity in doubt
- Staff of another organisation within the same federated structure are found to have been committing systematic abuse of beneficiaries and this has significantly damaged the reputation of the charity

### **Other, including criminality**

- Any other type of incident that appears serious and likely to damage reputation or incur loss of charitable funds/assets

## **Major Incident**

A major incident is any emergency that requires the implementation of special arrangements by one or more of the emergency services, the NHS or the local authority.

## **Near Miss**

“An avoided set of circumstances which had the potential to cause harm”

## **WHY DO INCIDENTS NEED TO BE REPORTED?**

Reporting all incidents, however trivial they may appear, enables a profile to be built of the risks to Little Hiccups representatives, families and the business of the organisation, from which a strong and factual basis for targeting resources effectively can be developed. By reviewing patterns and trends of incidents, services are therefore better placed to manage the underlying risks.

Little Hiccups has a statutory duty to report certain types of incidents including The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) which require the organisation to notify the Health and Safety Executive of accidents at work; and incidents concerning medical devices, food, medicines, serious equipment failings and fire as well as serious incidents involving staff, service users or members of the public.

## **Risk Evaluation**

Evaluation of risk is a key component of incident reporting and all incidents, actual or near miss, should be assessed to determine the level of risk and the type of action to be taken to reduce or eliminate any risk. All Little Hiccups representatives have a responsibility to identify and (within their level of authority) respond to or escalate the risk to promote its effective mitigation.

When an incident occurs the Little Hiccups representative who reports it should take action to manage any immediate safety concerns, escalating the incident if required (or relevant other individual as determined by the nature of the incident) immediately, if risk to families / Little Hiccups representatives / organisation remain uncontrolled.



The Trustees are responsible for checking that all necessary steps have been taken to manage the incident and its aftermath. Once the incident has been investigated, a further risk assessment is undertaken to reassess the grading in the light of control measures instituted.

## DUTIES WITHIN THE ORGANISATION

### Trustees

- The Trustees support a fair and open culture in the reporting and management of incidents and are responsible for ensuring there are effective incident reporting, learning and quality improvement arrangements within the organisation.
- The Trustees formally receive a regular report describing incident reporting, key risks identified and actions taken to enable them to be informed and assured that the Policy is working effectively.
- Overarching responsibility for the management of risk
- To monitor and review the Policy on the agreed date or before if the need arises
- To have ultimate responsibility for the incident reporting, and management of adverse and serious incidents.
- Will ensure that all incident reports submitted are correctly referenced, graded, data entered, collated, reported and archived in order to provide a permanent record of reported incidents for statutory and organisation purposes. They will monitor incoming incident reports to ensure that actions are completed in a timely way and risks escalated within the organisation
- Ensure that this Policy is made available to read
- Ensure that all volunteers, Contractors and visitors are aware of the Policy
- Following every incident or near miss, Trustees must take immediate action to make the situation safe

### Little Hiccups Representatives

- All users of the services have a responsibility to report near misses, adverse incidents and Serious Incidents
- Little Hiccups representatives should be fully open and co-operative with any investigation process.
- Little Hiccups representatives have a responsibility to highlight any risk issues which could warrant further investigation
- Any Little Hiccups representatives who is involved in an incident or near miss must complete a Incident Report Form immediately (i.e. within one working day) for each relevant incident according to the attached procedure
- All Little Hiccups representatives must ensure that “Serious Incidents” are reported immediately to the Trustees.

### Little Hiccups Families:

- Treat Little Hiccups representatives politely and with respect
- Abusive, aggressive or violent behaviour will not be tolerated and individuals behaving in this manner may be reported to the police

## Procedure

### PROCEDURE FOR REPORTING, RECORDING, INVESTIGATING AND LEARNING FROM INCIDENTS

#### Adverse Incident Reporting Process

All incidents should be reported, recorded and investigated. Reporting should take place immediately





using the Incident Report Form.

### **Serious and Major Incidents**

Serious Incidents as defined in 'Serious Incidents' must be reported immediately to the Trustee who must take immediate action to:

- prevent or minimise any further harm, loss or damage
- report it to the Commission as a serious incident
- report it to the police (and/or other relevant agencies) if you suspect a crime has been committed, and to any other regulators the charity is accountable to
- plan what to say to your staff, volunteers, members, the public, the media and other stakeholders, such as funders
- review what happened and prevent it from happening again – this may include reviewing internal controls and procedures, internal or external investigation and/or seeking appropriate help from professional advisers

Serious Incidents should, at the same time, be reported on an Incident Report form and investigated according to the procedure. Any lessons learned from a Serious Incident will be disseminated as appropriate.

Serious Incidents will also need to be reported to the Charity Commission.

### **Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) reportable incidents**

Full compliance with the RIDDOR regulations will be met.

RIDDOR regulations require the organisation to report and keep records of all work related deaths, serious injuries, certain diseases and dangerous occurrences.

RIDDOR reportable incidents should be reported on a Incident Report form and investigated according to the procedure.

### **Security and Violence and Abuse**

All such incidents must be reported using the Incident Reporting form.

### **Procedure for responding to an incident**

Before completing the Incident Report form, Little Hiccups representatives must determine whether the incident is a Serious Incident or RIDDOR reportable.

Following every incident or near miss, Little Hiccups representatives must take immediate action to make the situation safe. This may include the wearing of protective clothing, removal of similar pieces of equipment, undertaking/reviewing risk assessments and change of clinical procedures.

This action should be entered on the Incident Report form. The Trustees should be informed of the incident within a maximum of one working day, immediate notification is required if the incident is assessed as serious, falls within the Serious Incident criteria



**1. Immediate Response:**

Any witness to, or victim of, an adverse incident should report the event to a Little Hiccups staff member as soon as safely possible. The staff member will take immediate action to ensure the safety and well-being of all involved.

**2. Documentation:**

The staff member will document the incident in detail, including the date, time, location, individuals involved, and a narrative description of the event.

**3. Review and Investigation:**

The report will be reviewed by a designated Incident Response Team composed of the Chair, Treasurer, and Secretary. This team will investigate the incident, which may involve interviewing the parties involved and any witnesses.

**4. Decision Making:**

Based on the investigation, the Incident Response Team will determine the appropriate course of action. Actions may include, but are not limited to, verbal warnings, written warnings, probation, temporary bans, or permanent bans from Little Hiccups' activities and services.

### **Specifics Regarding Probation and Bans**

**1. Probation:**

- a. Individuals placed on probation, will be closely monitored for a specified period (e.g., 24 months).
- b. Any further discretions during the probation period will escalate the response, potentially leading to temporary or permanent bans.

**2. Temporary Bans:**

- a. Temporary bans may be issued for a period appropriate to the nature and severity of the incident, ranging from one month to up to two years.
- b. The conditions for lifting a temporary ban will be communicated clearly to the individual, including any requirements for behaviour management or rehabilitation efforts.

**3. Permanent Bans:**

- a. Permanent bans may be issued in cases of severe incidents or where there is a pattern of adverse behaviour that indicates a significant risk to the Little Hiccups community.
- b. A decision for a permanent ban will be made with careful consideration and as a last resort.

### **Appeals Process**

Individuals subject to disciplinary action, including probation or bans, have the right to appeal the decision. Appeals must be submitted in writing to the Board of Trustees within





30 days of the decision notification. The Board will review the appeal, considering any additional information or context, and make a final determination.

### **Completing the Incident Report Form**

If the person involved in an incident is unable to complete the incident report form for any reason, then a witness or Little Hiccups representatives should do so on their behalf. All information given, including written statements, must accurately state the facts, without expressing personal opinion or allocating blame. All sections of the Incident Report form should be completed as fully as possible.

### **Review and Monitoring**

This policy and its procedures will be reviewed biennially or in response to significant incidents, changes in legislation, or operational changes within Little Hiccups. This ensures that our approaches remain effective and relevant to our commitment to safety and support.

### **FOLLOW UP / SUPPORT**

Adverse incidents and near misses can have a significant impact on individuals who are either involved in it or witness it, consequently, when an adverse incident occurs, the needs of those affected by the incident need to be the primary concern.

Clearly incidents and near misses vary significantly in their nature and the appropriate action to be taken in response will vary accordingly.

Policy agreed by Trustees on:

Signed by Chairperson:

To be reviewed:



## Appendix 1:

**Table 1: Incident Definitions / Risk management Matrix - Consequence (C)**

	Consequence score (severity levels) and examples of descriptors				
	1	2	3	4	5
Domains	No Harm	Minor	Moderate	Major	Catastrophic
Impact on the safety of families, LH representatives or public (physical/psychological harm)	No harm No time off work	Minor injury or illness, requiring minor intervention  Requiring time off work for >3 days  Increase in length of hospital stay by 1-3 days	Moderate injury requiring professional intervention  Requiring time off work for 4-14 days  Increase in length of hospital stay by 4-15 days  RIDDOR/agency reportable incident  An event which impacts on a small number of patients	Major injury leading to long-term incapacity/disability  Requiring time off work for >14 days  Increase in length of hospital stay by >15 days  Mismanagement of care with long-term effects	Incident leading to death Multiple permanent injuries or irreversible health effects An event which impacts on a large number of patients
Quality/complaints/audit	Peripheral element of treatment or service suboptimal  Informal complaint/inquiry	Overall treatment or service suboptimal  Formal complaint (stage 1)  Local resolution  Single failure to meet internal standards  Minor implications for public safety if unresolved  Reduced performance rating if unresolved	Treatment or service has significantly reduced effectiveness  Formal complaint (stage 2) complaint  Local resolution (with potential to go to independent review)  Repeated failure to meet internal standards  Major public safety implications if findings are not acted on	Non-compliance with national standards with significant risk to public if unresolved  Multiple complaints/independent review  Low performance rating  Critical report	Totally unacceptable level or quality of treatment/service  Gross failure of patient safety if findings not acted on  Inquest/ombudsm an inquiry  Gross failure to meet national standards
Adverse publicity/reputation	Rumours  Potential for public concern	Local media coverage – short-term reduction in public confidence	Local media coverage – long-term reduction in public confidence	National media coverage with <3 days service well below reasonable public expectation	National media coverage with >3 days service well below reasonable public expectation.



		Elements of public expectation not being met			Total loss of public confidence
Service/business interruption Environmental impact	Loss/interruption of >1 hour Minimal or no impact on the environment	Loss/interruption of >8 hours Minor impact on environment	Loss/interruption of >1 day Moderate impact on environment	Loss/interruption of >1 week Major impact on environment	Permanent loss of service or facility Catastrophic impact on environment

**Table 2: Likelihood Score (L)**

What is the likelihood of the consequence occurring? The frequency-based score is appropriate in most circumstances and is easier to identify. It should be used whenever it is possible to identify a frequency.

<b>Likelihood score</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Descriptor</b>	Rare	Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Almost Certain
<b>Frequency</b> How often might it/does it happen	This will probably never happen/recur	Do not expect it to happen/recur but it is possible it may do so	Might happen or recur occasionally	Will probably happen/recur but it is not a persisting issue	Will undoubtedly happen/recur, possibly frequently

**Table 3: Risk scoring = consequence x likelihood ( C x L )**

	<b>Likelihood</b>				
<b>Likelihood Score</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Domains</b>	Rare	Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Almost Certain
	5	10	15	20	25
	4	8	12	16	20
	3	6	9	12	15
	2	4	6	8	10
	1	2	3	4	5

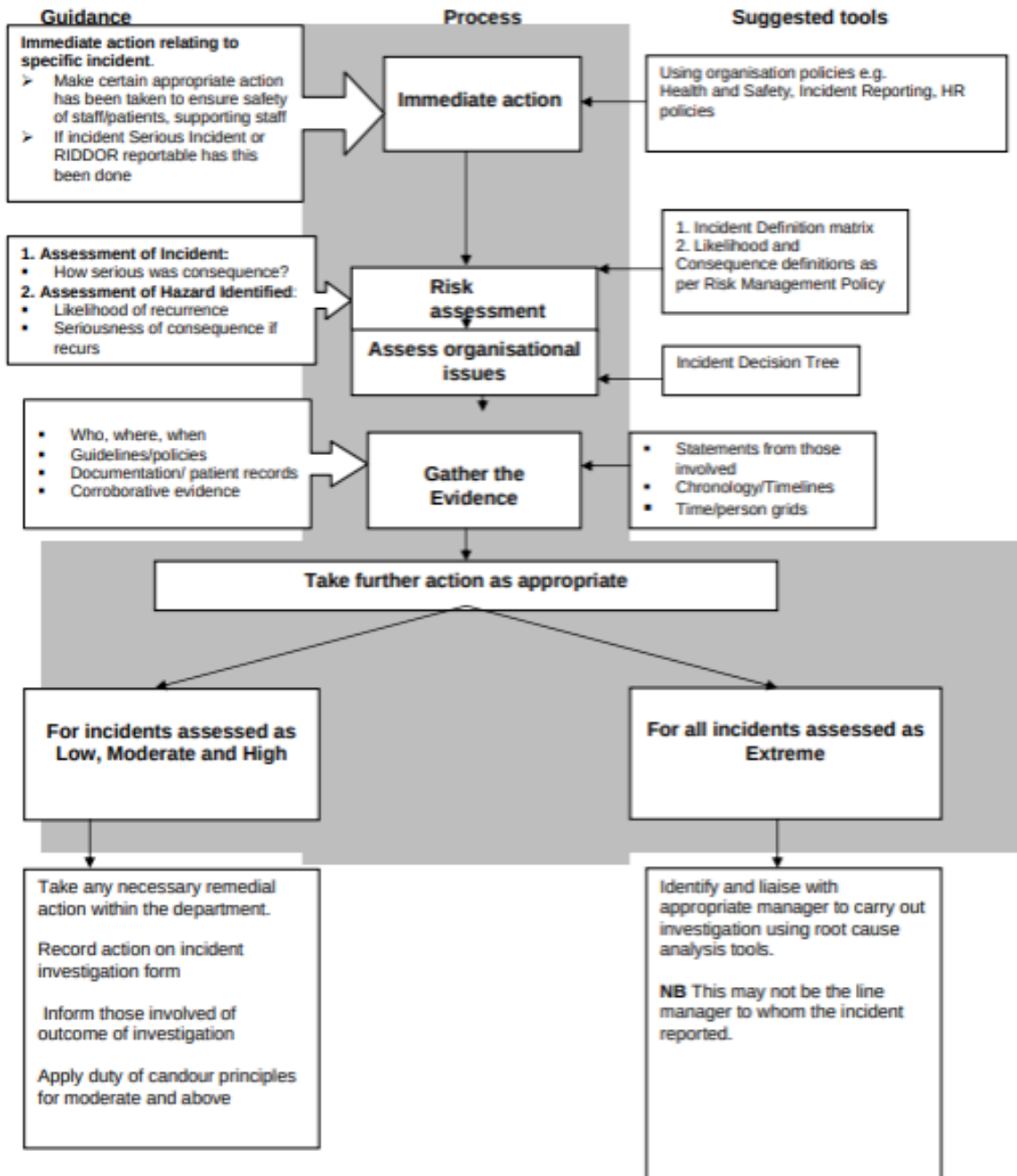
For grading risk, the scores obtained from the risk matrix are assigned grades as follows

- 1 - 3 Low risk
- 4 - 6 Moderate risk
- 8 - 12 High risk
- 15 - 25 Extreme risk



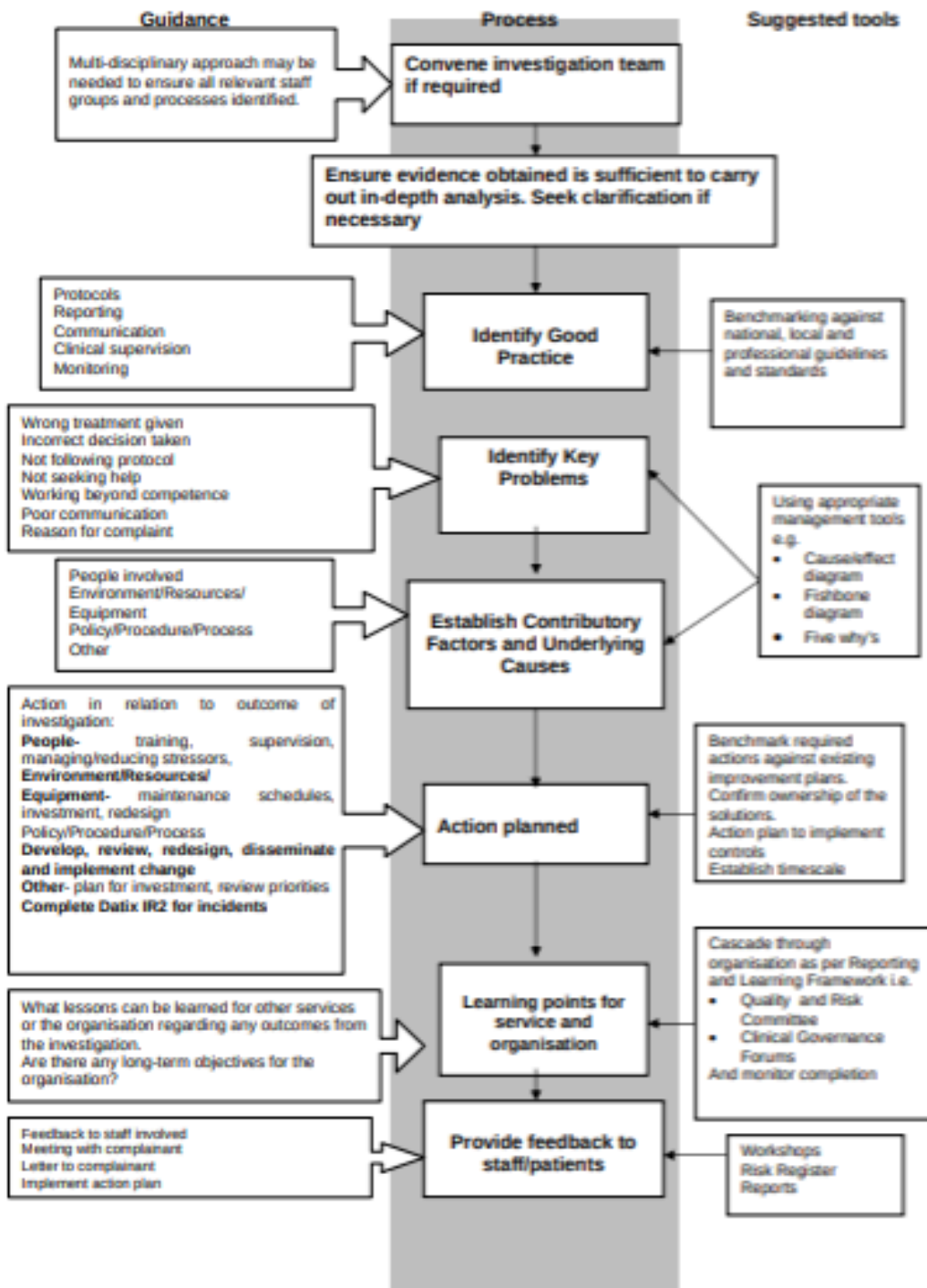
## Appendix 2

### INVESTIGATING AND LEARNING FROM INCIDENTS AND COMPLAINTS



## Appendix 3:

### HIGHER LEVEL INVESTIGATION FOR INCIDENTS AND COMPLAINTS



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## Amendments

Date	Amendment Made	By whom
01/03/2024	Procedure for responding to an incident updated. Appeals added	MWP

