

Referral and Admission Policy

This Policy Relates to the following Legislation

- The Children Act 1989
- The Children Act 2004
- The Care Standards Act 2000

This Policy Relates to the following Regulations

- Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015.

This Policy Relates to the following Guidance

- Every Child Matters 2004
- The DfE publication, "Guide to Children's Home Standards Including Quality Standards April 2015

This Policy Applies To:

- a) Senior Managers of The Lioncare Group who are directly responsible for and involved in the decision-making process in relation to the safe and appropriate selection of children to become members of The Lioncare Group community and live in our Homes and/or attend our School.
- b) All those directly employed by The Lioncare Group who have involvement in the process and procedure concerning the safe and appropriate admission of children to The Lioncare Group community and our Homes and/or School.
- c) Placing Authorities and other professionals who have a duty to ensure a child is correctly and appropriately placed in a residential children's home that can safeguard the child and meet the child's assessed needs.

Responsibilities Associated with this Policy:

All employees, whether they are 'front-line' engaged directly in the task of caring for, educating, and supporting the children in our care, or 'ancillary' (e.g. House Keeper, Maintenance Worker, Administrator etc.), are personally responsible for managing their own conduct in relation to following this policy.

All employees whether they are 'front-line' or 'ancillary' are also responsible for supporting their colleagues and co-workers to follow this policy.

Members of the Management Team (Senior Therapeutic Carers, Senior Learning Support Assistant, Deputy Managers, Assistant Head Teacher, Registered Managers, and Head Teacher) are responsible for ensuring all those employed directly are made aware of this policy and guidance, and for managing and monitoring its appropriate implementation, and for taking necessary action to guard against any breach of this policy.

The Executive Team (Service Manager and Executive Director) are responsible for reviewing this policy and at least annually and more frequently if and when it is considered necessary to do so, and for ensuring this policy remains fit-for-purpose.

Monitoring and Review of this Policy:

The implementation of this policy and its corresponding guidance will be monitored continuously, and the policy itself will be reviewed at least annually in August of each year by the Executive Team and in consultation with relevant others including where possible and feasible those involved in caring for, educating, and supporting the children in our care, and consultation with the children themselves.

Policy Statement

The Lioncare Group exists to support children with complex needs who may have experienced abuse, neglect, and/or psychological trauma, and who subsequently face difficulties in coping with the pressures and demands of day-to-day living and learning. They may present with mild or moderate learning difficulty or disability; this may be either formally recognised or as yet undiagnosed. Similarly, they may present with some form of mental health difficulty ranging in severity from mild anxiety and depression, to borderline personality disorder; again this may be either formally recognised or as yet undiagnosed.

These children may have experienced care histories involving severe neglect and/or multiple breakdowns of placement. They may display occasional signs of aggression and/or withdrawal from every day social interactions. Indications of difficulties in forming and maintaining positive attachments and relationships may be present in addition to problematic behaviours around socialising, identity, sexuality, and coping with the demands of day-to-day living. Difficulties may be present in the child's academic, education, and learning abilities.

Admission Criteria

The Lioncare Group is designed to create a family-like, homely and welcoming group-living-and-learning environment in which children can feel secure and safe without feeling institutionalised. We provide 52 weeks per year medium to long term (i.e. between 6-months to 3 years) residential placements for both girls and boys aged 6-12 on admission at Springfields, and 12-16 at Hillfields and Westfields; the Lioncare School accepts children aged 7-16 years old. We can continue to care for and look after children up to and including 16 years of age at Springfields, and 18 years of age at Hillfields and Westfields and in some cases longer where a recognised need for this has been highlighted and agreed; this would however be exceptional.

We can also offer placing authorities an initial assessment placement of a minimum 6 months during which time the practical and emotional and psychological needs of the child can be assessed whilst they are living and/or learning in a safe and nurturing environment. Recommendations are then made and discussed with the placing authority as to the type and quality of care in our professional opinion would best meet the child's presenting needs and difficulties. This could include a return to the birth family, a foster placement, a specialist foster placement with wrap round support, residential care, remaining at The Lioncare Group and/or The Lioncare School, a boarding school or an alternative appropriate provision.

These children may have experienced a break down in their own family home, will generally present with needs that have not been met in alternative family based or residential care settings, and will feel that (or will have been advised that) a foster-placement is inappropriate or unrealistic at this point in time.

The child may present as being fragilely integrated, display some difficult or concerning behaviour, have difficulty in containing or controlling their own conflicted feelings, have low self-esteem or distorted self-image, have problems in forming or maintaining meaningful relationships with others, and need an extended period and holistic experience of therapeutic intervention in order to facilitate successful progression to more integrated and functioning way of being.

These children will generally find it difficult to deal with day to day situations, frequently exist in a state of panic and/or rage, may display signs of anxiety or anger when faced with situations which they feel are challenging, and will generally have experienced severely traumatising and/or emotionally depriving and damaging situations in their past.

They may have been prevented from achieving a level of basic trust in adults, or had their trust in adults shattered through abusive and damaging and neglectful experiences in early infancy or childhood. They will usually find the demands of everyday life and everyday living overwhelming, and in this respect may present as functioning at a very much younger age than their chronological age. Long standing but ultimately damaging defensive mechanisms, which appear to have protected them from being 'harmed' by the outside world in the past, may now be impeding their healthy emotional, psychological, and social development, and represent a

barrier that needs to be negotiated with the help of others. Disruptive and destructive outburst and impulses may be a pattern of behaviour, and their inner world may well be filled with feelings of worthlessness, emptiness and low esteem. In general, they may present as children who have not received basic care and emotional support, and who require support and sensitive guidance in working through unresolved needs and difficulties, at the same time as needing to learn the skills necessary to move towards a more rewarding and sustainable state of functioning.

The consequence for the child is that they experience difficulties in their ability to:

- Form, invest in, or sustain meaningful emotional attachments to others
- Have a healthy perception of their sexuality and their role in sexual relationships
- Contain their own emotions
- Cope in a healthy way with situations of separation and loss
- Deal with their feelings of aggression and anxiety
- Show healthy functioning within a group and/or social situation
- Look forward to their adolescents and view the transition in to adolescents as a rewarding experience

Through our work, we help children incorporate a positive experience of “good enough” care and guidance that can facilitate repair of the emotional damage caused by previous abusive, neglectful, or traumatic situations and experiences. We recognise that the healthy development of any child greatly depends on the availability of “good enough” care, together with the provision of appropriate models of individuals, relationships and situations and opportunities to experience different ways of relating, living and learning.

This approach has enabled us to develop an environment at The Lioncare Group which has the feel of a family home without the pressures of family living, is both sensitive to the needs of the individual children and the children’s group, and which can accommodate their changing needs as they move through childhood and adolescents.

The care of the children is delivered by a dedicated and professional team of adults and guided by a team of professionally trained and experienced consultants who between them cover the areas of psychodynamic child care, social care work, and education.

Psychodynamic Assessment of Emotional Need informed and overseen by professional and experienced managers and consultants, combined with the provision of appropriate care in a nurturing environment, and an integrated education provision supported where relevant by access to external specialist education resources, provide the framework for meeting the needs of the children cared for and educated by The Lioncare Group.

The Therapeutic Community Approach requires adults at The Lioncare Group to work closely with each child, develop a sense of pre-occupation about the needs and wishes of the child (as would any concerned parent), live alongside them, share the experiences of the child with the child, use their skills and understanding as therapeutic practitioners to offer the child alternative ways of coping with and resolving the child’s difficulties and pain and upset and issues, and guiding them through the experience of maturation and growth through childhood and in to adolescence. The adults at The Lioncare Group recognise that for many of our children, this transition is further complicated by the need to simultaneously negotiate and manage the echoes and reverberations of past abuse, neglect, and trauma.

An external team of consultants provides professional support, supervision and guidance to our practice through regular meetings and visits. Specialist services are accessed as and when required. These may include:

- advice and guidance from experts in education and learning
- links with specialist ethnic and cultural support groups
- support with speech and language development

- referrals to the local CAMHS team
- referrals for professional psychiatric assessments and treatment
- liaison with the Brighton & Hove Youth Offending Team

All placements for children at The Lioncare Group include access to individual weekly psychotherapy. The sessions last up to 1 hour each week and are facilitated away from the home by independent psychotherapists who have been specifically matched to meet the needs of the children in our care. The frequency of psychotherapy sessions can be increased if all parties agree that this would be in the best interests of the child.

We aim to help children overcome difficulties caused by previously abusive or traumatic experiences and assist them in finding ways to incorporate a positive experience of 'good enough care' and parenting in their present worlds. Our approach is part of a continuum of the therapeutic process that assists children to achieve equilibrium, enjoy their childhood and adolescent years, explore new opportunities through appropriate and managed risk-taking, and negotiate the changes needed to move forward.

Our primary task is to enable them to reach a more integrated level of functioning in their day-to-day lives at home, at school, and in the wider community and become healthier and safer, be able to enjoy and achieve, to make a positive contribution and achieve economic wellbeing as valued members of their community and social networks in later life.

We recognise the importance of properly preparing children for leaving our care and giving them access to effective and appropriate ongoing support. We know that children coming towards this stage will do so from a wide variety of backgrounds and circumstances, at various ages (both actual and emotional), and with various levels of support available to them from family and friends. The Lioncare Group offers a very flexible service to meet differing experiences and needs. We assist children to continue developing appropriate attachments, continue the process of repair and restitution, make necessary and important mistakes and poor decisions and learn from these, and continue to find the missing pieces in the jigsaw puzzle of their lives. We endeavour to help them pick up their own fragmented pieces and become whole once more.

The successful outcome of the Placement Plan for each child living at The Lioncare Group is dependent on the child being given the opportunity to proceed and develop at a pace that they feel comfortable with and that is appropriate to their individual needs. This is in turn dependent on their unique experiences, the accuracy and feasibility of the Placing Authorities Care Plan for the child, and on the level of trauma and emotional damage that the child has suffered previously. With this in mind, The Lioncare Group offers medium to long-term placements (i.e. between 6-months and 3-years) for children offering stability, consistency and reliability of care and education, which in our experience promotes sustainable and positive outcomes and a better prospect of achieving Permanency for the child.

Throughout the referral and admission process, there is a strong emphasis on establishing honest and open communication between The Lioncare Group and the referring authority to ensure that the needs of the child remain the focus of discussion and that all relevant information or documentation is shared in order to ensure that an accurate Initial Impact Risk Assessment is carried out (prior to and informing any decision to offer a placement for the child) and that any decision to offer a placement at The Lioncare Group remains the right one for the child and for the other children already placed at the Home.

Referral Procedure

When a referral is made from a local authority, we take in to consideration the needs and presenting behaviours of the child being referred and the needs and presenting behaviours and composition of the current group of children living at the respective home being considered. Where initial indications are that we may be able to offer the child an appropriate placement, we carry out an Initial Impact Risk Assessment (see below) using the information made available to us by the Placing Authority and cross referencing with information we hold and know about the individual risks of children currently placed and of the children's group as a whole. We aim to determine as best we can which children on referral The Lioncare Group can offer a safe and appropriate care

environment whilst ensuring and maintaining the safety and wellbeing of the current group of children in the home. When deciding whether to offer a placement, we work with the referring authority on how the child's contact with family and significant others will be supported, particularly in regards to the distance between the home being considered, and the child's family and significant others. Similarly, the child's need for, and the availability of, services such as health agencies including specialist services such as CAMHS and sexual health services, is also taken into account when deciding whether to offer a placement.

Initial enquiries for referrals made by local authorities should be made to the Service Managers at our administrative headquarters:

Lioncare House,
58a Livingstone Road,
Hove,
East Sussex BN3 3WL
T: 01273 720424
E: referrals@lioncare.co.uk

The Service Manager overseeing the referral follows the relevant referring authorities own procedure (these differ significantly from one authority to the next) including completion of any Placement Proposal Form based on the Every Child Matters 5 Outcomes for Care that may be used by the referring authority. The Service Manager also gathers together all available information on the child and will include where possible but is not limited to; a fully completed Lioncare referral form, all available and relevant professional reports, a copy of the child's most recent CLA review meeting (if available), the child's current EHC Plan, and information from the child's current placement (care and education). The Service Manager and Registered Manager of the home being considered and (where applicable) the Head Teacher of The Lioncare School complete an Initial Impact Risk Assessment (see below) to assess and determine the relative ability/inability of home and (where applicable) The Lioncare School to safeguard and meet the needs of the child being referred. Following this process of consideration and consultation and initial assessment, the Service Manager contacts the referring authority and informs them of the preliminary decision made by The Lioncare Group to either offer or refuse a placement for the child based on the information that has been provided and the findings of the Initial Impact Risk Assessment.

If and when a placement is offered, and accepted by the referring authority, the Service Manager, in collaboration with the Executive Director and Registered Manager and where applicable the Head Teacher of The Lioncare School, begins preparing for and organising an Initial Placement Planning Meeting in relation to the child.

Initial Impact Risk Assessment

In accord with sections 8.3., 11.4. and 11.5. of the 'Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations including the quality standards April 2015' and The Care Planning Standard and The Positive Relationships Standard, we will work closely with the referring placing authority to understand the child's relationship history and the impact that the child's arrival may have on the group living in the home.

We will only accept placements for children where we have satisfied ourselves that the home can respond effectively to the child's assessed needs as recorded in the child's relevant plans, and where the impact that the placement will have on the existing group of children has been fully reflected on and considered (i.e. thought about).

We will challenge any referring Placing Authority who asks us to accept a child in the absence of a complete and current relevant plan, as the expectation that a placement of a child would go ahead, without the necessary information, (in circumstances other than an emergency) is inadequate in relation to the role of the Placing Authority. It is essential that we understand what will be required of us before we accept responsibility for a child's placement, to avoid disruption and instability for the child in future and for other children in the home.

We will liaise with social workers and placement officers where information is vague, and record this within the Initial Impact Risk Assessment we are compiling about the child. We will also question social workers and placements officers if information within the placing authorities needs assessment on the child is vague, and we will not stop questioning until we are satisfied that we have the information we need to keep the child and other children and adults working in the home, safe.

All information in referral documents will be used as it is all relevant to the quality and efficacy of the Initial Impact Risk Assessment. The Initial Impact Risk Assessments will always be completed prior to any offer or agreement being made in respect of offering the placing authority a placement for the child in the home.

On agreement being reached with the placing authority for a placement in the home for the child, and on receipt of the Placing Authorities relevant plans including Care Plan, Needs Assessment, and most recent Risk Assessment, we will produce an initial Placement Plan for the child. We will only offer a placement to, and admit children to the home, where we have fully considered the impact that the placement may have on the existing group of children, and the impact the children in placement may have on the child being placed.

The Initial Impact Risk Assessment is carried out by the Service Manager and Registered Manager with support and involvement where required from the Referrals Administrator and Deputy Manager. If the child being referred also needs education through The Lioncare School, the Head Teacher of The Lioncare School will also assist in carrying out the Initial impact Risk Assessment.

The Initial Impact Risk Assessment is composed under the following seven main sections:

1. Risks to Self: this lists specific known or observed risks presented by the child
2. Risk from Other Children: this assesses how the referred child might be impacted on by the known and observed risks presented by those children already living in the Home
3. Risk To Other Children: this assess how the referred child might impact on those children already living in the Home
4. Risks to the Adults (Staff Members): this assess how the referred child might impact on adults i.e. staff members working in the Home
5. Risk in the Wider Community: this assesses how the referred child might impact on the wider community outside of the Home and how the wider community outside of the Home might impact on the referred child
6. Risk re; Location of the Home: this considers how areas highlighted in the Home's Location Assessment Review Report might impact on the referred child
7. Decision Based on Assessed Risks: this contains a statement as to whether or not admission of the referred child is deemed viable, and if so why and if not why.

For each section outlined above, there is a clear space to describe the possible measure and strategies that could and would be implemented to control and manage identified risks.

Refusal of Placement

The Lioncare Group will only offer a placement to the referring authority where feel we can reasonably expect to meet the child's assessed and recognised needs. The Lioncare Group is not able to offer placements for children with high level or severe or profound learning disability, severe sensory or cognitive impairment¹, or who have a severe physical disability requiring specialist and/or a high level of nursing or health care. Whilst it may transpire through the course of a placement (following admission) that a child is experiencing mental health problems, The Lioncare Group is not generally intended as positive placements for those children with clinically

¹ Where evidenced by professional medical assessment or medical opinion.

diagnosed and/or severe mental health disorders. We would consider a placement in a health care setting to be more suitable and appropriate. Similarly, we cannot offer placements for children who present on admission with severe drug or alcohol dependence, but would endeavour to work through such issues, alongside other professional agencies, should a child develop dependencies during the course of their placements.

Admissions Procedure

If The Lioncare Group and/or The Lioncare School is previously not known to the referring authority, we request that a mutually agreeable date is set for the referring officer / case social worker to visit home and the school and meet with the Service Manager and Registered Manager and Head Teacher in order that all parties are completely satisfied that the proposed placement meets the child's needs, their EHC Plan, and the requirements of the referring authority.

If all parties are in agreement as to the suitability of the placement, the Service Manager confirms with the referring authority by e-mail the details of the offer of placement including all fees and costs. The referring authority is asked to formally notify the Executive Director in writing (by email) their wish to accept the offer and to begin the admissions procedure.

Except in the event of an emergency admission situation, all admissions are carefully planned in order to ensure that the process is carried out at a pace appropriate to the needs of the child being referred, and for the current group of children living in the home. Even in an emergency admission situation, we would endeavour to undertake as much planning as possible and would always complete an Initial Impact Risk Assessment before offering a placement. We aim to facilitate the transition between placements in such a way as to enable the child, and the current group of children living at the home, to experience the process as being positive and "good enough". The ideal length of time required for an appropriate admissions process is 3-4 weeks but may be shortened or increased dependent on the particular circumstances surrounding the referral, the needs of the Placing Authority, the needs of the child, the needs of other children living at the home, and the relative stability of the children's group as a whole at the point of referral.

When agreement to place the child at the home and (where applicable) The Lioncare School has been finalised in writing by the Placing Authority to the Executive Director, the following admissions procedure is initiated²:

- The Service Manager formally hands over all information and details to the Registered Manager, who is from herein responsible for all aspects of the admissions process to the Home.
- The Registered Manager shares the information regarding the referral with the team at the home. The team is invited to raise and discuss any questions, concerns, and initial thoughts and areas for consideration.
- From the information gained through the referral process and including the Therapeutic Plan, an initial Combined EHC Plan and Treatment Programme is compiled. This highlights the needs of the child as presented by the Placing Authority, and indicates how the team intends to begin the initial phase of caring for the child.
- The Registered Manager and the allocated Casework Manager make a visit to the child in their current placement. An individualised 'Welcome Book'³ is given to the child to own and to read at their leisure. It is designed in age appropriate language and a format that the particular child can access and is intended to help familiarise the child with the home, understand how they will be looked after, what they can expect, and what will be expected of them when they move to The Lioncare Group. By providing the child with a copy of the guide, it is hoped that they will begin to feel a part of The Lioncare Group prior to admission and that their anxieties about their new 'home' might be reduced.

² Details of the admission process for The Lioncare School are contained in The School Prospectus available on our website: <http://lioncare.co.uk/therapeutic-education/lioncare-school/>

³ The Welcome Book is our version of "The Children's Guide" as defined by the Quality Standards contained in the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015.

- A mutually agreeable date is set up for the child, present carers (and/or parents where appropriate and safe to do so) and social worker to visit the home and where applicable school in order that the child can make an informed decision as to whether The Lioncare Group is a place in which they would like to live and/or learn. It is expected that this initial visit will last no longer than two hours.
- An overnight visit ideally takes place approximately one week after the initial visit. We see this as part of the moving-in process and encourage the child to leave an item of personal value in their room at the home, to be cared for by the adults. During this visit, the adults will attempt to ascertain the child's favourite meal, leisure activities, the colour they want their bedroom decorated, and their interests.
- Through liaison between the Casework Manager, the child and their present carers, the adults decorate the child's bedroom in a style that reflects the child's choice i.e. favourite colour, chosen theme etc. A duvet cover and set of towels reflecting this choice are purchased for the child prior to their admission.

The Initial Placement Planning Meeting

A meeting without the child, known as the Initial Placement Planning Meeting⁴, is held after admission. We would wherever possible (and except where there are extenuating circumstances beyond our control) expect this meeting to be convened no more than 7 days after the date of admission of the child to the home.

Where an Initial Placement Planning Meeting cannot be convened within or shortly after the 7 day timescale of the date of admission, we would endeavour to convene our own internal review meeting to assess and review the child's placement at the home.

All significant adults involved with the child are invited to attend the Initial Placement Planning Meeting. This would normally include:

- Registered Manager
- Service Manager
- Casework Manager
- Present Carers
- Parents (where appropriate and safe to do so)
- Social worker
- Head Teacher (of previous/current school and where a change of school is proposed, the Head Teacher of the proposed school if this is known and possible)

And where applicable:

- Guardian ad litem
- CAMHS Representative
- Youth Offending Team

The primary purpose of the Initial Placement Planning Meeting is to;

- Confirm the homes placement plan and ensure it covers all needs and areas contained in the placing authority's care plan
- Confirm the home has received all relevant plans and documentation and information and case records etc.
- Ensure all documents that need signatures and dates have been signed and dated

⁴ to bring it in line with the language and terminology used by placing authorities and to support better understanding of the purpose of this meeting between all parties and across all agencies.

- Confirm dates for the next two Placement Meetings, first CLA Review after Admission, visits by social worker and where applicable Independent Visitor and/or Advocate, and including Permanency Planning Meetings: confirming the dates of the next two Planning Meetings and recording these in the report of the meeting ensures that placement progress is being appropriately monitored and that children’s plans for permanency are being kept under review.
- Provide a forum to share views, discuss concerns, put forward ideas, and thereby begin establishing and strengthening the connections and working relationships between the home and the child’s wider support system to assist the home in meeting its duty under Regulation 5 (engaging with the wider system to ensure children’s needs are met) of the Children’s Home [England] Regulations 2015.
- Discuss any concerns or issues and gain agreement and clarity

The following documentation will have been provided to The Lioncare Group prior to admission (except in the case of an emergency admission) and certainly before the Initial Placement Planning Meeting is convened:

- Signed medical consent form (sent to the social worker prior to the meeting)
- Signed monitoring device consent form (for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child concerned, or other children, under regulation 24(1)(b) of the Children’s Homes Regulations [England] 2015 and sent to the social worker prior to the meeting)
- Consent by the placing authority for use of Monitoring and Surveillance devices to
- Completed copy of the list of clothing requirements (given to the present carers prior to the meeting). We recognise that it may not be possible to ensure that the child has all the items of clothing stated on the list. However, we would expect their present carers to have made some attempt to ensure that the child is equipped with a basic set of essential clothing when they arrive at The Lioncare Group on the day of their admission.
- The referring authorities most current policy on Safeguarding procedures
- Birth certificate (or copy of)
- Passport (if available)
- Current EHC Plan where applicable
- Health records
- Report from current school
- Statement of special educational needs (if appropriate)
- Any legal documentation and including a copy of any and all applicable Court Order(s) and Care Order

The Day of Admission of the Child

On the day of admission of the child to the home, the following procedure will be used:

- The present carers / significant adults, and social worker are expected to accompany the child to the home on the day of admission.
- Wherever possible, provision is made for the Registered Manager and the assigned Casework Manager to be present on the day of admission. The Casework Manager, supported by their line manager, is responsible for all aspects of co-ordinating the arrival of the child.
- On arriving, the child is welcomed by the Registered Manager and Casework Manager, introduced to the adults on duty, and offered refreshments.
- The Registered Manager and Casework Manager introduces the child to other children living at the home that they may not have met previously during their visits, and together with the child’s present carers, helps them to unpack and spends some time with them whilst they re-adjust to their new home. The current group of children living at the home is also encouraged to be involved in this process.

- Before the current carers/significant adults and social worker leave, they are expected to be involved in the formal side to the admission procedure. The Registered Manager is responsible for ensuring that all necessary paperwork is completed, any medication currently being used by the child is exchanged, and that a comprehensive hand-over is received.
- An adult is allocated responsibility to over-seeing the child throughout their first day and night at the home and to help the child begin to re-adjust and familiarise themselves with life in their new home.

Emergency Referrals and Admissions

Our commitment to maintaining the principles of the therapeutic ethos that underpins the practice approach adopted by The Lioncare Group means that where possible we refrain from accepting emergency admissions. We are mindful of guidance that states that emergency admissions should not be taken unless the home's Statement of Purpose and its capacity and support systems mean that it has the capability to care for children admitted at very short notice while continuing to offer high quality care to children already living in the home.

However, we are also aware of the increasing pressures placed on referring authorities to find suitable placements with very limited or little notice. We therefore have to accept that on occasion it is in the best interest of the referred child to offer a placement at The Lioncare Group at short notice. In this situation we would endeavour to follow a minimum 72-hour process from first contact to admission, unless there was clear and certain evidence that to do so would be detrimental to safeguarding the wellbeing of that child.

In the event of a child being admitted to The Lioncare Group as an emergency placement, the Initial Placement Planning Meeting (see below) convened 7 days after admission to the home (or very shortly after this where there are extenuating circumstances beyond our control) is also used to consider whether the home is indeed able to offer the child an appropriate placement able to meet the child's needs and without impacting too greatly on the homes ability to continuing caring for the children already in placement, or if it is in that child's and/or the other children's best interests to consider recommending that an alternative placement is found for the child that can better meet the child's needs.

Assessing Whether Children Are At Risk Of Harm

There is a consistent approach to the management of risk associated with individual children. As detailed above, an Initial Impact Risk Assessment is completed for each child for whom a placement at The Lioncare Group is being considered, and that identifies the child's vulnerabilities and defines the strategies adults should follow to keep the child and others safe.

Within 4 weeks following admission, the Initial Impact Risk Assessment is reviewed and where necessary the arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child are revised in light of the child's actual interactions with the adults caring for them, interactions with the other children in placement, and with reference to any additional information made available to the home following the child's admission. The revised assessment is recorded on a different document to the Initial Impact Risk Assessment and is known as a Safeguarding Risk Profile. In this way the adults caring for the children have clear advice and guidance on how they should interact with the child to ensure the child's safety and the safety and wellbeing of all others.

Expectations by The Lioncare Group of the Placing Authority

At The Lioncare Group we rely on the positive working partnership formed with the child's social worker and Placing Authority to maintain good communication of information relating to the child and their family, effective and agreed processes of decision making and care planning, and ultimately support in achieving the therapeutic task of the home and school.

With this in mind, we explicitly insist prior to admission of a child that the child have been allocated a named social worker, that we (and therefore also the child) are informed of any changes to this arrangement at the earliest possible date, and that a replacement named social worker is allocated prior to the departure of the

previous worker, in order to allow the child to be appropriately introduced and the transition managed in line with good practice.

In line with best practice, we also request that newly allocated case social workers visit the home and school within one week (5 working days) or as soon as reasonably possible after appointment, in order to meet with the Registered Manager and Head Teacher and the Casework Manager and become acquainted with the ethos of the home and school and the therapeutic community approach used. We have found that this procedure facilitates shared understanding and consequently assist in maintaining a respectful, clear, and positive working partnership between The Lioncare Group and the Placing Authority.

We also insist that in line with legislation and regulation, a CLA Review meeting is held no later than 28 days following admission of the child to The Lioncare Group.