

**Joint Protocol for Commissioning of Assessment,
Intervention and Moving On(AIM) in Lincolnshire –
March 2019**

Lincolnshire Police

Future4MeLincolnshire Children's Service

**East Midlands Crown Prosecution
Service**



Introduction - AIM Assessments

There are three types of AIM assessment:

- AIM2
- AIM Under 12
- Technology-Assisted AIM.

When a request for an AIM assessment is made, jointly with their supervisor, the practitioner should consider which model is most appropriate to apply. It is important to use the model appropriate to the young person's situation and further specialist advice can be sought from the AIM Project (GMAP). As a general guide,

- The AIM2 model can be applied with children and young people between the age of 12 to 18 years, who have displayed harmful sexual behaviour, against children, adolescents and/or adults, within the family, outside the family and stranger abuse. The model is also applicable for young people with learning disability; however in some cases a cognitive abilities assessment may also be required.
- The AIM under 12 model provides guidelines to assist workers to develop an understanding from research, and clinical experience, of the areas which need to be explored when undertaking an initial assessment of a child under 12 years age of old with problematic sexual behaviours and their families. The Technology-Assisted AIM model provides a framework to assess how technology may facilitate sexual offending amongst adolescents. The purpose of each framework is to offer an assessment of the young person and his or her family to assess the concerns, risks and strengths of the young person.

The assessment report will include information on;

- The context of the abusive behaviours, including the nature of the relationship between the children/young people, difference in age between the victim and alleged abuser, absence of consent, exploitation and whether the alleged abuser had authority or responsibility for the victim, secrecy, coercion, bribery or violence;
- The child's development and family and social circumstances;
- The need for services, specifically focusing on the child's harmful behaviour as well as other significant needs;
- The risk to self and others, including other children in the household, extended family, school, peer group or wider social network;

- Identify level of supervision required to prevent repeat harmful behaviour;
- In child protection terms identify risk to either the child/young person or their actual/potential victim(s);
- To assess the child/young person's motivation and capacity to engage in service and plans;
- Identify the capacity of the parents /carers or significant others to manage and support the child/young person;
- The assessors should draw conclusions from the AIM initial assessment framework and identify the initial level(s) of intervention indicated as necessary.

Information gathered throughout the assessment process will be compiled into a report format. The assessors will read through the report with the young person and their parents / carers in a supportive setting and any areas of disagreement will be noted and attached to the report. The family are entitled to retain a copy of the report. It is good practice to write a child-friendly version of the report dependent on the age and level of understanding of the child or young person.

Where the assessment has been triggered by an admission of guilt (or having been found guilty post trial) the report will inform the recommendation in the Pre-Sentence Report for Court.

Appropriate assessors should be identified using the following principles:

- At least one assessor must be AIM trained;
- At least one assessor must hold a Social Work or Probation qualification or another suitable professional qualification – CAMHS Specialists/ YOT Officers in Future4Me.
- Assessment should be multi-agency; Future4Me will take the lead where a criminal process is likely; Children's Social Care will lead where the child with the harmful behaviour is under 10, or has intellectual disabilities;
- Where no alternative exists two Children's Social Care workers may undertake an assessment where there are no criminal proceedings. The Social worker for the victim should not be involved in the assessment in order to ensure it remains objective.
- Other assessors may be drawn from those working with the family or young person, including Early Help, CAMHS etc.

For **all** cases where there are concerns about **harmful** sexual behaviour, Children's Social Care and the Police need to be informed. They will hold a multi-agency Strategy Discussion within 24 hours of disclosure in relation to the alleged abusing child and the child victim where there is reasonable cause to suspect that the child concerned has experienced or is at risk of Significant Harm.

There may be isolated occasions where the behaviour is not thought to be serious enough to warrant further intervention and the matter may be dealt with through an out of court disposal through the Joint Diversionary Panel, or through an Early Help Assessment and Team around the Child response. These decisions should not be taken lightly and should be fully supported by assessment and multi-agency decision discussion. The behaviours should be considered symptomatic of un-met need in a child or young person. However it is important that behaviour of this nature should **always** be reported into Children Social Care so that a record is made and future assessments can take this information into account.

The decision on how to proceed is made after an initial Strategy Discussion:

- a. Into a child protection pathway;
- b. Into a criminal justice pathway;
- c. Sometimes both pathways will be running in conjunction with each other.

Child Protection Pathway

This procedure applies to all children and young people who have displayed harmful sexual behaviour and are not entering the criminal justice system:

- Case comes to the attention of Children Social Care and a **Strategy Meeting** is held within 24 hours involving the Police, Children's Social Care and the Future4Me Service (for the over 10 years) and any other agencies who have important information such as Health and Education;
- Agree temporary risk management strategy based on the information available;
- Any criminal aspects of the alleged abuse are investigated;
- Information relevant to the protection and needs of the alleged victim is gathered;
- A decision is taken regarding whether a **Section 47** investigation is conducted and from which an AIM assessment is commissioned;

- Co work assessors are allocated to complete the relevant AIM assessment from Children's Services, Future4Me Service or Child And Mental Health Services (CAMHS);
- Children Social Care take the role of lead agency;
- Information is collected from professionals and relevant agencies;
- Interviews are carried out with the young person their family and other significant persons;
- The assessment is completed and written into a report format
- The multi-agency Aim Review meeting to which parents and the young person are invited is held
- The outcomes of the assessment report are considered and an intervention plan is agreed;
- Review dates are set to monitor progress and review the intervention plan as required;
- Where Strategy Discussions (Section 47 or AIM) or meetings are required for both the child or young person who has displayed harmful sexual behaviour and the child(ren) or young person who is the victim, consideration should be given to the need to hold separate Strategy Discussions or Meetings;
- Where separate Strategy Discussions/Meetings are held, care must be taken to ensure that the appropriate professionals attend the relevant meeting in order to provide confidentiality for the children involved. For example, school representatives should only attend the meeting involving the pupil at their school. The police officer and social workers who are conducting the enquiries should participate in both sets of Strategy Discussions.

Section 47 Enquiries and Assessment

If it appears that either the child who has displayed harmful sexual behaviour or the victim has suffered, or is at risk of suffering Significant Harm, the Section 47 Enquiry will be conducted. Relevant considerations include:

- The nature and extent of the abusive behaviours and the impact on the victim;
- The context of the abusive behaviours;

- The age of the children involved;
- The child's development and family and social circumstances;
- Whether the child acknowledges the alleged behaviour;
- Whether there are grounds to suspect that either/any child has been abused or that adults have been involved in the development of the harmful sexual behaviour;
- Both children's needs for services;
- The risk the child who has displayed harmful sexual behaviour poses to him/herself and others, including other children in the household, extended family, school, peer group or wider social network; and
- Whether an AIM assessment should be undertaken.

The risk of further harm by the child who has displayed sexually harmful behaviour is likely to be present unless: the opportunity to further abuse is ended, the child has acknowledged the abusive behaviour and accepted responsibility and there is agreement by the child and his/her family to work with relevant agencies to address the problem and participate in an AIM assessment.

If during the course of the assessment there are concerns about any risks to other children posed by the perpetrator child, a multi-agency meeting should be convened straight away in order to develop:

- A written risk management plan in relation to any child identified as at potential risk; including educational and accommodation arrangements both for the perpetrator child and the potential victim(s);
- Appropriate arrangement for the continuation of the assessment and the need for any specialist assessment; and

How the services to be provided will be coordinated – including safety planning and direct work with the child and family.

Outcomes of Section 47 Enquiries - The Child who has Displayed Harmful Sexual Behaviour

- If the information gathered in the course of the Section 47 Enquiry suggests that the child who is suspected or alleged to have sexually abused another child is also a victim, or potential victim, of abuse including neglect, a **Child Protection Conference** must be convened. A representative from the Future4Me team should be invited to the **Initial Child Protection Conference**.
- If the child becomes the subject of a **Child Protection Plan**, the coordination of services will continue through the **Core Group**, which should address the child's inappropriate behaviour, the potential risks the child poses to others as well as the concerns which resulted in the need for a Child Protection Plan.
- Where the Section 47 investigation or Child Protection Conference concludes that the child who is suspected or alleged to have sexually abused does not require a Child Protection Plan, consideration should be given to the need for services to address any sexually abusive behaviour and the inter-agency responsibility to manage any risks.
- Where there are no grounds for a Child Protection Conference, but concerns remain regarding the child's sexually problematic behaviour, (s)he will be considered as a **Child in Need**, and managed at the appropriate level of team around the child.

Criminal Justice Pathway

This procedure applies to young people over the age of criminal responsibility (10 years) where the Police have made a decision to charge prosecute immediately because the offence is so serious or there are previous convictions.

- Young Person is charged with a sexual offence;
- Depending on the gravity of the offence, the Crown Prosecution Service will either charge the matter to Court or defer decision-making to the Joint Diversionary Panel

Charge to Court

- Young person appears before Court;
- If a not guilty plea is entered the legal process continues and no AIM assessment is done at this point;
- If a young person enters a guilty plea or is found guilty the Court will request a Pre-Sentence Report and should be asked to give sufficient time to complete and AIM assessment to inform the Pre-Sentence Report;

- Future4Me will carry out an AIM assessment to inform the Pre-Sentence Report; the report will consider appropriate interventions, including community and custodial sentence planning.
- Future4Me service will make a proposal to the Court for an appropriate disposal;
- An intervention plan will be formulated and roles and responsibilities identified
- When a child is aged 10 or over and is alleged to have committed an offence, the first interview must be undertaken by the Police under the provisions of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984

Joint Diversionary Panel

- Offence and case are discussed at the multi-agency Joint Diversionary Panel
- If a decision is made to charge to Court, refer to the above process.
- If a decision is made to work with the young person on a Youth Restorative Intervention Tier 3, Future4Me will open an 18 week intervention. For the first 6 weeks they will carry out an AIM assessment which will consider appropriate interventions. For the final 12 weeks, this package of intervention will be delivered.
- If a decision is made to assess suitability for a Youth Conditional Caution, Future4Me will complete an AIM assessment and feedback to the Police with their recommendation within xxx days. If the decision is made to charge to Court or to look at a Youth Restorative Intervention Tier 3, the matter should be referred back to the Joint Diversionary Panel. If the decision is to issue a Youth Conditional Caution, the Joint Diversionary Panel Co-ordinator is to be notified. The Youth Conditional Caution will expire 12 weeks after being issued by the Police.

A Case Within The Criminal Justice Process

A decision to complete an AIM assessment may be delayed until the young person has been to court and a plea has been entered. Young people who deny an alleged offence will not go through the initial AIM assessment process at this stage. However those young people who deny the offence but are later found guilty, or change their plea, will be subsequently assessed and the model can be an appropriate framework to inform a pre-sentence report.

In all such cases it is important that an AIM initial assessment is carried out. The young person and their parent / carers will be asked by the assessors to participate in this process. If consent is not given, but concern remains, an assessment can still be undertaken drawing on existing information.

For those young people who are immediately charged, the assessment will be triggered by their admission of guilt in court or by them having been found guilty in court. At this point a request for an adjournment should be made in order to carry out the initial assessment, which will inform the pre-sentence report.

In those cases where a young person commits a further offence whilst on bail, their bail status will be reviewed.

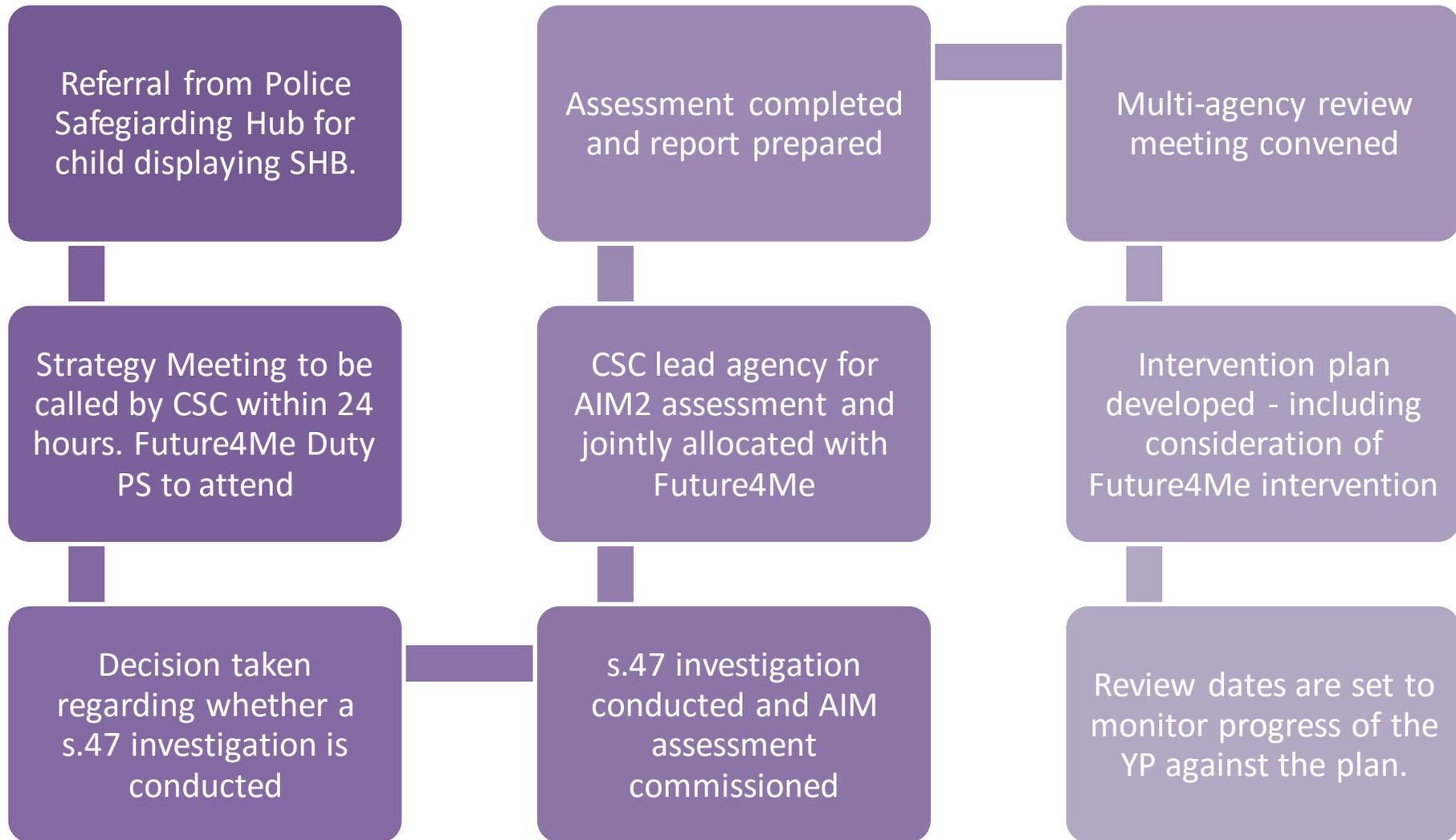
Where it is concluded there is insufficient evidence to charge consideration should be given to a referral to Children's Social Care for an assessment of need and an AIM assessment via the child protection/child in need route.

If an AIM assessment/intervention work has been started in custody this should be continued on release and highlighted as an area of intervention at the pre-release meeting. Any future intervention work should be outlined as a condition of the young person's licence/notice of supervision. If the child/young person is looked after, this work should also be reflected in their care plan.

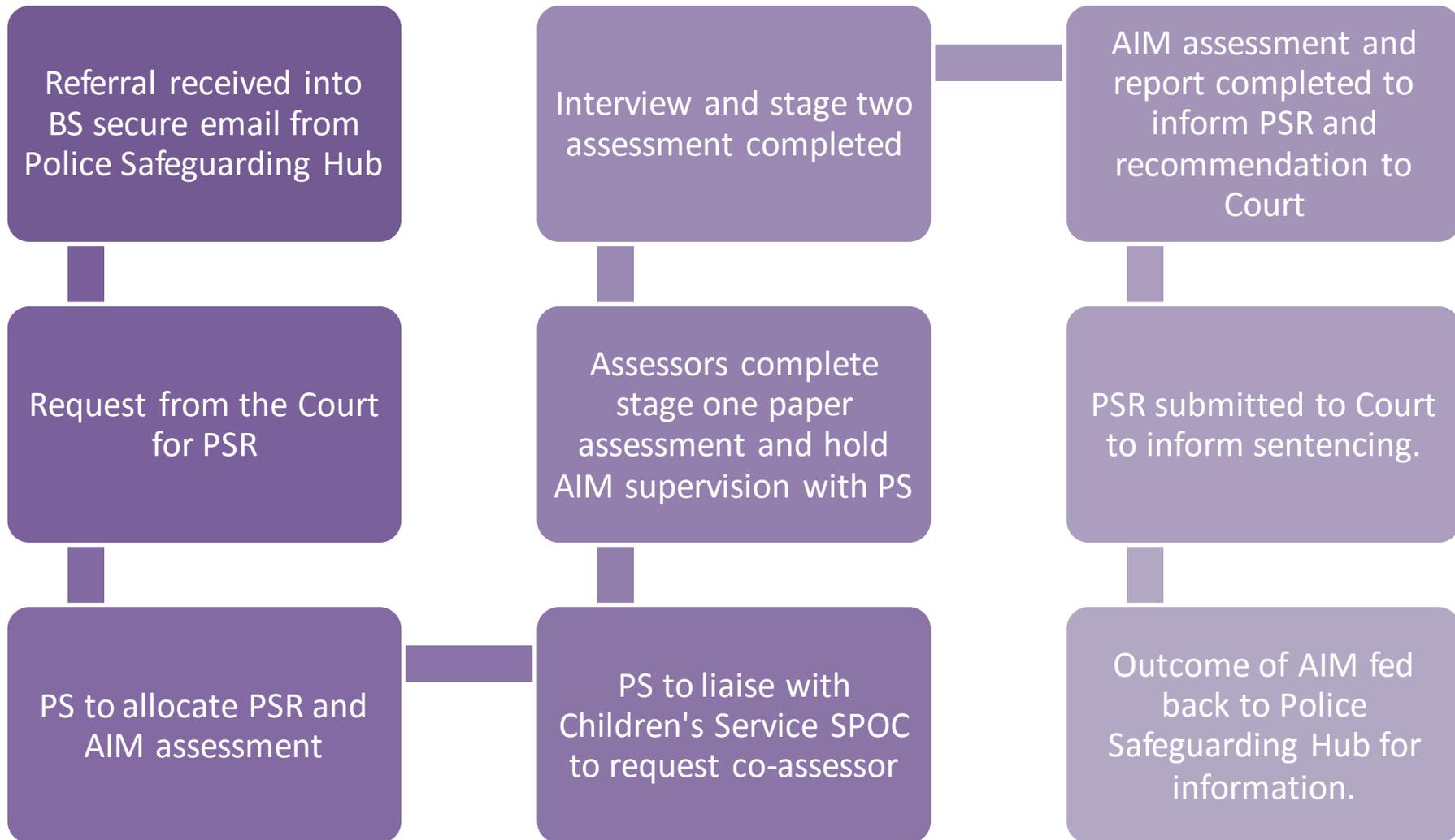
If no AIM intervention has been completed during the custodial element of the order then this should be included in the pre-release plans and incorporated, where appropriate, into the young person's notice of supervision/licence conditions. Again this work should be incorporated into any care planning documentation.

Children who are returning to the community following a custodial sentence or time in secure accommodation following concerns re harmful sexual behaviour also require consideration through this procedure.

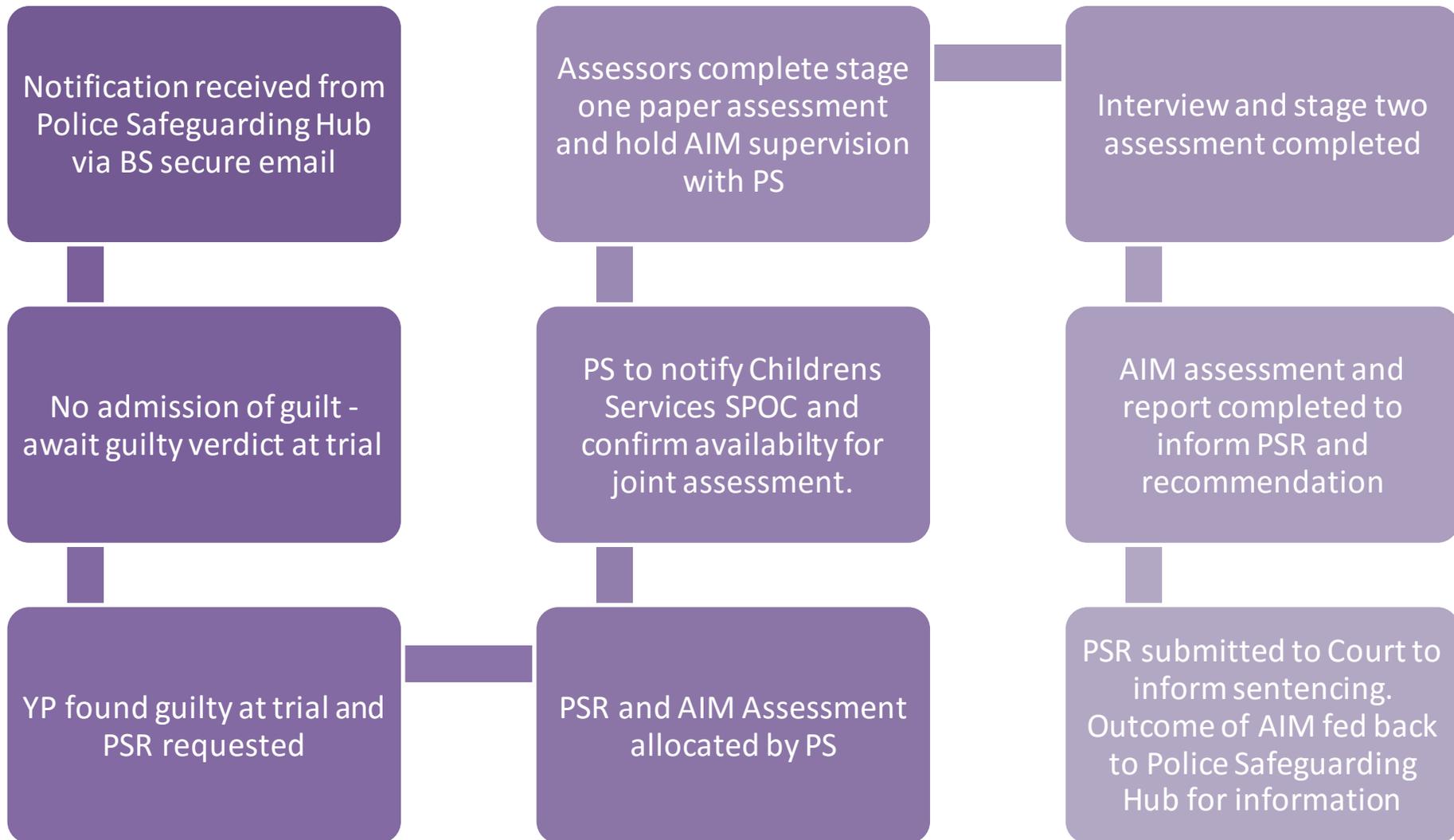
Appendix A – Child Protection Pathway – No Criminal Charges



Appendix B - Admission of Guilt - Straight to Charge



Appendix C – No admission of guilt – Post Conviction



| Key | |
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| BS | Business Support (FUTURE4ME) |
| CPS | Crown Prosecution Service |
| CSC | Customer Service Centre (Children's Services) |
| OIC | Officer In Charge (Police) |
| PS | Practice Supervisor |
| PSR | Pre-Sentence Report |
| YCC | Youth Conditional Caution |
| YP | Young Person |