

## Coerver Coaching

### Safeguarding Briefing Paper No. 1 - Welfare Officer Training

#### Dealing with Safeguarding Concerns and Taking Appropriate Action

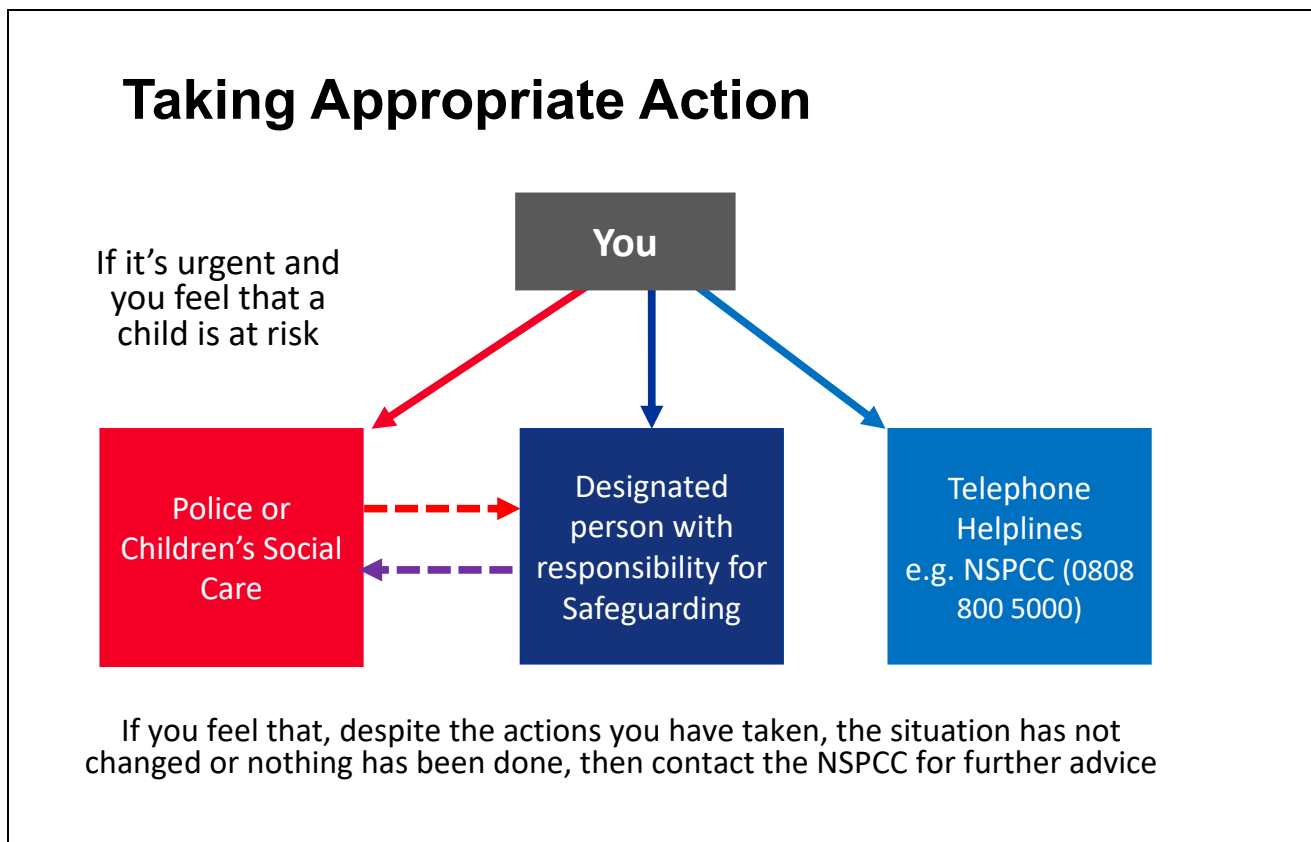
Coerver Coaching is determined to meet its obligations in relation to safeguarding by ensuring that Licensees providing football coaching programmes for children and young people on its behalf provide the highest possible standards of care.

The Coerver Coaching Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and Procedures, the Staff Code of Conduct and other related policies and procedures have been developed to provide Licensees and their staff with an operational framework which underpins this aim.

There may however be instances where coaches or others are found to be operating outside of these policies and procedures and action needs to be taken.

This has already been covered in the safeguarding training which has been provided for Licensees and is summarised in Diagram 1 below.

#### Diagram 1 - Taking Appropriate Action



Whilst the diagram above describes the action you should take in the UK, the fundamental principles will be the same for any Coerver Coaching licenced territory. It is however important to note that the organisations responsible for the welfare of children (Children's Social Care in the UK) are likely to be different in each territory and not all territories will have telephone helplines.

Using the diagram as a guide, there are two main options available to anyone who wants to report a concern, as follows:

**1. If the matter is urgent and you believe that a child is at risk you should contact the Police or Local Statutory Agencies within your respective territory.**

The person reporting the concern also needs to inform the Welfare Officer in the licenced territory who will work with them to ensure the Coerver Coaching Lead Child Protection/Safeguarding Officer is kept informed of the incident and any action taken through the incident reporting process (including completion of an Incident Reporting Form).

**2. If the matter is not urgent and there is no immediate risk to the child, this should be referred to the Welfare Officer for the licenced territory. The Welfare Officer should deal with the concern in line with the Coerver Coaching Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and Procedures and/or Staff Code of Conduct document(s).**

The Welfare Officer in the licenced territory will also keep the Coerver Coaching Lead Child Protection/Safeguarding Officer informed of the incident and any action taken through the incident reporting process (including completion of an Incident Reporting Form).

Whilst the third option (telephone helplines) may not be available in all territories, the Coerver Coaching Lead Child Protection/Safeguarding Officer is available to offer support.

**Based on the above it is recommended that Welfare Officers make a note of the key contact details in their respective territories, as follows:**

**Local Police (specifically those who deal with safeguarding issues)**

E-mail:.....

Telephone:.....

**Local Statutory Agencies (i.e. agencies who deal with children's welfare)**

E-mail:.....

Telephone:.....

**Support is also available from:**

**Coerver Coaching Lead Child Protection/Safeguarding Officer - John Mills**

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Whilst the above-mentioned guidance provides a reasonable level of clarity on the action to be taken, not all safeguarding concerns will be clear cut.

It is therefore important to understand that when it comes to dealing with concerns there is a sliding scale, based on the seriousness of the concern.

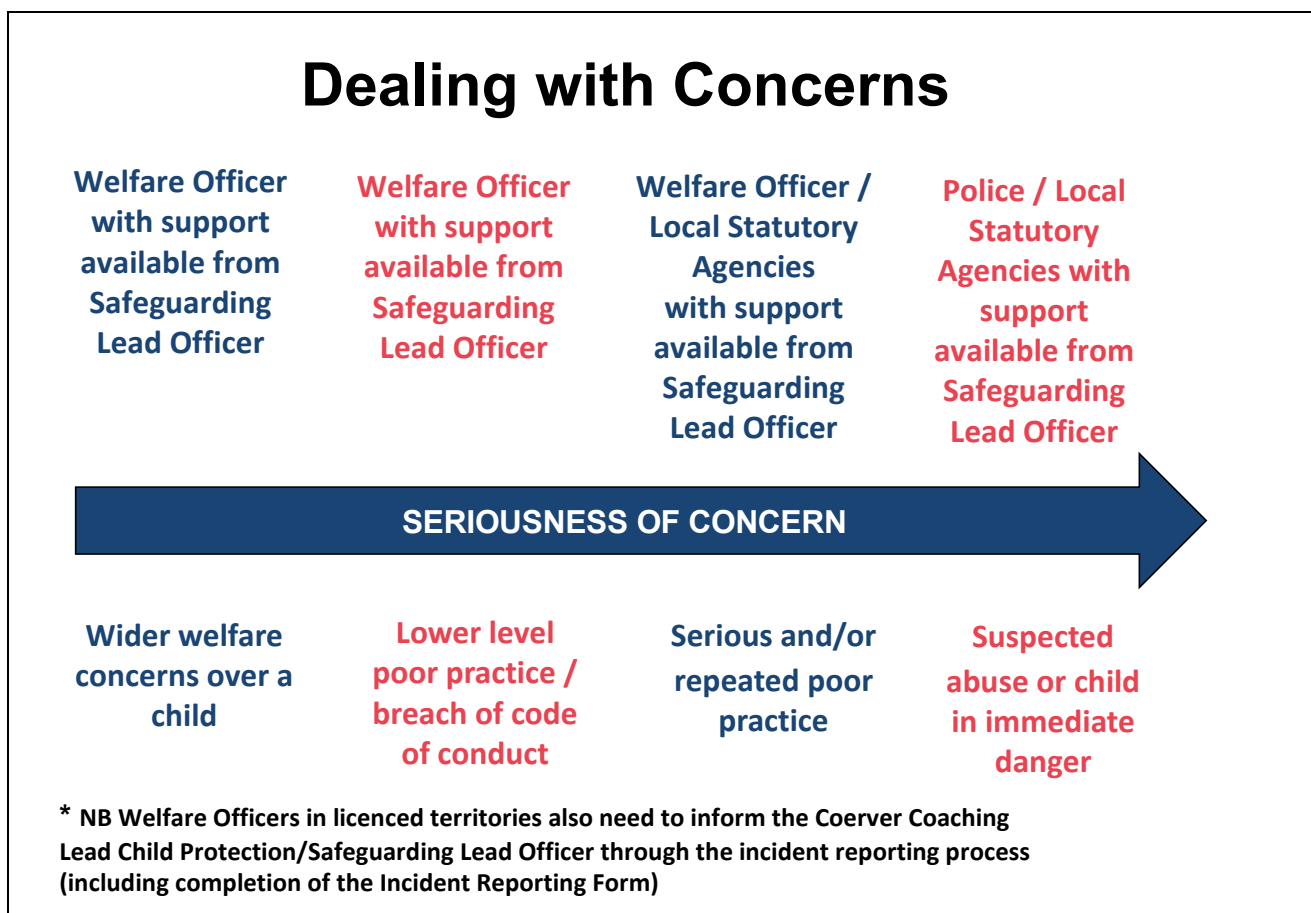
As you will see from Diagram 2 below, this ranges from 'wider welfare concerns over a child' through to 'suspected abuse' or a 'child in immediate danger'.

Whilst at the lower end of the spectrum concerns can usually be dealt with by the Welfare Officer, more serious concerns will need to be referred to Local Statutory Agencies and/or the Police.

Based on the information received regarding the concern, the Welfare Officer should be able to decide if it is something that can be dealt with at a local level or whether it needs to be referred to the Police or Statutory Agencies.

If in doubt the Welfare Officer in the licenced territory should contact the Coerver Coaching Lead Child Protection/Safeguarding Officer or his deputy, who will be able to offer advice and support.

### **Diagram 2 - Dealing with Concerns**



## **Dealing with poor practice in a Coerver Coaching setting**

With regards to poor practice in a Coerver Coaching setting, examples could include:

- A parent of one of the players informs you that their child is regularly being left out of the sessions by the coach. They tell you that they've spoken to the coach, who is a former professional player and he's told them that if the child can't do simple drills they're not going to make it as a professional footballer, so they might as well just give up!
- One of your more experienced coaches is very critical of some of the newly qualified coaches you have recently employed. He says that he doesn't know how they managed to get a coaching qualification and he is refusing to let them work with him. You've also heard that he's been telling some of the players and their parents that the newly qualified coaches don't know anything about coaching or how the game should be played.
- One of your coaches arrives late and hasn't planned anything for the session. As a result, the session is very disorganised and the children start messing around. The coach then starts shouting and swearing at them in order to try and regain control the group.
- A parent of one of the players writes to you to complain about the behaviour of another young player who attends the same coaching sessions. In the letter the parent informs you that the player in question has been bullying her son and several other players. She says that it isn't the first time this has happened and she says that although she and several other parents have reported their concerns to the coaching staff nothing has been done.

The above-mentioned examples would generally come under the heading of 'poor practice' and would normally be dealt with by the Welfare Officer in the respective licenced territory.

The Welfare Officer should be able to deal with the majority of 'poor practice' concerns at a local level, using the Coerver Coaching Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and Procedures and Staff Code of Conduct as points of reference.

With regards to the specific procedure to follow this is detailed in 'Flow Chart 1 - Dealing with poor practice in a Coerver Coaching setting' (available in the policy and replicated below).

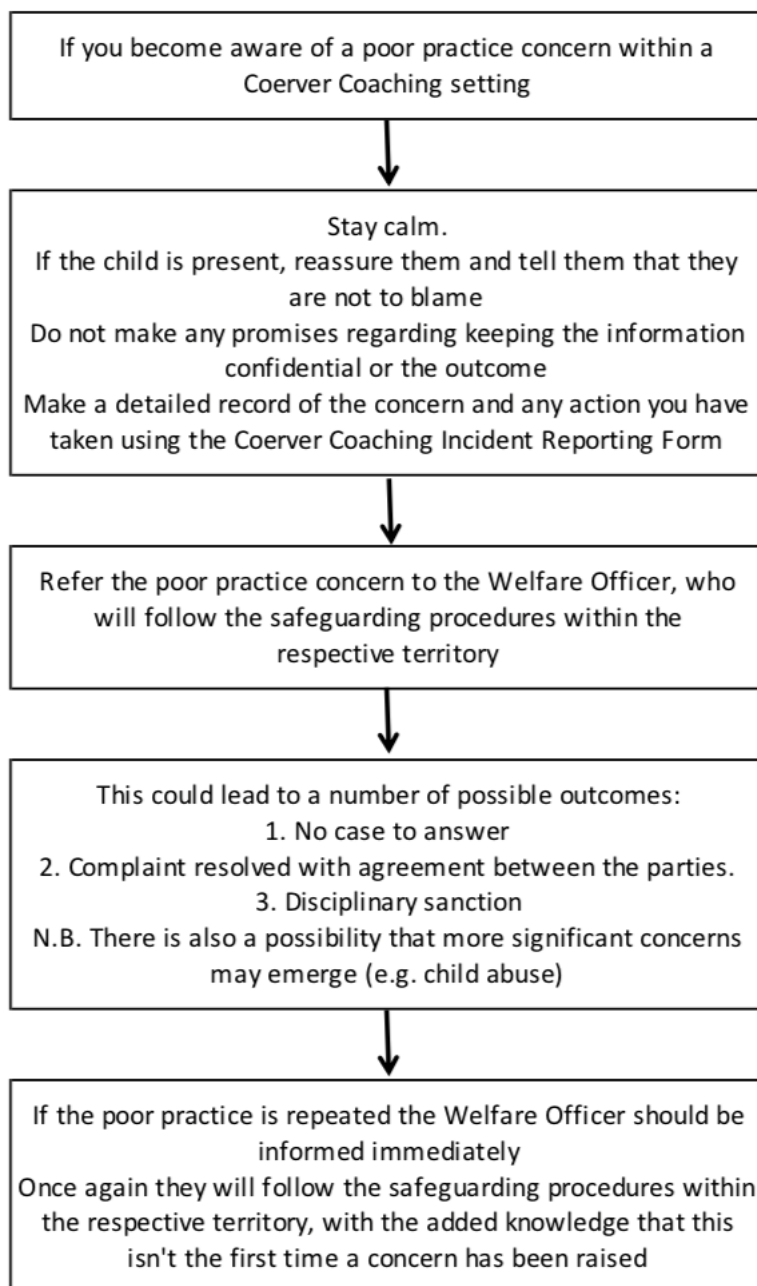
In respect of the above, an initial breach of the code of conduct would usually be dealt with by reminding the coach of their responsibilities and if necessary, providing re-training. Persistent or more serious breaches of the code of conduct would require further action, such as a written warning, final written warning and/or dismissal.

The Welfare Officer of the respective territory needs to keep a record of all concerns raised and any actions taken and this information needs to be held securely. The Coerver Coaching Lead Child Protection/Safeguarding Officer also needs to be kept informed through the incident reporting process (including completion of an Incident Reporting Form).

If the recommended process is followed and all concerns are recorded and dealt with appropriately the risk to the Licensee and/or Coerver Coaching should be minimal.

With regards to dealing with the Press, it is unlikely they will be interested in isolated cases of poor practice.

### **Flow Chart 1 - Dealing with poor practice in a Coerver Coaching setting**



## **Dealing with possible child abuse in a Coerver Coaching setting**

With regards to possible child abuse in a Coerver Coaching setting, examples could include

- You discover one of your coaches in a changing room with a young player with the lights off and the door closed. The coach said that the young player had gone back to the changing room after being substituted in a game. He said that he went to check up on the player who then got very upset and he was just trying to console them.
- You have had a report that one of your coaches who works on his own at a remote location has been changing and showering with the young players after training.
- A parent of one of the children who attends your sessions has informed you that one of the coaches has been sending text messages to her daughter. Whilst initially the text messages were linked to the young person's performance in the coaching sessions, more recently they have included messages telling her that he thinks she is really beautiful and asking if she would like to meet up with him away from the coaching sessions.
- A coach has applied for one of your part-time coaching roles. Your recruitment process requires you to do the necessary criminal records checks and take references. When the criminal records check comes back it says he has a conviction for a sexual offence against a young person. The conviction was three years ago but he has two references dated this year both of which confirm that he's a very good coach.
- A parent has informed you that one of the coaches is constantly shouting insults at the young people in his session. He said that in one session a young player got really upset and confronted the coach who then pushed him in the chest and knocked him to the ground.

The above-mentioned examples would generally come under the heading of 'possible child abuse' and should be referred immediately to the Welfare Officer in the respective licenced territory. The Welfare Officer will then pass the concern on to the Police and/or Local Statutory Agencies.

If for any reason the Welfare Officer is not available the concern should be reported directly to the Police and/or Local Statutory Agencies without delay. If the concern is reported directly to the Welfare Officer should be informed at the earliest available opportunity.

With regards to the specific procedure to follow this is detailed in 'Flow Chart 2 - Dealing with possible child abuse in a Coerver Coaching setting' (available in the policy and replicated below).

Once again it is important that all concerns are recorded and the Coerver Coaching Lead Child Protection/Safeguarding Officer is kept informed through the incident reporting process (including completion of an Incident Reporting Form).

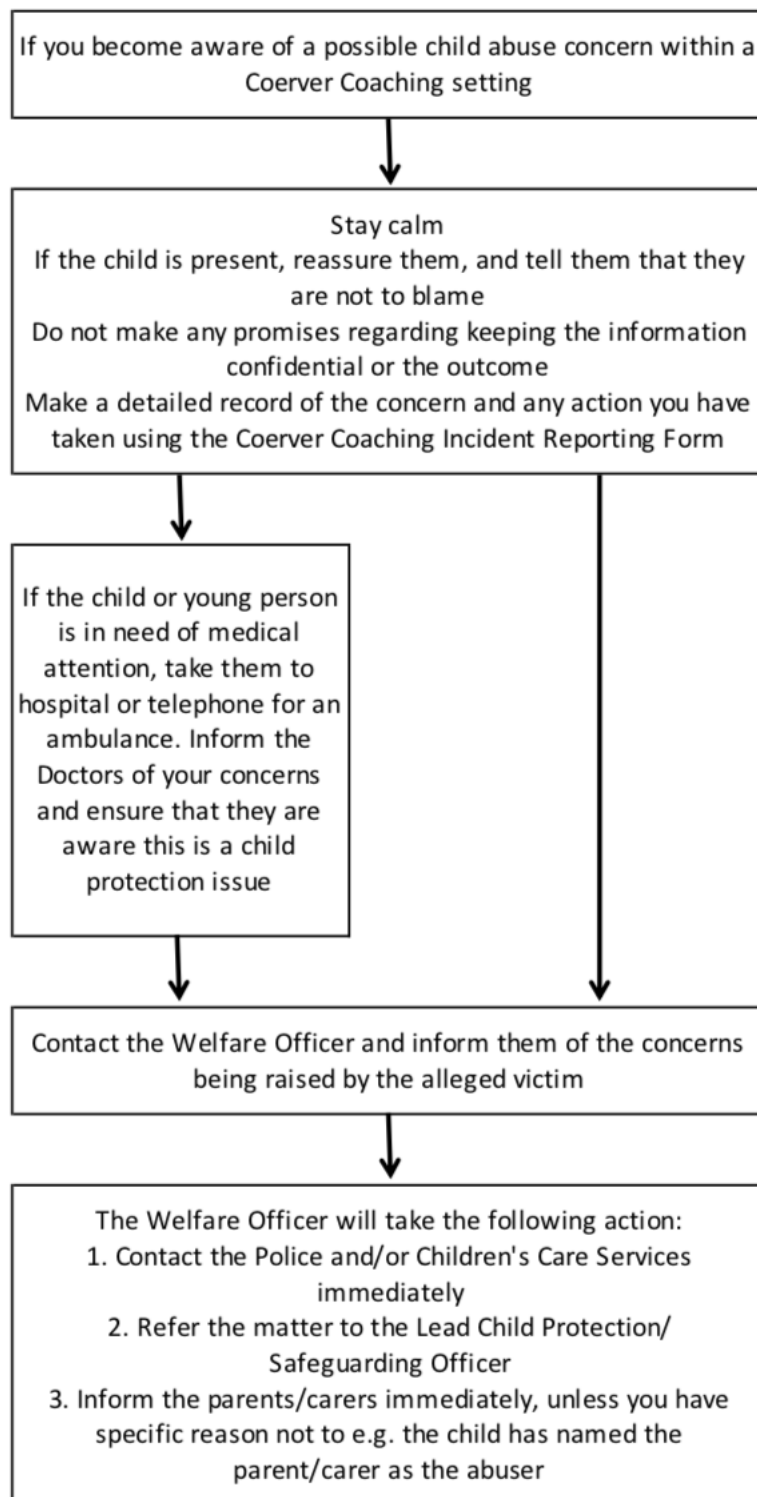
In cases of possible child abuse, the coach or staff member will usually be suspended, pending the outcome of an investigation. Any suspensions made prior to the outcome of an investigation should therefore be viewed as a neutral act.

With regards to dealing with the Press, the appropriate response in this instance would be to say that the matter is being dealt with in line with the Coerver Coaching Safeguarding Children and

Young People Policy and Procedures and is currently subject to an investigation, we are therefore unable to make any comment until the investigation has been concluded.

The investigation should then be completed, and due process should be followed and the concern should be recorded and dealt with in line with Coerver Coaching Policy and Procedures.

### **Flow Chart 2 - Dealing with possible child abuse in a Coerver Coaching setting**



## **Dealing with concerns outside of a Coerver Coaching setting**

With regards to concerns outside of a Coerver Coaching setting, examples could include:

1. A child who attends your sessions regularly turns up on his own in his football kit which doesn't appear to have been washed for some time. He doesn't have any warm clothes to put on after the session and never has a drink with him or any money to buy one.
2. After a match you hear one of the parents shouting at their child in the car park, telling them they weren't trying hard enough and that they need to improve or they might as well give up. This carries on for over ten minutes and the child is crying and visibly upset.
3. During one of your sessions a child is tackled and goes down injured holding his back. When you ask to have a look at the injury you notice a number of bruises on his lower back and what look like cigarette burns. When you ask him about the injuries he says he doesn't want to talk about it as it will only get him into more trouble.
4. A child tells you that his uncle who sometimes takes him to football matches has asked him to put his hand down his trousers and has been doing the same to him.

The above-mentioned examples would generally come under the heading of 'concerns outside of a Coerver Coaching setting' and should be referred to the Welfare Officer in the licenced territory.

The examples provided are designed to represent a sliding scale of seriousness (similar to that shown earlier in Diagram 1). In this context Example 1 represents 'wider welfare concerns over a child' through to Example 4 which represents 'suspected abuse or child in immediate danger'.

Based on the sliding scale, the Welfare Officer will have to decide what to do with the concern. This can range from the Welfare Officer dealing with the matter at a local level through to reporting the concern to Local Statutory Agencies and/or the Police.

If for any reason the Welfare Officer is not available and the concern is serious then it needs to be reported directly to the Police and/or Local Statutory Agencies without delay. If the concern is reported directly to the Police and/or Local Statutory Agencies the Welfare Officer should be informed at the earliest available opportunity.

With regards to the specific procedure to follow this is detailed in 'Flow Chart 3 - Dealing with concerns outside of a Coerver Coaching setting' (available in the policy and replicated below).

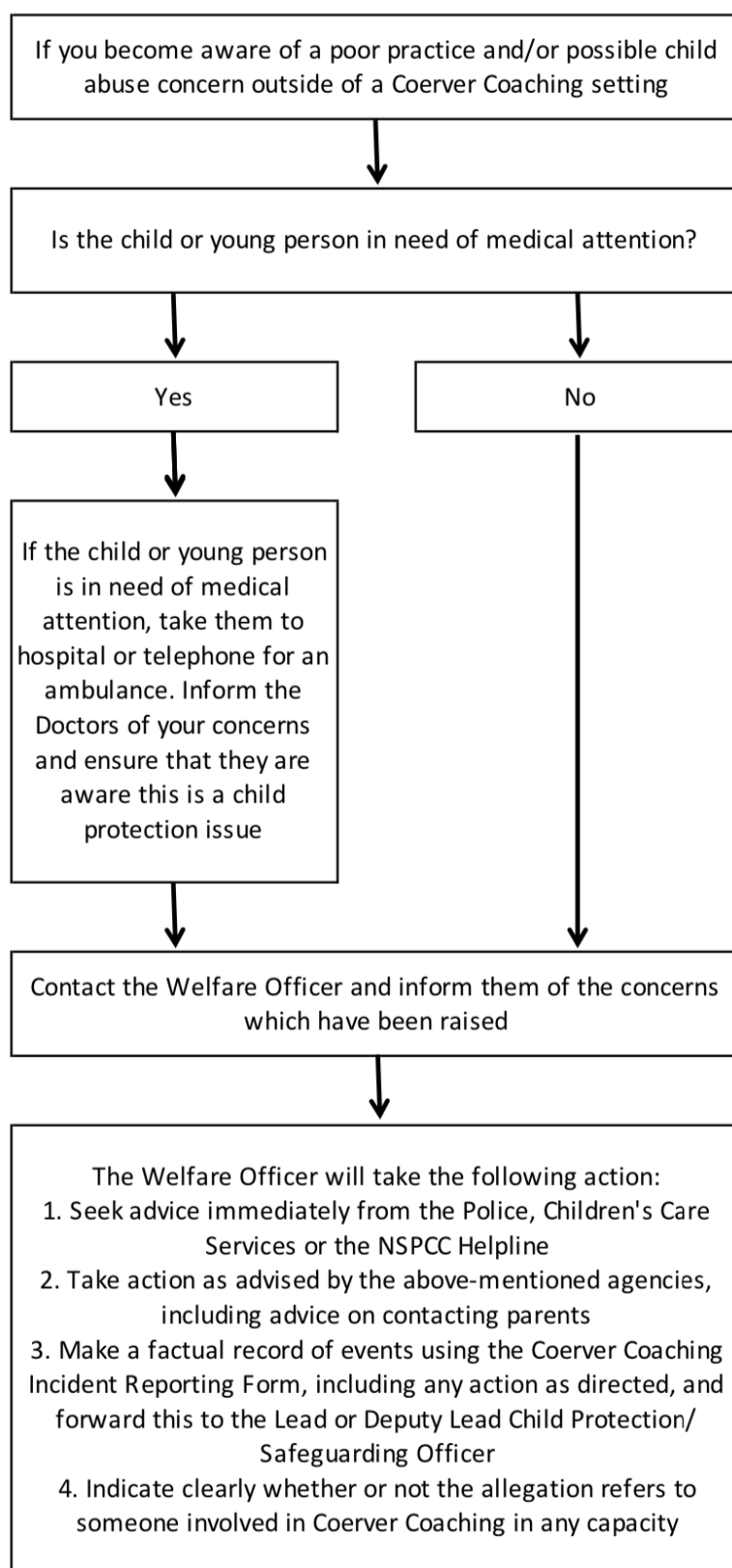
Once again, it is important that any concerns are recorded and the Coerver Coaching Lead Child Protection/Safeguarding Officer is kept informed through the incident reporting process (including completion of an Incident Reporting Form).

With regards to dealing with the Press, the appropriate response would be to say that the matter has been dealt with in line with the Coerver Coaching Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and Procedures and has been passed on to Local Statutory Agencies and/or the Police.

Once again, due process should be followed and the concern should be recorded and dealt with in line with the Coerver Coaching Policy and Procedures.



### **Flow Chart 3 - Dealing with concerns outside of a Coerver Coaching setting**



**Notes**

Whilst this briefing paper has been provided to help Licensees / Welfare Officers to deal with concerns about the welfare of a child or young person in their respective territories, it should be read in conjunction with the Coerver Coaching Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and Procedures, the Coerver Coaching Staff Code of Conduct and other related guidance documents.

Any questions regarding this or any other safeguarding documents should be directed to:

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