

Reporting procedures for any suspected POVA incident

We are aware that all providers currently have differences in their policies for dealing with a suspected POVA incident. We think it would be appropriate if there was some consistency, as this would add to safeguards already in place in ensuring that any employee investigated by one organisation and found guilty could not find employment within the same field without having to declare it.

Currently in supported housing there is no procedure in place to prevent re-employment unless that person is prosecuted by the police, any such conviction would then be present on a CRB check. If, however, a provider carried out an internal investigation and, for example, the employee left their employment part way through the investigation, the provider is under no legal obligation to pass on their concerns to the police, leaving the door open for the person to move to another organisation and possibly commit a similar offence.

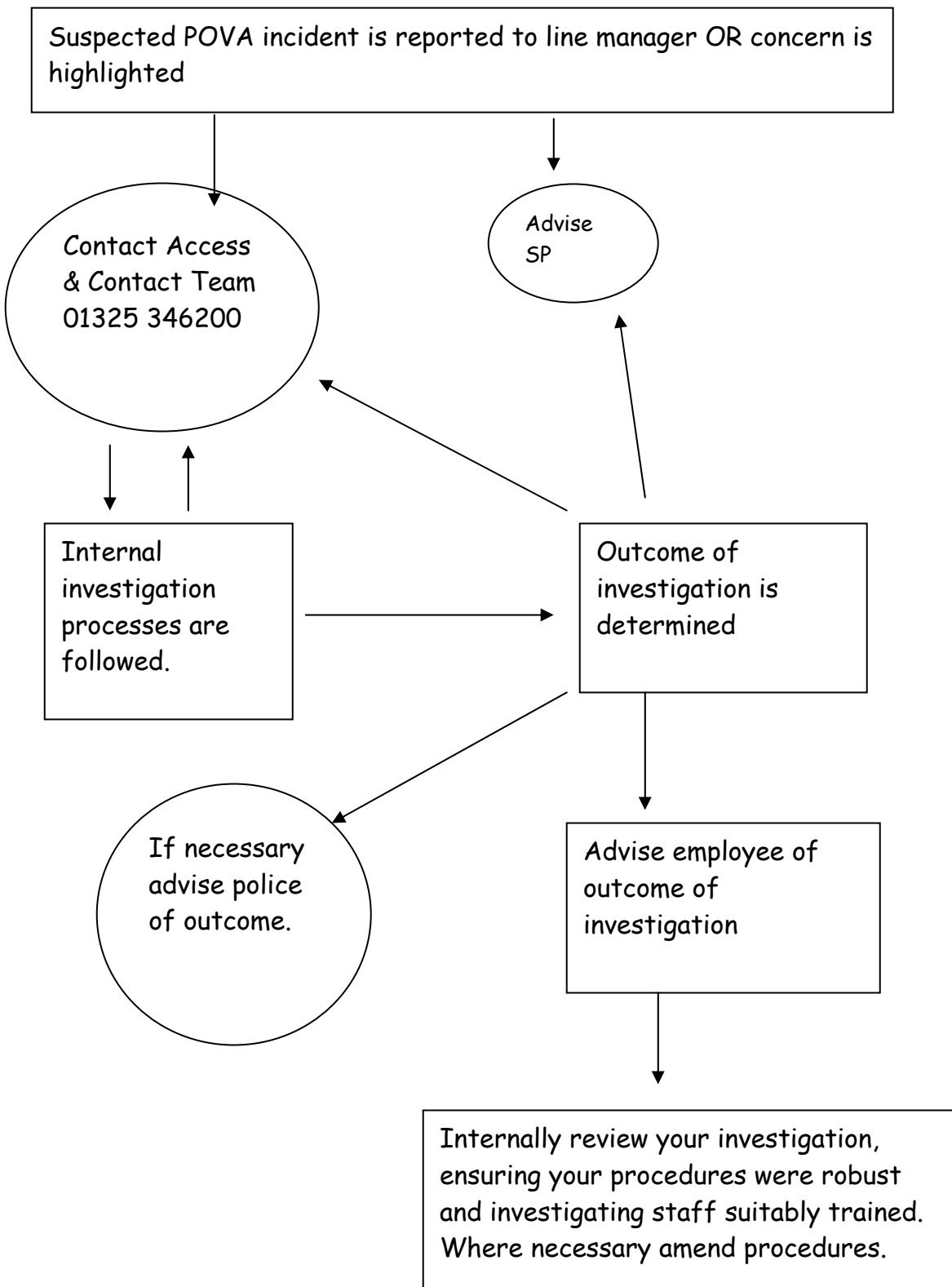
The Supporting people team would like all providers to include, in their procedures, that any concerns, once escalated to the scheme manager, are firstly discussed with Darlington Borough Council's Access and Contact Team **prior to any internal investigation being carried out**. They would then nominate an appropriate team manager who would work with you to determine the best course of action. This joined up working will ensure that Best Practice is always followed and would prevent any evidence being contaminated.

This would mean that as a provider you would be able to have your processes checked to ensure they are robust. At this time we cannot insist providers follow the above procedure, but we are hopeful that current government processes for recording those found guilty of a POVA offence in registered homes will be rolled out to those who work in supported living.

The new contract monitoring workbook which all providers are completing on a rolling programme asks about workforce suspensions, dismissals and reasons for them. In addition to this, we would like to be made aware if you have instigated any investigations into concerns over staff working practices, as from a contractual point of view we would not like to discover

at the point we monitor you that you have carried out an investigation, and due to mitigating circumstances, it was not carried out effectively.

The following flow chart gives an example of how the Supporting people team would like incidents to be reported and investigated:



If you would like any further information regarding the reporting procedures followed by Darlington Borough Council please contact the Access and Contact Team on 01325 346200