**Police Powers of Protection procedure**

Rationale

This guidance has been developed in order to ensure that there is a clear and consistent approach to managing cases whereby the police have exercised powers of protection in respect of a child or young person. It aims to outline the process for further decision making by Children’s Social Care and partner agencies.

Police Powers of protection

Police can exercise powers of protection if they have reasonable cause to believe that a child would otherwise be likely to suffer immediate significant harm.

The ‘Initiating’ Officer may: -

* Move the child to suitable accommodation and keep them there; or
* Take such steps as are reasonable to ensure that the child’s removal from any hospital, or other place, in which them then then being accommodated is prevented.

Police powers of protection are time limited to 72 hours

The responsibilities of the police

* Inform the local authority within whose area the child was found of the steps that have been, and are proposed to be, taken with respect to the child under this section and the reasons for taking them. Use working hour teams or Emergency Duty Team;
* Give details to the authority within whose area the child is ordinarily resident (“the appropriate authority”) of the place at which the child is being accommodated;
* Inform the child (where appropriate in line with level of understanding)

(i)of the steps that have been taken under this section and of the reasons for taking them; and

(ii)of the further steps that may be taken under this section.

The responsibilities of Children’s Social Care

If police power of protection is exercised outside of working hours, then EDT would hold a strategy discussion with police. In all circumstances whereby police powers are protection are considered or taken the service manager on call must be consulted. If a place of safety is required, then EDT and police will undertake all necessary enquiries to attempt to secure the child in a place of safety within their family network.

Upon being informed of police powers of protection being undertaken or the intention to do so, Children’s Social Care must hold a strategy meeting. All agencies involved with the child and family must be invited and share relevant information during working hours. Within the strategy meeting a plan of further action would be identified.

Achieving the best outcome for the child

If the outcome of the strategy meeting is that the child needs to be become/ remain Looked After by TFC then the Care and Legal Gateway Panel process must be followed. Consideration will need to be given to the legal status of the child and whether it is appropriate to seek Section 20 agreement from parents, apply to the court for an Interim Care Order/ Emergency Protection Order.

If once enquiries have been undertaken, it is deemed safe and appropriate for the child to return home, a follow up strategy meeting must be held and chaired by a strategic service manager to ensure multi agency decision making. Further assessment planning would need to be undertaken.