1. Introduction

1.1 This guideline describes the process to be followed in University Hospitals of Leicester (UHL) NHS Trust when a child leaves the hospital prior to medical discharge, with or without their carer. This includes children who "abscond" from a department.
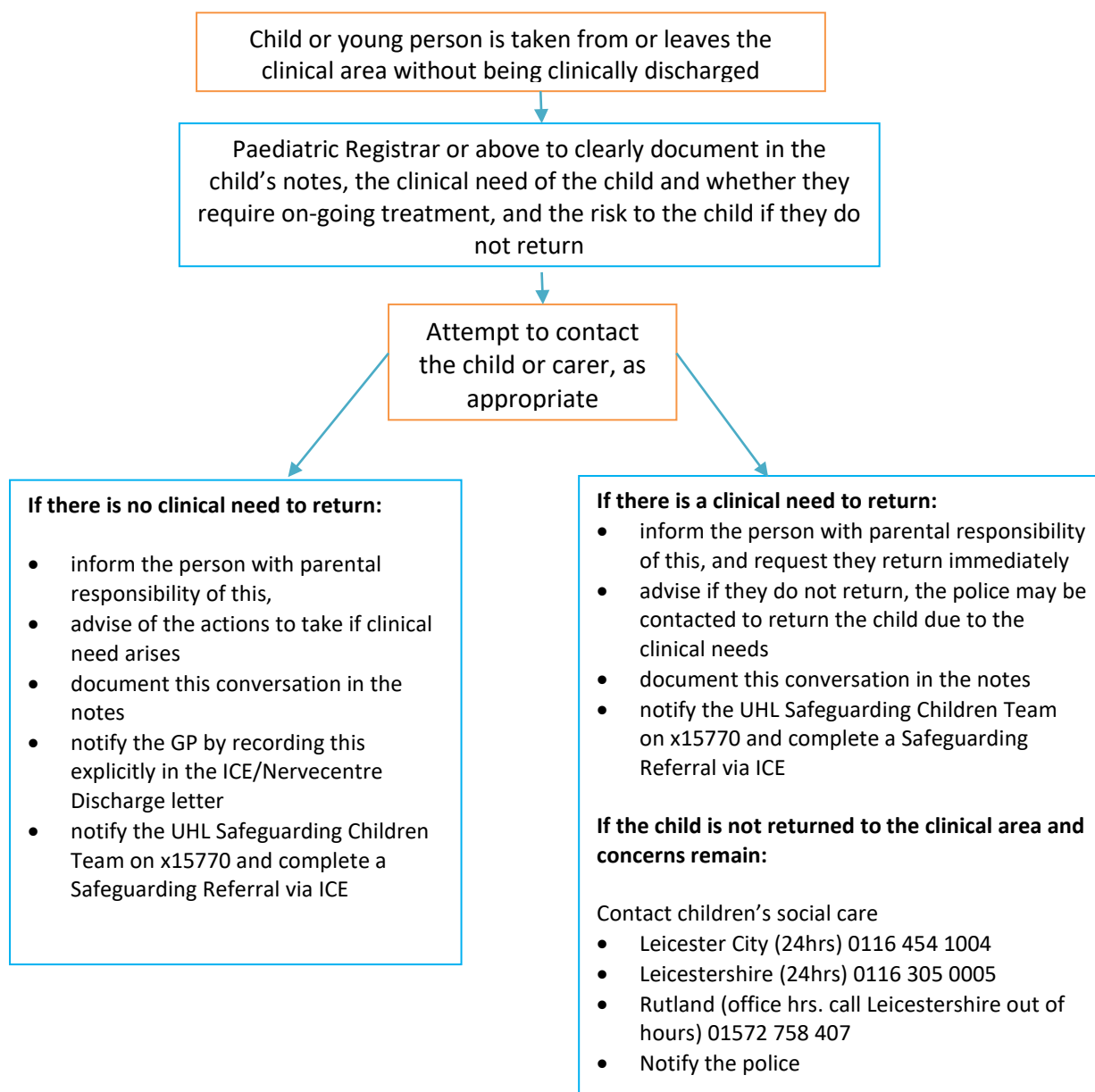
1.2 A child is defined by the Children Act (1989) as any person up to their 18th birthday.

2. Scope

All staff working within UHL

3. Recommendations, Standards and Procedural Statements

Managing Paediatric Patients Who Leave Hospital Prior to Medical Discharge

Child or young person is taken from or leaves the clinical area without being clinically discharged

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Paediatric Registrar or above to clearly document in the child's notes, the clinical need of the child and whether they require on-going treatment, and the risk to the child if they do not return

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Attempt to contact the child or carer, as appropriate

If there is no clinical need to return:

- inform the person with parental responsibility of this,
- advise of the actions to take if clinical need arises
- document this conversation in the notes
- notify the GP by recording this explicitly in the ICE/Nervecentre Discharge letter
- notify the UHL Safeguarding Children Team on x15770 and complete a Safeguarding Referral via ICE

If there is a clinical need to return:

- inform the person with parental responsibility of this, and request they return immediately
- advise if they do not return, the police may be contacted to return the child due to the clinical needs
- document this conversation in the notes
- notify the UHL Safeguarding Children Team on x15770 and complete a Safeguarding Referral via ICE

If the child is not returned to the clinical area and concerns remain:

Contact children's social care
- Leicester City (24hrs) 0116 454 1004
- Leicestershire (24hrs) 0116 305 0005
- Rutland (office hrs. call Leicestershire out of hours) 01572 758 407
- Notify the police

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3.1 On occasion a child or young person may be taken from or leave the hospital prior to being clinically discharged. This may be a young child with a parent or carer, or an older child on their own.

3.2 It is important to establish whether there are safeguarding or medical concerns regarding their departure.

3.3 The Quick Reference Guide for this guideline should be followed available on page 1 or as a standalone document on the Safeguarding Children Team webpages on InSite.

3.4 Refer to the Patients Who Self-Discharge in the Paediatric Emergency Medicine Department UHL Childrens Guideline

4. Education and Training

Training on this guidance is included within the UHL Safeguarding Children mandatory training programme accessed by all staff.

5. Monitoring and Audit Criteria

Key Performance Indicator	Method of Assessment	Frequency	Lead
Correct use of guideline	Audit	Annually	Lynn Cunningham

6. Supporting Documents and Key References

University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust Safeguarding Children Policy

7. Key Words

Safeguarding children, self-discharge

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This table is used to track the development and approval and dissemination of the document and any changes made on revised / reviewed versions

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