



Multi Agency Protocol for Children who present to the Children Emergency Department (CED) at Bristol Royal Hospital for Children (BRHC) who are medically fit but there is an unclear pathway for safe discharge



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Principles

- Agencies in Bristol work to the shared principle that the use of an acute hospital bed is not appropriate placement for a child or young person who does not require physical medical intervention.
- Agencies in Bristol commit to working together to enable a timely solution for the child by identifying an appropriate safe discharge destination and facilitating a safe discharge.
- As far as possible, agencies will attempt to avoid duplication in assessments and will coordinate resources to ensure a timely initial response, particularly if an incidence takes place out of hours.
- Bristol agencies recognise the importance of early involvement by Senior Management to ensure that resources and response are coordinated across complex services and to nominate a single point of contact known in this protocol as the Lead Case Manager for the agency.
- Where there is professional disagreement about the pathway required to meet a child's needs or the findings of an assessment, all agencies will take steps to resolve this in a timely and constructive way using the local escalation policy if required.

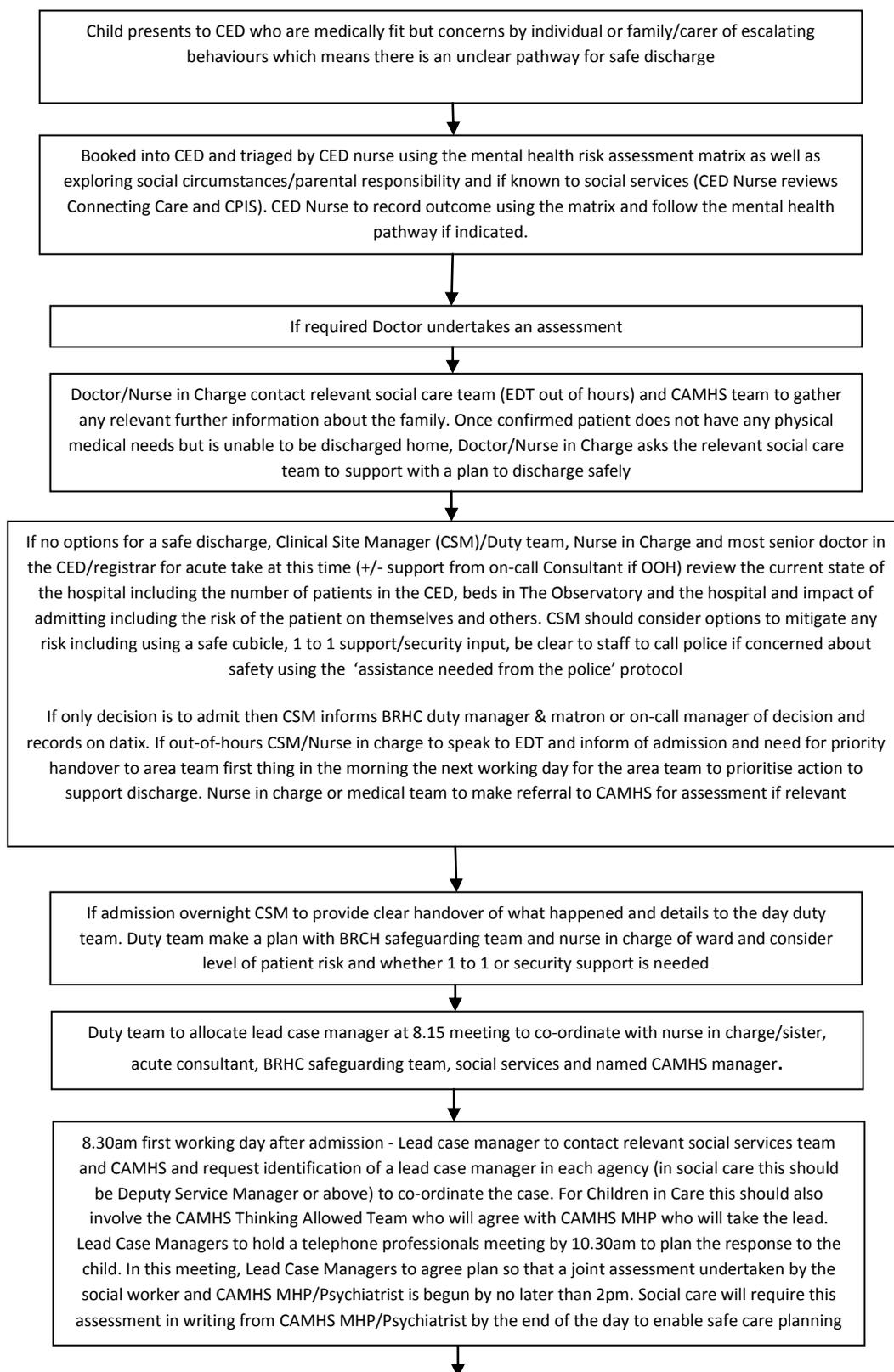
Overview

BRHC is not an agreed place of safety however there are times particularly out of hours when children and young people cannot be discharged safely as either their current place of residence is not suitable and/or there is no alternative place of residence for the young person to be discharged to. Often this situation also involves an assessment of the child or young person by the CAMHS service. Children who have experienced trauma, abuse and neglect may present at hospital with dysregulated, risk taking or self-injuring behaviours. For these children there can be professional disagreement about whether a mental health or safeguarding response is required to meet their needs. Often, even if the child does not have a mental health diagnosis, mental health services input or support is required to enable safe discharge and risk associated with the behaviour to be reduced. It is imperative that high-quality decisions are made by the agencies around children to ensure that children are not in acute hospital beds unnecessarily. This requires collaborative partnership working and multi-agency assessment which recognises competing pressures but ensures that the child's needs and safety is paramount.

Therefore if a child or young people presents to BRHC who is medically fit but there is an unclear pathway for safe discharge, all agencies recognise this as a situation requiring a multi-agency response and commit to work together in line with the following protocol.

Multi-agency Protocol

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