

Policy for temporary safety of victims

Context

Ascension Island currently has a population of approximately 800 (approximately 120 children). There is no resident population on Ascension Island and the population are all either in employment or here as a dependant of an employee. All employers on Ascension Island have a duty of care to their employees and to their dependants.

The Lucy Faithfull Report in 2013 identified "There are specific issues in terms of the employment and residential status of persons working on Ascension Island which are unlikely to change, but which have a profound effect upon safeguarding. The withdrawal of a work permit for persons convicted of serious criminal offences will result in their leaving the island, which is an additional and inevitable punishment. This, in the Reviewers' view, makes the disclosure of both sexual and domestic violence less likely, since the victims of both will be aware of the consequences of reporting, and this may well mask the true nature and incidence of both issues."

Reporting of domestic violence is difficult in any context. Statistics from SafeLives (2015) state that:

- On average victims experience 50 incidents of domestic abuse before getting effective help
- On average high-risk victims live with domestic abuse for 2.6 years before getting help
- Most victims – 85% - see on average 5 professionals in the year before they finally get effective support

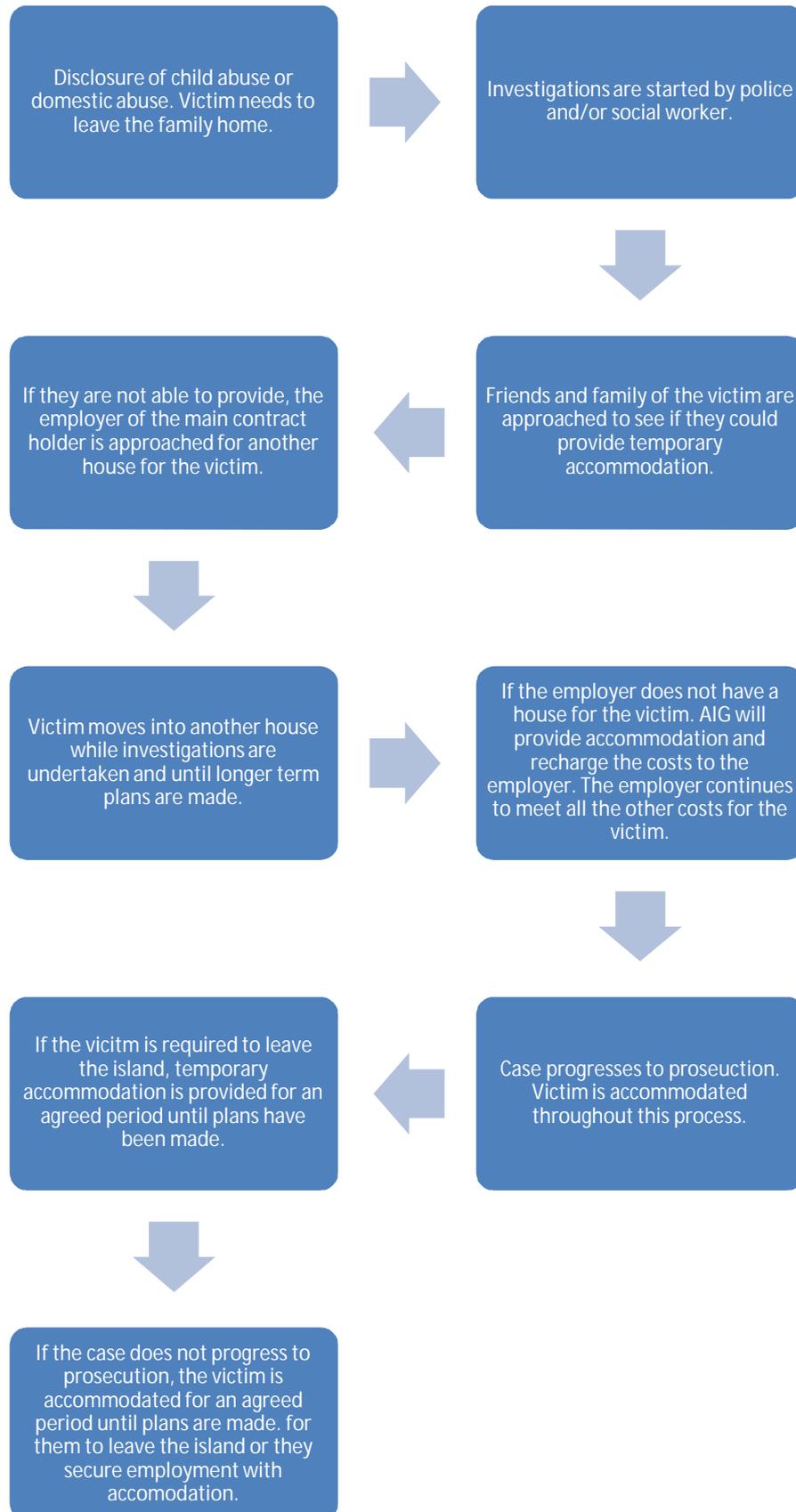
To help address some of the issue of under-reporting the AISCB would like to put in place a policy, along with all the employing organisations on the island, to help support victims who come forward. This will reassure people that disclosure of abuse does not mean immediate removal from Ascension and they can remain in accommodation outside of their family home while investigations and prosecutions are ongoing and further plans can be made.

Who will this policy apply to?

Anyone who discloses abuse, either child abuse or domestic abuse and needs to leave the family home while investigations are undertaken. This applies particularly to people who are on a household status contract or no contract and they need to be separated from the main contract holder who has accompanied status.

Temporary accommodation:

It is envisaged that the following procedure will be followed by all employing organisations.



Limitations of policy

It is recognised that any accommodation provided is not a “safe house” or “refuge” as would be recognised in the UK. Due to the small size of Ascension it is inevitable that the alleged perpetrator will become aware of where the victim is living. If required, orders to exclude the alleged perpetrator from the vicinity of the victim’s home should be applied for.

AIG cannot be expected to take on the full costs of all victims. While they *may* be able to provide temporary accommodation as a last resort, the employing organisation should still take responsibility for all costs, including but not exclusive to, subsistence/food allowance, amenities costs, health insurance/costs etc.

Time limits

It is recognised that temporary accommodation cannot be given for an unlimited period. Temporary accommodation must only be provided for an agreed time scale – until a case progresses to court or to allow the victim time to make appropriate arrangements to leave Ascension. The time for temporary accommodation must be made by agreement of all involved parties.