Appendix J
Planning an investigation - factors to consider

As part of the planning process you should establish:

- If you have a statutory obligation to investigate the complaint and, if so, whether there are any related requirements in conducting the investigation.

- Whether the investigation should be a formal evidence-based investigation, or an outcome-focused investigation, taking into account what is in the best interests of any children or young people involved, as well as any others who may be impacted by the process or its outcomes.

- Which of your organisation’s policies, procedures and practices are relevant to the complaint, and assess the person’s conduct against these? Also be alert to any gaps or weaknesses in your organisation’s policy or practice framework that should be remedied as a result of the investigation.

- What the relevant lines of inquiry will be, including whether there are witnesses (including children and young people) who will need to be interviewed?

- In what sequence investigation tasks should be carried out? For example, the subject of complaint is generally interviewed last, so that all relevant issues identified can be put to them.

- Whether the investigation should be undertaken internally or externally. It may be appropriate for an investigation to be conducted externally if, for example, you do not have sufficient resources within your organisation, the allegations are serious and involve senior staff, or the matters to be investigated require someone with legal and/or sufficient technical expertise that is not available within your organisation.

- Who the relevant decision-maker will be in relation to the investigation? Your organisation’s complaint-handling policy should detail the relevant decision-maker for particular types of investigations.

- Who should be appointed to investigate the complaint, bearing in mind the advice provided in Guideline 7 about avoiding any actual or perceived conflicts of interest, as well as ensuring the person has the requisite skills, experience, and capacity?

- The investigator does not necessarily have to be the person who conducts the interview with the child or young person.