

- Arrange a meeting to decide what will happen next. (This is called an Initial Child Protection Conference – there is another leaflet that explains about this.)
- If it is absolutely necessary at this stage and /or during the child protection process, seek legal advice and take legal action in order to protect your child.

### What are my rights as a parent?

You have the right to:-

- Be listened to
- Be treated with respect
- Be involved in what is happening and told about the decisions that are being made.
- Be told in writing about the outcome of the enquiry when it is over.
- Be able to complain if you feel that you were not treated fairly and have your complaint dealt with.

### Remember

- You are the most important person in your child's life.
- Your views and feelings will be heard and respected.
- There is a commitment from all Children's Agencies to help and support you at this difficult time.
- If you are able to work with people who are committed to help you, it is likely that your child will remain safe.

### Further helpful information is available from:

- A solicitor who works with children
- Your local Citizens Advice Bureau
- Family Rights Group (Advice Line)  
Tel: 0808 801 0366
- Children's Legal Centre (Child Law)  
Tel: 0808 802 000

### Complaints

If you have a complaint please contact your social worker and a complaints leaflet will be made available to you. Complaints should be made in writing to:

Customer Feedback and Complaints Officer – Children and Families Services, Customer Feedback and Complaints Team, Staffordshire County Council, 2 Staffordshire Place, Tipping Street, Stafford ST16 2DH

Contact Centre: 0300 111 8000  
[www.staffordshire.gov.uk](http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk)

**If you would like this document in another language of format, e.g. large text, please contact the Communications Team (Families First) on 01785 277135**

Leaflet updated: March 2017

# Child Protection Enquiries

## Information for Parents and Carers



## Why does Children's Social Care need to be involved?

If Children's Services is told by someone that your child may be suffering harm or may be at risk of suffering harm, the law says that they must look into the matter to ensure that your child is safe. They may receive information from a variety of places, indeed anyone can refer to Children's Services if they are worried about a child.

## What sort of harm?

Harm in these circumstances means child abuse or child mal-treatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by acting to cause harm or not acting to stop harm.

It is often described in one of these

ways:-

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect
- Any combination of these

Enquiries will also have to be made if a child is living with someone who has previously been involved in the abuse of another child.

## What is likely to happen?

- The social worker and/or police officer involved will tell you about the concerns that have been reported about your child. It may not be possible to tell you who reported these concerns.

- Where it has been suggested that someone has caused harm to your child/ren you are likely to be spoken to by a social worker and a police officer. The social worker and/or police officer will need to talk to your child alone and any other children in your household. These interviews may be video recorded. This is to make sure that your child/ren is/are not questioned too many times.
- The video is then stored in a safe place by the police officer.
- You will be asked to give permission for the interview to take place, however if you do not give permission and your child is at risk of harm the social worker and police officer may still do this without your permission. The social worker will discuss this with you at the time.
- If you are able to talk openly with the people involved about the concerns the best decisions will be made for your child.

## What else might happen?

- Sometimes it may be necessary for a doctor to see your child. This will normally be a doctor who has a lot of experience of working with children.
- If there are other children in the family they may also need to be seen in order to make sure that they are alright.
- You will be asked for your permission before your child is seen by a doctor (although if your child is old enough to understand what is happening they can give permission themselves).

## Will my child/ren be taken away from me?

- In the vast majority of reported child abuse cases it will be assessed that it is in the child's best interest for them to remain at home with their families.
- Children's Services have to consider the safety and welfare of your child above all else, but they also have a responsibility to try to enable families to stay together.
- Sometimes agreement is reached for children to stay with their extended family for a short time while enquiries are made.
- If Children's Social Care believes it necessary, they can apply to the Court to protect your child if he/she is in danger of significant harm.
- If the Police believe that your child is in immediate danger they can take your child to a safe place for up to 72 hours. A safe place may include a family member, a family friend, a foster carer or sometimes hospital.

## After the child protection enquiry – what happens next?

Children's Services may do one or more of the

following:-

- Take no further action.
- Offer you advice and help. This may happen in a range of ways