

A Guide for Parents and Carers



The Child Protection Process



Sharing Information

If there are concerns about your child's welfare, professionals will normally ask for your permission before gathering information from others. If your child is old enough, they will also ask their permission. However, it is important to remember that professionals can share information about your child without your permission if they believe that he or she is at risk of suffering significant harm.

Introduction

This booklet has been written to give you more information about what happens if there is a child protection investigation involving your child or children.

We explain how social workers and other professionals will gather information about your child and family and use this to make an assessment of your child's well-being.

We explain what will happen next, if your child is assessed as being at continued risk of significant harm.

1. Gathering information

When concerns have been raised about your child by professionals or by a member of the public, it is a social worker's job to gather information to see whether or not your child's welfare is being harmed.

The social worker will start by trying to talk to you and your family. In the vast majority of cases, they will visit you at home (sometimes with a police officer) to:

- Make sure you understand the concerns that have been raised and ask for your views
- Speak to your child or children on their own (if they are old enough) to get their views and assess any immediate risk to their safety
- Ask for permission, if needed, to gather more information from the other professionals who know your child, if permission has not been given already. This helps the social worker to build a picture of your child's needs.

If the social worker feels that your child is at risk of significant harm they do not need your permission to gather more information.

2. Assessing your child's needs

The social worker will use the information that they gather to make an initial assessment of your child's needs, in line with government guidance.

If it is thought that a crime may have been committed, the police will be involved. Haringey social workers work jointly with the police Child Abuse Investigation Team. This is made up of officers who have had special training to work with children and families and they do not wear uniforms. Government guidance and childcare law state that the police must be involved when there are concerns that an offence has taken place against a child.

If their assessment is that your child does not need additional support, no further action will be taken. This can happen when no evidence is found to support the concerns that have been reported.

If their assessment is that you or your child would benefit from extra support, you will be encouraged to access support services that can help.

If their assessment is that your child is at risk of **significant** harm there will be a child protection investigation.

3. The Child Protection Investigation

A 'strategy meeting' or discussion involving social workers, the police and, where appropriate, other workers such as health professionals who know your child, will decide how to investigate the concerns that have been reported and how best to protect your child.

If it is believed that your child has been injured or is in need of medical treatment, experienced doctors will need to do an examination. In most situations, you can come to the hospital with your child.

Your child may have an interview with a social worker and a police officer that is videoed. He or she will be encouraged to tell the interviewers what has happened to them in their own words. This interview is relaxed and takes place in a specially designed room. It is videoed to limit the number of times your child has to speak to professionals.

If you do not wish to give your permission for an interview or a medical examination, the social workers must seek legal advice.

What if I am accused of harming my child?

The social workers and the police will consider whether your child, or children, are still at risk. If it is believed that you may have committed an offence you will be formally interviewed by the police. Your rights will be explained to you, and you have the right to seek legal advice.

Will my child be taken away?

In certain circumstances, if it is felt that your child is in immediate danger, the social worker will apply to the Court for an Emergency Protection Order. Your child may then live temporarily away from you whilst the investigation is completed. You will be informed of any legal action and you have the right to legal advice.

Most Child Protection investigations are carried out whilst children remain at home. Social workers work with you to ensure that your children are safe and protected from further harm.

Will I be kept informed?

Your social worker will tell you what is going on and consult with you about your child all through the investigation. They will be open

with you at all times unless this would put your child in danger. Throughout the investigation you can ask your social worker to explain the procedure and they will answer any of your questions.

You are entitled to seek independent or legal advice at any time during the investigation. You have the right to read the social worker's record of your child and family. Please ask your social worker about this.

4. The Child Protection Conference

At the end of the investigation it may be decided that there is a need to hold a child protection conference to which you will usually be invited. The purpose of the conference is to:

- Share the information that has been gathered
- Make a decision about whether your child is at continuing risk of significant harm and therefore, in need of protection
- Agree an outline child protection plan that sets out the actions necessary to reduce the risk to your child.

All the professionals who work with your child will be invited to the conference. It will be chaired by a Child Protection Advisor, whose job it is to make sure that everyone gets a chance to contribute their views.

It is really important that you give your views to the conference as they will be central to the decisions that are made. In order to help you with this:

- The social worker will show you the report they have written. This will give you a chance to think about what you might want to say.
- You can bring someone to the conference to support you if you think it would help. This person is normally called an 'advocate'.
- You can talk to the Child Protection Advisor before the conference and make sure they know what you want to say.
- You should tell the social worker if you need an interpreter to be there or if you have any special needs so that arrangements can be made beforehand.

5. The Child Protection Plan

Those present at the conference will design a plan to protect your child and provide help and support for your family. This plan is then developed further and worked on by a **core group** of involved professionals and family members.

The first Core Group meeting should take place within 10 working days of the conference.

Three months after the conference a Review Conference will be held to look at what progress has been made in implementing the plan.

Further review conferences will be held as necessary at six month intervals.

6. Complaints, Comments and Compliments

Haringey Local Safeguarding Children Board is committed to ensuring that families going through the child protection process have access to information and support and are treated with consideration and respect. If you have any comments or suggestions about how we can improve our practice we would like to hear from you.

If you are not happy with the way in which you or your child has been treated then you can complain. You can get information and leaflets from all council offices about the complaints procedure.

If you want to complain about the person who chaired the conference or any decisions made at the conference, you should write to:

Head of Service, Quality Assurance, Child Protection and Review,
48 Station Road, London N22 7TY

The **Local Safeguarding Children Board** is made up of senior officers from all the statutory agencies in Haringey with a role to play in keeping children safe. It has a duty to ensure that the work we all do to safeguard children is well-coordinated and effective.

Shqip

Kjo fletushkë ju jep informata mbi procesin që do të jenë të inkuadruar. Nëse fëmija juaj referohet për helim mbrojtjeje femiash. Nëse e dani këtë të përkthyer në ndonjë gjuhë tjetër, ju lutem plotëson formularin dhe na e dërgoni.

Polski

Ninie sza publikacja informuje rodziców o procedurze postępowania w którą będą zaangażowani w razie, jeśli ich dziecko objęte zostanie dochodzeniem w ramach ochrony dzieci zagrożonych przemocą. Aby uzyskać kopię publikacji w języku polskim należy wypełnić formularz przesyłając na nasz adres

Français

Cette brochure vous donne des informations sur le processus dans lequel vous serez impliqué si une enquête de protection de l'enfance est demandée pour votre enfant. Pour en obtenir une traduction dans une autre langue, veuillez compléter et nous retourner le coupon.

Soomaali

Buugyarani waxuu ku si hayaa macluumaad ku saabsan nidaamka aad ku lug yeelan doorto, haddii ilmahaaga loo soo gudbiyo baadhitaanka ilaalinta ilmaha. Haddii aad rabto in laguugu tarjumo luqaddaada, fadlan buuxi formka oo non soo celi.

Kurdî Kurmancî

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Türkçe

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