**Basic Child Protection Information**

Definition of Significant Harm:

The Children Act 1989 was the first piece of legislation that gave children the right to be protected from abuse and exploitation and the right to enquiries to safeguard their welfare. This is the key piece of legislation used today, although there have been some variations and other legislation for specific areas of social care intervention.

Under s.31(9) Children Act 1989

“harm” means ill treatment or the impairment of health or development;

“development” means physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development;

“health” means physical or mental health; and

“ill-treatment” includes sexual abuse and forms of ill treatment which are not physical.

Under s.31(10) Children Act 1989

Where the question of whether harm suffered by a child is significant turns on the child’s health and development, his health or development shall be compared with that which would be reasonably be expected of a similar child.

*(Children Act 1989:* [*http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents*](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents) *)*

Under s.17(1) every local authority has a duty:

1. To safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their area who are in need; and
2. So far as is consistent with that duty, to promote the upbringing of such children by their families,

By providing a range and level of services appropriate to those children’s needs.

Under s.47(9) Where the local authority are conducting enquiries under this section, it shall be the duty of any person mentioned is subsection (11) to assist them with those enquiries (in particular by providing relevant information and advice) if called upon by the authority to do so (unless under subsection 10 it would be unreasonable under all the circumstances of the case). The persons are- any local authority; any housing authority; any local education authority; any health authority;Primary Care Trust or any National Health Trust; and any person authorised by the Secretary of State for the purposes of this section.

Section 47(1) where a local authority-

1. Are informed that a child who lives, or is found, in their area-
2. Is the subject of any emergency protection order; or
3. Is in police protection; or
4. Have reasonable cause to suspect that a child who lives, or is found in their area is suffering, or is likely to suffer significant harm,

The authority shall make, or cause to be made, such enquiries as they consider necessary to enable them to decide whether they should take any action to promote the child’s welfare.

Category’s of child abuse / Child Protection Plan:

Neglect, Physical, Emotional, Sexual

**Emotional Harm**

The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child’s emotional development

It may:

* involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person
* involve not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or ‘making fun’ of what they say or how they communicate
* feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child’s developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction
* involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another
* involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

**Neglect**

The persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child’s health or development.

Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse

Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

* provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
* protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
* ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or
* ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child’s basic emotional needs.

**Physical Harm**

A form of abuse which may involve; hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child

Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

**Sexual Harm**

Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening

The activities may:

* involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing
* also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet)

Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.