

Information for parents and carers where there are child protection concerns (also known as Section 47 Investigations)

Child protection concerns cover a range of issues about the physical, sexual or emotional abuse or neglect of children. Individuals must tell Children's Social Care or the police if they are worried about the welfare or safety of a child. When a professional contacts Children's Social Care or the police they will usually tell you what they are doing. However in certain cases they are not allowed to (for example where a criminal matter may need to be investigated by the police).

Child Protection Enquiries

Social workers will gather as much information as they can about your child/children and your family. They will talk to professionals who know your child/children such as your doctor, health visitor, teachers and school nurse.

The social worker will talk to you about this information and discuss what the risks appear to be for your child/children. The social worker will want to hear from you as parents/carers and (where appropriate) other family members. They will want to talk to your child/children on their own and in private; and they will want to look around your home.

If the social worker needs more information they will continue with their enquiries and may visit you more than once.

Seeing a doctor

It may be necessary for your child/children to be seen by a specially trained doctor. The social worker will discuss this with you.

Why do the police get involved?

The police may visit you with the social worker if they believe a crime may have been committed. They may want to speak with and possibly interview the child/children.

Information sharing

Where there are concerns about a child's safety and wellbeing, professionals must share information about the child and family with other professionals who are involved with the welfare of the child.

What happens next?

We are committed to keeping you informed about what is happening.

If there are no concerns, the social worker will not need to see you again.

If there are some concerns, the social worker can arrange a **Child In Need** (CIN) meeting to discuss what will help and support you and your child/children. You will be invited to this meeting and your social worker will want you and your family to be involved at this meeting.

If there are serious concerns, the social worker or other professional will arrange a **Child Protection Conference**. You will be invited to this meeting and your social worker will want you (and your family) to be involved in this.

Will my children be taken into care?

In most cases your children will NOT be taken into care. Sheffield Children's Services believe that children should grow up with their own family wherever possible, and we can offer help and support with this if required.

If your child/children are in immediate **danger** of serious harm they can be taken to a safe place, which with your agreement can be with another family member or alternative care. We

would discuss this with you however there may be times when we need to apply to the court in order to protect your children. Sometimes, we would request that another family member moves out of the home, in order that the children can remain at home safely.

Social workers cannot remove your children from you without permission from the court.

Your and your children's rights

You are entitled to:

- be asked for your views, to be listened to and to have what you say recorded (written down)
- be told what is happening and what is going to happen next
- have all decisions clearly explained and recorded
- be treated with respect
- ask for support from someone you chose
- seek legal advice
- an interpreter if necessary

Your child/children are entitled to:

- be protected from harm
- be listened to and taken seriously
- be told what is happening
- refuse to have a medical examination (if they are old enough to understand)
- to ask for support
- make a complaint

Useful Information:

Social worker name.....

Mobile no.....Office no.....

Notes.....

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Legal Context

Section 47 Enquiries (Child Protection Enquiries) refer to Section 47 of the Children Act 1989. Children's Social Care Services have the statutory duty to make enquiries when the circumstances defined in Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 exist. See www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents

Independent Advice and Support

You can seek legal advice if you wish to do so; and the following organisations provide advice:

Family Rights Group

Free, confidential advice for families whose children are involved with, or require, local authority services because of welfare needs or concerns.

Freephone Helpline Number 0808 801 0366

www.frg.org.uk

Parentline Plus

Free help and support for families in all aspects of family life.

Phone: 0808 800 2222

www.familylives.org.uk

For leaflets in alternative formats please ask your social worker.