

# CHILD PROTECTION ENQUIRY

Information for Parents, Carers and Families

Newcastle Children's Social Care



# WHAT IS A CHILD PROTECTION ENQUIRY?



Children's Social Care (CSC) has a legal duty to make sure that all children in the city are safe and protected. This means carrying out a child protection enquiry to look into any claims that a child is being harmed or neglected. When the enquiry is finished, a decision is made about whether or not the child needs a child protection plan to help keep them safe from harm.

## WHAT IS HARM?

Harm to a child can include:

- **Neglect** not caring for a child and not providing adequate food, clothing etc.
- **Physical abuse** physical punishment that causes injury.
- **Sexual abuse** involving a child in sexual activities.
- **Emotional abuse** not providing warmth and love.

All these forms of harm can affect children's development and stop them from doing well in later life.

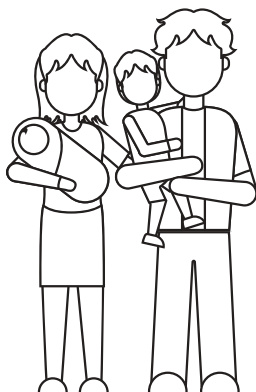


# WHO CARRIES OUT THE CHILD PROTECTION ENQUIRY?



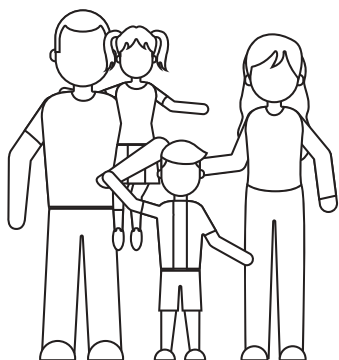
The child protection enquiry is carried out by a Social Worker, but they will need to get information from other professionals who know you and your family, such as your health visitor, your GP and your child's teacher. These are called agency checks.

Although it is legal for us to ask for information about your family from other agencies without your permission, we will normally let you know that we are doing this before we talk to other professionals, unless we think that this would place your child at more risk.



# WHAT HAPPENS DURING THE ENQUIRY?

The social worker will visit you at home to talk to you about the concerns, and ask you and your family questions. The social worker will also need to see your child, and may ask to speak to them alone, if they are old enough. Normally, we would ask your permission to do this, but if your child is at serious risk of harm, we may need to speak to them alone without your permission.

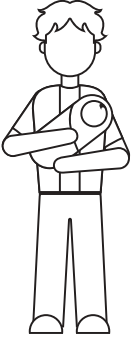


If someone has committed a crime against your child, for example, an assault, a police officer may be involved in the enquiry and we may ask for your permission to interview your child on video. This is to allow the police to get evidence for court. You may go with your child to the interview, but you won't be able to sit with them while they are being interviewed.

Sometimes, we may ask you to agree to your child being examined by a doctor so we can find out if your child has any injuries, and how the injuries happened. We will always ask for your permission first, but if you don't agree, we may have to take legal advice.

During the enquiry, your social worker will always keep you informed about how things are progressing and what will happen next.

## CONSENT



If there are concerns your child/ren has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm, (Section 47, Children Act 1989), your consent is not needed as CSC are legally required to undertake an assessment. However, we will normally talk to you about the information we are gathering and who we will be speaking to - unless we think that this would place your child at more risk.

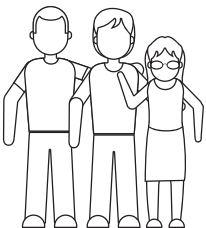
## HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE?

A social worker has a maximum of 15 working days to complete the Child Protection Enquiry. There is a review point at 5 days where a decision will be made as to whether an initial child protection conference is needed.

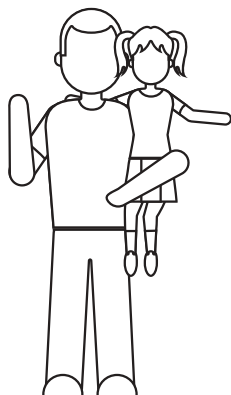


## WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE ENQUIRY?

When the social worker has gathered all the information, they will discuss the findings with their manager and decide what action to take next. The investigation may show that your child is not being harmed or neglected, and CSC will take no further action. However, if your child needs services and support to achieve good outcomes or your family needs extra support to help with parenting, CSC may offer you a child in need service or refer you to Newcastle's Early Help Offer. If the investigation shows that your child is being harmed or neglected, or is at risk of harm, CSC may decide to hold a formal meeting called an initial child protection conference.



# WHAT IF MY CHILD ISN'T SAFE AT HOME?



The vast majority of children who are referred to CSC because of child protection concerns will remain at home with their parents. Very rarely, if we are really worried about a child being at risk at home, we may have to take further action to protect them.

If we think it is not safe for your child at home, your social worker will talk to you about what options there are to keep them safe. This may involve:

- someone who is living in your home moving out because it is thought they are a risk to your child
- a friend or relative moving into your home to help you to look after your child
- your child going to stay with family or friends, who have been approved by CSC
- if there is no-one that your child can stay with, your child may go to live with a foster carer or foster family.

These are all temporary arrangements to make sure your child is protected while we work with you to make sure it is safe for your child to live at home



# WHERE WILL MY INFORMATION BE KEPT?

When your child/ren are open to CSC, information that is collected about you and your family will be recorded onto the recording system. This will be saved in line with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018.

CSC are allowed to share this information with other services such as the Police but ONLY for very specific reasons, such as to protect a child from significant harm or to prevent a crime.

You can request to see the information we hold about you and your children at any time.

Your Social Worker:

How to contact them:

Useful contact numbers

Initial Response Service (IRS) - 0191 277 2500

Long Term Service - 0191 211 5485

Children in Care & Care Leavers - 0191 278 2700

Children with Disabilities - 0191 277 4700

Children's Safeguarding and Care Standards (IRO Office) - 0191 277 4636

