



Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership

Child Protection Concerns

Information for Parents and Carers

Child Protection Concerns

This leaflet aims to help you understand what happens if social workers are worried about the care of a child and are carrying out an enquiry to make sure that the child is safe.

Child protection enquiries (also called Section 47 enquiries) have to be started when someone believes a child is either suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm.

If an enquiry is under way about your child, or a child you care for, you are bound to find this a very difficult and upsetting time.

Concerns might be:

- A child may be deliberately injured or their parent/carers may fail to protect them from an injury.
- Parents/carers may not be meeting a child's essential needs for food, hygiene, clothing or medical care.
- Parents/carers may be leaving a child without proper supervision.
- A child may be subject to sexual abuse or exploitation.
- A child may be affected by seeing or hearing domestic abuse.
- Parents/carers may not be meeting a child's emotional needs.

By law, the Local Authority Children and Young People's Service (CYPS) must investigate whether a child is safe whenever a report is made that he or she might not be.

If they have any reason to believe that your child is at risk from any form of abuse, they must make checks.

The law also says that CYPS must work with parents and carers and keep them involved with what is happening.

Checks

CYPS will check information from the people who have contact with your family e.g. school, doctor, health visitor/school nurse, police. In some situations, a doctor will examine your child to check for any signs of harm.

The home visit will:

- Collect more information.
- Find out about the needs of your child.
- Get your views on the situation.
- Speak to your child.
- Explore family networks.
- Let you know what will happen next to ensure your child can be kept safe.

This may mean that a social worker will need to speak to other members of your family.

Speaking to your Child

It will usually be necessary for a social worker to speak with your child on their own. The social worker is trained to do this sensitively and will try to make sure the meeting takes place somewhere that your child feels safe, perhaps at school or at home. Sometimes they may need to speak with your child as part of a formal, videoed interview, undertaken jointly with the police. This interview may be used as evidence, if the police believe a crime has been committed.

What happens next?

All the information will be collected and a decision made on whether any further action is necessary. Parents/carers and your child will be informed. Where no further action is needed agencies will offer help or advice.

If the child protection enquiries show that your child may need protection, a meeting called a **Child Protection Conference** will be arranged by CYPS.

Parents and children, depending on their age, will be invited along with other people such as a social worker, health visitor, doctor, police officer or a school teacher.

Please see our information sheet called 'Child Protection Conferences'.

Contact Numbers

Customer First: Tel: 0808 800 4005 (24hr service)