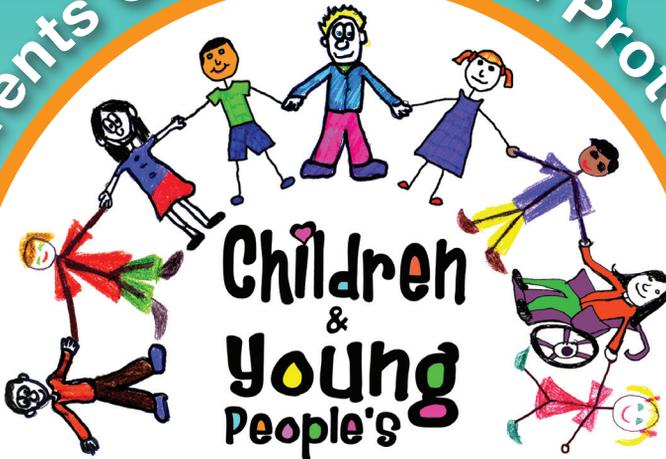




North

Yorkshire County Council

A Parents' Guide to Child Protection



S E R V I C E
S O C I A L C A R E

in North Yorkshire

www.northyorks.gov.uk

Introduction

If your family has been referred to Children's Social Care because of child protection concerns, this leaflet will explain what will happen next.

We understand you may be worried, angry or upset, but Children's Social Care want to work with you to help you keep your child safe from harm.

If you have questions that are not answered in this leaflet, or there is anything you don't understand, the social worker will be able to help you.

Why have I been referred?

Sometimes a health visitor, school, another organisation, or a member of the public may contact us because they are worried that a child is being harmed or neglected. This is called a referral.

We have to make enquiries into concerns raised and make sure your child is safe. We will always tell you who has referred your family, unless the person is a member of the public who has asked not to be named.

The child protection enquiry

What is a child protection enquiry?

Children's Social Care has a legal duty to make sure that all children in North Yorkshire are safe and protected. This means carrying out a child protection enquiry to look into any concerns that a child is being harmed or neglected. When the enquiry is finished, a decision is made about what actions need to be taken next. This may lead to the holding of a Child Protection Conference, which you are likely to be invited to.

Who carries out the child protection enquiry?

The child protection enquiry is carried out by a social worker, working closely with the police, where there is concern a crime may have been committed. 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. We will ask for your permission before we talk to other professionals, unless we think that this would place the child at more risk.

What happens during the enquiry?

A 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 will 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.

A police officer is involved in the enquiry and we may ask your permission to interview your child on video, to allow evidence to be gathered 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 your permission first, but if you don't agree, we may need to take legal advice to ensure your child is well.

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

What happens after the enquiry?

When the social worker has gathered all the information, he or she 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 Children's Social Care will take no further action. However, if you feel you need extra support to care for your child, we may be able to provide help.

If the investigation shows that your child may be being harmed or neglected, or is at risk of harm, Children's Social Care may decide to hold a formal meeting called an initial child protection conference.

What is an initial child protection conference?

This is a formal meeting where parents, the social worker and other professionals who know the family get together to discuss the concerns and decide what can be done to keep your child safe from harm. If such a meeting is to take place, you are likely to be invited and given a leaflet explaining the process in detail.

What if my child isn't safe at home?

The vast majority of children who are referred to Children's Social Care because of child protection concerns will remain living at home with their parents. If Children's Social Care are really worried about a child being at risk at home, we may take further action to protect them.

If we think it is not safe for your child at home, the social worker will talk to you about what options there are to keep 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 Children's Social Care
- Your child going to live with an approved foster carer.

These are all temporary arrangements to make sure your child is safe and protected while we work with you to make sure it is safe for your child to live at home, or we decide that your child cannot return home at this time.

Complaints

If you are not happy with the way Children's Social Care have carried out the child protection enquiry you can make a complaint through our complaints procedure. A leaflet is enclosed in the Information Wallet.

All of this information is available to download on the website of the North Yorkshire LSCB – the multi agency group established to set up and monitor child protection policy and procedure in the county.

www.safeguardingchildren.co.uk

Contact us

**North Yorkshire County Council, County Hall, Northallerton,
North Yorkshire, DL7 8AD**

Our Customer Service Centre (social care enquiries) is open Monday to Friday
8.00am - 5.30pm, Saturday 9.00am - 5.00pm.

Tel: **0845 034 9410** email: **social.care@northyorks.gov.uk**

Or visit our website at: **www.northyorks.gov.uk**

If you would like this information in another language or format
such as Braille, large print or audio, please ask us.

Tel: 01609 532917 Email: communications@northyorks.gov.uk

