

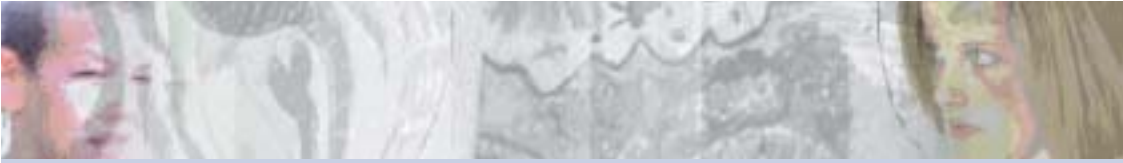
DURHAM LOCAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD

# The Child Protection Enquiry

Information for  
**Parents and Carers**

**Durham**  
Local Safeguarding Children Board





**This leaflet has been produced to help you understand the Child Protection process.**

**You should consult your solicitor if you require independent legal advice or information concerning your legal rights.**

- If you need this information summarised in another language or format such as Braille or talking tape please call (0191) 383 3305
- If English is not your first language, you may ask the social worker to arrange for an interpreter to explain the contents of this leaflet.
- This leaflet may also be produced in large print.
- If you have difficulty reading, the social worker can also arrange for someone to help you understand.



## The Child Protection Enquiry

If you have been given a copy of this leaflet you will have seen a social worker and possibly a police officer due to concerns about your child.

In order to help protect your child, it is important that you are fully involved in any enquiry. You will need to be told exactly what the concerns are so that you are clearly informed and can co-operate with the agencies involved in the enquiry.

If there is anything you do not understand you must ask for it to be explained more fully. Every attempt will be made to make things clear.

The focus of the work of the investigation team will be the safeguarding of your child. **The welfare of children will always come first.**



## The various stages of a Child Protection Enquiry

When concerns about the safety or well-being of a child are reported to the police or Durham County Council's Safeguarding and Specialist Services, these must be investigated.

### **IMMEDIATE PROTECTION FROM DANGER**

**Very occasionally information is received, or a child is found to be in such serious danger that it is necessary to immediately protect the child from harm.**

#### **STAGE 1**

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##### **Initial Checks**

Checks are made with other professionals to find out more about you and your family. For example, the school, health visitor or doctor may be asked for information. This may seem intrusive, but it is necessary to talk to people who know your child because important decisions about their welfare and safety will need to be made. Your consent may be asked for, in order to initiate the checks. If you do not give consent, the enquiry may still continue, if it is thought that your child is at risk of harm.

#### **STAGE 2**

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##### **Strategy Meeting**

Once the social worker and police officer (if one is involved) have completed their initial enquiry they will meet with a manager from Safeguarding and Specialist Services and



other professionals who know your family. The purpose of the meeting is to share information and decide what further action is necessary. It is then decided if and how the enquiry will proceed. The meeting will also decide:

- who will be seen and by whom
- when and how children will be seen
- whether there is a need to clarify or obtain other information
- whether a medical diagnosis or examination of the child is necessary

You will be talked to following the strategy meeting and you may be asked to give your consent for your child to be talked to.

Only on rare occasions would action be taken, or children seen without the knowledge of their parents or carers. This action would only be taken if it were seen to be in the child's best interest, in which case strict procedures would be followed.

### **STAGE 3**

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#### **Visiting the Family**

A social worker and possibly a plain clothes police officer will visit you to introduce themselves and explain the details of the concerns that have been raised.

If information suggests that your child has been physically harmed you may be asked for permission to have your child seen by a paediatrician (a doctor that specialises in the medical care and treatment of children). The paediatrician is also experienced in diagnosis of the cause of injuries and can help to understand the possible causes. Any child over



16 can give consent to an examination. A child younger than 16 can consent if it is felt that he/she understands what this means. You will be asked for consent; if this is refused legal advice may be sought by Safeguarding and Specialist Services, to find a way forward.

The social worker or police officer may talk to you about the most suitable way to interview your child. They may ask to see your child on their own. All attempts would be made to ensure that your child is not distressed by such action.

In some situations a criminal offence against a child may have taken place which could result in court action. If it is felt that a child may have to give evidence against an adult, the child may be asked to be interviewed on video. Your child would need to be willing for this to take place.

## **STAGE 4**

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### **Decision Making**

At the end of the enquiry the social worker or police officer (if involved) and a manager from Safeguarding and Specialist Services will decide whether there are any remaining child protection concerns. If there are, you will be invited to a child protection conference to discuss these.

You can obtain more information in our leaflet

**'CHILD PROTECTION CONFERENCES'**  
**'Information for Parents and Carers'**



### **If you are unhappy with the service you have received**

Several agencies are involved with child protection including Police, Health, Education and Safeguarding and Specialist Services.

If you wish to complain about the behaviour or attitude of a particular officer, it is important that you discuss your concerns with the agency which employs that person.

Some decisions are the responsibility of more than one agency, for example at a child protection conference, several agencies may agree to make a Child Protection Plan, in order to keep your child safe.

**Social Workers name:** .....

**Contact Number:** .....

**Address:** .....

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[www.durham-lscb.gov.uk](http://www.durham-lscb.gov.uk)

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