

The Referral Process to Social Care



The local authority (Children's Social Care) must take all reports (or Referrals) seriously.

This summarises the procedures that will be followed.

Stage 1 – Referral/Single Assessment

Within one working day of a referral being received, having collected some key information about the concern or allegation, a Local Authority Service Manager will make a decision about whether the referral criteria are met and the type of response that is required. This will include determining whether the concerns and needs are:

- **Low level needs** where individual services and universal service are able to address the child's needs;
- **Emerging needs** where a range of early help services are required co-ordinated through an early help assessment;
- **Complex or serious needs** where assessment and help is likely to be required as a child in need (section 17 of the Children Act 1989) or that they require accommodation (section 20 Children Act 1989);
- **Child protection concerns** where a child requires immediate protection and urgent action because there is reasonable cause to suspect that the child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm, and enquiries are to be made and the child assessed under section 47 of the Children Act (1989). This may include consideration about whether a child can safely remain at home.

All Referrals will be considered by a Social Worker in Children's Services, and a Single Assessment may be conducted.

It may be necessary to take immediate action to protect you or the child(ren) involved, in the extreme, this can result in children being temporarily cared for by a Foster Carer. If this happens to you and your brothers and sisters, you'll usually be cared for by the same foster carers.



Stage 2 - Strategy Discussion

If it looks like abuse has happened or might happen, the social workers and others, like teachers or the Police, will hold a meeting called a Strategy Discussion to decide whether a Child Protection Enquiry is necessary (see the next stage).



Stage 3 - Child Protection Enquiry

If a Child Protection Enquiry is started, this will involve a Social Worker and the Police assessing the concerns or allegations, the Child(ren) and Parents will be involved in this process.



Stage 4 - Initial Child Protection Conference

At the end of the Child Protection Enquiry, an Initial Child Protection Conference will be conducted, chaired by an Independent Manager.

You might be invited to this meeting.

You have rights too...

If you are unhappy about any aspect of the meeting, you should talk to the chair of the meeting to discuss your views. If you feel you haven't been properly informed or involved, seek advice from a Solicitor, the Citizens Advice Bureau or you can make a complaint. Ask your social worker or chair to explain the complaint process. If you have a complaint about your social worker or chair of the conference you can contact:

Sara Bartlett

Head of Child Protection
Derbyshire County Council
Room 363 North Block
County Hall
Matlock
Derbyshire
DE43AG

Email: sara.bartlett@derbyshire.gov.uk