

Contacts and Referrals

Local Information

1. Initial Contacts

All contacts regarding children who have not got an open case file must go through the Duty and Advice Service (DAS). The Duty and Advice Service (DAS) is part of Leicester City Council and is **the point of contact for all referrals to Children's Social Care 24 hours a day, 7 day a week.**

The DAS will accept calls from professionals and the public and will offer:

- Information on parenting issues through the provision of leaflets and website addresses
- Signposting to other services as appropriate including the Early Help and Prevention Services. Signposting into the Team Around the Child (TAC) process for children with additional needs
- Referral onto Children's Social Care : Single Assessment Service or Children with a Disability Team

It is good practice for professionals to discuss any concerns they have with the family and, where possible, to seek the family's agreement to making a referral to Children's Social Care. However there are exceptional circumstances where such discussion and agreement-seeking would increase the likelihood of the child suffering significant harm. In these circumstances it can be appropriate to refer without discussion or agreement from the family, although the source of the referral will then be disclosed to the family by Social Care unless the referrer is a member of the public who has requested anonymity.

In all other cases, at the point when an Initial Contact is made, the DAS Social Worker will briefly establish the nature of any concerns and whether the threshold criteria is made for a safeguarding referral to the Children's Social Care.

The DAS Social Worker will support practitioners in their decision making. If a consultation is required, the DAS Social Worker will record whether consent has been given for the discussion by the parent/carers. Professionals will be asked to provide their name, job role and contact details and the name of the child if consent has been obtained. If Consent has not been obtained from parents/carers will parental responsibility to share personal details

and no immediate child protection concerns have been reported , the DAS Social Worker will only be able to provide practitioners with a hypothetical consultation and this could impact on the quality of the advice being given. If consent has been given DAS Social Worker will record a summary of the concerns on an Initial Contact.

Based on the information provided by the referrer and professional discussion and a decision will be made about the outcome of the contact which can be:

- Provide information or redirect to another service;
- Progress to a Referral see **Section 2, Referrals**;
- The caller to complete an **Early Help Assessment (EHA)** if they are a Professional Referrer. In the event that a professional referrer is making a contact in the form of a EHA, they will be advised that they need to obtain the family's consent unless there is reason to believe that the child is likely to suffer **Significant Harm** and that their welfare will be prejudiced if consent is sought.

The outcome decision of both the consultations and safeguarding referral must be made within one working day of making the referral.

Wherever contact is made to the Customer Service Centre regarding children who have an allocated worker, the caller will be connected with the social worker. However, if this is not possible, the Customer Service Advisor will connect the call with the Duty Social Worker for that Locality Team. Customer Service Advisers will not take information on open cases or update the child's file with information.

2. Referrals

An Initial Contact will be progressed to a referral where the manager considers an assessment and/or services may be required for a Child in Need.

It is the DAS social worker who will try obtain as much of the information as possible.

3. Timescales

The responsibility of determining whether the urgent threshold requires a consultation with the Police Child Abuse Investigation Unit to establish if Child Protection Procedures need to be instigated, falls with the Team Manager of the DAS The Duty Team Manager will determine whether child protection procedures need to be instigated and whether a Strategy Discussion will be required.

6. Recording of Referrals

Copying a Referral to siblings

The decision to create a referral to a sibling will be made by the Screening Manager and progression of the referral must be completed by the DAS Team within one working day of the date and time of the original referral. The date of the sibling's referral must be the date which it was created and not the date of the original referral.

The DAS team must ensure that the outcome recorded by the Team Manager on the Contact of the subject child is copied to the contact created by copying the referral to the sibling.

Should a duplicate contact be made from copying the referral to Siblings then the DAS Team should ensure that the original contact is deleted, once the outcome has been copied (see above).

Sibling contact not progressing to referral

If the decision has been made by the Team Manager not to progress the sibling to referral, a clear rationale for the decision needs to be completed. All contacts must have an outcome selected within one working day of it being created.

Creating a contact and referral on a siblings record at a later date

If a contact on a sibling's record did not progress to a referral within one working day, a further contact must be created if further information is received. This contact must be followed by a referral if a Social Care Assessment is required. The timescales for creating contacts and referrals outlined earlier in this document apply.

Referrals closed at referral with no Social Care Assessment

Should the DAS Team determine, following either further investigation and/or re-direction to other services such as Early Help Services/ other agencies etc. that a Social Care Assessment is not required they can close the referral at the referral stage.

The DAS Team Manager/ Social Worker should discuss this decision with the Early Help Team Manager/ other professional to agree this course of action, then authorise the referral and close the referral using the outcome of 'Closure at Referral' using the same date. In the summary section the DAS team must give a summary as to why they have decided a Social Care Assessment is not required, along with a record of the discussion with the Early Help/other professionals.