



Leicestershire
County Council

Section 47 Child Protection Enquiries

| Information for Parents and Carers

Why does Children's Social Care need to be involved?

If Leicestershire Children's Services is told by someone that your child may be suffering harm or may be at risk of suffering harm, the law says that they must look into the matter to make sure that your child is safe. Anyone can contact Children's Services if they are worried about a child.

What sort of harm?

Harm means child abuse or child mal-treatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by acting to cause harm or not acting to stop harm.

It is often described in one of the following ways:

- Physical abuse;
- Emotional abuse;
- Sexual abuse;
- Neglect;
- Child Sexual Exploitation;
- Any combination of these.

Enquiries will also have to be made if a child is living with someone who has previously been involved in the abuse of another child.

What is likely to happen?

Where it has been suggested that someone has caused harm to your child/children you are likely to be spoken to by a social worker and a police officer. You will be told about the concerns that have been reported about your child. It may not be possible to tell you who reported the concerns.

The social worker and/or police officer will need to talk to your child alone and to any other children in your household. These interviews may be video recorded. This is to make sure that your child is not questioned too many times.

You will be asked to give permission for the interview to take place, however if you do not give permissions and your child is at risk of harm this may still happen without your permission. This will be discussed with you at the time. If you are able to talk openly with the people involved about the concerns, the best decisions will be made for your child.

What else might happen?

Sometimes it may be necessary for a doctor to see your child. This will normally be a doctor who has a lot of experience of working with children.

If there are other children in the family they may also need to be seen in order to make sure that they are alright.

You will be asked for your permission before your child is seen by a doctor (if your child is old enough to understand what is happening they can give permission themselves).

Will my child be taken away from me?

In the majority of reported child abuse cases it will be assessed that it is in the child's best interest for them to remain at home with their families.

Children's Services have to consider the safety and welfare of your child above all else, but they also have a responsibility to try to help families to stay together.

Sometimes agreement is reached for children to stay with their other family for a short time while enquiries are made.

If your child is in danger of significant harm:

- The Children's Social Care if necessary; can apply to the Court to protect your child;
- The Police can take your child to a safe place for up to 72 hours. A safe place may include a family member, a family friend, a foster carer or sometimes hospital.

After the child protection enquiry - what happens?

The social worker, team manager and agencies involved, will understand the worries, but also look at the strengths of the family and what the family are already doing to keep the child safe.

Children's Services may do one or more of the following:

- Take no further action;
- Offer advice and help;
- Arrange a meeting to decide what will happen next. This is called an Initial Child Protection Conference;
- If necessary take legal action in order to protect your child.

Police

Police have a responsibility to protect children from harm. The Police will work with other Agencies to provide support for those children at risk of harm and will investigate related offences. Police may ultimately take a view, alongside the Crown Prosecution Service, that a case has not met the evidential requirements for Court proceedings in the Criminal Court. Police however may still have concerns for the children involved and may continue to work with Partner Agencies to ensure those children are protected.

Our Core Values:

Our Core Values across Leicestershire is to ensure that when we work we families we are:

Aspiration - Being aspirational for our children, families and workforce.

Being Curious - Being Curious and paying attention to the detail

Collaboration - Building strong working relationships

Other Useful Links:

For further information and details about the process or if parents want further independent advice please contact Citizens Advice:

www.citizensadvice.org.uk/family/children-and-young-people/child-abuse/local-authority-involvement/local-authority-investigations-of-child-abuse

Making a complaint:

Speak to the Social Worker and Team Manager:

If a parent is not happy about the service that has been offered or feel they have been treated unfairly, it is important that this is discussed with the Social Worker and/or their Team Manager.

Speak to our Complaints Team:

If the complaint is not resolved a formal complaint can be made by using the following website:

www.leicestershire.gov.uk/about-the-council/contact-us/complaints-and-comments

Links to our Policy and Procedures:

<https://llrscb.proceduresonline.com/index.htm>