

## What is.....

### **Safeguard – protecting children from abuse or neglect.**

Child Protection - process of protecting individual children identified as having suffered, or at risk of, significant harm as a result of abuse or neglect  
Significant harm or likelihood of significant harm - refers to the harm or likelihood of harm that a child or young person has or may suffer including - physical, psychological or emotional harm as a result of what is done (physical, sexual or psychological abuse) or not done (neglect) by another person, often an adult responsible for their care.

**A strategy discussion** – is held between Childrens Social Care, Police and Health and may involve other professionals, to discuss the risks or harm in relation to individual children and plan what needs to happen.

**A section 47** - Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 gives Children's Social Care a duty to make enquiries to decide whether they should take action to safeguard or promote the welfare of a child who is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm.

**Accommodation-** Section 20 of the Children Act 1989 enables a local authority to provide accommodation for a child who has no person with parental responsibility for him/her, is lost or abandoned or whose parent cannot provide suitable accommodation and care.

**Legal advice-** if Children's Social Care do not think a child is safe they may speak to their managers and the Local Authority solicitor to see what actions are needed, including going to court to seek an Order for a child to be removed from parents care.

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# The Child Protection Plan

## A guide for parents and carers



This leaflet explains what happens when your child needs a Child Protection Plan



CYP - CIC05

## What does it mean for my child to have a Child Protection Plan?

A Child Protection Plan is made so you and the professionals will work together to improve your child's daily life and listen to their voice. The aim of the plan is to give you skills and support to reduce the significant harm or risk of harm and improve outcomes for your child. You and the professionals working with your family day to day for example, Social Worker, Probation Officer, Health Visitor, Teacher etc., will meet regularly. These are called core group meetings. In a three month review period there should be a minimum of two core group meetings and in a six month review period there should be a minimum of three core group meetings. As a group you will develop and update the Child Protection Plan and discuss the progress and further actions required to achieve the outcomes.

There will be a Child Protection Review Conference held within three months to consider what progress has been made in reducing the risk and meeting the agreed outcomes and to identify if a Child Protection Plan is still needed. If the decision is yes, a further Review Child Protection Conference will be arranged within six months. Only at the Review Child Protection Conference can a decision be made to end the Child Protection Plan.

Following the decision for the Child Protection Plan to end your child will continue to have a Social Worker who along with you and other professionals will develop a Child In Need plan for a minimum of three months.

## Can children be removed from their parents?

Social Workers cannot take a child away against the wishes of the parent or carers simply because the child has a Child Protection Plan. If your child is exposed to further risks, you and core group members will be approached in the first instance to find solutions to reduce the risks. If the risks remain Children's Social Care may consider seeking legal advice to inform the best way to protect your child. A decision to remove a child from their parents can only be made by agreement of you and Children's Social Care under Section 20 (Children Act 1989) or by order of the court.

## Does my child have to have a Social Worker?

**Yes.** Children's Social Care will allocate a Social Worker for your child. The Social Worker will be the 'lead professional'. All core group members are responsible for sharing information to help everyone involved understand your situation. Therefore it's important that you work closely with them.

Social workers are required by law to visit children they are working with. There will be planned and unannounced visits and statutory visits. These visits must happen at least every 28 days. If you refuse to allow the Social Worker to see your child Children's Social Care will consider whether to involve the police or the court.

## Can I appeal against a decision to make a Child Protection Plan for my child?

**Yes.** If you disagree with the decision of the conference you or somebody on your behalf, should write to the Conference Chair within 5 working days of being notified of the decision. Please say why you disagree with the decision of the Child Protection Conference. The appeals process will be followed.

## Legal advice

You can seek help from a solicitor, whether or not you agree with any action which Children's Social Care takes concerning your child. This is especially important if Children's Social Care decide to go to court to ask for an order. It is most important that you have the help of a solicitor in court. You can get a list of solicitors in your area specialising in child-care work from your local Citizens Advice Bureau. If your income and savings are below a certain level, you may be entitled to legal aid to pay for work which the solicitor does for you. You should ask about this on your first visit to the solicitor.