

OLDHAM

Area Child Protection Committee

Quick Guide

Making a Child Protection Referral



This Quick Guide has been developed to help ensure that anyone concerned about the safety and welfare of a child can easily make a referral.

This will help you to understand what you need to know and what you need to do in order to make an appropriate referral.

But if in doubt **PHONE** the duty team or the Police.

Don't leave it to chance.

The safety and welfare of the child **must** come first.

This Quick Guide to making a Child Protection referral is intended to act as a basic reference tool. Detailed Area Child Protection Procedures are available for reference in Libraries, G.P. Surgery's, Health Centres, Hospitals, Schools, Social Services Offices and appropriate voluntary sector agencies.

How does the guide work?



Questions and answers are in the light blue boxes



Issues to consider are in the Yellow box



Guidance

The yellow boxes provide guidance about issues raised

Informing Parents

Do I have to inform parents about my concerns?

You should inform parents about a referral which is about to be made about their child
Unless any of these situations apply In which case Police and Social Services will make the decision about when and how to inform parents

What if I can't see the parents to tell them?

If parents have not been told about the intention to refer. It will be necessary to discuss with Social Services or the Police, when making the referral, how the parents are to be informed

Make a written record of your observations and actions

Guidance

It is important at the outset to be as open and honest as possible with parents about the concerns, the possible need of a referral to Social Services or the Police and the accompanying Child Protection Check that needs to be made. However an inability to inform parents should not prevent a referral being made.

Sexual Abuse is suspected
Organised or Multiple Abuse is suspected

Munchausen Syndrome by proxy (also known as Factitious Illness by proxy) is suspected

Contacting the parents would place the child, yourself or others at risk

If you have any doubts or need to seek further clarification you should contact Social Services immediately

Physical Abuse

Guidance

Does the child have a physical injury?

No

Does the child allege an injury but there is no physical evidence?

Yes

Yes

Is there a satisfactory explanation for the injury?

Yes

If the child requires medical treatment take appropriate action. Otherwise no further Child Protection Action

Refer to Social Services or Police

No

Does the child require urgent and immediate medical treatment?

No

Contact Social Services Duty Team as soon as possible

Yes

Make appropriate arrangements for the child to receive medical attention and inform parents

"Urgent & Immediate"
=
Serious or Life threatening Injuries

Make a written record of your observations and actions

If you have any doubts or need to seek further clarification you should contact Social Services immediately

Sexual Abuse

Do you suspect or have concerns about sexual abuse or has the child made allegations about sexual abuse?

Yes

Inform Social Services or the Police immediately
Do not inform parents

Guidance

You may suspect this because you have observed behaviour such as ; Sexual knowledge which is not age appropriate, Sexualised or provocative' behaviour, hinting at sexual activity through words, play, drawings etc.

Social Services and/or The Police will decide when it is appropriate to inform parents when:

Sexual Abuse is suspected
Organised or multiple abuse is suspected. This involves either numbers of abusers acting together to abuse, or recruit for abuse, one or more children; or one person abusing, or recruiting for abuse, a number of children across a number of families, within institutions or within the wider community.

Make a written record of your observations and actions

If you have any doubts or need to seek further clarification you should contact Social Services immediately

Emotional Abuse

Guidance



Emotional Abuse occurs when a child's basic need for love, security, praise and recognition go unmet either through deliberate negative actions by parents/carers or by a failure to act positively. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children.

Make a written record of your observations and actions

If you have any doubts or need to seek further clarification you should contact Social Services immediately

Neglect



Make a written record of your observations and actions

Guidance

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.

It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care and treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

If you have any doubts or need to seek further clarification you should contact Social Services immediately

Making a Referral

Who should I make the referral to?

You should telephone the Social Services Duty Officer

Following your referral an Initial Assessment may be made by Social Services who will then make decisions about subsequent action

What should I do next?

Having made the referral by telephone you **MUST** follow up with a written referral within 3 working days

Make a written record of your observations and actions

Guidance

If the referral is made 'out-of-hours' the Emergency Duty Team or the Police should be contacted (628 5993)

- Children under 16 911 3790/1
- Children 16 and over 626 4947
- Children with Disabilities 627 1749
- All other contact outside work hours 628 5933

- Written referrals are expected from professionals. Referrals from professionals cannot be made on an anonymous basis.
- Written referrals from members of the public are welcomed and will, if required, be kept anonymous.

If you have any doubts or need to seek further clarification you should contact Social Services immediately

Making the referral

What information will I be expected to provide?



Obviously, the more factual information you can provide the more speedily and efficiently Social Services or the police will be able to deal with the referral

Regardless of whether you have this information or not you **MUST** make a referral if you have concerns for a child

Make a written record of your observations and actions

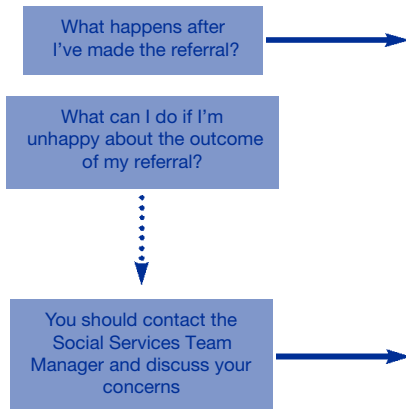
Guidance

Listed below is the data that Social Services and the Police need to help them do their work. It would be helpful if you could give as much information as you have when making a referral.

- Full names and dates of birth of the child, carers and any other family members
- Child's full address and telephone number
- Daytime address and contact telephone numbers for parents/carers
- Ethnic origin, religion and cultural background
- Reason for the referral, including description of any injuries observed, details of allegations made, discussions with the child or others, details of any witnesses. Including any relevant dates/times/places of alleged incidents
- Action taken and people contacted since concern arose
- Any immediate or impending danger to the child
- Previous concerns and any relevant background information
- Based on your knowledge of the child and family, you may well have an opinion about how the family are likely to react to the referral and any subsequent Child protection Enquiries,
- including any factors which may place the child or others at further risk. (e.g. where there is domestic violence)

If you have any doubts or need to seek further clarification you should contact Social Services immediately

After Making a Referral



Make a written record of your observations and actions

Guidance

Examples of possible action following a referral are:

- Take action to ensure the immediate safety of the child
- Make Child protection Enquiries (under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989)
- Decide if it is appropriate to call a Child Protection Conference
- Offer services to the family to relieve need or reduce risk
- Refer the family to another agency
- Take No Further Action

If after this discussion you are still not satisfied, you should put your concerns in writing to the Team Manager and send a copy to the relevant Children Services Service Manager and the Child Protection Service Manager.

If you have any doubts or need to seek further clarification you should contact Social Services immediately

Telephone Numbers

Social Services Contact Numbers

Children under 16 (Work hours) **016 911 3790/1**

Children 16 and over (Work hours) **016 626 4947**

Children with Disabilities (Work hours) **0161 627 1749**

All other contact outside of works hours 0161 628 5933

Police Contact Numbers

Family Support Unit (Work hours) **016 856 8961**

Family Support Unit (Answer phone) **016 856 8962**

Uniformed Police (24 hours) **0161 872 5050**