

This leaflet is intended to help you understand the safeguarding and child protection assessment and:

- **Why people are concerned**
- **What processes are involved**
- **What will happen afterwards**
- **Where you can get help**

Why are people concerned?

There are a number of reasons why health professionals may have safeguarding concerns about a child. This could include:

- You and your family need additional support to meet your child's needs.
- Bringing up children is challenging and sometimes you may need help with this.
- Your child or family has a child protection plan in place
- Your child has an injury or a mark that raises concerns about its cause because
 - It is an unusual injury or mark
 - It is an unexplained or serious injury
 - There has been an unusually long delay in bringing your child to the hospital.

Once a concern is raised, healthcare professionals have a **duty of care to your child** to explore it further. This means we have to consider all possible causes, including medical, accidental or inflicted, and investigate the problem thoroughly.

It is routine and recommended practice to inform social services of the concern. They will inform specialist police.

Is this confidential?

Although children, young people and their families have a right to receive confidential medical care and advice, sometimes staff have to share information with other professionals if they feel a patient is at risk of harm or neglect.

We will discuss this with families unless we are worried that by doing this we will place the child at greater risk.

What will happen next?

A doctor will take a detailed account of what happened. They may ask personal or difficult questions. We ask everybody the same questions.

Will my child be examined?

If they haven't already had one, your child will have a top to toe general examination. Any injuries will be noted, measured and drawn in your child's medical records and photographs may also be taken.

Some tests *may* also be done, such as:

1. Blood tests
2. X-rays and eye tests.

All of this helps to provide further information about the injury. Leaflet 2 will explain more about these tests.

You will have an opportunity to talk about your concerns and to ask questions about the process.

What happens after the examination?

Depending on the injury, you and your child may be admitted to the children's ward for a few days in order to complete investigations. This may involve more medical tests and information gathering by social services.

A strategy meeting is usually held. Health workers, social workers and any other relevant professionals will share information to make sure we are doing the best for your child.

As part of this, the doctor will write a report which is shared with the social worker, police, health visitor, and GP.

What will social workers and police do?

Social workers and the Police have a legal responsibility to investigate any concerns which suggest your child, or any other child, has been harmed or is at risk of harm. They aim to:

- Make sure your child is healthy and safe
- Protect your child from actions of any possible offenders

They may speak to you, your child and any other relevant people.

What if no further action is needed?

- Social services will write to you when the case is “closed”.
- We will offer you a follow-up appointment.
- You and your child may be offered support and advice.

What if further assessment is needed?

If further assessment is needed by social care a case conference will be arranged to decide on monitoring. You will be invited to this.

In most cases children remain at home. It is rare for children to need to be taken away by social workers. This happens when information suggests that there is an immediate danger and the child cannot be protected within their wider family circle.

We recognise that this can be a very stressful time for you and your family.

We aim to treat you with respect, listen to you, give you clear explanations, and offer you advice and support.

Please tell us if we can do better. For the Royal Alexandra Children’s Hospital or the Royal Sussex County Hospital, you can contact the patient Advice and Liaison Service on 01273 664511 or 664973 or by email at bsuh.pals@nhs.net.

If you are calling from the Princess Royal Hospital please contact the Patients’ Advisor on 01444 441881 extension 5909.

Useful contacts

The NSPCC has helplines that children and adults can ring for advice and support.

Children and young people can call ChildLine on 0800 1111. Adults can call 0808 800 5000 for help and advice.

The Family Rights Group (FRG) provides free confidential advice and support to families whose children are involved with local authority children’s services. Families can call its advice service free on 0808 801 0366 or send an email to advice@frg.org.uk.

FRG also has a range of free advice sheets on its website: www.frg.org.uk

The Coram Children’s Legal Centre. Call 020 7520 0300 for free legal advice on child Law, family law and education law.

Family Lives is a national charity providing help and support on all aspects of family life. It has a confidential service called Parentline (0808 800 2222), which parents can call for free from landlines and most mobiles for information, advice, guidance and support on any aspect of parenting and family life. www.familylives.org.uk

Home-Start UK is a nationwide charity supporting children and families through a network of volunteers. www.home-start.org.uk

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Leaflet 1: Safeguarding & Child protection Assessments

This leaflet should be provided together with **Leaflet 1: Safeguarding & Child Protection assessments**