

Children Services

CHILD PROTECTION INVESTIGATIONS

Approved by

Swindon Local Safeguarding Children Board

Information for parents & carers

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Child Protection Investigations

In Swindon we are committed to working in partnership with parents. This leaflet has been produced to help parents understand about Child Protection investigations that involve Children Services and the Police working together.

When do Child Protection Investigations happen?

When anyone receives information that suggests a child has been abused or neglected or is at risk of abuse or neglect from an adult or another child, they should contact the Children & Families (previously Social Services Department or Police.

Once the Children & Families Department or the Police hear information that suggests a child may have been abused the law states that they have a DUTY to investigate this. They cannot ignore this information. If the information they receive suggests that a crime may have been committed then the investigation will usually be carried out by a police officer and a social worker.

Initial Visit

How are Child Protection Investigations done?

- The Police and or Social Worker will assess whether the child / young person is in any immediate danger.
- They will explain why they have come to see you. (Don't forget that you have the right to ask to see their identity cards).
- With your permission speak with the child / young person. There will only be exceptional circumstances in which a child will need to be interviewed without parental consent being obtained. These include:
 - a) The possibility of a child being threatened or otherwise coerced into silence.
 - b) A strong likelihood that important evidence would be destroyed.

- c) The child does not wish for the parents to be involved at this stage and is competent to make that decision
- ▶ They will try to find out from you if there is any truth in the allegation and your views about it.
- ▶ The Investigation may end here.

The Interview

If the investigation needs to continue then your child will, with your consent or another person with parental responsibility, be interviewed at home or another place e.g. school. If criminal offences are suspected then the interview may be done using a video, in the Police Child Protection Suite.

(The Police Child Protection Suite is a set of rooms which are comfortably furnished and equipped with toys. There is a video camera which is controlled by equipment in the room next door).

It may be helpful for you to sit in on the interview of your child, but if not you may be able to watch the interview in another room. A child should not be interviewed in the presence of an alleged perpetrator or potential victim.

It is important for you to discuss these arrangements with the interviewers.

The interviewers are trained to make the child feel relaxed, not to put words into the child / young persons and not overtire the child. Your advice will be helpful to them.

Medical Examination

It may be necessary in some cases for your child to be examined by a doctor. This will need your written consent and/or your child's, depending upon how old the child is.

The examination will be done by a Paediatrician (a children's doctor and) or a police doctor.

What happens if I refuse to let my child be interviewed or medically examined?

In most cases only one of the child's parents needs to give their consent. If neither will, then the Children Services and Police have a duty to think about the immediate safety of your child. They may seek an Order from the Court giving them permission to interview or medically examine your child, without your consent.

Where a police officer believes a child is in an unsafe situation / or at risk of harm, she / he has the power and may:

- ▶ Remove the child to suitable accommodation or;
- ▶ Take steps to prevent the child / young person being removed from hospital or other places in which they are accommodated.

What if I / we need extra help?

Where a child or parent has a disability, it may be necessary to provide help with communications to enable the child or parent to express themselves to the best of their ability.

Where a child or parent speaks a language which is other than that spoken by the interviewer an interpreter will be provided.

Other things which could happen during the investigation.

There are some other things which could happen as part of the Child Protection Investigation, for example:-

If there are any injuries to your child, which can be seen, a trained photographer may be asked to take photographs of the injuries.

If there is a possibility of broken bones, internal injuries or a head injury, then other tests may be considered e.g. X-rays.

People suspected of causing the injury to your child could be arrested and interviewed by the Police.

If other children in your family (or children in other families) are thought to be at risk, they may also need to be interviewed.

What happens next?

The Children Services and Police will, with your co-operation, try to decide if there is any risk to the child. They will hope to agree with you about how to protect your child from further harm.

The Children Services and Police have to make sure your child is safe. They will make every effort to involve you in the decisions about your child.

The Children Services and Police will also decide whether to recommend that a Child Protection Conference is held. You will usually be invited to attend this Conference and will be sent an invitation and a leaflet which tells you all about Child Protection Conferences.

Alternatively, the Children Services and Police could decide that your child is safe & that the investigation may end here. Whatever happens you will be informed in writing.

What is a Child Protection Conference?

The Child Protection Conference is a meeting between parents and people from the different agencies who know your family, to look at the investigation. It will collect information about your family and try to understand what has happened and why. You will be given every opportunity to put your point of view to the Conference. (Also see Child Protection Conferences Information for Parents)

Can I appeal against the investigation outcome?

There is no right of appeal against the outcome of a Child Protection Investigation, but if you are unhappy about the conduct of any of the people involved in the investigation you should take it up with their manager. The Children Services and the Police have information about their complaints procedure and you should ask for a copy of this.

This document has been produced by Swindon Borough Council Social Services Department on behalf of Swindon Area Child Protection Committee.

If you wish to discuss this information with someone outside of Children Services, we suggest that you contact the local Citizens' Advice Bureau (address in telephone book) for help, or the Family Rights Group advise line Tel: 0800 7311 696 (open Monday - Friday 10.00 - 12.00 and 1.30 - 3.30). You may find it helpful to talk more about any of this information with the Social Worker involved with your family. If so, please contact:

► Social Worker

Who works at:

Telephone:

If you want to know more about the rules and regulations covering Child Protection in Swindon, you could look at the following:-

- Children Act 1989 (HMSO)
- Working Together to safeguard Children (Department of Health 1999)
- Achieving best evidence in criminal proceedings (2001)

These are available from your local library.

- Multi-Agency Child Protection Procedures & Guidance (Swindon & Wiltshire Area Child Protection Committee)

Yours Views

We would welcome your comments. If you would like to give us your thoughts and ideas about this leaflet or other Children Services publications please contact: **Customer Liaison Officer**

Tel: 01793 463496

Email: YourCommentsCount@swindon.gov.uk

Web: www.swindon.gov.uk

If you require Council Information in another format, please contact Customer Services on 01793 463725

আপনার যদি অন্য কোন আকারে বা রূপে তথ্যের দরকার হয়, কাস্টমার সার্ভিসেস্কে (01793) 463725 নম্বরে টেলিফোন করুন।

Bengali

如果您需要用其它语言或方式咨询这方面的信息，请拨打我们的顾客服务热线：(01793) 463725。

Chinese

જો તમને બીજા ફાર્મેટ (પત્રક) માં જાણકારી જોવાની હોય તો કૃપા કરી ગ્રાહક સેવા પ્રતિનિધિનો ટેલીફોન નંબર (01793) 463725 ઉપર સંપર્ક કરો.

Gujarati

यदि आपको अन्य फार्मेट (प्रपत्र) में जानकारी चाहिए तो कृपया ग्राहक सेवा प्रतिनिधि से टेलीफोन नंबर (01793) 463725 पर संपर्क करें।

Hindi

Per informazioni in altro formato, contattare il Servizio Clienti chiamando il numero: 01793 463725

Italian

別の構成・形式で資料をご使用される必要がある場合には、次の番号の弊社顧客サービスまでお問い合わせ下さい。電話：01793 463725

Japanese

Jeśli chcesz uzyskać informacje w innym formacie, prosimy o kontakt z Wydziałem Usług dla Klientów pod numerem telefonu 01793 463725.

Polish

ਜੇਕਰ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਫਾਰਮੈਟ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਕਸਟਮਰ ਸਰਵਿਸਜ਼ ਠਾਲ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਨੰਬਰ (01793) 463725 ਤੇ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

Punjabi

Hadaad u baahatid macluumaad hab kale ku qoran fadian la soo xinir Adeega macmiisha (Customer Services) oo kasoo wac lambarkan (01793) 463725

Somali

اگر آپ کو کسی دیگر زبان یا بڑی لکھائی وغیرہ میں معلومات درکار ہوں تو براہ مہربانی کسٹومر سروسز سے ٹیلی فون نمبر : 01793 463725 پر رابطہ قائم کریں۔

Urdu