

What are my rights?

You have the right to:

- Be listened to and have your views respected.
- Be supported throughout the investigation by the social worker and sometimes by someone else who may speak on your behalf.
- Be involved in what is happening.
- Have decisions explained to you
- Complain if you do not feel that you are being treated properly.

Complaints

If you have a complaint please contact your Social Worker and a complaints leaflet will be made available to you. Complaints should be made in writing to:

Complaints Manager
Staffordshire County Council
Social Care and Health Directorate
The Walton Building
Martin Street
Stafford
ST16 2LH

www.staffordshire.gov.uk

Remember

- Abuse is not your fault.
- You have a right to be protected properly.
- You are an important and valued person.
- Your views and feelings will be listened to and respected.
- Let someone help to make things better for you.

Further helpful information is available from:

- A Solicitor who is a member of the Law Society's Children's Panel.
- Your local Citizens Advice Bureau.
- Family Rights Group (advice line) Tel: 0800 7311 696
- Children's Legal Centre (child law) – Tel: 0845 120 2948

The Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board is a partnership between:

Staffordshire County Council – Children and Lifelong Learning
Adult Social Care
District Councils
The Police
Probation

Youth Offending Services
Health
Connexions
CAFCASS
Young Offenders Institutes
The Voluntary Sector

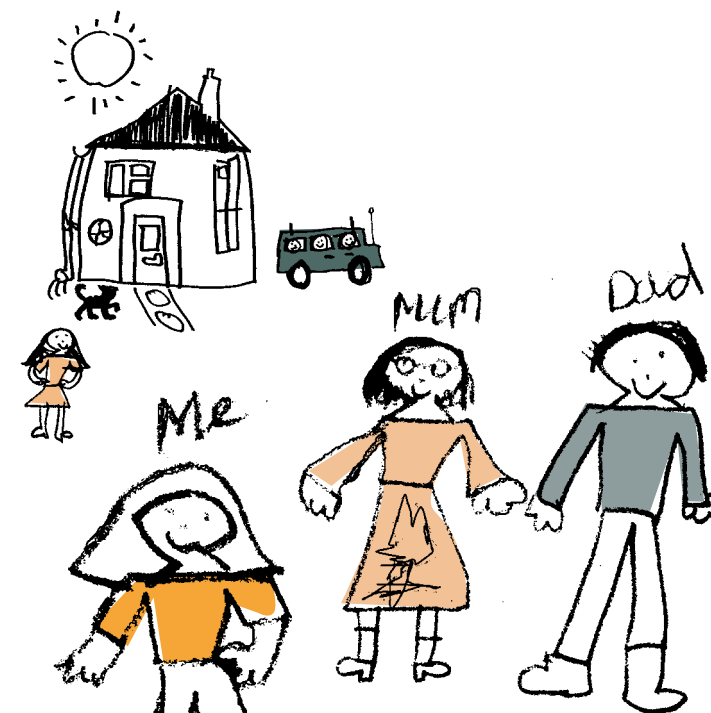
If you would like this document in another language or format, e.g. large text, please contact the Communications Team (Children and Lifelong Learning) on 01785 278666.

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Child Protection Investigations

Information for children and young people



What is a child protection investigation?

- This is when social workers, and sometimes the police, follow up reports they receive that make them concerned that a child or young person may be harmed by someone who is looking after them, someone they know or someone they don't know.
- The law says that children must be protected from harm and that social workers should do something about it.

What is harm

Harm is ill-treatment or child abuse. Here are some examples.

Emotional abuse

- You may be feeling unloved, undervalued or that your parents or carers are constantly picking on you. It may involve seeing someone else in your family being hurt.
- This may have been happening for a very long time and make you feel sad, unhappy, and that you do not like yourself very much.

Neglect

- You may be young and left alone for a long time.
- You may not have enough food to eat or proper clothes to wear.
- You may not be taken to the doctor when you are unwell.
- You may be left with people who you do not feel safe with.

Physical abuse

You may be:

- Punched
- Bitten
- Hit

- Thrown
- Burnt or
- Beaten (for example, with a stick or a belt)
- Hurt in other ways.

Sexual abuse

- Some one may ask you to look at rude pictures, videos or computer games.
- Someone may ask you to touch their or someone else's private parts.
- Someone may touch your private parts.

What should I do if I think I am being abused or may have been abused?

- Tell someone that you can trust. This could be a friend, relative, teacher or social worker.
- You can also 'phone Child Line on 08001111.

It may be very difficult to talk about some of the things that have happened. You may feel frightened or be worried that you may get someone into trouble, but this should not stop you from talking to someone about it.

What will happen after I tell someone?

- The person that you tell should contact a social worker or the police so that they can help you. Social workers, and sometimes police officers, will need to talk to you and other people about what has happened. This may include your teachers, your school nurse and your doctor.
- They will also have to talk to your family, but only when they are reasonably sure that you are safe from harm.
- The social worker and police officer may ask you if they can video record their conversation with you. This will mean that they do not have to ask you the

same questions lots of times. They cannot record the conversation without your permission.

- If you have been abused, a doctor may need to examine you. The doctor will have helped many children like you. They care about you and want you to be safe. However, you don't have to see the doctor if you really don't want to.

Where will all of this happen?

- You will usually be able to speak to the social worker and the police officer and see the doctor at a place not too far away from where you live. It will be somewhere comfortable and friendly where you can feel safe. You can have someone with you to support you – this may be a relative or another adult you feel safe with.

Will I be able to go home?

- If people think that you will be safe then yes, if that's what you want to do.

What else might happen?

The social worker may do one or more of the following.

- Offer you and your family help and support.
- Arrange a meeting to decide what should happen next. (This is called a child protection conference and there is another leaflet which explains about this.)
- If it is absolutely necessary, we may need to arrange for you to stay in a safe place. This may be with a relative, friend, or, if this is not possible, a foster carer or a residential home.

Remember – abuse is wrong and it is never your fault