

The Enquiry

A Guide for Parents and Carers

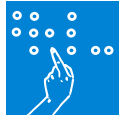


Look for this symbol

We want you to be able to read our information. Wherever you see this symbol, on request, we will translate our information into any of the following formats:



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Language



Help with
sign language

What happens next?

If it is likely that your child has suffered significant harm, enquiries will carry on.

Further enquiries about other children and family members may be made. This often includes the paediatrician seeing other children in the family to ensure that no harm has happened to them.

The Children and Young People's Service and the police may decide to interview your child on video. This is because the police in some situations may take criminal proceedings and video evidence may then be used in court.

The Children and Young People's Service will call a Child Protection Conference if it is likely that your child has suffered significant harm. You will be invited to attend. There is another leaflet explaining the Child Protection Conference in more detail.

What if I have a complaint about the enquiry?

You can either talk to the social worker or the police officer or contact our Complaints Officer.

If you wish to speak to the complaints officer you can ring on either:



(01609) 780780 and ask for extension 2638

Or



Freephone (answerphone) (0800) 515875

Or



social.complaints@northyorks.gov.uk

You will have been given this leaflet because someone has reported a concern about your child, or a child in your care, to the Children and Young People's Service or the police.

This leaflet explains how enquiries are carried out and answers some of the questions you may have.

This is a brief guide only - you may also wish to take legal advice from a Family Law Solicitor.

When Does a Child Protection Enquiry begin?

A child protection enquiry starts with a report that a child may be:

- being physically abused
- being neglected
- being emotionally harmed
- being sexually abused

This report may come from:

- The police, Children and Young People's Service or the NSPCC.
- A parent or family member of a child; it could be a neighbour, a teacher at a child's school or nursery, a health visitor or other health professional.
- From a hospital where a child has been taken to the casualty department or has been admitted.
- Some concerns are made anonymously. Some of these turn out to be malicious and some are correct. Every concern will be treated seriously.

What happens next?

All concerns will be looked into as soon as possible.

- Where there is suggestion of immediate danger to your child or the concerns are of a serious nature, a Strategy Meeting will be held. This will bring together the Children and Young People's Service, the police and sometimes other professionals who know you or your child, to plan what action to take. You will usually be contacted following this meeting.
- In other cases, a social worker from the Children and Young People's Service will normally contact you to discuss the referral. They will ask for your agreement to discuss the concerns reported with other professionals who know your family and child, for example, your child's health visitor, teacher and doctor.

It is usual for the social worker, and the police if they are involved, to see your child at the earliest possible stage. This is essential to help find out whether the concerns are true.

If Children and Young People's Service are satisfied at any stage that the concerns about your child are not founded or the injuries were accidental, matters will not go further.

Can I be there when my child is asked questions?

Usually yes - although sometimes children find it easier to talk without their parent present and you may agree to not being there.

If you don't want us to speak to your child, it is important you say so and explain why this is the case. The Children and Young People's Service may take legal advice in such situations. You should also be able to explain your view of the situation, to say whether you have any concerns about your child and what actions you and others could take to help.

Will there be a medical examination?

It may be necessary for your child to be seen by a paediatrician, this will be:

- To find out what has happened
- Where there are injuries that need treatment

Paediatricians are doctors who undertake child medicals within North Yorkshire. They are trained to work specifically with children and are experienced in judging how injuries could have been caused.

Younger children can only be examined with your permission, unless they need emergency treatment. If you do not agree to a medical, then Social Services can apply to the court for permission. If this happens you may wish to take legal advice.

Older children can agree to be examined if the doctor feels they are old enough to make this decision on their own.