



What to do if you have concerns about the welfare of a child....

As professionals working with children, young people and families you should ensure you understand how to seek advice or make a referral to Gloucestershire County Councils children's social care and what to expect as a response.



When faced with child welfare concerns that might result in the impairment of a child's health and development or the possibility a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm:-

- Discuss your concerns with the child's parents and explain you will be seeking advice or making a referral from Children's Social Care- unless you judge to do so would put the child at risk;
- Discuss your concerns with your supervisor or designated safeguarding officer to decide whether to seek advice from, or make a referral to, children's social care;
- To seek advice or make a referral to children's social care contact the children's helpdesk on **01452 426565**.

Seeking advice from children's social care:-

- If you have concerns but are unsure how to proceed tell the Children's Helpdesk you are seeking advice about a child welfare matter and you will be put through to the appropriate social work team, determined by where the child lives;
- You can discuss your concerns in principle with a social worker or social work manager without the issue being recorded on the social work database;
- During this discussion you should be clear about the nature of the concerns and any history of concern held by yourself or your agency;
- Alternative ways of addressing your concerns will be discussed and these could include the provision of extra support on a single agency basis, initiating multi agency support through a CAF as well as the appropriateness of making a referral.
- In cases where the concerns do amount to possible impairment to a child's health and development or the possibility a child is suffering, or likely to suffer significant harm, you will be advised that a referral is appropriate and necessary and you will be asked to make that referral and details will be recorded on the social work database (see below);
- the responsibility for making a referral remains with you and if after seeking advice you feel your concerns do amount to possible impairment to a child's health and development, or the possibility a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, you should make that referral.

Making a referral to Children's Social Care:-

- When making a referral you will be asked by the Children's Helpdesk to complete a Multi-Agency Referral Form, which will include personal information about the family and child, the nature and degree of your concerns (including any previous concerns held by you or your agency) as well as contact details about yourself;
- These details will be passed to the appropriate social work team, determined on where the child lives , a social worker will contact you and discuss your concerns within the next 24 hours;
- In circumstances where there is immediate risk you will be put through to the social work team to discuss the next steps.
- Your discussion with the social work team should include what action is appropriate in the light of the information supplied by you and any information held by the social work team including whether there are alternatives to a referral, if a referral is not appropriate;
- The social work team may need to conduct further enquiries before making a decision about whether to accept the referral; this decision will be fed back to you.

If you are left worried that your concerns are not being addressed:-

- Use the new "resolution of professional disagreements in work relating to the safety of children (escalation policy)" which is available through SW child protection procedures, which can be accessed via www.gscb.org.uk.

For further information please contact the Safeguarding Children Service on:

Tel: 01452 583629

Email: gscb@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Website: www.gscb.org.uk