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## Child Protection

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## Child Protection Advice

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### 1. Government/Local Authority Guidelines on Child Protection

In England and Wales Child Protection is the overall responsibility of Skills (DFES).

Their contact details are:-

Department for Education and Skills  
Sanctuary Buildings  
Great Smith Street  
London  
SW1P 3BT  
E –Mail: [info@dfes.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:info@dfes.gsi.gov.uk)  
Tel: 0870 000 2288

The DFES issue guidance to local authorities about Child Protection statutory guidance. You can view and print a copy of this guidance at <http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk.pdf>

The DFES also issue non statutory guidance to local authorities. The local authorities follow.

Local authorities use the above guidelines by the DFES to produce th

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your local authority for a copy of their guidelines. You are legally entitled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

The framework used for child protection procedures is "Framework for the Assessment of Children and their Families - Department of Health 2000. You can view and print <http://www.dh.gov.uk/pdf>

You can also print off all the guidance notes, questionnaires, scales, <http://www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics>

The laws used for child protection are:-

The Children Act 1989 - <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts1989/Ukpga>

The Children Act 2004 - <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2004/20040>

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## 2. Child Protection Enquiry

The local authority have a duty to make enquiries about a child's protection if the cause is often very unreasonable - cause to suspect that a child is suffering from harm. This is called a Child Protection Enquiry.

"Harm" is defined as "ill-treatment or the impairment of health, or development, including the impairment of the child's physical, emotional, sexual and social development, or the impairment of the child's ability to have a normal childhood." Government guidance divides the categories - physical, emotional, sexual and neglect. A child may be considered to be at risk if he/she witnesses any violence or conflict at home. Social services can intervene because the parents are arguing under the category of emotional abuse.

Social services will contact professional agencies involved with the family, such as the head teacher. They are allowed to do this without the parents' consent. They are allowed to interview the child and the family. We would recommend parents ask for an independent person/family member to be present at the meeting, or for the meeting to be tape recorded, as what is written in reports is often not a true representation of what was actually said. Parents can also ask the child to be videoed, or for the child to have a medical examination. Social services can get a court order to allow this.

Social services have 24 hours to decide what action to take. If they do not, they must carry out an initial assessment. This must be completed within 7 days.

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## 3. Initial Assessment

When social services consider your children at risk of harm, but not an emergency, they will follow guidance laid down in the "Framework for the Assessment of Children and their Families" (Department of Health 2000). The assessment will look at what you as a parent can meet them, also if your child is safe. Are you able to meet your child's needs for development, and if action is needed to protect or promote your child's welfare. If you take your child from you, this report will be as damning as possible. It will state the facts, as has happened to many parents in this position. You will have to attend a court hearing).

Guidelines state that the local authority must help you play a full role in proceedings. (In reality they keep parents in the dark as much as possible if it helps their case. Be very careful what you say to them. They have been in this context so it sounds bad. They will use anything you say against you helping you, but if they want your child taken, they will only be gathering evidence against you).

If the initial assessment concludes that your child has not suffered and then they may take no further action. If it finds your child is not in need of services", the parent will be asked whether they agree to a care plan. If you advise do not accept, unless there will be consequences in not doing so, help, or if possible pay yourself for some decent respite, with someone with social services they can so easily take your children).

If the child is judged to be at risk, or have suffering harm then they will involve where professionals from the relevant agencies, including the police and health will decide what information (if any) about the strategy discussion will be shared with the family are not invited to this discussion. They will also decide whether an enquiry.

Government guidance specifies the following, which are often totally ignored. It acknowledges the impact of the enquiry process on the family can be handled sensitively.

Social services are required to be open and honest with you (yeah right) and provide information with you unless this will place your child at risk. Any information is decided by the strategy meeting.

they must conduct enquiries in a way which allows for future constructive

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#### **4. Emergency Protection Procedures**

If there is concern that a child is in immediate danger then the local authority can take action. They can ask the person they think is endangering the child to stop. They may suggest putting your child in voluntary care (Never take your child back from voluntary care. Parents can be later threatened with removal of the child and try and bring your child back home). The local authority or police can prevent their removal from a safe place such as a hospital. The child can stay there for a maximum of 72 hours (3 days), without first obtaining a court order. The local authority must make accommodation arrangements for the child, such as placement with family or friends to see if there any suitable family members first that the child can be

The local authority can then apply for an Emergency Protection Order from home for up to 8 days. Another option would be an exclusion order preventing the abuser from the family home allowing the child to stay with the non-abuser.

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#### **5. Section 47 Enquiry**

Section 47 relates to Section 47 of the Children's Act 1989. You can view Section 47 of the Children's Act 1989 at <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts1989>

The Child Protection officer will follow the procedures set out in the Framework for the Assessment of Children in need and their families - Department of Health 2000. See Section 47. They will undertake a core assessment.

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## 6. Core Assessment

This will be to identify your child's needs, to assess your capacity to meet those needs in a wider family context and to determine what services would be appropriate to achieve the best outcome for the child. Government Guidance divides the assessment into three sections: the child's developmental needs, family and environmental needs. Support from other agencies such as housing or education should be sought. According to government guidance you should be kept fully involved in the assessment. Discuss the assessment with what is happening verbally and in writing.

Once completed you should be involved in drawing up a plan of action for your child (if they have sufficient funds for it). They may also suggest Family Group Conferences (FGCs) for taking forward such plans.

The core assessment should be completed within a maximum of 35 working days from commencement.

If the child is deemed to be at risk of continuing significant harm then a Child Protection Conference should be held.

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## 7. Child Protection Conference

A child protection conference is a meeting organised by social services to discuss the child's place before a child is even born, for instance if there is a history of child abuse or the mother is substance dependent.

The Child Protection Conference is attended by the family and all professionals involved with the child e.g. social workers, doctor, health visitor, teacher, paediatrician. There are also representatives from child protection services there. Also a police officer to advise if there has been a history of child abuse there hasn't been. You can take a friend, family member for support and to take notes if he/she cannot speak. They can only observe and take notes. Make sure you are present. The conference will usually be held at the social services offices. (It can be held elsewhere if that is as best as possible).

You cannot take a dictaphone in to the meeting, but you should make a list of what is said. Also, make sure you read thoroughly through all the minutes of the meeting. It is your collective experience that what is said is often recorded out of context. Write to the chairperson of the meeting (social services will give you the name) asking them to be changed. Give a copy of your letter to your solicitor. This is your right. This letter will be given into the judge if care proceedings are instigated.

The aim of the conference is for everyone to share information about the child's situation. If your child is at risk, come up with plans to protect your child and look

should include a written report that you should have seen in advance may have done reports also. The conference must be held within 15 conference will often be chaired by a child protection officer.

The conference will decide whether or not your child's name needs p by deciding if your child has suffered ill treatment or other impairment of physical, emotional or sexual abuse or neglect, and that professional treatment or impairment are likely, or professional judgement substantiate that your child is likely to suffer the above.

If the decision is made to register your child's name, an outline child p will be developed into a full plan after the conference. The outline plan child, the aims and objectives about how your child will be protected ; lastly it should clarify who will have responsibility for which actions are will have a key social worker allocated to them. They are responsible implemented and developed properly, and following core group meet

It may be decided at the child protection meeting that care proceedings Advice - Care proceedings England & Wales).

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## 8. The Child Protection Register

Each local authority keeps its own child protection register. It is a list continued risk of significant harm.

If a decision is made to place your child on the child protection register held after three months, and then every six months thereafter for as long the register. Review meetings are usually chaired by a child protection other professionals involved will be invited to come. You can take a friend take your solicitor but he/she can only observe and take notes. These social services offices. They will look at how the plan is progressing and made. If they feel your child is now not at risk of harm they can remove protection register (de-registration).

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## 9. How to appeal registration on the Child Protection Register

You have to put your reasons in writing to the chairperson of the Child days of the conference.

What will happen to the appeal?

The chairperson of the Child Protection Sub-Committee will let you know so, an appeals panel will be set up.

What is an appeals panel?

An appeals panel is made up of at least three people who have not been members are nominated by local child protection agencies, but the panel independent.

The panel will read all the relevant files and reports and will interview

report and recommendations will be completed within 28 days of the then given to the chairperson of the Child Protection Sub-Committee. What will an appeals panel do?

The panel will recommend that a registration decision should be looked at if there were serious faults in the way procedures were used in the case or if relevant information was not taken into account

irrelevant information influenced the decision.

anyone involved in the conference decision had a personal interest or if the decision was against the weight of evidence.

no reasonable conference would have arrived at the decision that was made.

#### Decisions & actions

The chairperson of the Child Protection Sub-Committee will make a recommendation and will let you know what will happen as a result.

If the chairperson agrees that the registration decision should be looked at, a conference will be held as a matter of urgency.

Where possible, different staff will be asked to attend the conference.

This new conference will consider the appeals panel's recommendations and will let you know you and your child. They will then decide whether child protection should be put on hold.

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