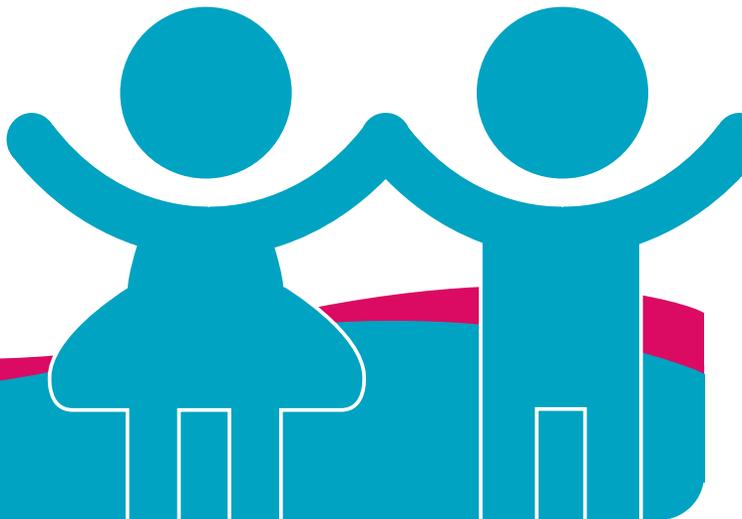


Information for parents and carers where there are child protection concerns





Child protection concerns cover a range of issues about the physical, sexual or emotional abuse or neglect of children.

Individuals must tell Children's Social Care or the police if they are concerned about the welfare or safety of a child. When a professional makes the referral they will usually tell parents and carers what they are doing.

However, in certain cases they are not allowed to (for example where a criminal matter may need to be investigated by the police).

Enquiries

Enquiries are carried out by Lambeth social workers who will gather as much information as they can from people who know your child and your family. This might include your doctor, your child's teacher, school nurse or health visitor. The social worker will need to discuss the concerns with you and see your children.

During the enquiry the social worker will want to talk to you as parents/carers, to members of your extended family (if appropriate) and to your children. It is an absolute requirement that the social worker looks around your home and is able to speak to your children individually and in private, if they are old enough and able to understand properly.

In some cases after just one visit, it becomes clear that the concerns are unfounded and that no further enquiries are needed. More often however,

everything will not be clear after just one visit to you and your child and it will be necessary to make some more enquiries to get a clearer picture of the situation to know how best to help you and your children.

Will it be necessary for my child to see a doctor?

It may be considered necessary for your child to be medically examined by a specially trained doctor. This will be discussed with you and usually parents are asked to accompany the child to the examination.

Why do the police get involved?

If there is a possibility that an offence has been committed the police might visit you with the social worker. If the police believe that a crime may have been committed they may want to speak to and possibly interview the child at a place where the interview can be videotaped for use in any possible court proceedings.

Who will know the information?

Wherever possible the social worker and police will give you as much information as they can so that you are fully aware of the concerns about your child. You will have every opportunity to answer any allegation made against you or others who may have placed your child at risk.

It is also an absolute requirement that while there are child protection concerns, professionals share information with each other. It can be very difficult for both parents and professionals when it is necessary to share information that has been given in confidence but the child's protection must outweigh issues of adult confidentiality. All professionals must keep their records confidential and only share them with other professionals who are involved with the child's welfare.

Throughout the enquiries you and your child/ren will be listened to and kept informed.

What happens next?

If the enquiries show that there are no concerns about your child the social worker will not need to see you again unless you feel you would like further support.

If there are still concerns after the enquiries the social worker will need to take further action and may arrange a Child in Need meeting to look at what might help your family. This meeting will include yourselves and other people who know your family and might be able to help. When there are more serious concerns a Child Protection Conference will be arranged by the social worker.

Other professionals can also request that a conference be held.



There is a separate leaflet for parents/carers about child protection conferences.

Will my children be taken into care?

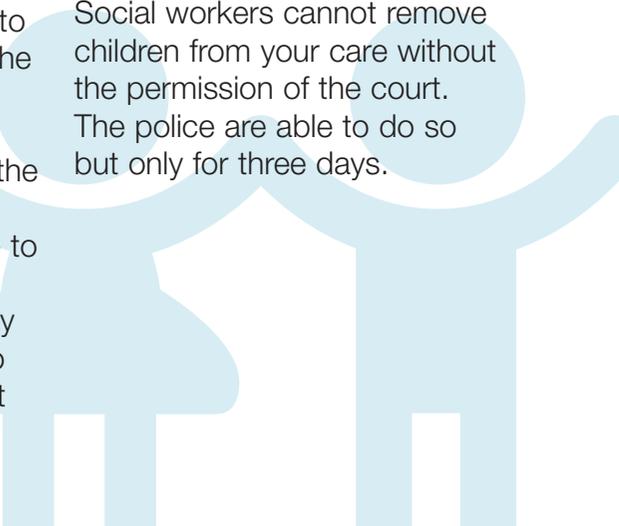
In most cases NO. Very few children have to leave home because of child protection concerns. All professional agencies in Lambeth believe that wherever possible children should live with their own families - provision of help, advice and services can usually reduce concerns.

It is ONLY if children are in immediate danger of serious harm that they will be taken to a safe place. This could be the home of relatives or friends, foster carers or a children's home. When this is needed the social worker will seek your agreement. If you are unable to agree, Lambeth's Children's Social Care will need to apply to a court for a legal order to keep your child safe. In most

situations you will be informed that this is the plan and have the opportunity to get legal advice to oppose the application in court. You also need to know that Children's Social Care can also apply to court if they believe there are serious concerns but you are refusing to allow access to your child.

In some cases children may be able to stay in their own home if another member of the household moves out and Children's Social Care can assist with this.

Social workers cannot remove children from your care without the permission of the court. The police are able to do so but only for three days.



What are my rights?

Both the social worker and police officer (if involved) will remind you that you have certain rights during the course of their enquiries. These include the right:

- To be treated with respect by professionals who have an open mind about relationships within your family
- To be given a clear explanation about what is happening and possible future action
- To have all decisions clearly explained
- To be listened to and your views asked for and recorded
- To be adequately supported by anyone you choose
- To seek legal advice
- To appropriate confidentiality
- To an appropriate interpreter if required
- To complain if you are not satisfied with the service you have received

What about my child's interests?

Child protection enquiries can be distressing for your family and your child will need your support. You can help him/her by:

- Being reassuring, patient and calm
- Telling your child he/she is not to blame for what is happening
- Working with the social worker and police in an open and honest way

Like you, your child has rights

These are:

- To be protected from harm
- To be listened to and taken seriously
- To be told about what is happening during the enquiries
- To say no to any interview or medical examination (if the child is of an age to understand)
- To ask you for support
- To complain



Independent help & advice

The Family Rights Group can provide free, confidential advice and they publish a much fuller guide to child protection procedures.

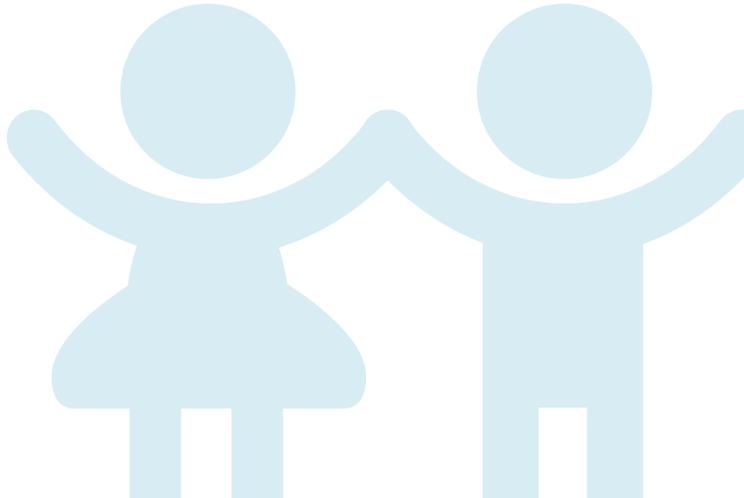
The telephone advice service is available:

Monday - Friday, 10am - 12pm & 1.30pm - 3.30pm

Freephone: 0800 731 1696

You can also email advice@frg.org.uk

Children's Legal Centre, 38 Great Portland Street,
London W1W 8QY. Tel: 020 7580 1664



If you would like this information in large print, braille, audio tape, in pictures and symbols, or in a community language please call **020 7926 5555**.

Spanish

Si desea esta información en otro idioma, rogamos nos ilame al 020 7926 5555

Portugese

Se desejar esta informação noutro idioma é favor telefonar para 020 7926 5555

French

Si vous souhaitez ces informations dans une autre langue veuillez nous contacter au 020 7926 5555

Somali

Haddii aad ku jeclaan laheyd macluumaadkaan luqad kale, fadlan wac nambarkaan 020 7926 5555.

Hindi

यदि आप यह सूचना किसी और भाषा में चाहते हों, तो कृपया 020 7926 5555 पर फोन करें।

Urdu

زبان میں چاہئے تو برائے مہربانی 020 7926 5555 کال کریں۔
اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی دیگر

Twi

Se woape saa nkaeboy yi wo kasa foforo mu a fre 020 7926 5555

Yoruba

Tí ẹ ba ẹ ìmòrán yìí, ní èdè Òmfràn, ẹjǫ, ẹ kàn wà l'ágogo 020 7926 5555

Gurjarati

જો તમને આ જાણકારી અલ્પ ભાષામાં જાઈતી હોય તો, કૃપા કરીને કોલ કરો 020 7926 5555.

Arabic

بلغتة أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال بالرقم: 020 7926 5555.
إذا رغبت في الحصول على هذه المعلومات

Bengali

যদি আপনি অন্য কোনো ভাষায় এই তথ্যটি চান, তাহলে অনুগ্রহ করে 020 7926 5555 নম্বরে টেলিফোন করুন।