

CHILDREN SERVICES

Children Services is a Local Authority department responsible for helping and protecting vulnerable children. It used to be called Social Services.

Why are there concerns about children? Research shows that:

<p>Children who see, hear or experience abuse suffer emotional harm, sometimes physical harm too; domestic abuse affects children of any age</p>	<p>Parenting abilities of parents experiencing abuse can be disrupted, they are not able to look after the children as well as they would like</p>	<p>Witnessing or experiencing abuse can have a negative impact on children’s behaviour at home and at school</p>
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Anyone can contact Children Services to ask for help if they believe that it’s required because there is domestic abuse at home or there is a risk that it might happen – it includes victims, family members, school worker, police officer etc.

Don’t wait for the situation at home to get worse. Ask for help now to avoid the need for Children Services to be involved!

Early help for the family

If you are worried about the situation at home, you can ask for help someone who is already working with your child, e.g. health visitor or teacher. An **early help assessment** will be undertaken as part of the **Common Assessment Framework (CAF)** to establish what support you may need. You and your child will be involved in planning the support for you. **Team Around Family (TAF)** will be set up if the support is offered by more than one agency. Practical and emotional support offered at the early stages of problems developing within the family aims to prevent their escalation and the intervention of the Children Services in the future.

When is it necessary to make a referral to Children Services?

- when a child requires more support because of complex needs relating to physical or mental health, e.g. disabled child, child experiencing emotional difficulties or behavioural problems at school
- when a child’s safety is at risk