

The results of any medical examination may be used by the social worker later as evidence any Children's Hearing or in court.

Medical examinations may be carried out by:

- your child's own doctor;
- community paediatrician; or
- doctors with a special knowledge of child protection.

After the medical, the results will be discussed with you and your child by the doctor carrying out the medical, the social worker or police officer.

Where families can get help

If you need legal advice on your and your child's rights in relation to this investigation, you can contact:

- a solicitor (legal aid may be available);
- Citizens Advice; or
- the Child Law Society.

If there is anything that you do not understand, please ask the workers involved. They are used to being asked questions in these situations. If they cannot answer your questions, they will try to find the right person who can.

Children have a right to grow up in households where they feel safe, well looked after and protected. If you would like more help or advice about caring for your child, please speak to one of the following.

- A health visitor.
- A nursery teacher.
- A teacher.
- A social worker.
- your family doctor.

This leaflet was given to you by:

Name:

Agency:

.....

Phone number:

If this person is not available, please ask to speak to the following manager.

Name:

Agency:

.....

Phone number:

Out-of-office hours - If you need to speak to someone urgently, please phone 01382 436430.



You can get this leaflet in large print, in Braille or on cassette by contacting us on 01307 474151. We can provide this information in other languages if you need it.

Information for parents and carers About child protection investigations



Introduction

This leaflet will help families who become involved in child protection investigations to understand:

- why people are concerned;
- what is likely to happen during the investigation;
- what will happen after the investigation; and
- where families can get help.

Responsibilities of agencies and others

Everyone has a responsibility to make sure children are safe and well looked after. You should report any concerns about a child or young person's welfare or protection to:

- professionals involved with your child or family;
- social work; or
- the police.

Why are people concerned about your child?

There may be concerns about your child for a variety of reasons, for example, that they have experienced, or are at risk of, harm. There are different types of harm to children and they include the following.

- Physical injury - being hit, kicked, punched, burned or scalded
- Physical neglect - not being properly fed or clothed, poor hygiene, illness or injury that has not been treated
- Sexual abuse - sexual behaviour or language that is not appropriate. This could include being exposed to or involved in mobile phone or internet abuse

- Emotional abuse - being criticised all the time or put down, being ignored, humiliated or exposed to family violence
- Failing to thrive - not growing or developing as expected, with no obvious reasons for this

There may also be concerns because your child is, or may be, living in the same house as a person who is a risk to children.

What is likely to happen during an investigation?

Social workers and the police have a legal responsibility to investigate any concerns which suggest your child, or any other child, has been harmed or is at risk of harm.

In an investigation, it is important that the social worker or police officer contacts you as quickly as possible.

The reasons for this are to:

- make sure your child is healthy and safe;
- protect your child from the actions of any possible offenders; and
- tell you about the concerns that have been raised.

At all times the welfare of your child comes first. Usually the police officer and social worker will want to do the following.

- Speak to your child. Sometimes it may be necessary to do this away from home. Where possible they will ask you to be there and they will make sure your child is properly looked after at all times.
- Speak to you.
- Speak to any other relevant person, for example, other family members, your child's teacher, a health visitor.

- Ask for more information, for example, checking the conditions children are living in.
- Arrange a medical examination if necessary.

Police officers may want to interview anyone suspected of harming a child.

Depending on your child's age and how well they understand, the social worker and police officer will usually ask your child to agree to take part in an interview or a medical examination.

In most cases, you will be asked by the social worker or police officer to agree to your child being interviewed. However, sometimes this might not be possible. In these situations, why your child was interviewed by a social worker or police officer, or other action was taken by them, without your knowledge or consent will be explained.

If you refuse to agree, the social worker or police officer may consider other emergency legal measures to protect your child's welfare.

Where possible, you will be kept up to date by the social worker or police officer with the investigation. If you need advice or support, this can be arranged. If you feel you have not been treated fairly by any of the workers involved, you will be advised of your rights and given information by them about who you should contact for more advice.

What will happen after the investigation?

The social worker and police officer will collect information about your child's circumstances and assess whether your child is at risk or not. Depending on what they find out, one or more of the following might happen.

- They will take no more action.
- They will offer support to you and your child.
- There will be a child protection case conference to decide whether more child protection measures are necessary.
- They may ask the person who is a risk to your child to move out of the family home.
- There may be voluntary arrangements for your child to live with a family member or friend.
- They may need to take legal action to protect your child.
- They may refer your child to the Reporter to the Children's Hearing for Angus who will consider the referral and decide on the need for a children's hearing.

In the most cases, children are able to stay at home. Children only need to be taken away from home by a social worker if the information suggests there is an immediate danger to the child and they cannot be protected within their own family.

Medical examinations

In some cases, your child may need a medical examination. The main reasons for this are to:

- check the good health and welfare of your child;
- confirm whether your child has been injured; and
- find out how any injuries that may have been found have been caused.