



BEDFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL

What is a referral to Children's Social Care?

A guide for
parents and carers

What is a referral?

If the Bedford Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) is contacted about your child or young person, they will consider whether any services are appropriate from Early Help or Children's Social Care. MASH staff will contact parents and other involved professionals, unless doing so would place the child or young person at risk. If it is decided that involvement of Children's Social Care is appropriate, MASH staff will pass a referral to Children's Social Care within one working day.



What will happen?

Children's Social Care will consider the referral and decide how it should be dealt with. It is likely that Children's Social Care will want to complete an assessment, gathering information from everyone involved with your child or young person to decide the best course of action. This assessment should take no longer than 45 working days and many assessments are completed much more quickly.

If the concerns are of a particularly serious nature they may need to involve the Police from the start.

How will you be involved?

A Social Worker will talk to you and your family about the referral. They will also talk to any other people who have contact with your child or young person such as your child's or young person's doctor, teacher or school nurse. A decision will then be made as to whether anything further needs to be done to help and the Social Worker will inform you of the decision. This may be:

- no further action
- offer advice
- offer support either by one of our teams or to signpost you to an organisation that could help
- a decision that your child or young person is at risk of harm, and a Child Protection Conference needs to be called.

The aim of the process is to safeguard your child or young person and the professionals involved want to help you and your family to do that.

Does all this take place in private?

Nobody wants to cause you any more distress than you may already be feeling. All interviews will take place in private and any information shared by professionals will remain strictly confidential. If it is necessary to share any information about you and your family with other agencies, your consent will be sought, except when there are concerns that your child may be at risk of harm. For more information on information sharing and consent, please take a look at our leaflet called **“Information Sharing and Consent – for parents and carers”**.

Your child or young person will be spoken to by a Social Worker so we can take their views into consideration. We will usually seek your consent before talking to your child or young person.



Your rights

During the process described in this leaflet, you as the parent or carer have a right:

- to be heard and treated with respect
- to be kept informed and involved (where this does not place a child or young person at risk)
- to have your racial, religious and cultural background and that of your child or young person considered
- to bring a friend to any meetings for support. Remember that personal information about your family may be shared in discussions, which could include details of any criminal convictions, and anyone who comes with you will hear this information.

What the professionals need from you to ensure the best outcome for your child or young person:

- honesty and co-operation



What can I do if I am not happy with what is happening?

If you have a complaint about how Children's Social Care has dealt with the referral you should talk to your child's or young person's Social Worker. They may be able to explain further why the decision was made and answer any questions that are worrying you. If you still disagree you can contact the Complaints department, details below:

Contact the Bedford Borough Customer Relations on telephone 01234 228597 or email: be.heard@bedford.gov.uk



Useful Contacts

Bedford Borough Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) – 01234 718700
during these hours (Mon-Thurs: 8.50am - 5.20pm Friday: 8.45am - 4.20pm)
or Out of hours Emergency Duty team - 0300 300 8123 (Open 5pm – 9am
Monday to Thursday, Weekends 4pm on Friday to 9am on Monday)

Bedford Borough Safeguarding Children Board - 01234 276512

Bedfordshire Police Public Protection Team - 01234 846960

Childline - 0800 1111

NSPCC - 0808 800 5000

Family Rights Group - 0800 731 1696

Family Lives - 0808 800 2222

A local solicitor that specialises in Family Law.

Finding out more

If you would like further copies, a large-print copy or information about us and our services, please telephone or write to us at our address below.

Për Informacion

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Informacja

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Za Informacije

Per Informazione



01234 267422



Children Services

Bedford Borough Council
Borough Hall
Caudwell Street
Bedford, MK42 9AP



childrensservices@bedford.gov.uk