

Contact Details

First Response Service (Local Authority)

0800 13 13 126

first@staffordshire.gov.uk

Police **0300 123 44 55 or 101 (non emergency)**

Emergency Duty Service (Local Authority Out of

Hours) **0845 6042886**

The Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board is a partnership between:

Staffordshire County Council – Families First
Adult Social Care
District Councils
The Police
Probation

Youth Offending Services
Health
CAFCASS
Young Offenders Institutes
The Voluntary Sector

Protecting children is your responsibility too...

What can you do? Public information leaflet



If you would like this document in another language or format, e.g. large text, please contact the Communications Team (Families First) on 01785 277135.

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Background

Most children enjoy generally happy childhood experiences within their own family.

Unfortunately for some, this is not the case.

During difficult family times everyone has a responsibility to protect children from future harm. Good child care begins before a child is born.

What is harm?

One in ten adults will have experienced harm during their childhood.

Harm is ill treatment or child abuse.

Here are some examples:

Physical abuse

- This could be any physical injury like cuts, bruises, burns, scalds or broken bones that have not happened by accident. Injuries may be caused as a result of shaking in the case of babies. It can also be when someone deliberately induces illness in a child.

Emotional abuse

- This may involve making a child feel constantly worthless or unloved, frightened or in danger. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another.

Sexual abuse

- This is when a child is made to take part in or watch sexual activities: they may be around when someone is watching pornographic material.

In most cases sexual abuse is carried out by a person who is known to the child – even a member of their own family.

Neglect

- A child may be left alone or left with unsuitable caregivers. They may not be fed or clothed properly or not be taken to the doctors when they are unwell. Neglect also involves not protecting a child from danger.

What should I do if I think that a child is being harmed?

Telephone the First Response Team at the MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) or the Police straight away – they will listen – local contact numbers are on the back of this leaflet.

Do I have to give my name?

No – it is your choice; if you decide that you want to remain anonymous that decision will be respected. (Professionals making a referral should be aware that they cannot be guaranteed anonymity.)

What happens next?

Social workers will follow up every report where they believe a child may be at risk of harm.

They will talk to other people who know the child and may be able to provide a clearer picture.

This includes teachers, health visitors and members of the child's family.

After this several things could happen:

- No further action will be taken.
- Help and support will be offered to the family.
- An investigation will take place.

Are children taken away from home?

Very rarely - social workers cannot remove a child from their family without the permission of the court. This only happens when there are real concerns that the child will not be safe at home, and then consideration is always given to the child being looked after by a relative or a friend.

Will I be told what has happened?

You should receive written confirmation that your referral has been received and acted upon unless your report was anonymous.