



MAKING  
**CHILDREN**  
SAFER

## Child Protection Guide

Helpful advice about protecting children in Northamptonshire.

August 2014



# Introduction

This simple guide to child protection in Northamptonshire is for anyone who works or volunteers with children, young people or families.

The following pages will:

- help you to know what to do if you are concerned about a child
- help you to recognise the potential signs of abuse
- explain what happens once you raise a concern about a child
- give you an overview of the range of support for children and families in the county
- explain some of the words and phrases that are used when child protection procedures are taking place

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## Your responsibilities

All children have a right to be protected from harm and all adults have a role to play in ensuring that our children are protected and safe.

As individuals, we all play an important part in the child protection process. Whether as part of your job or volunteering activities, or simply as a member of your local community, child protection is your responsibility.

Some organisations like schools, nurseries, health agencies and local authorities have very specific roles and responsibilities.

However, protecting children from harm is not limited to those agencies. Any group or organisation that works with, or organises activities for, children and young people must have appropriate arrangements in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Your responsibility includes making sure you know the child protection procedures and protocols your group or organisation uses. This will help you to know what to do if you are concerned about a child's welfare and give you the confidence to understand what information you can share with others in raising concerns. It will also help you to know how to record both your concerns and your response.

You should also make a point of finding out if there is an individual assigned to lead on child protection issues in your group or organisation and how to contact them.

Crucially, you have a responsibility to listen to the children and young people you work with and try to see situations from their perspective.

## Recap:

Your responsibilities:

- Try to see situations from the child or young person's perspective
- Know your group, organisation or employer's child protection policies and procedures
- Know who the lead colleague for child protection issues is in your group, organisation or service and how to contact them
- Know when and how to raise a concern about a child
- Know what to do if you suspect a child is in immediate danger of harm



## The Big Picture – The Johnson Family

The Johnsons are a family of five living in Northamptonshire. Each family member has been in contact with one or more organisation, that provides services for children or families.



# The Big Picture – The Johnson Family

## What the frontline professional sees:

- **Adult Mental Health Worker**

I have been working with Mrs Johnson for several weeks. She has suffered from severe depression in the past. She finds it hard to cope with her children and loses track of time; this may be due to her medication. Her husband has been out of work for some time. She told me that her oldest, Sam, has been in trouble with the police.

- **Police Officer**

We were called out to a disturbance outside the local youth club. Sam, a 13 year old boy, was a little intoxicated and needed calming down. My colleague and I took Sam home. His father did not seem surprised and said he didn't know how to control his son. Mr Johnson also reported that his wife was depressed and finds it hard to look after the younger two children.

- **Health Visitor**

Frankie is two years old and the youngest of three children. She is slightly underweight and her clothes are often dirty. Frankie's mother has suffered from depression in the past and is finding it hard to cope.

- **Teacher**

Janice is seven years old. She doesn't concentrate in school and is small compared to the other children in her class. Her mum is often late to pick her up from school and seems distracted and disorganised. Janice tells me that a police officer visited their house last week.



## The Big Picture – The Johnson Family

- **GP**

Mr Johnson came to see me last week. He told me that he has been unemployed for six weeks and that life at home was difficult due to his wife's depression and his children's behaviour. He is worried that he will start drinking again. Mr Johnson attended Alcoholics Anonymous several years ago and has drunk alcohol since.

We can see there are numerous ways in which local services and organisations interact with the family. Each organisation has a limited view of the family's circumstances but if each person working with them shares their information, we can build up a much better picture of the family's circumstances. This helps to make sure that any risks to the children and family can be identified and acted on.

Any one of the five professionals in contact with the family can start the process of pulling in support from their own and other organisations. Keep reading to find out more about the routes that process can take.

# Early Help Pathway: what happens when a family needs additional support?

If you think a child or young person is not meeting the expected development for their age, or you have worries that a parent is not taking care of their child very well

and

The child or family could benefit from additional support and that would need the involvement of more than just your own organisation or group. (This extra support is often referred to as early help and prevention services).

Contact Northamptonshire County Council to discuss your understanding of the child or family's situation with the Common Assessment for Families (CAF) team\*. Telephone 01604 367336 or email [cafcoordinators@northamptonshire.gov.uk](mailto:cafcoordinators@northamptonshire.gov.uk)

The CAF team co-ordinates multi-agency responses to individual situations and helps make sure that the right support is provided to the family at the right time.

The CAF team will check if the child or family is already receiving multi-agency support. If they are, then the information you have will be used to build up a bigger and better picture of the family's situation.

If the family is not already receiving additional support, then you may be asked to start or help with an assessment of the family's needs. This is called a Common Assessment for Families (CAF\*).

The family's situation might be the subject of a Complex Case Meeting where individual cases can be discussed with the family's consent. You may be asked to attend the meeting to share your concerns.

A dedicated meeting might be arranged to talk about the family's needs and how organisations can work together to address those needs. This will be called the Team around the Family which is usually referred to as a TAF\*. You may be asked to attend this meeting to share your concerns.

\* See glossary for fuller explanation.

Seek the consent and participation of the family where possible to allow the family an opportunity to influence the process of identifying their needs. It also ensures you are taking the thoughts and experiences of children into account.



## Child Protection Pathway: what happens when a child protection concern is raised?

A child or young person tells you something or behaves in a way which makes you worried, or you see injuries or marks that cause you to be concerned, and you think they could be at risk of harm.

Tell the child or young person that you are worried about them, if it's appropriate to do so. Ask them how they feel and that you need to pass the information on.

Make a written note of the information the child gave you, or the circumstances that led to your concerns. This will help the people who need to investigate your concerns.

If your group, organisation or service has a child protection procedure, you should follow it. This may involve speaking to a manager or colleague with a designated child protection role.

If your organisation doesn't have a designated child protection coordinator, you are responsible for passing on your concerns. This is known as making a referral.

If you think a child is in immediate danger, call Northamptonshire Police on 999.

If there is no immediate danger, you should contact Northamptonshire County Council by emailing [MASH@northamptonshire.gcsx.gov.uk](mailto:MASH@northamptonshire.gcsx.gov.uk) or telephoning 0300 126 1000 between 8am and 6pm Monday to Friday.

If there is no immediate danger, but you need to speak to somebody outside these working hours, contact Northamptonshire County Council's out-of-hours service on 01604 626938.

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graph TD; A[Your call or email goes to a dedicated team of child protection professionals, known as the Northamptonshire multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH).] --> B[If a decision is taken that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer serious harm, then it will be passed to the most appropriate social care team.]; A --> C[If a decision is taken that the situation does not meet the threshold for significant harm and doesn't need social care involvement, but does need additional support such as early help or prevention services, you will be advised of other support available to the family. You may also be advised to use the CAF* process to pull in multi-agency support.]; B --> D[You or the person who made the referral if it was your organisation's designated safeguarding lead – will be kept informed about the outcome.];
```

Your call or email goes to a dedicated team of child protection professionals, known as the Northamptonshire multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH).

People from different organisations work together in the team, including social care, police, NHS, education, and probation services.

If a decision is taken that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer serious harm, then it will be passed to the most appropriate social care team.

This is likely to include more detailed enquiries and you may be involved in the planning and delivery of the response to the child or family's circumstances.

You or the person who made the referral if it was your organisation's designated safeguarding lead – will be kept informed about the outcome.

If a decision is taken that the situation does not meet the threshold for significant harm and doesn't need social care involvement, but does need additional support such as early help or prevention services, you will be advised of other support available to the family. You may also be advised to use the CAF\* process to pull in multi-agency support.

\* See glossary for fuller explanation.



## Types of abuse and how to recognise them

Recognising child abuse is not easy but if you have any concerns that a child is subject to abuse or neglect, you must act to make sure your concerns are looked into. Child abuse is divided into four categories.

### **Neglect**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health and development.

Neglect may involve failure to provide:

- adequate food, clothing or shelter
- protection from harm or danger
- access to appropriate medical care or treatment

It may also include failure to meet or respond to basic emotional needs or to ensure that educational needs are met.

### **Physical Abuse**

Physical abuse may involve:

- hitting
- shaking
- throwing
- poisoning
- burning or scalding
- drowning
- suffocating
- female genital mutilation
- or otherwise causing physical harm to a child

Physical abuse may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates symptoms of illness or deliberately causes ill health to a child.

## Types of abuse and how to recognise them

### Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development.

- It may involve conveying to a child that he or she is worthless, unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as he or she meets the needs of another person
- It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children
- It may involve causing a child to feel frightened or in danger or involve exploitation or corruption of a child

### Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.

- Activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative and non-penetrative acts
- Sexual activities may also include non-contact activities such as involving a child in looking at, or producing, sexual activities or encouraging a child to behave in sexually inappropriate ways



## Types of abuse and how to recognise them

### Sexual Exploitation

Child sexual exploitation is illegal activity by people who have power over young people and use it to sexually abuse them.

This can involve a broad range of exploitative activity, from seemingly consensual relationships and informal exchanges of sex for attention, accommodation, gifts or cigarettes, through to very serious organised crime.

Young people may be groomed by boyfriends or girlfriends – the young person may believe they are in a loving relationship. They can also be groomed by a family member, or friend of the family. Youngsters who are living with known sex workers can be at a higher risk.

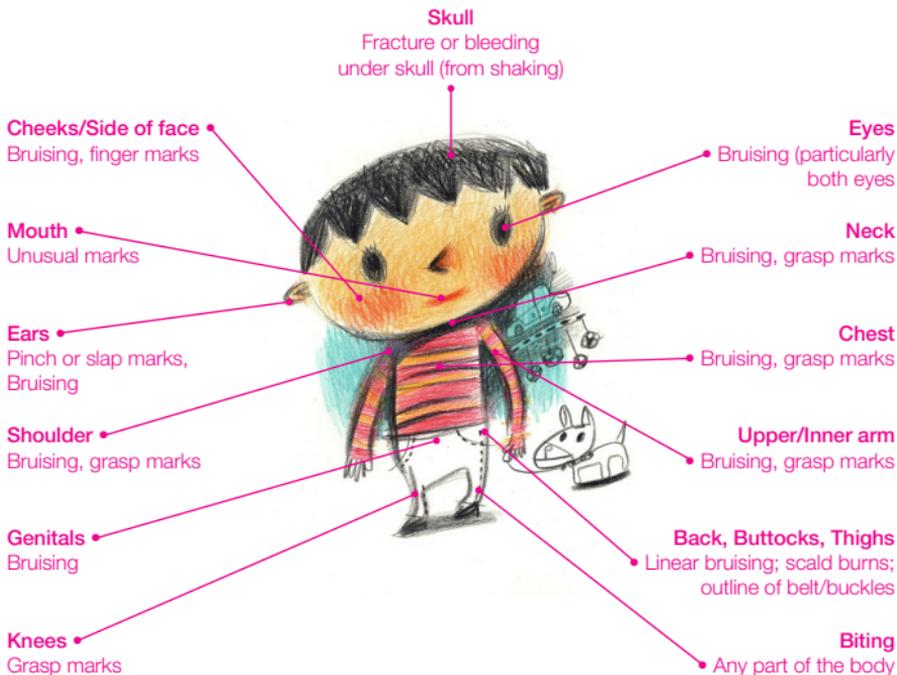
Because it usually involves secretive behaviour by the young person, sexual exploitation is difficult to recognise.

These are some of the signs that a young person might be a victim of sexual exploitation:

- running away/going missing
- self-harming behaviours
- exclusion from school or poor school attendance
- physical symptoms such as sexually transmitted infection (STIs) or bruising suggestive of physical or sexual abuse
- unexplained clothes, money or other gifts
- substance, drug and/or alcohol abuse
- poor relationship with family and peers
- low self-esteem
- having keys to unknown premises
- being contacted by unknown adults or associating with older men
- having more than one mobile phone or using different SIM cards

# Physical Abuse: Common sites for physical injury

## Possible sites for physical injury



The above is not an exhaustive list but should raise concerns.

N.B. Bruising is extremely rare in young babies especially if they are not yet walking



## Common sites for accidental injury

These may not cause you as much concern as overleaf above – they may be from a child having a simple accident.





## Case Studies

The following details are taken from real cases in Northamptonshire. They show examples of the range of responses and support available when responding to a family's needs. Every family will have different needs and should be assessed to make sure the most appropriate help is offered for their particular circumstances.



## Case study 1 – Health Visitor

### **What was the issue?**

A health visitor had concerns about a new mother's mental health needs and the effect this was having on her attachment with her newborn son. An assessment known as the Common Assessment for Families (CAF)\* was completed by the health visitor with the family to look at what support could be put in place.

### **How was it addressed?**

Following the assessment, the health visitor decided a multi-agency team could provide the support the child and family needed. The CAF\* help desk organised the first meeting of this team, known as the team around the family (TAF\*). The health visitor, an adult mental health worker and a children's centre worker attended the TAF meetings.

The TAF coordinated their work to ensure that regular visits were made to the parent. Childcare was arranged to make time for dedicated mental health support. In line with this, the children's centre completed outreach work with the mother and child to help with the attachment issue.

### **What difference did the additional support make?**

The regularity and consistency of the support helped the mother to make a positive recovery. The baby made great progress in his development and attachment with his mum.

\* See glossary for fuller explanation.

## Case study 2 – Head Teacher

### What was the issue?

A head teacher was uncertain how to proceed with a specific family. The school had heard about circumstances and events in the family home through the child and had completed a CAF. Working as a multi agency team with partners, they made some progress but the situation had become stuck and not improving for the child and family.

### How was it addressed?

The head teacher presented the case at a Complex Case Meeting with the consent of the family. The professionals present suggested how to support the child and the family, based on their experiences of similar cases. A referral was made by the chair of the Complex Case Meeting for additional parenting support from a commissioned service provider.

### What difference did the additional support make?

The head teacher returned to school and put several of the suggested approaches into practice. The family also received additional support with parenting from the commissioned service provider. The child's situation improved and the concerns about her home life have reduced. She is happy at school and working hard.

The situation gave the head teacher the confidence to adapt her learning to other situations that may arise and helped her understand the additional support available



## Case study 3 – Police Community Support Officer

### What was the issue?

A Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) patrolling an estate visited the home of a mother of three children (aged 8, 2, and 6 months) he knew to have recently separated from her partner due to issues of domestic abuse.

The officer noticed a large amount of dirty plates and pots in the kitchen and a pile of clothes on the floor. There were two dogs running around the house with evidence of dog faeces indoors and a strong smell of ammonia. The woman did not know where her eldest child was: she thought that he “might be with a neighbour”.

Upstairs, there were loose wires hanging from an old plug socket and the lights didn't work. There was only one child's bed with a dirty and stained sheet.

There were no toys for the children. In the bathroom there were more dirty clothes and dirty nappies. There was no stairgate.

The mother confided that she was feeling really low after separating from her husband. She was considering allowing her husband to return to the family home. The PCSO was concerned about the state of the house, the presentation of the mother and her comments about reconciliation; however, he decided that there was no immediate risk to the children and the children's mother was supported by the neighbour who brought her eldest child back into the house while the officer was present.

## Case study 3 – Police Community Support Officer

### How was it addressed?

The PCSO made a referral to the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH\*) for consideration of social care intervention. Due to the multiple concerns (neglect; historic domestic abuse; possible reconciliation; mother unaware of where her child was; state of the home), this was passed to the local assessment service for completion of an initial assessment.

The assessing social worker visited the home to engage with the children and their mother. The neighbour had continued to offer the family practical support and had helped the children's mother to clean up the house.

The children appeared to be happy and securely attached to their mother. The eight-year old child was a little withdrawn, but sought support from his mother and looked to her for reassurance during the assessment visits.

The mother agreed that she had not been able to care for the dogs. The assessing social worker made contact with the RSPCA who assisted with their re-homing.

The assessing social worker was able to observe an improvement in the state of the family home between the two visits she made to complete her assessment.

\* See glossary for fuller explanation.



## Case study 3 – Police Community Support Officer

It was agreed that a referral should be made to the local children's centre for family support intervention. The children's mother stated that she was committed to maintain her separation from the children's father. She was supported in this by the neighbour who agreed to be the contact point for the father to receive and hand over the children for his visits. The children's mother also took up the support offered to her by the children's centre, joining their stay & play group and accessing a free nursery placement for her two year-old.

The eldest child's school agreed for him to attend their next nurture group, a small structured teaching group. With the younger children's health visitor, it was agreed that the family could benefit from a more structured support system.

The health visitor agreed to convene a CAF\* and act as lead professional following the end of the initial assessment process in order to support the children's mother in the changes she was committed to make.

### **What difference did the additional support make?**

The PCSO had, initially, considered that the children should be removed from their mother's care due to the multiple concerns witnessed on his initial visit. However, through the referral, the assessment and the support provided, the children's situation was greatly improved.

These children could have easily ended up in local authority care, if their mother had not been supported to make the changes she did. Through the provision of assessment and focussed early help, they were able to stay with their mother in the family home.

\* See glossary for fuller explanation.

## Case study 4 – Children's Centre

### What was the issue?

The child of a lone parent with learning difficulties was due to start at the nursery attached to a children's centre. It became apparent at a meeting arranged for new parents that the mother had difficulties in parenting her children and had a poor understanding of safety and children's needs. A discussion was held between the nursery head teacher, school head teacher and children's centre manager about how support could be offered to the parent. Support was offered informally at first but it very soon escalated to high level concerns for the safety and security of the children.

### How was it addressed?

A referral was made to Northamptonshire County Council's multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH). As a result of the referral, the family was allocated a social worker.

Children in Need meetings were held at the children's centre to support the family. Special support from the family's housing officer was arranged and work took place to ensure the safety of the children.

### What difference did the additional support make?

Things became more manageable for the mother and the children began to be more settled. A support network of friends was developed to support the mother outside working hours. Work to support the family is continuing by many of the professionals involved with the family.



## Case study 5 – Children's Centre Targeted Support

### What was the issue?

A young woman pregnant with her first child was not eligible for support under the Family Nurse Partnership, a structured support programme for first time teenage parents. The programme is designed for young women in the early stages of pregnancy but because of missed appointments, the young woman's pregnancy was too far advanced to allow her to take part in this programme. In addition, she did not meet the criteria for social care support.

However, her circumstances meant that there was a risk that she would need specialist services if her additional needs were not addressed. She was homeless and unemployed and had been a victim of domestic violence.

### How was it addressed?

Her midwife decided that the most appropriate referral would be for targeted support through her local children's centre. With the woman's involvement, her needs were assessed and an intervention plan devised.

An interim place in a specialist mother/child unit was obtained and support given to help find her own property. She was helped to access maternity grants and benefits and given support with accessing consultant maternal services. She was given advice and guidance with regard to baby equipment, and information about breastfeeding. She was advised about support for parents in her local area as well as advice about domestic abuse safety plans, knowing where to go for help, advocacy at meetings and support with court appearances.

## Case study 5 – Children's Centre Targeted Support

### **What difference did the additional support make?**

As a result of the intervention plan, sustained housing and finances were put in place; the necessary preparations were in place for the baby's arrival; help and advice were given with regard to domestic abuse and managing conflict; and she moved away from the person who was carrying out the abuse. A lead professional ensured that the young woman had a constant consistent contact before and after the child's birth.



## Case study 6 – Child Protection Proceedings

### What was the issue?

A mother of five with an alcohol misuse issue was receiving multi-agency support from a team of professionals including representatives from the local Children's Centre, schools, social care, health visitor and GP. Thanks to their regular meetings, they were able to identify the deteriorating situation in the home as a result of the mother's alcohol dependency. This included occasions when the mother did not have money to buy baby milk, an incident when the mother physically assaulted one of the children and numerous occasions when the mother was drunk and incapable of looking after her children.

### How was it addressed?

The family was already receiving support as the children had been assessed as being in need. However, the professionals working closest to the family identified that the deteriorating conditions presented an increased risk to the children's welfare and safety. It was apparent that the case needed to be escalated and treated as a child protection issue. The family was reassessed under Section 47\* and the children subject to child protection plans under the category of neglect.

\* See glossary for fuller explanation.

## Case study 6 – Child Protection Proceedings

The children were placed in foster care while the family's situation stabilised. The mother received treatment and support for her alcohol problems. The family was supported with relationship building therapy. The schools attended by the children developed age-appropriate support to help them with behavioural and emotional development. The mother was given help and advice about budgeting for food and how to access the local food bank.

The children have returned home. The family's needs have been reassessed at a lower level now that the crisis period is over but the same professionals are continuing to provide support in line with the actions identified as part of the ongoing CAF\* process.

### **What difference did the additional support make?**

As a result of the regular children in need meetings, professionals were able to identify the increased risk to the children. An appropriate child protection response was put in place which helped to manage and reduce those risks. Ongoing support means the stability of the family's situation can be monitored.

\* See glossary for fuller explanation.



In Northamptonshire, there are lots of different organisations providing services that impact on the wellbeing of children, their parents or the whole family.

The local safeguarding children board in Northamptonshire (LSCBN) exists to make sure all those organisations that come into contact with children and young people in the county are:

- carrying out their responsibilities to keep children as safe as possible from abuse, harm, neglect or exploitation
- cooperating and communicating with each other
- training their employees so that everyone working with children, young people and families is aware of what to do when they are worried about a child or young person

As well as holding the county's organisations to account, the LSCBN runs training programmes and develops policies and procedures for the whole county.

The LSCBN also reviews all child deaths in the county. This helps to identify any themes or recurrent circumstances that might need to be addressed by public awareness campaigns or improved training. It will carry out a serious case review:

- when a child dies or comes to serious harm
- and abuse or neglect is known or suspected to be a factor in the death,
- and concerns exist about agencies dealt with the family's situation

to establish if there were any weaknesses or failings in how the child's case was dealt with.

More information about the LSCBN can be found on its website: [www.lscbnorthamptonshire.org.uk/](http://www.lscbnorthamptonshire.org.uk/)

## Information Sharing

Sharing information about children, young people and their families is key to building up a picture of a family's needs, but it is important that information is shared in a way that respects individuals' and families' rights.

Data protection law helps to strike a balance between the benefits of public organisations sharing information while maintaining safeguards around the privacy of the individual. The following guidance should help you to use your professional judgement to decide on when it's appropriate to share information:

### Seven Golden Rules for Information Sharing

1. Remember that the Data Protection Act is not a barrier to sharing information but provides a framework to ensure that personal information about living people is shared appropriately.
2. Be open and honest with the person (and/or their family where appropriate) from the outset about why, what, how and with whom information will, or could be, shared. Seek their agreement, unless it is unsafe or inappropriate to do so.
3. Seek advice if you are in any doubt, without disclosing the identity of the person where possible.



## Information Sharing continued

4. Get permission to share confidential information whenever possible. Respect the wishes of those who do not consent to share confidential information. You may still share information without consent if, in your judgement, that lack of consent can be overridden in the public interest. You will need to base your judgement on the facts of the case.
  - necessary for the purpose for which you are sharing it
  - shared only with those people who need to have it
  - accurate and up-to-date
  - shared in a timely fashion
  - shared securely.
5. Consider safety and well-being: Base your information-sharing decisions on considerations of the safety and well-being of the person and others who may be affected by their actions.
6. Necessary, proportionate, relevant, accurate, timely and secure: Ensure that the information you share is:
  7. Keep a record of your decision and the reasons for it – whether it is to share information or not. If you decide to share, then record what you have shared, with whom and for what purpose.

# Support for children and families in Northamptonshire

## **Supervision in your organisation**

Most organisations, groups or services have a manager or designated lead for child protection with whom you can discuss your concerns at an early stage. They may be able to help you assess the child's or family's needs and make decisions about the support you can offer. You can also discuss whether additional support might be needed.

## **Complex Case Discussion**

A complex case discussion can be arranged to provide advice when a case is proving difficult to resolve and where additional or alternative support may be helpful.

The CAF co-ordinator for the locality will co-ordinate the response to the request for a discussion and seek guidance from relevant professionals or agencies.

There must be consent from the parent or carer for a case to be discussed. It is the responsibility of the professional requesting the discussion to secure that consent.

More information about complex case discussions, how to request one and details of scheduled meetings can be found on the county council's website [www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/complexcase](http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/complexcase)



# Support for children and families in Northamptonshire

## Children's centre services

Children's centre services in Northamptonshire offer a variety of early help services to children under five and their families.

Children's centre services delivery in Northamptonshire has two main elements:

### Element 1: libraries

Northamptonshire County Council's library service provide enhanced universal services including:

- information and advice, resources and support to access further children's centre services;
- children's centre registration services;
- activities such as stories, song and rhymetimes;
- recruiting and co-ordinating volunteers for children's centre services.

### Element 2: commissioned

children's centre services  
The children's centre services that are delivered by external organisations support the delivery of some universal services to all families (such as health services and JobCentre Plus advice) but primarily focus on activities for families who need extra support or early help.

The specific services delivered will be based on local needs but may include:

- information and advice about childcare and employment support;
- stay-and-play groups to support parents in their role as their children's first educators;
- school readiness working with parents and childcare providers to improve outcomes for children;

## Support for children and families in Northamptonshire

- health, lifestyles and wellbeing services such as ante-natal and post natal support, speech and language development, help with giving up smoking, information and advice on breast feeding, hygiene, nutrition and safety;
- parenting and family support including support for children in need, children on child protection plans and looked after children and their families;
- improved skills, education and employability support including benefits and debt advice, adult learning and local education opportunities and links to JobCentre Plus.

Contact details can be found at <http://families.northamptonshire.gov.uk>

### **Northamptonshire Children and Families Service Finder.**

Information is available on the county council's website to help parents and carers, families and professionals to access information about family-related services in their area.

This includes OFSTED-registered childcare providers and details of the services they offer in relation to funded early learning for two, three and four year olds.

<http://families.northamptonshire.gov.uk>



## Working together to safeguard children 2013

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013 is the government guidance for people and organisations involved in child protection and safeguarding.

It sets out, in one place, the legal requirements that health services, social workers, police, schools and other organisations that work with children and young people, must follow – and emphasises that child protection is the responsibility of all professionals who work with children.

The local safeguarding children board is responsible for ensuring compliance with this guidance.

Crucially for Northamptonshire, the guidance reinforces one of the key learning points that emerged from Northamptonshire's 2013 Ofsted inspection of arrangements for the protection of children – that the system for safeguarding children must focus on the needs of the child and the child's voice must be listened to.

The revised guidance represents a change in national child protection policy, placing greater emphasis on local areas to develop their own processes and encouraging stronger reliance on the professional judgement of individual practitioners.

You can find the document – Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013 – on the Department of Education website: [www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/DFE-00030-2013](http://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/DFE-00030-2013)



# Working together to safeguard children 2013

## Guides for young people

Two guides for young people have been written by the Office of Children's Rights Director (OCD) to help explain Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013.

[www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/statutory/g00213160/working-together-to-safeguard-children](http://www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/statutory/g00213160/working-together-to-safeguard-children)

The longer version is to help children and young people know how adults should keep children safe from abuse and neglect. The shorter version is to help children and young people understand what abuse is and where they can get help if they are at risk of harm.



## Glossary

Below are explanations of some of the terms you might come across when dealing with child protection issues.

### **Abuse**

The concept of abuse is wide ranging and includes causing physical, emotional and sexual harm. It also includes neglect, which is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical or psychological needs in a way that is likely to result in serious impairment to the child's health or development. For more information about abuse, see page 12.

### **CAF – Common Assessment for Families**

Every child is different and every family will have different issues to deal with in their lives. However, when a family has additional needs, we use a standard

process to identify them and work out the best response. That process is called the common assessment for families. You will hear it referred to as the CAF.

Because it is a standard process, it means that all services working with children, young people and their families – whether in statutory, community or voluntary sectors – can use the same method for initially assessing children and understanding their needs.

This is important because:

- it helps us all to spot problems early on and work out the best solution that pulls in expertise from more than one service or organisation
- it helps us all to share information quickly and in an easily understood format

## Glossary

### CAF – Common Assessment for Families continued

- it makes it easier to put together an evidence-based support package involving more than one team or organisation
- it reduces the number of assessments that families have to take part in
- where a CAF has already been started, it reduces bureaucracy and form-filling by allowing an existing one to be built on, rather than having to start from scratch

The common assessment is designed for when:

- there are concerns about how well a child is progressing in terms of their health, welfare, behaviour, progress in learning or any other aspect of their well-being
- the child's needs are unclear or broader than a single service can address

If you have a colleague with a designated child protection role, they will most likely have had training on how to complete a CAF. If your organisation does not have a dedicated lead for child protection issues, then you may be asked to help complete a CAF, with the support of the county council's CAF team, if you raise concerns about a child's welfare.

More information about the CAF can be found on the county council's website: [www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/caf](http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/caf)

CAF coordinators can be contacted via the CAF Help Desk (01604 367336) or via [cafcoordinators@northamptonshire.gov.uk](mailto:cafcoordinators@northamptonshire.gov.uk)



## Glossary

### **Child protection conference**

This is a formal multi-agency meeting. It brings together family members (including the child, where appropriate) and professionals involved with the child and the family, in order to make a judgement about whether the child is at continuing risk of significant harm, in which case a child protection plan will be drawn up.

### **Child protection plan**

This is a detailed multi-agency plan for a child who is at risk of significant harm. The plan is based on current findings from the assessment and information held from any previous involvement with the child and family. It sets out what needs to change in order to safeguard the child from harm.

### **Complex Case Discussion**

A complex case discussion can be arranged to provide advice when a case is proving difficult to resolve and where additional or alternative support may be helpful.

The CAF co-ordinator for the locality will co-ordinate the response to the request for a discussion and seek guidance from relevant professionals or agencies.

There must be consent from the parent or carer for a case to be discussed. It is the responsibility of the professional requesting the discussion to secure that consent.

More information about complex case discussions, how to request one and details of scheduled meetings can be found on the county council's website [www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/complexcase](http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/complexcase)

## Glossary

### Lead professional

The lead professional is the person who takes a lead role in co-ordinating the response to a child or family's needs. He or she will:

- act as a single point of contact for the child or family
- co-ordinate the delivery of the actions agreed
- reduce overlap, duplication and inconsistency in the services received

The lead professional is usually the person most involved in meeting the child's additional needs or who has greatest contact/trust with the child.

The lead professional can work in any sector or agency supporting children and families. The important thing is not what job they do, but whether they are the most suitable person in a particular case.

### Locality Forums

Locality Forums meet six times a year and are made up of senior representatives from across partner agencies. Their role is to influence and shape activities and services in the area based on a clear understanding of local need. They work in a timely way so that those needs are addressed early. Each Forum is required to choose and work together on a priority in its locality to ensure services meet the needs identified.

### LSCBN

The Local Safeguarding Children's Board Northamptonshire (LSCBN) co-ordinates child protection work by all agencies in the county and challenges their performance to make sure they are carrying out their responsibilities. It exists to make sure that all organisations in the county who work with children and families are cooperating to protect children and young people.



## Glossary

### **Northamptonshire MASH**

When you raise a concern about a child's welfare, your call or email goes to a dedicated team of child protection professionals, known as the Northamptonshire multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH).

People from different organisations work together in the team, including social care, police, NHS, education, and probation services.

By working together as a team, they are able to gather and collate information quickly to make informed decisions about the risks posed to a child because they can build a bigger picture of a child or family's situation and decide on the most appropriate response.

### **How does the MASH work?**

- If a decision is taken that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer serious harm, the team will share and use information to help decide on the best course of action

- This is likely to include more detailed enquiries by social workers and the police
- If a decision is taken that a case does not meet the threshold for significant harm and doesn't need social care involvement, other support available to the family will be highlighted.

### **Section 47 enquiry**

Every local authority has a duty to make enquiries when it has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm. These are known as Section 47 enquiries. Social workers have lead responsibility for undertaking these enquiries with other agencies, in particular the police, health bodies and schools.

## Glossary

### **Serious case review (SCR)**

When a child dies or comes to serious harm, and abuse or neglect are known or suspected to be a factor in the death and the case gives rise to concerns about the ways in which agencies work together, the local safeguarding children board will carry out a serious case review to:

- establish whether there are lessons to be learned from the case about the way individual agencies work individually and together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
- identify clearly what those lessons are, how they will be acted upon, and what is expected to change as a result
- improve individual agency working and inter-agency working and communications to better safeguard and promote the welfare of children

The focus of a serious case review is on learning lessons –

it is not an inquiry into how a child died or who is culpable. These are matters for the coroners/criminal courts to decide or for agency disciplinary proceedings.

### **Targeted Prevention**

A home-based service that aims to support children, young people, vulnerable adults and their families to function in their home, school and neighbourhood.

### **Team Around the Family**

Team Around the Family (TAF) meetings are for children and families with multiple additional needs, where a targeted and co-ordinated response is required. The TAF brings together young people, parents and practitioners, regardless of agency boundaries, into a small individualised team for each particular child who has been identified as having additional needs. Membership of the TAF may change as the needs of the child/young person and family change.



## Resources and further reading

This guide is part of a set of materials created to provide clear guidance about how to protect children and young people. Other important documents and guidance give more detailed advice, guidance and instructions:

### Local practice guidance

The Northamptonshire Thresholds and Pathways document is the most important resource on child protection and safeguarding matters for everyone in the county who works with children, young people and their families. It sets out the criteria to be used in assessing a child's needs, in identifying and managing the risks to the child and the appropriate levels of support.

The Northamptonshire Thresholds and Pathways is available on the council's website: **[www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/tap](http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/tap)**

### National policies and procedures

Working Together to Safeguard Children:

- A guide to interagency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children  
**[www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/DFE-00030-2013](http://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/DFE-00030-2013)**
- Two guides for young people have been written by the Office of Children's Rights Director (OCD)  
**[www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/statutory/g00213160/working-together-to-safeguard-children](http://www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/statutory/g00213160/working-together-to-safeguard-children)**

## Contacts

### **Local Safeguarding Children Board Northamptonshire (LSCBN)**

[www.lscbnorthamptonshire.org.uk](http://www.lscbnorthamptonshire.org.uk)

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### **NHS England**

[www.england.nhs.uk](http://www.england.nhs.uk)

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### **NHS Corby Clinical Commissioning Group**

[www.corbyccg.nhs.uk](http://www.corbyccg.nhs.uk)

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### **NHS Nene Clinical Commissioning Group**

[www.neneccg.nhs.uk](http://www.neneccg.nhs.uk)

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### **Northamptonshire County Council**

[www.northamptonshire.gov.uk](http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk)

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### **Northamptonshire Police**

[www.northants.police.uk](http://www.northants.police.uk)

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### **Northamptonshire Police and Crime Commissioner**

[www.northantspcc.org.uk](http://www.northantspcc.org.uk)

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### **Children & Young People Partnership (CYPP)**

[www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/cypp](http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/cypp)

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The information in this guide is correct at the time of going to print. Updated information will be published on Northamptonshire County Council's website.

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