

Children can experience serious harm and child abuse at home, at school – in fact anywhere. Usually the harm is caused by someone the child knows and rarely by a stranger.

What should you do if you are worried?

If you are worried about a child, contact Children's Social Care or the Police and talk about your concerns. Your identity is kept confidential. Everyone in the community has a responsibility to make sure that children grow up safe from harm. Children's Social Care will make enquiries about the child's safety and assess what services will help. This is done in strictest confidence.

The child, family and those professionals who work with the family will be involved in the assessment. In all cases, what the family does well for the child is considered alongside the concerns.

In most situations children remain at home safely with their family, while professionals work with the parents to get the right services involved. In all circumstances action will be taken to safeguard the welfare of the child and improve the situation.

If you are not sure, you should always ask for advice

Contacts

If you are concerned about a child or would like advice you can contact:

NSPCC Child Protection Helpline
0808 800 5000

Kent Social Services (Central Referral Unit)
Tel: 03000 411 105 (children)
03000 411 104 (adults)

Kent Social Services (Out of Hours)
Tel: 03000 419 191

Police
Tel: 01622 690 690 (24 Hours)

National Domestic Violence Helpline
Tel: 0808 200 0247

Websites:

Kent Community Health NHS Trust
www.kentcht.nhs.uk/home/about-us/support-services/safeguarding-adults-children-and-young-people/

Social Services
www.kent.gov.uk (follow links to adult / child protection).



PILGRIMS WAY
SURGERY

**Keeping children
and young
people safe**

Safeguarding children in need

Some children require greater levels of support from Children's Social Care along with other agencies. They are children in need. Usually these services support children living at home. If you think a child may require services as a child in need, you can seek advice from Children's Social Care.

Worries about a child

Parents, children and young people, relatives, members of the community and professionals may have concerns that a child has been or might be harmed. Some children live in circumstances where they do not receive enough basic care such as food, clothing, warmth or safety. This can cause their health and development to be neglected and harmed. Help and services are available for parents to improve the situation.

In a small number of cases, a concern may be that an adult or older child is deliberately harming a child. Sometimes, a single hurtful event may cause serious harm, for example a violent assault, sexual assault or poisoning.

Harm can also be caused by ongoing incidents, which damage the child's physical, emotional and psychological development, e.g domestic violence.

Family life

Family life is varied and there is no perfect way to bring up a child. Parenting involves providing for a child's basic needs, keeping them safe, showing them warmth and love.

Children need the support of their parents, family and community to grow up and help them achieve their full potential.

A wide range of services and professionals provide support to families so that their children grow and develop successfully, especially in relation to their health and education.

Parenting can be challenging. All parents may at times feel they need to talk about worries they have about their child. This can feel difficult, but making sure a child is safe, healthy and growing up successfully sometimes needs the support of others. Seeking support not only helps the child but can also strengthen the family and community and is a positive step.

Advice and Support for Parents

Teachers at your child's school and health visitors and doctors at your local health centre can all help provide more information about where to find the right support for you and your child. Asking for advice early on can lead to you receiving the right support and services.

Services are free and all parents, or people caring for a child, can seek help and advice. You can also find out what help is available for children who have disabilities, children

with long term ill health, school problems, bullying and children with special educational needs and children who are young carers.

Arranging extra support

If you would like services from a number of different agencies talk to your teacher, health visitor or doctor. You should be invited to be involved in the assessment of your child's needs. This is called a Common Assessment and it helps the people supporting you to understand what services you and your child need and how all the agencies can work together in the best way. You can also get help and information, in confidence, about problems related to pregnancy, parenthood, housing, ill health, depression, alcohol or drug problems or domestic violence.