
What to do if you are worried about a child

You must always report any worries you have about a child.

Your agency should have a person responsible for children's safeguarding that you can discuss any concerns with. They will pass the information on to children's services-social care if needed. Make sure you know who the responsible person is for your agency.

If you do not know who the person is, or it is an emergency, contact children's services duty worker on 020 7525 1921.

If anyone is injured or there is immediate danger call the emergency services on 999.

If a young person tells you they are being abused

DO

- listen to them carefully
- tell them they have been right to tell you and you will have to tell someone else who can help them
- write down exactly what you remember of the events as soon as possible.

DO NOT

- ask a lot of prompting questions e.g. 'did your Dad give you those bruises'
- tell them you will keep a secret
- tell their parent or carer before you have sought advice from children's services if it may put the child at risk or if the allegation is one of sexual abuse.

Southwark Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB)

SSCB is responsible for making sure agencies work together effectively to safeguard children in Southwark.

For more information on safeguarding children and free training check our web pages, www.southwark.gov.uk/safeguardingchildren

Contact us

Administration

sscb@southwark.gov.uk

Useful links

NSPCC www.nspcc.org.uk

NSPCC helpline for adults tel. 0808 800 5000

Child Line a helpline for children and young people www.childline.org.uk
Tel. 0800 1111

Parentlineplus advice line for parents
www.parentlineplus.org.uk
Tel. 0808 800 2222

Remember

If you are worried about a child in Southwark tel. 020 7525 1921 and speak to the duty worker.

Safeguarding Children

Your duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children



This leaflet outlines

- your duty to help safeguard children
- what to do if you're concerned about a child
- where to go for help and support.



Romi Bowen writes

Romi Bowen

Strategic director
of children's services
and chair Southwark
Safeguarding Children
Board (SSCB).



As director of children's services in Southwark, I am clear about my personal duty to safeguard children. Since a number of tragic cases of child abuse in the UK, there have been changes to the way children's services are organised.

One of the most important has been to extend the legal duty to help safeguard children to all public services, their workers and to agencies and workers commissioned by public services.

We each have a personal responsibility to ensure children are kept safe from harm and abuse. Children rely on us to make sure they are happy and cared for and to help them grow up to make the most of their lives.

You may think a child is at risk but not know what to do about it. Take a few minutes to look through this leaflet. It outlines how you can play your part in safeguarding children in Southwark.

Thank you for your support,

Romi Bowen

Your role in safeguarding children

Guidance issued under the Children Act 2004 states that public services have a legal duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The key thing about this duty is that it applies to everyone whatever their job or role, including workers who would not see their primary role as working with children. This means that everyone needs to be able to recognise a situation when a child may be suffering harm or abuse and know how to report it.

Some examples would be

- A council worker visits a tenant in their home, they notice the tenant has let the property become unhygienic and unsafe and there is evidence of drug use. There are two young children living there who appear unkempt.
- A park ranger notices that every day when they lock up the park the same child is there on his own; he does not seem old enough to be out unsupervised.
- A library worker sees a service user hitting a young child around the head.
- A street cleaner notices a child going through the bins for food.
- A community warden catches a group of boys looking at sexually explicit photos of a local girl on their mobile phones.

This leaflet explains some of the signs that a child may be being harmed or neglected and what to do about it.

What is child abuse?

Child abuse is the term used when an adult or another child or young person harms a child or a young person under the age of 18. It includes neglect of a child's needs.

A child may be experiencing abuse if he or she is:

- frequently dirty, hungry or inadequately dressed
- left in unsafe situations or without medical attention
- constantly "put down", insulted, sworn at or humiliated
- afraid of parents or carers
- severely bruised or injured
- displaying sexual behaviour which doesn't seem appropriate for their age
- growing up in a home where there is domestic violence
- living with parents or carers involved in serious drug or alcohol abuse
- involved in inappropriate sexual acts.

Remember, this list does not cover every type of abuse. You may have seen other things in the child's behaviour or circumstances that worry you.

Abuse or neglect is always wrong and it is never the young person's fault.