

Standards

We regularly review our performance to make sure we are providing the best service we can. We do this by:

- consulting service users and using the information to improve and plan our services
- regular reporting to the council and government with regards to service quality and delivery of positive outcomes for children and families
- undertaking random spot checks and audits to see whether we are actually doing what we claim.

Access to records

Under the Data Protection Act 1998 you have the right to make a written request to view all or part of records held on you by Southwark children's services. Your social worker or local office will be able to assist you in making this request.

What to do if you are unhappy with service?

If, for any reason, you are dissatisfied with the service you have received from us, you can:

- raise your concerns with your social worker or their manager
- make a formal complaint by using Southwark Council's "how to give us your views" leaflet. These are available from your social worker or local office. Alternatively you can telephone Southwark's complaints officer on 020 7525 3977.

Translation or other formats

If you require help with translation or other formats such as audio or large print, please visit the addresses below.

Bermondsey one stop shop
17 Spa Road, SE16

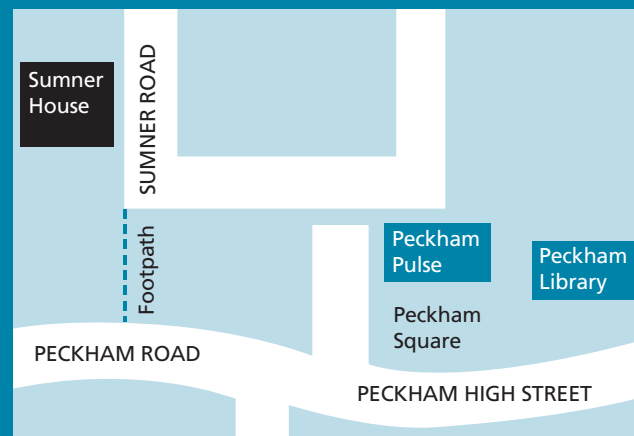
Peckham one stop shop
Peckham Library, SE15

Walworth one stop shop
151 Walworth Road, SE17

Further information

To find out more please contact the referral and assessment service on 020 7525 1921

Referral and assessment service
Southwark children's services
Sumner House
Sumner Road
London SE15 5QS



Referral and assessment service

Information for parents and carers



The referral and assessment service receives referrals about children and their families who may require an assessment. This is to decide how children's services and other professionals can best help to meet the needs of children and their families in Southwark.

Our aim is:

- to keep families together within their communities
- to protect children and young people who may be at risk of harm
- to promote children's welfare within their families
- to work in partnership with parents and carers to promote better outcomes for children in Southwark.

Who can make a request for help?

A parent, carer, doctor, teacher, health visitor, neighbour, relative, friend or anyone who may know of a parent, child or young person who may need our help. They may contact us because they are concerned that you may need help or support. We may need to speak to these people to better understand what is happening within your family and how best we can help you.

If someone else contacts us we will share with you what we have been told.

We may also need to speak to other members of your family or professionals that know you and your child. We will always seek your permission to contact these people and explain why we need to do so. We will only do this without your permission if we think your child is at risk of harm.

Who will do the assessment?

A social worker from the referral and assessment service will assess your children and families' needs. Sometimes we will ask other specialists to help us, such as our health specialist for children under 5. We may also visit you with other professionals known to you.

Sometimes we can complete an initial assessment when you visit the office. It may then be possible to help you straight away. Alternatively we may need to make an appointment to see you at home. The government requires us to complete this initial assessment within 7 working days, so once we have set a time to see you and your children you should try and keep this.

We understand that some issues are more complex so the assessments may take longer. In this case, we will allocate a social worker to you and your family who will carry out a full assessment.

Southwark children's services will ensure assessments include other Southwark agencies that know you and your family.

What can you expect from the assessment?

We will speak to you in detail about your situation and the difficulties you may be having and how you manage these. We will explore with you what other services can do to help. We will also ask you questions about your culture and ethnic background and whether you have any disabilities, so that we can fully understand your family's needs.

We want to hear from all members of your family so if your children are old enough, we would want to give them the opportunity to talk to us as well. This helps us build a clear picture of what issues we can help you with.

What happens after the assessment?

When the assessment is complete we will talk to you about the outcomes of our assessment. You will be given a copy of the assessment. We will discuss with you what services could be helpful and whether you are happy for us to approach them.

If you feel your situation has changed or you are still worried about your children you can contact us again.

If your family has more complex needs, or we think children are at risk of harm or abuse, you will receive help from an allocated social worker in one of our other specialist social work teams for as long as is necessary.

Will we take your children away?

This rarely happens as our first aim is to help you look after your child yourself. We will always consider alternative options. If we are worried about your care for your child, we will work hard with you to improve the situation, which may include your child living with you to improve the situation or may include your child living with other family members or friends for a period of time. A child coming into care is very unlikely unless he/she would be at serious risk if they were to remain living with their family.