

## What if I don't want a service?

You may think there is no need for a social worker to be involved with you and your family. However while we are committed to working in partnership and respect your views where there are child protection concerns about your child, we have a legal duty to try and work with you and your family.

For some families it may be that the social worker and other professionals (health visitors, teachers etc) think that without help things may get worse. We aim to prevent problems getting worse and will be as clear as possible with you as to why we want to work with you and how we might be able to help.

Ultimately our aim is to work with you and other professionals to ensure children remain within their families and that they are kept safe from harm and are able to grow and thrive.

## 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 family support and safeguarding service on 020 7525 0768.

Family support and safeguarding service  
Southwark children's services  
Sumner House  
Sumner Road  
London SE15 5QS

[www.southwark.gov.uk/childrenandfamilies](http://www.southwark.gov.uk/childrenandfamilies)

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# Family support and safeguarding service

## Information for parents and families



## Summary

The aim of this service is to ensure children are safeguarded and that, whenever possible, children remain with their families and support is offered to reduce the risk of family breakdown.

The family support and safeguarding service is made up of social workers and family therapists who offer a service to children and families with complex needs. Family support may be provided directly by the team or by other agencies and voluntary organisations. Southwark is committed to providing support for families in a constructive and caring way. The family support and safeguarding service has developed a range of services in partnership with other voluntary and statutory sections of the community. These include:

- parenting skills workshops or support within homes
- counselling for domestic violence
- help with children's behaviour
- mediation around family issues
- household budgeting
- helping carers to improve their children's development and address their educational needs.

Most people will already have had contact with the referral and assessment service. If their assessment of your needs considers that you need more help than is available from suitable agencies, then the referral and assessment service will involve the family support and safeguarding service.

If your child is the subject of a child protection plan, then you will automatically receive a service from us after the initial child protection conference.

## What will happen when you are referred to us?

This depends on each family's individual circumstances but our aim is to provide you with a range of support packages that will then be reviewed on a three to six month basis. If your child or children are subject to a child protection plan, then you will have a social worker until a conference agrees that this is no longer necessary. Usually, we aim to complete our work with you within nine months but sometimes you may need support for a slightly longer period of time. You should be advised at the initial child protection conference the name of your child's social worker and a visit will be arranged within two weeks. For other referrals you will be normally contacted within two weeks. When allocating a social worker to you we need also to talk to other professionals about your circumstances. We will always attempt to seek your consent to do so unless we are of the view that your child is at risk.

## What kind of help or support can we provide?

The family support and safeguarding team can provide a range of services directly through other voluntary services. Some examples of these services are:

- the intensive parenting project is a multi skilled team that works with families experiencing relationship difficulties, parenting skills or on managing more difficult types of behaviour
- the parenting support programme whose skilled workers can help you and support you in your own home to improve areas of parenting

- Welcare, a voluntary organisation in Southwark that can provide support on our behalf working with families on budgeting, improving the domestic arrangements within the home, routines for children or individual work with a parent on personal issues that affect how they cope with the care of their children.

Your allocated social worker can organise a range of other short term supports like domestic help within your home or help you find other support within your own families. Your social worker will help you liaise with other agencies where you may be having difficulties such as housing issues, benefits, school exclusion worries or to establish how best we can work together to support you and your family.

## What can be expected?

The law expects social workers to work in partnership with families.

**This means that you should:**

- be asked what you think
- have everything explained to you
- be given choices when possible.

The family support and safeguarding service will try to work in close partnership with you to make sure we put in place plans that will help you and your family. Such plans should be written down in the form of an agreement with you, so that everyone is clear about what is happening. If your child is the subject of a child protection plan the social worker will make regular visits to see you and your children. They will also complete up to date assessments reports, which they will share with you and ask for the views of individual members of your family. They will invite you to attend any child protection conference reviews or agency meetings.