

- Social Workers will never insist on a child being undressed or try to physically examine a child. If a medical is necessary, it will take place at a medical establishment by a doctor, trained to examine the child and report his/her professional opinion to Children's Social Care.
- Social Workers have no automatic right to enter anyone's home, but they ask people to co-operate by letting them explain in private why they are visiting. Most people accept the importance of making sure that any allegation must be investigated in order to keep all children safe.
- Responding to and coping with allegations of child abuse is a difficult experience for everyone concerned.
- Children's Social Care accept that people will be upset or sometimes angry when Social Care visit to say an allegation has been made, but the public must understand that they cannot walk away and leave a child until they are sure he/she isn't being harmed.
- All child abuse enquiries are undertaken with sensitivity and the aim is to treat everyone with respect. However, it is your right to make Children's Social Care aware if you are unhappy about how you are treated and you wish to make a complaint.

**Information about how to do this can be obtained from the social worker or you can telephone the Children's Safeguarding Unit on 01925 457013**

## CONTACT NUMBERS

Warrington Safeguarding Children Board Policy & Practice Manager	01925 457075
Service Reception Team Poll Tax House, Ryland Street Warrington	01925 444239
Out of Hours Service	01925 444400
Principal Officer (Safeguarding Children)	01925 457013
Children's Safeguarding Unit	01925 457016
Warrington Police Station	01925 652222
Police Public Protection Unit	01244 614878
Designated Nurse - Safeguarding Children	01925 643113
Designated Doctor - Safeguarding Children	01925 405712
Consultant Paediatrician or Senior Registrar	01925 635911
Senior Education Welfare Officer	01925 442928
Senior Probation Officer	01925 650613

For further information visit our website  
[www.safeguardingwarringtonchildren.org.uk](http://www.safeguardingwarringtonchildren.org.uk)

August 2006

# Warrington Safeguarding Children Board



## WHAT HAPPENS WHEN CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE RECEIVE ALLEGATIONS OF CHILD ABUSE

*This guide is intended to provide information to those people who may be involved either as a parent, carer or professional in an investigation of child abuse.*

# What happens when there are allegations of child abuse?

Responding to, and coping with allegations of child abuse is a difficult experience for everyone concerned?

**SENSITIVITY AND CO-OPERATION ARE ESSENTIAL**

**FACT:** Children do get abused!

Abuse can mean physical harm, severe neglect, sexual assault, exposure to inappropriate sexual material, or emotional abuse.

**FACT:** Children's Social Care has to protect and safeguard the welfare of children. Legislation requires them to investigate.

**FACT:** Children's Social Care want to work with, and not against the families with whom they come into contact.

**FACT:** Children's Social Care aims to keep children with their families. In only extremely serious cases are they removed.

**FACT:** In serious cases of child abuse or if the parents refuse to co-operate in a child abuse investigation, legal advice may be sought.

**Warrington Safeguarding Children Board believes that every child has a right to be:-**

**LISTENED TO:** When they complain about being badly treated or harmed.

**INFORMED OF:** What action can be taken and what that may mean for them and their family.

**PROTECTED:** Where abuse has occurred they will need help and support in coping with what has happened, and action taken to make sure it doesn't happen again.

**INVOLVED:** In making plans to keep them safe now and in the future.

**Warrington Safeguarding Children Board also believes that every parent or person who has care of a child has the right to be:**

**TREATED WITH RESPECT** when allegations of abuse have been made about them or another member of the family.

**KEPT INFORMED** of how the child protection enquiries are progressing and what action, if any, is to be taken.

**INVOLVED** in making plans to keep their child/ children safe now and in the future.

**TOLD** when the child protection enquiries are completed, and the outcome, both verbally and in writing.

**WHAT HAPPENS WHEN AN ALLEGATION IS MADE?**

Lots of different people, relatives, teachers or neighbours for example, can contact Social Care if they are worried that a child is being abused in some way. Occasionally they are malicious.

Children's Social Care have a legal duty to check on every report received and have to be satisfied that children are not being harmed, or in danger of being harmed.

**HOW DOES CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE DO THIS?**

By telling the public that if anyone is worried about what might be happening to a child, it is right for them to tell Children's Social Care who will listen and consider all information very carefully. People shouldn't be worried if, after making enquiries, Children's Social Care say that the child isn't being harmed, it's better to be safe than sorry.

**MAKING ENQUIRIES**

When information is received Children's Social Care check their records and talk to other agencies such as Health, Education and sometimes the Police, this

helps to make sure up to date information is available before decisions and plans are made. They too have a legal duty to protect children, and to share any relevant information. All this is done before any contact with the family.

**WHAT CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE DO NEXT**

Children's Social Care needs to talk to the family, to let them know that an allegation has been made. It is important that the family has this opportunity to give the social worker an explanation as to what has happened.

In some more serious situations Children's Social Care needs to act quickly to protect a child, this depends a lot on how the child has been harmed and whether or not the person who harmed him/her lives in the same house. The family and the child will be given reasons why a certain course of action is being taken.

**WHEN THE INVESTIGATION IS COMPLETED**

The carer/parent and the child/young person will be told, and the conclusion of the child protection enquiries are confirmed in writing. You will know whether Social Care is to remain involved (this will be dependent on the seriousness of the situation), or if the case is to be closed.

**CONFIDENTIALITY**

If an allegation of child abuse is made against you, only the people and agencies that need to know about it will be told.

**PLEASE REMEMBER**

Children's Social Care staff may visit without an appointment, especially in serious or urgent situations. However, they will carry identity cards, you should examine them carefully before letting anyone into your home. If in doubt ring Children's Social Care or the Police to check.