

What happens now?

What is an enquiry?

- There is a duty placed on the Local Authority under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 to make enquiries when there are concerns raised about the safety of children.

What happens during the enquiry?

- Social Workers will gather as much information as it can from people who know your family; this could include Schools, Health Visitors, GP's, Police and Probation
- The Social Worker will need to discuss the concerns with you and speak with your children
- Sometimes it may be necessary for the Police to become involved
- Sometimes a medical examination may be needed; a specially trained doctor will carry this out, if this is needed the Social Worker and Doctor will discuss this with you fully
- The enquiries will show social workers others can best help you and your children to be safe
- Whilst you could refuse to take part or allow Social Workers into your home it is important that they are able to work with you as you know your children best and parents information can often sort out any worries quite quickly
- If there are difficulties working together the Social Workers may have to take legal action to make sure children are safe and well

What happens next?

- If the enquiry shows that there are no concerns about your children the Social Worker will not need to see you again. However, if you feel that you would like some further help or support the Social Worker can talk to you about services which might help
- If there are still concerns after the enquiry the Social Worker will need to take further action and may arrange a Child Action Meeting to look at what might help your family; this meeting will include you and other people who know your family and might be able to help
- Sometimes more serious concerns will need to be discussed at a Child Protection Case Conference. This is a meeting which decides whether your child need to be subject to a child protection plan to help you keep your child/children safe, if this is needed you will of course be invited to take part in this meeting

Does an enquiry mean my children will be taken into care?

- In most cases NO; almost all children seen by social workers remain at home. Usually help, advice and support services can ease a difficult situation and reduce concerns
- It is only IF children are in immediate danger of serious harm that Social Workers will find a safe place for the children to stay; this could include suitable family members or someone the children are familiar with or it may be foster care
- Very rarely a legal order may be necessary to keep children safe; if this is needed it will be discussed fully with you and it will be important for you to discuss this with a solicitor.

What else do I need to know?

- It is important that you ask questions to make sure you understand what is happening and why
- Make sure you know the Social Worker's name and contact number
- If you are not satisfied about the way the enquiry was managed or with the decisions made you should speak to the Social Worker's Manager. If you are still not satisfied you should complain; to do this you should contact the Complaints Officer on 01204 332007 who will explain what you need to do next.

Useful Numbers

North District Referral and Assessment Team – 01204 337400 **Castle Hill Centre**

Areas Covered: - Astley Bridge, Bradshaw, Breightmet, Bromley Cross, Tonge Moor and Derby

South District Referral and Assessment Team – 01204 337729 **Farnworth Town Hall**

Areas Covered: - Burnden, Daubhill, Farnworth, Harper Green, Kearsley, Little Lever

West District Referral and Assessment Team – 01942 634625 **Westhoughton Town Hall**

Areas Covered: - Blackrod, Deane cum Heaton, Halliwell, Smithills, Hulton Park, Horwich and Westhoughton