

A GUIDE TO  
CHILDREN'S  
SERVICES



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# INTRODUCTION

The first time children's services get involved with a family is when they receive some information that a child may be at risk or in need of support. This could come from the child or parent themselves, a concerned neighbour or a professional such as health worker, a teacher or the police. The name of the person giving the information can be kept confidential.

When that information is received, a social worker will judge the level of response needed. This could be anything from 'that is not a concern', through to a joint police investigation.

If children's services need to look into things further, then a worker will do exactly that. It's important to point out that whatever information is received, it's not always accepted as a fact. A social worker would do an assessment to enable them to have a full picture.

As part of an assessment the young person, parents and anyone else who might have helpful information should be spoken to. Often different people may disagree and the social worker will use all available information in making a judgement. The safety and needs of the young person would be the top priority.

Based on the assessment there could be a few outcomes. The following pages talk about the different outcomes, and what to expect if you find yourself in any of them.

# Possible Outcomes



## **No Further Action (NFA)**

When information is shared with children's services we know that it may not always be the whole story. Somebody could have got the wrong idea or over reacted. If after an assessment, there is not a concern then the outcome would be 'No Further Action'.

## **Single Agency Referral**

If the information received suggests the family may need help with a particular issue then it may be appropriate to make a referral to a specific support service. If there are no other concerns then this could be all that is needed.

## **Common Assessment Framework (CAF)**

If there is more than one need, but there are not concerns or risks that would meet 'child in need' or child protection levels, then a CAF could be used. This is where lots of different professionals can share and offer their services to help the family. It is voluntary so families can decide if they want the help on offer.

Every six weeks a 'team around the family' (TAF) meeting is held to make sure that services are doing what was agreed and the family are getting the best help available.

## **Child in Need**

This refers to children and young people who need services to support them to reach their full potential in areas such as personal development and in education.

If a child in need plan is agreed then you will see a worker at least every 15 working days and a meeting happens every six weeks, between the workers that should be helping you, to make sure that they are offering the best support possible.

## Child Protection

The assessment may identify that you are at risk of significant harm under the category of neglect, physical abuse, emotional abuse or sexual abuse.

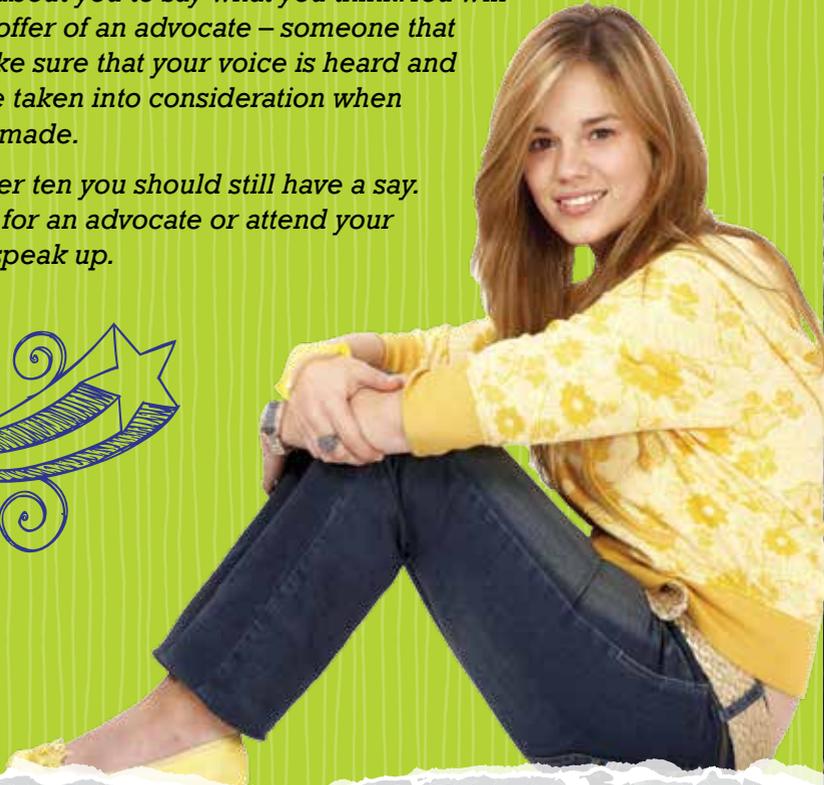
The information will be presented at Initial Child Protection Conference (ICPC) to decide if you need a Child Protection (CP) Plan.

This will have all the details of the things that workers, parents and you need to do. After three months this is reviewed and then after every six months.

- Every six weeks the plan is discussed at 'Core Group Meetings', and
- At least every ten working days you will see a worker. This could be at home, at school or in the community.

*If you are over ten then you should be given the chance to attend the meetings about you to say what you think. You will also have the offer of an advocate – someone that is there to make sure that your voice is heard and your views are taken into consideration when decisions are made.*

*If you are under ten you should still have a say. You could ask for an advocate or attend your meeting and speak up.*



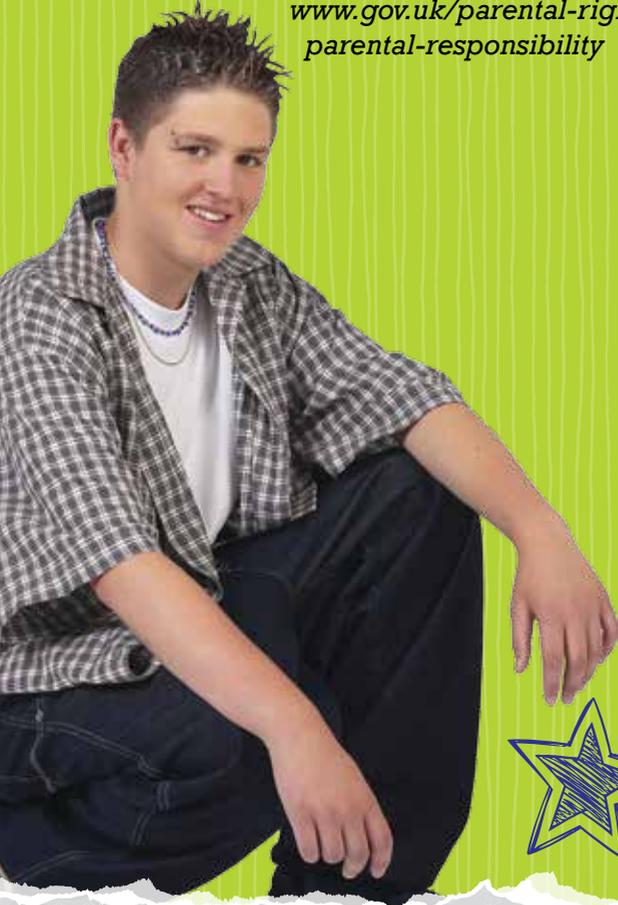
## Child in care

If you are looked after by children's services it will be for one of two reasons: Either because the court says that you have to be (a full care order), or by an agreement with your parents (a voluntary arrangement).

- If a full care order is granted then children's services share parental responsibility (PR) and can make decisions to keep you safe and help you to develop and be happy.
- In a voluntary arrangement your parent would keep all of the parental responsibility (PR), but they have agreed that you need the support from children's services to be safe, develop and be happy.

Find out more about parental responsibility from here:

*[www.gov.uk/parental-rights-responsibilities/what-is-parental-responsibility](http://www.gov.uk/parental-rights-responsibilities/what-is-parental-responsibility)*



# MEETINGS

If you are in care then there are different meetings that happen to make sure your care and support is the best it can be.

## # **Looked After Children's (LAC) review**

This happens when you first come into care, after three months and then every six months. This is where the plan for your care and support is discussed and agreed. Important things like contact with family and where you live are agreed.

## # **Placement Planning Meeting (PPM)**

This happens when you begin living somewhere new. It is a chance to agree what rules you are to abide by and let you know what to expect.

## # **Stability meeting**

This happens if where you are living is not working as well as it could. If there is a risk that you may move out, this meeting is held to see what needs to happen to allow you to stay or to start planning for you to leave.

## # **Personal Education Plan (PEP) meeting**

This happens within 20 days of becoming looked after, then within three months and then every six months. It specifically looks at things like your grades and if anything can be done that may improve them.

## # **Reintegration meeting**

This happens after exclusion from a school. Before you are allowed to return to school a reintegration meeting has to happen to look at the reasons and what can be done to improve the situation.



# What help is available?

## **Independent Reviewing Officer**

An independent reviewing officer will be in charge of any child protection or LAC review meetings. They are separate from the social workers who support you. A large part of their job is to make sure that you receive a correct service as per legislation and the plan agreed at their meeting. If you think this is not happening then speak to them and they may be able to help.

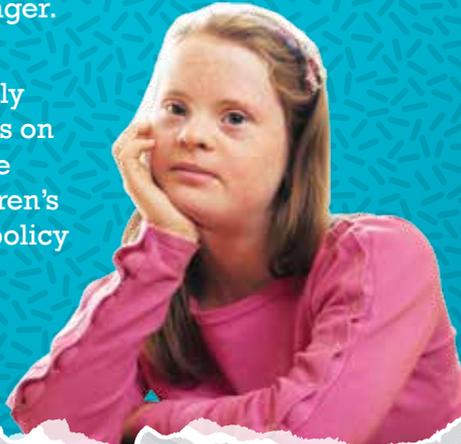
## **Independent Advocate**

If you are unhappy with the service you have had or disagree with the decisions that have been made then an Independent Advocate will be able to help. National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) run this service on the Isle of Wight and are completely independent of Children's Services.

## **Children's Rights and Participation Officer**

The children's rights and participation officer works as part of children's services, to support the voice of young people to be heard. This includes running young people's groups such as Hearing Young People's Experiences (HYPE) and annual events such as 'Have Your Say Day'. If you are unsure of what is happening, or who to speak to, this worker can often find out the relevant information and speak to the relevant worker or manager.

The children's rights and participation officer is readily available during office hours on mobile and facebook to give any information about children's rights nationally, and local policy of what service you should expect on the Isle of Wight.



# Useful Information

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## Isle of Wight Council

### # Isle of Wight Council

You can be put through to anyone by name.

01983 821000

[www.iwight.com/childrensservices](http://www.iwight.com/childrensservices)

### # Isle of Wight Council outside of regular office hours

0300 300 0117

### # Reviewing officers

01983 823705

### # Stephen Woodford, Rights and Participation Officer

Stephen can help you have your say, and can get you any information you need.

07779 999902

01983 821000 ext 6869

Facebook: Steve theCRO

### # Case worker contact

Worker name:

Team name:

Phone:

Team number:

Manager's name:

## Others

### # NYAS

Totally independent advocacy support.

08088 081001

help@nyas.net

www.nyas.net

### # What is parental responsibility

- [www.gov.uk/parental-rights-responsibilities/what-is-parental-responsibility](http://www.gov.uk/parental-rights-responsibilities/what-is-parental-responsibility)

### # Children's Commissioner

- [www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/](http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/)



If you have difficulty understanding this document, please contact us on 01983 821000 and we will do our best to help you.

