

Factsheet:

What happens when a referral is made to Children's Services



Did you know?

All the professionals and volunteers you and your family come into contact with at home, in surgeries, in hospitals, the community, the school, have a duty to refer any worries they have about a child being at risk of harm or experiencing harm.

If a professional has worries about your family they will explain them to you and ask for your consent to refer to Children's Services. There is only one reason they will not speak to parents and carers before they refer their worries and this is if they believe it would increase a risk of harm to the child or someone else.

We know that families can have difficulties at times and need some additional support. This can be for all sorts of reasons like losing a loved one, having financial problems, breakdown in relationships in the family, mental and emotional health issues, alcohol or drug use,.

The majority of families referred to Children's Services do not end up being involved with a social worker as there are lots of other services in the Borough that can help families. You can learn more about these services here [LINK TO EHH AND TAF PAGE](#)



In Merthyr Tydfil professionals, volunteers and members of the public refer any worries they have about a child to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). In the Hub there are social workers, police officers, professionals from health and education and adult services.

When the Children's Services social worker receives the information that a professional, volunteer or a member of the public has worries about a child they will check their own records to see if the child already has a social worker. If so, the information will be passed straight through to that social worker.

If the child is not known to Children's Services or was previously known, then the social worker will check with other agencies like police, health and education to see if they are also worried about this family.

Once the social worker has gathered this information they will speak with parents and carers to see what kind of support they feel would be helpful unless this would increase the risk of harm to someone. Then they will make a decision as to the most appropriate services for the family. In most cases you will be signposted to other services like the Early Help Hub, Flying Start and others.

There are times when the information we gather makes us very worried about the safety of a child. If so, we have a discussion with other agencies and this is called a 'strategy discussion'. This meeting will share information across agencies and then decide whether there needs to be a child protection investigation. Sometimes this is done by Police and Children's Services together and sometimes it is done by Children's Services only.



If a child has physical injuries this will be discussed with a Paediatrician and the child may have a medical examination. A social worker will need to complete an assessment of the family whether this is a 'child protection investigation' or agencies are less worried but want to see whether the family can be supported by other agencies to overcome their difficulties.