

Worried about a child or young person?

1. What you can do to help if you are worried about a child or young person

This information is for anyone worried about a child or young person who may be at risk of abuse or neglect.

It is everyone's responsibility to protect children.

All children and young people have a right to grow up in a caring and safe environment. All adults have a responsibility to protect children and young people including:

- Parents
- Family members
- Friends
- Neighbours
- Members of the public
- All professionals

2. Why might you be concerned about a child or young person?

Children rarely tell if they are being abused. There may be signs, which make you concerned and may be an indication of a child being abused or neglected.

3. The child or young person may:

- Have unexplained bruising or bruising in an unusual place
- Appear afraid, quiet or withdrawn
- Appear afraid to go home
- Appear constantly hungry, tired or untidy
- Be left unattended or unsupervised
- Have too much responsibility for their age
- Be acting in a sexually inappropriate way
- Be misusing drugs or alcohol
- Tell you something that sounds as though they have been hurt by someone

The adults may:

- Act in an aggressive, violent or sexual manner towards the child or young person
- Misuse drink or drugs while caring for a child or young person
- Leave their child unattended or with unsuitable adults
- Be verbally abusive towards the child or young person

4. What to do if you are concerned

If you see behaviour that is of concern, or if a child or young person tells you something, you need to take them seriously, do something about it, and speak to someone. This could be a teacher, a doctor, a health visitor, a social worker, a police officer or nursery staff.

5. To make sure a child gets the best possible help:

- Give as much information as you can about the child or young person and their family/carer;
- Describe what it was that you saw or heard and what it was that concerned you; and
- Let the person know if there are other things they should be aware of, for example, immediate risks for the child or any other child.

6. Will you need to give your name?

Any information about you will be treated with care. Any details, including your name, will not be revealed unless the child's safety requires it.

Even if you do not give your name, enquiries can still be made into the child's care and welfare. Withholding your name may make it more difficult for those looking into these concerns.

Any information you give may need to be shared with other professionals to ensure appropriate action is taken to protect the child.

7. What will happen to the child or young person and their family?

All information will be treated seriously and acted upon. This may include:

- Making sure the child or young person is safe
- Checking whether the child is known to other agencies and what information is held

- Speaking to the child and their family and assessing the situation

Once enquiries have been completed one or more of the following might happen:

- No further action
- Support or advice is provided to the child and their family;
- A service is provided to the child or family (for example help with childcare)
- Referral to another agency who can assist the child and their family;
- Referral to the appropriate legal system

Where child protection concerns are identified:

A meeting will be held to decide the best way to protect the child. This meeting will involve people who know the child or young person and their family such as the health visitor, teacher, police, doctor and parents and carers.

In a small number of cases immediate action may be necessary to protect the child or young person.

8. If you are concerned about a child or young person you can get help by contacting one of the following numbers:

Angus Council Social Work and Health Department

Monday to Friday 8.45 to 5 p.m.

ACCESS Line

Tel: 08452 777 778

Out of Hours Social Work Service -

Tel: 01382 432270

5 p.m. – 8.45 a.m. weekdays and 5 p.m. – 8.45 a.m. weekends and public holidays.

Tayside Police

Arbroath -

Tel: 01241 872222

Forfar -

Tel: 01307 302200

Dundee -

Tel: 01382 223200

Scottish Children's Reporter Administration -

Tel: 01241 873194

Childline - Tel: 0800 1111

Parentline - Tel: 0808 800 2222

ChildProtectionLine - Tel: 0800 022 3222 (Freephone number)

Your local Health Visitor who can be found through your local surgery or health centre.