

Explaining how to access  
children's social services

# How we decide who to help



## **Introduction**

This leaflet explains how we, children's social services, decide how to help children and their families. There are other leaflets available at your local office which explain different parts of the service. You will find a list of these on the back page.

## **How we decide how we can help**

We advise and help vulnerable people so that they are safe and can live as independently as possible.

We also have to make sure that we treat everyone fairly and that people in need receive the greatest help. This means that we have to make sure we use our resources in the best way possible.

We use 'access guidelines' to work this out.

## **When you first contact us**

Our reception staff will help you when you first contact us. However, if you need more advice, you will speak to a children's helpdesk adviser. If appropriate, they will ask you about your needs, or the needs of the child or children you are concerned about, to decide how we might be able to help.

It is important that we have as much information as you can give us to help us make the best decisions. If we can't help you ourselves, we will put you in touch with another organisation that might be able to help.

## **Comments, compliments and complaints**

Please let us know if you have found our services helpful, or if we could improve them. If you are unhappy or worried about your situation, tell someone you feel might be able to help you. The person you have been in contact with in children's social services or their manager will be able to help you. We have a complaints procedure if we cannot sort the problem out at the local office. Leaflets about this are available at your local office.

## Other information

We provide other information leaflets, including some for adults and carers who want to find out whether they are eligible for a service.

The following publications will help explain what we do, how to contact us, what you can expect from us and what an assessment is.

- How we decide who to help – explaining eligibility criteria for adults' services
- Looking after someone – a guide to assessments for carers
- How can we help?
- A guide to assessments for adults
- A guide to assessments for children, young people and families

Please contact your local office if you would like a copy.

## Who else can help

We may not always be the best people to help you but we will talk to you about who else may be able to offer you some support or help.

If you would like some information about other services offering help in your area, we suggest that you contact ICIS: information for life. ICIS is a voluntary organisation that provides free, confidential and unbiased information about services offering care, support or advice in West Sussex.

- Freephone: 0800 859 929 (voice and text)
- Fax: 01903 777601
- E-mail: [enquiries@icis-info4life.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@icis-info4life.org.uk)

### Other formats

If you would like this leaflet in other formats, for example on audio tape, or would like the information translated into another language, please contact:	Communications Manager Social and Caring Services County Hall, Chichester P019 1QT. Phone: 01243 777415 Fax: 01243 777679 Textphone: 01243 777681 E-mail: <a href="mailto:socialandcaring.services@westsussex.gov.uk">socialandcaring.services@westsussex.gov.uk</a>
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# Access guidelines to children's social services

## At risk

A child is considered to be 'at risk' when he or she:

- has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm and there is serious concern for their safety; or
- has complex or high-level needs that need reviewing urgently with others who could help, for example, the health service.

In this case, we will speak to you within 24 hours. If we think that a child is, or could be, at risk of harm, we will also make sure the child is safe.

If you are worried that a child is being abused, please let us know. A list of our offices is on the back page, or you can phone 01903 694422 outside office hours.

If you are concerned about a child's immediate safety or a child has been badly hurt, please call the police or ambulance emergency services on 999. You can let us know more details afterwards.

## In need

A child is considered to be 'in need' when he or she:

- needs extra services to help with their development;
- is unlikely to reach or maintain a reasonable standard of health and development without services being provided; or
- is disabled.

We will contact you. Depending on the circumstances, this will usually be within seven working days.

## Vulnerable

A child is considered to be 'vulnerable' when he or she:

- is disadvantaged and would benefit from extra help to improve his or her life chances, for example, where there are emotional or behavioural difficulties or health problems.

In this case, a team of people from social and caring services, education, and other organisations such as health, will provide advice and support.

We may also look at your situation in more detail if necessary.

## Universal needs

A child is considered to have 'universal' needs when he or she:

- has health or educational needs which can be met in the community.

In this case, we will offer advice and information or suggest other services that can help.

- Glebelands, Middle Road, **Shoreham-by-Sea** BN43 6GA  
Phone: 01273 268800 Fax: 01273 268801

#### **Arun offices**

- Elizabeth House, 83 Victoria Drive, **Bognor Regis** PO21 2TB  
Phone: 01243 852800 Fax: 01243 852865
- 44 High Street, **Littlehampton** BN17 5ED  
Phone: 01903 738900 Fax: 01903 738989

#### **Chichester offices**

- 1a East Row, **Chichester** PO19 1PD  
Phone: 01243 752999 Fax: 01243 752644
- Whiphill Farmhouse, Lamberts Lane, **Midhurst** GU29 9DZ  
Phone: 01243 752999 Fax: 01243 752644

#### **Crawley office**

- Centenary House, County Buildings, Woodfield Road, **Crawley** RH10 8GN  
Phone: 01293 895100 Fax: 01293 895114

#### **Horsham offices**

- Talbot House, 20-22 East Street, **Horsham** RH12 1HL  
Phone: 01403 213100 Fax: 01403 213125
- 26 West Street, **Storrington** RH20 4EE  
Phone: 01403 213100 Fax: 01403 213125

#### **Mid Sussex office**

- Oaklands, Oaklands Road, **Haywards Heath** RH16 1SU  
Phone: 01444 446100 Fax: 01444 446144

#### **Worthing office**

- Centenary House, Durrington Lane, **Worthing** BN13 2QB  
Phone: 01903 839100 Fax: 01903 839248

#### **Child Disability Teams**

- **South.** Queensway House, Queensway, Bognor Regis PO21 1QT  
Phone: 01243 852940 Fax: 01243 852978
- **North.** Horsham Court, 6 Brighton Road, Horsham RH13 5BB  
Phone: 01403 246450 Fax: 01403 246451

[www.westsussex.gov.uk](http://www.westsussex.gov.uk)

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