

WHAT HAPPENS IF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES ARE CONTACTED (CYPS)?

(Formerly known as part of Social Services)

Sometimes if a young person is thought to be at risk of harm, whether physical, emotional, sexual or psychological, Social Services are contacted. The CYPS is a government agency that has the power to investigate how safe a young person is. If CYPS think a young person is not safe where they live they will try to find out how much risk is present.

WILL THEY TAKE THE CHILD AWAY?

CYPS do have the power to move a young person to a safe place. This is something CYPS take very seriously and will only act if they believe the young person is at serious risk.

WILL THEY TAKE PARENTS AWAY?

This will depend on how severe the abuse to the young person is and the dangers present to the young person.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

After CYPS have been contacted they will try to make a decision on what to do next, within 24 hours:

- They may decide to chat with the young person.
- They may suggest contacting a different service.
- They may choose to offer advice or information to the family.
- They may decide not to take any further action.

If CYPS decide to look into the matter further, they will have a week to collect more information. This can sometimes take a bit longer.

During this time, CYPS will be finding out:

- What the needs of the young person are
- Whether other services are more appropriate
- Whether a full investigation is needed.

A FULL INVESTIGATION

At this point, CYPS have emergency powers to move a young person away from danger if they believe there is severe risk. During a full investigation, CYPS will find out what the needs of the young person are and whether their carers are meeting these needs. CYPS will decide whether they need to take any further action. CYPS will talk with the young person and their parents. Information from the school, or the young person's doctor will also be looked at.

At the end of a full investigation CYPS will:

- Take no further action if they are satisfied the young person is safe.
- If they believe there has been abuse, they will organise a child conference. At this meeting, other professionals will be there to help decide what to do in the best interest of the young person.

At the child case conference it may be decided the young person needs to be placed on the child protection register. This means their name will be entered on a list of young people they have concerns about.

A CHILD PROTECTION PLAN

After the full investigation, CYPS may decide to make a child protection plan.

The plan will have steps to ensure the young person's safety, and will be set up so it can be monitored to ensure it is working.

This plan will make sure everyone involved knows what they should be doing to help the young person.

EMERGENCY POWERS

CYPS have the power to remove the abuser from the home, or the young person (removing the abuser is more difficult than moving the young person).

They can request police protection where necessary.

A YOUNG PERSON'S RIGHTS

A young person has the right to be safe.

THE LAW

There are laws in place to protect young people from being harmed.

Just because a person is a parent does not protect them from the law. If the parent is harming their child, the law can be applied.

The Children Act 1989 is a piece of law that is used to help protect young people.

SCHOOL POLICY

Schools must have a Child Protection Officer in school. If a member of staff believes a young person is at risk of being harmed they must report this to the Child Protection Officer.

The Child Protection Officer may decide to speak with Social Services, the police or the parents.

The Child Protection Officer will usually speak to the young person first.

HOW YOUR COUNSELLOR CAN HELP

Sometimes the counsellor can help a young person make a decision as to whether to contact CYPS or not. The counsellor can contact them on their behalf, but the usual route in school is to inform the Child Protection Officer.

At other times, the counsellor may have no choice but to inform the school or CYPS, whether the young person wants them to or not. This is because the counsellor must abide by the child protection laws and observe school policy.

If the counsellor talks to CYPS they will aim to reveal as little information about the young person as possible. Wherever possible the counsellor will speak with the young person first and explain what is happening.

The counsellor will offer the young person their services throughout the process to give support.

Students often find being able to talk about what is going on with a counsellor can be helpful.