Information for Parents about Norfolk Child and Family Social Workers

When someone has a worry about the safety or wellbeing of a child or children in a family, they make raise a concern with the Children's Advice and Duty Service (CADS). When agencies agree there is a worry, a social worker is asked to undertake a statutory assessment.

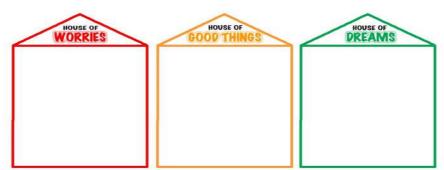
Families often feel worried about a social worker becoming involved in their life or afraid that their child or children will be taken away. These worries are natural but social workers want what families want; for children to be well looked after within their own home. Social workers are there to help families achieve this for themselves. Social workers can only place children in care if there is evidence that they are being significantly harmed or they have been abandoned by their parent, and a Judge in a Court decides that an Order needs to be made for them to live with someone else; hopefully a family member but if not, a foster carer or adoptive parent.

Your social worker is there to help and support you and your family make things better for your child. They will help you understand what people are worried about. They will ask you questions about what is working well for you as well as any worries you have. They will also speak with your child to make sure they understand what life is like for them. They will want to build a safe and trusting relationship with you and your child and any wider family you want to involve.

You may hear the words 'Signs of Safety'. This is the approach that all Norfolk Child and Family Social Workers use. Using this approach helps everyone involved with your child or young person – including the child/young person themselves – to think about ways to keep safe, healthy and settled.

Talking to children

Talking to your children is at the heart of **Signs of Safety.** It is important that children, as well as adults, have an opportunity to talk about what they are worried about, what makes them happy, and what they would like to see happen in their family and community to keep them safe. The **Signs of Safety** approach uses a tool called 'The Three Houses' to talk to children and ask them their views:





The Social Work Assessment will also include professionals working with your child, such as teachers, nurses, doctors and police. During an assessment four key questions will be asked of you, your child, your wider family and anyone else who helps to care for your child:

- 1. What are we worried about for your child?
- 2. What is working well in your family?
- 3. What needs to happen to make sure your child is safe and well in the future?
- 4. How safe or well is your child on a scale from 0 to 10?

(0 meaning the child is in danger, 10 meaning the child is safe)

If everyone decides there are some worries for your child which might affect their health and development, the social worker will make a plan together with you, your child, your wider family network and any other professionals in your life. The plan will make sure that you can build on your strengths as a parent, and reduce or sort out any risks or dangers to your child.

Whether you have a 'Child in Need' meeting or a 'Child Protection' meeting, you will be making a plan which looks something like this:

What are we worried about?	What's working well?	What needs to happen?
What has happened to make us worried and what is the impact on your child, including things that may be happening in your family's life that make the problem(s) harder to deal with.	Things that are already happening to keep your child safe and protected from harm and abuse/meet their needs.	What your family and professionals need to see, to be satisfied your child is safe enough. These are turned into goals and a plan.
Scaling 0 ◀ Child in danger		► 10 Child is safe

You will be given a copy of your child's assessment, and the plan, so you can work on the safety goals.

If you want more information about Norfolk child and family social workers, Signs of Safety, how you can get help, or how to make a complaint, you can go to either:

www.norfolklscb.org or www.norfolk.gov.uk

Contact information

Your social worker
Tel No
Office base

