

Client Portal: Professional Request for Support Form Guidance for Professionals

This guidance is for professionals who need to complete and submit a Request for Support form through Children's Services Online.

It explains how to open the portal form, register or log in, complete the form, upload supporting documents and submit the request.

Important: Do not use this portal form for immediate safeguarding concerns. Follow your usual safeguarding procedures and contact CADS where urgent advice or action is needed.

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Overview

Children's Services Online is the external portal used by professionals to send a Request for Support into Norfolk County Council. You do not need direct access to EHM (Early Help Module – Norfolk County Council's digital case-management and recording system) to use it.

On completion of the form, your local Family Hub or CADS will review the submitted information, link it to an existing EHM record where appropriate or create a new record, and contact the submitting professional within 5 working days.

Before you start

- You need an email address and access to a phone that can receive a text message or call for authentication every time you log in.
- You can use an existing Children's Services Online account if you already have one or register when prompted.
- The Children's Services Online account is separate from EHM and other Norfolk County Council staff system logins.
- You can save the form for later before submission, create a PDF or print the form from each section.
- Once you submit the form, you cannot amend that submitted version.

Related documents and links

- Request for Support webpage

- Children's Services Social Care privacy notice
- Children's Services Online account and sign-in guidance

Step-by-step process

Open the Request for Support form

[Open the Request for Support webpage](#) and select Make a request for support (Professional). This opens the portal-enabled Professional Request for Support form.

Request for support

Before you refer a family for support, you can direct them to our online advice and guidance at [Best Start Family Hubs](#) or [Healthy Babies](#). These online resources will signpost families to advice and guidance on a wide range of topics.

If a family has a greater need, professionals can refer families for support once you have their consent.

Volunteers can help a family self-refer for support.

Professionals, volunteers and families can complete our request for support form online.

[Make a request for support \(families and friends\) >](#)

[Make a request for support \(professional\) >](#)

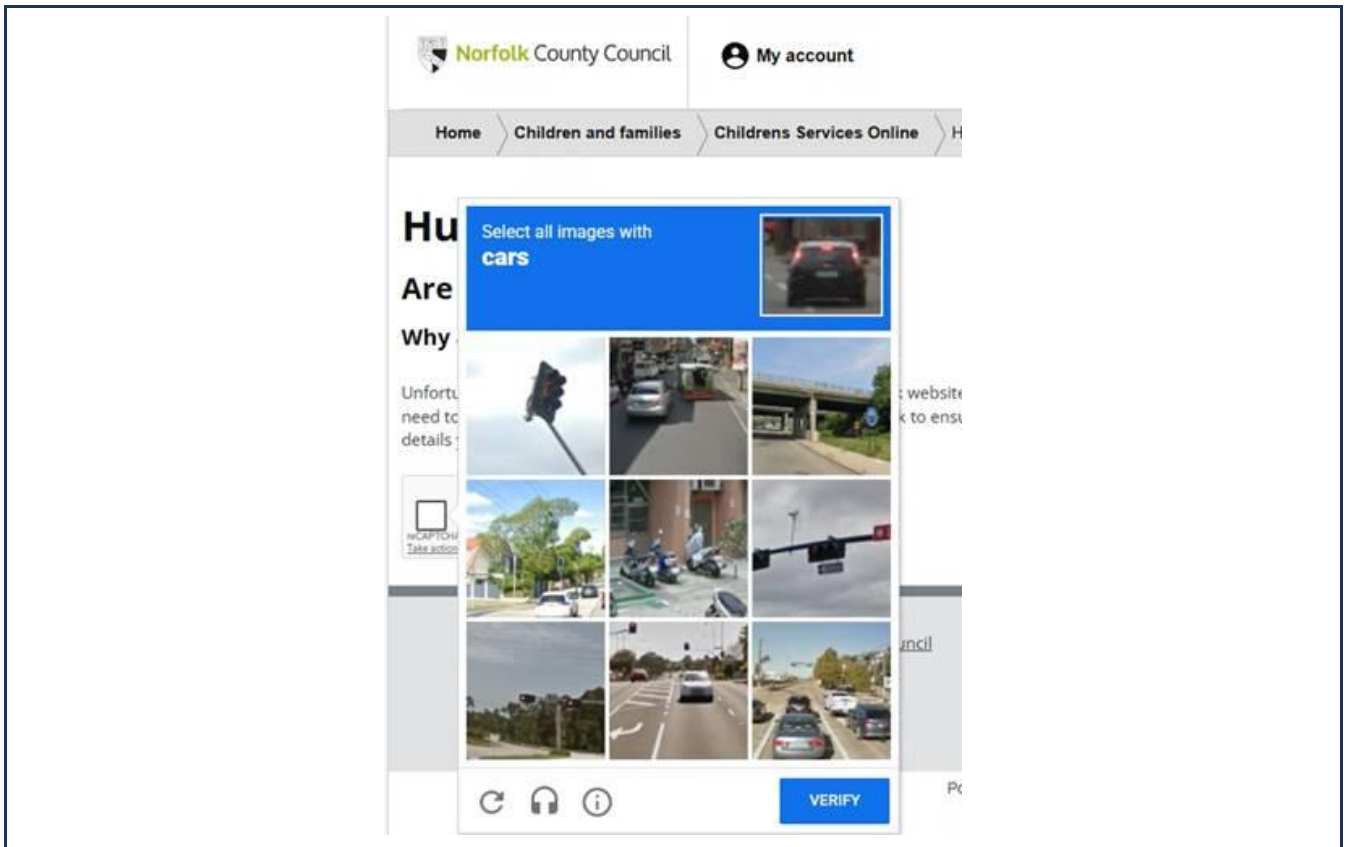
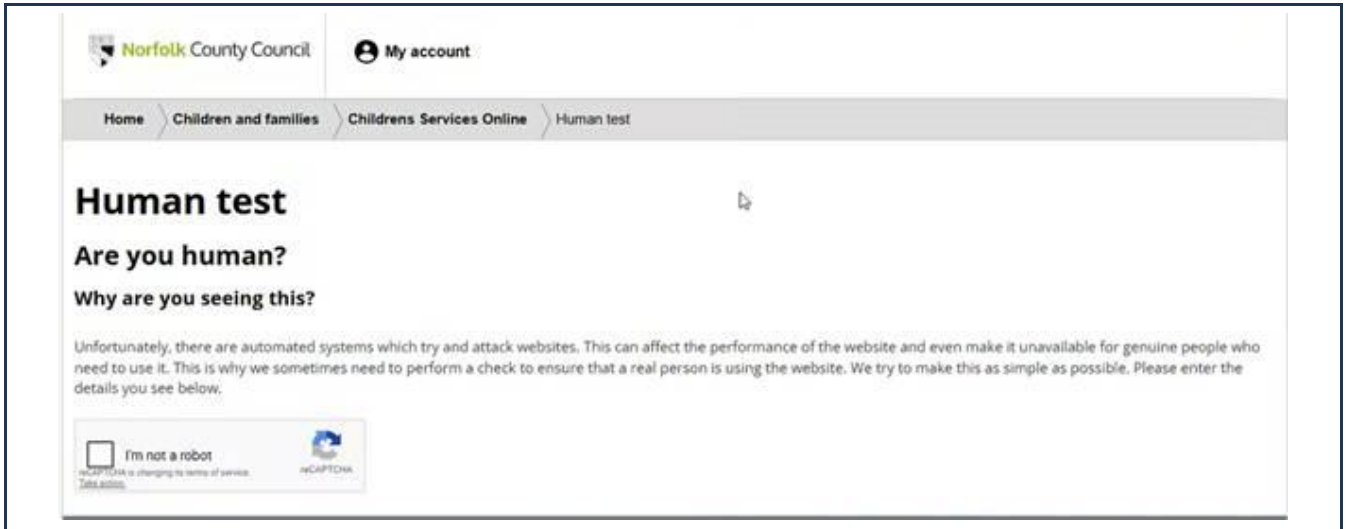
Please include as much detail as possible on the referral to make the process as smooth as possible.

You can use the form to request:

- Support from a specific service or intervention
- A more general request for help

Our Early Help advisors will triage your request and identify the best support for the family.

Complete the Captcha check when prompted. This confirms that the form is being completed by a person rather than an automated process.



Complete the initial questions

The form opens in Children's Services Online. Some sections use conditional logic, which means the questions shown may change depending on the answers you give.

Use the options at the top of each section to save the form for later, print it, create a PDF, close the form or cancel. Saving is useful if you need to gather further information before submitting.

Section 1: Children's Services Professional Request for Support

Do you have any immediate safeguarding concerns?

Do not use this portal form for immediate safeguarding concerns. Follow your usual safeguarding procedures and contact CADS where urgent advice or action is needed.

Home > Children and families > Childrens Services Online > Professional Request for Support Form

Professional Request for Support Form

1 Children's Services Professional Request for Support >

Children's Services Professional Request for Support

Do you have any immediate safeguarding concerns? *

If you have immediate safeguarding concerns call CADS

Yes
 No

This form is not for immediate safeguarding concerns. If you have immediate concerns for the welfare and safety of a child call CADS on 01603 306389. You may also wish to consider contacting emergency services on 999.

Print Save for later Close Cancel

Who are you requesting support from...?

Choose the option that best matches the support needed.

The option you choose affects the rest of the form. If you select **Community Based Help through Family Hubs**, some later sections may no longer be available, including the option to add attachments. This is because the form uses conditional logic and follows a different route.

Community Based Help through Family Hubs is for exploring early, community-based support for a family. This may include help from Best Start Family Hubs, support to start an Early Help Assessment and Plan, parenting programmes, Early Childhood and Family Services, youth support, housing support or other local services. Choosing this option will ask you if you have viewed the Family Hub web pages to see if the support you are seeking can be found there and the link to this web page is provided.

Professional Request for Support Form

1 Children's Services Professional Request for Support >	Children's Services Professional Request for Support
2 Your Details >	Do you have any immediate safeguarding concerns? *
3 Your role >	<i>If you have immediate safeguarding concerns call CADS</i>
4 Child's Details >	<input type="radio"/> Yes
5 Parent / Carer Details >	<input checked="" type="radio"/> No
6 Reason for Request >	Who are you requesting support from? *
7 Submit >	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Community based early help through Family Hubs <input type="radio"/> Family Help: targeted early help, safeguarding, and promoting the welfare of children
	Before requesting support, have you viewed the Family Hub web pages to see if the support you are seeking can be found there? Family hubs - Norfolk County Council *
	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No

Family Help is for children and families with multiple, complex or escalating needs where universal or community-based support has not been enough. Family Help provides targeted, structured support through a coordinated multi-agency approach, with an agreed Family Plan or Graded Care Profile where this is needed.

Professional Request for Support Form

1 Children's Services Professional Request for Support >	Children's Services Professional Request for Support
2 Your Details >	Do you have any immediate safeguarding concerns? *
3 Your role >	<i>If you have immediate safeguarding concerns call CADS</i>
4 Child's Details >	<input type="radio"/> Yes
5 Children in the household >	<input checked="" type="radio"/> No
6 Parent / Carer Details >	Who are you requesting support from? *
7 Current Support and Actions Taken >	<input type="radio"/> Community based early help through Family Hubs <input checked="" type="radio"/> Family Help: targeted early help, safeguarding, and promoting the welfare of children
8 Reason for Request >	
9 Voice of the Child(ren) >	Has the family read our Children's Services (Social Care) privacy notice ? *
10 Single Agency Chronology >	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
11 Supporting Documentation >	
12 Submit >	

Has the family read our Children's Services Social Care privacy notice?

Ensure the family has had the opportunity to read the privacy notice to continue with the form.

Has the family read our Children's Services (Social Care) [privacy notice](#)? *

Yes
 No

You must ask the family to read the privacy notice and agree they understand how Norfolk County Council's Children's Services department uses your personal information to continue

Has the family consented to receiving support from Early Help Services?

Ensure the family has consented to receiving support in order to continue with the form.

Does the family consent to receiving support from Early Help services? *

Yes
 No

You must agree to receiving support from Early Help services to continue

You must have consent to contact us for Early Help services. You can tell us later in the form about any specific people or organisations the family do not want information to be shared with.

Has the family consented to information sharing?

There is an opportunity to add any specific people or organisations the family do not want information to be shared with later in the form.

Does the family consent to information sharing? *

Yes
 No

You must have consent to contact us for Early Help services. You can tell us later in the form about any specific people or organisations the family do not want information to be shared with.

When all mandatory fields are complete, select Next to move on.

To complete your request for support, you are required to login to or set up a Children's Services Online account.

To setup an account, you will need a professional email address and a phone number that you will be able to receive a text message or call to every time you login to your account.

To complete your request for support, you are required to login to or set up a Children's Services Online account.

To setup an account, you will need a professional email address and a phone number that you will be able to receive a text message or call to every time you login to your account.

Next →

Register or log in

You must log in or complete the registration process before the form can be submitted.

The account used for this form is a Children's Services Online account, linked to the external sign-in process. It is not your EHM login.

Professional Request for Support Form

- 1 Children's Services Professional Request for Support >
- 2 Your Details >**
- 3 Your role >
- 4 Child's Details >
- 5 Children in the household >
- 6 Parent / Carer Details >
- 7 Current Support and Actions Taken >
- 8 Reason for Request >
- 9 Voice of the Child(ren) >
- 10 Single Agency Chronology >
- 11 Supporting Documentation >
- 12 Submit >

Your Details

Please note that the grey boxes cannot be edited


In order to progress with this form you must either log in or complete a simple registration for a new account. You can then continue to complete this form. This will enable you to track the form at a later date.

Login or Register

← Previous Next →

Print Save for later Close Cancel

You may be taken to an external sign-in page. Follow the on-screen instructions to sign in, create an account or confirm your details.



Sign in

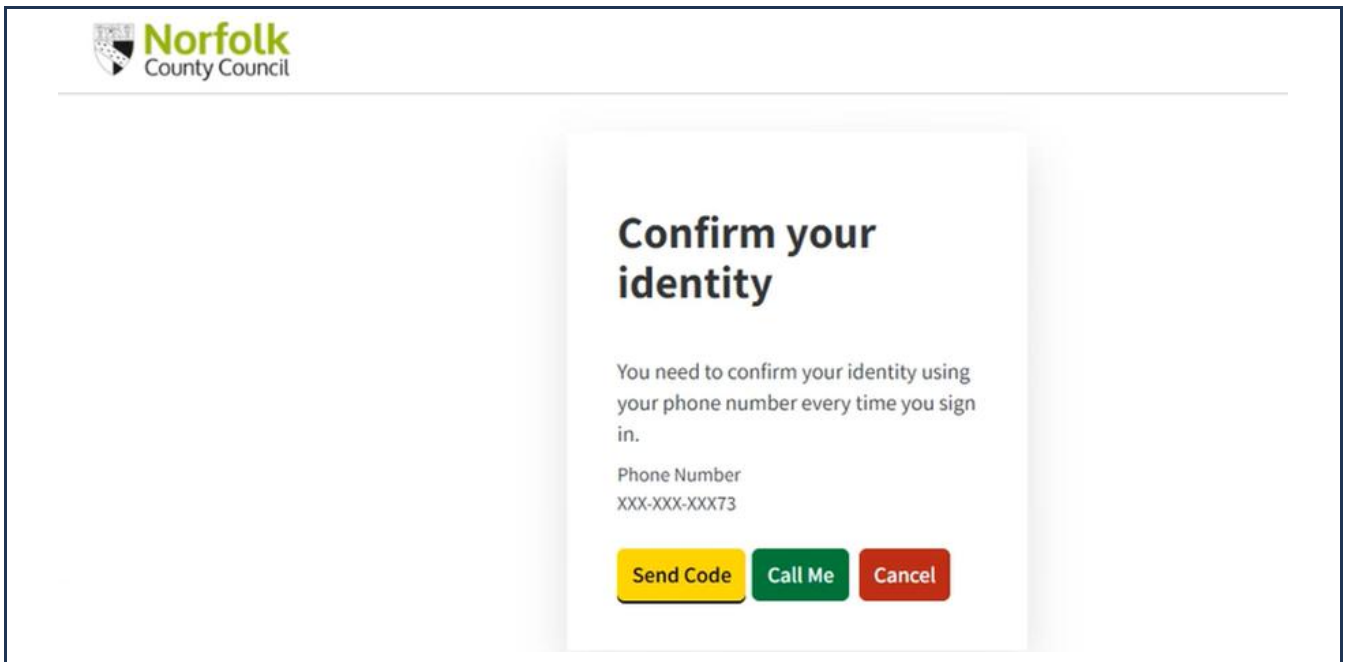
Email address

Password [Forgot your password?](#)

Sign in

Don't have an account?

A phone number is needed because the account uses authentication each time you log in. You may receive a text message or phone call as part of this check.



When registering for the first time, look out for the confirmation email.

Once you have logged in or registered, the portal should return you to the form so you can continue from where you left off.

Complete each section of the form

Work through the form carefully from section to section. The wording below explains who the information relates to.

Section 2: Your Details

Enter your own details. Some form fields may be automatically filled from your login details. Check these are correct before moving on.

The screenshot shows the 'Your Details' section of the 'Professional Request for Support Form'. The breadcrumb trail at the top reads: Home > Children and families > Children's Services Online > Professional Request for Support Form. The left-hand navigation menu lists 12 steps, with '2 Your Details' highlighted in purple. The main content area has the title 'Your Details' and a warning: 'Please note that the grey boxes cannot be edited'. Below this, the text says 'Your Details (Please note the grey boxes cannot be edited)'. There are four input fields: 'First name' with the value 'Your first name', 'Last Name' with 'Your surname', 'Email' with 'youremail@norfolk.gov.uk', and 'Telephone' which is empty. At the bottom, there are navigation buttons: 'Previous' (left arrow), 'Next' (right arrow), 'Print', 'Save for later', 'Create PDF', 'Close', and 'Cancel'.

Section 3: Your role

This section is about your role. Input your organisation and your role and select Next

The screenshot shows the 'Your role' section of the 'Professional Request for Support Form'. The breadcrumb trail at the top reads: Home > Children and families > Children's Services Online > Professional Request for Support Form. The left-hand navigation menu lists 12 steps, with '3 Your role' highlighted in purple. The main content area has the title 'Your role' and two input fields. The first is 'Your organisation *' with the value 'eg. Norfolk school'. The second is 'Your role *' with the value 'eg. teacher'. At the bottom, there are navigation buttons: 'Previous' (left arrow) and 'Next' (right arrow).

Section 4: Child's Details

This section is about the child or young person.

- Select “someone else in a professional capacity” from the dropdown list.
- Enter your own relationship to the child in the “Your relationship to person” field.
- From the first name question onwards, enter the child or young person's details.

Professional Request for Support Form

- 1 Children's Services Professional Request for Support >
- 2 Your Details >
- 3 Your role >
- 4 Child's Details >**
- 5 Children in the household >
- 6 Parent / Carer Details >
- 7 Current Support and Actions Taken >
- 8 Reason for Request >
- 9 Voice of the Child(ren) >
- 10 Single Agency Chronology >
- 11 Supporting Documentation >
- 12 Submit >

Child's Details

IMPORTANT: PLEASE READ

The first question 'I am completing this form on behalf of' should be answered 'Someone else in a professional capacity'.

From the question 'First name' onwards, please use the child / young person's details.

I am completing this form on behalf of


Who is this form for?

I am completing this form on behalf of *

Your relationship to person *

First name *

Last name *

Date of birth 

Is date of birth estimated?

Age

Pronouns

Sex *

Enter Child's Address

Find address by inputting postcode and selecting "Find address"

Address

House number or name

Postcode *

Select the appropriate address from dropdown list

Address

Select address *

- Select an address
- Chief Executives, County Hall, Martineau Lane, Norwich, NR1 2DH
- Planning And Transportation Department, County Hall, Martineau Lane, Norwich, NR1 2DH
- Democratic Services, County Hall, Martineau Lane, Norwich, NR1 2DH
- Telecommunications Mast On Roof Of County Hall, Martineau Lane, Norwich, NR1 2DH
- Community Services, County Hall, Martineau Lane, Norwich, NR1 2DH
- Director Of Legal Services, County Hall, Martineau Lane, Norwich, NR1 2DH

If the address does not appear in the search, select "enter address" and enter the address manually. Once the address is inputted and mandatory questions are answered, select Next.

Address

House number or name

Street *

Area

Town/City *

County

Postcode *

Section 5: Children in the household

Enter details for all children in the household, starting with the child you are requesting support for.

Scroll horizontally to complete all columns and use the + button to add more lines to add more children in the household.

Use the toggle button to format text.

Professional Request for Support Form

- 1 Children's Services Professional Request for Support >
- 2 Your Details >
- 3 Your role >
- 4 Child's Details >
- 5 Children in the household >**
- 6 Parent / Carer Details >
- 7 Current Support and Actions Taken >
- 8 Reason for Request >
- 9 Voice of the Child(ren) >
- 10 Single Agency Chronology >
- 11 Supporting Documentation >
- 12 Submit >

Children in the household

How many children live in the household?

2

Is there a pregnant woman in the household?

Yes
 No

Provide details for **all** children in the household, **including** the child you have referred to in the 'Child's Details' section
Use a separate table line for each child. Use the '+' button to add more lines.

Full name	Date of birth	Address	School / Nursery	Current attendance	GP Practice	NHS
Child's full name	02-06-2023	Child's address	Child's School/Nursery	Child's Attendance rate	Child's GP practice	Child's NHS number

Full screen + -

← Previous Next →

Print Save for later Create PDF Close Cancel

Select "Full screen" to see the table in full.

Provide details for **all** children in the household, **including** the child you have referred to in the 'Child's Details' section
Use a separate table line for each child. Use the '+' button to add more lines.

Full name	Date of birth	Address	School / Nursery	Current attendance	GP Practice	NHS Number	Ethnicity	First Language	Disability	SEN
Child's full name	02-06-2023	Child's address	Child's School/Nursery	Child's Attendance rate	Child's GP practice	Child's NHS number	Any other mixed background	English	Diagnosed with Autism or Asperger Syndrome	Autistic Spectrum Disorder
Sibling's full name	01-01-2025	Sibling's address	Sibling's School/Nursery	Sibling's Attendance Rate	Sibling's GP Practice	Sibling's NHS Number	Any other mixed background	English		

Section 6: Parent / Carer details

Enter the parent or carer details.

Scroll horizontally to complete all columns and use the + button to add more lines to add more parents/carers in the household.

Use the toggle button to format text.

Professional Request for Support Form

- 1 Children's Services Professional Request for Support >
- 2 Your Details >
- 3 Your role >
- 4 Child's Details >
- 5 Children in the household >
- 6 Parent / Carer Details >**
- 7 Current Support and Actions Taken >
- 8 Reason for Request >
- 9 Voice of the Child(ren) >
- 10 Single Agency Chronology >
- 11 Supporting Documentation >
- 12 Submit >

Parent / Carer Details

Provide details for all parents / carers

Use a separate table line for each child. Use the '+' button to add more lines.

Full name *	Relationship to child	Same household as child(ren)?	Phone Number	Email address
Parent/carer's full name	Alleged Abuser	Yes	07*****	parent1@parentcare
Parent/carer's full name	Carer	Yes	07*****	carer@parentcare

Full screen + -

What is the first language of the parent(s) *

English

Is an interpreter required? *

Yes

No

← Previous Next →

Select "Full screen" to see the table in full.

Provide details for all parents / carers

Use a separate table line for each child. Use the '+' button to add more lines.

Full name *	Relationship to child	Same household as child(ren)?	Phone Number	Email address	Consent obtained for referral?	Please name any individuals or organisations the parent / carer does not consent for us to contact
Parent/carer's full name	Alleged Abuser	Yes	07*****	parent1@parentcarer.gov.uk	Yes	eg. Doctors surgery, police
Parent/carer's full name	Carer	Yes	07*****	carer@parentcarer.gov.uk	Yes	

Section 7: Current Support and Actions Taken

Summarise the current support you are providing, what has already been tried and what action has been taken so far.

Summarise any current support other professionals are providing, what has already been tried and what action has been taken so far.

Be clear and factual so the request can be understood without further background.

If the family has a current support plan, which has been approved, please select “yes” and attach in Section 11: Supporting Documentation. If not, select “no” and Next to move on to section 8.

Professional Request for Support Form

- 1 Children's Services Professional Request for Support >
- 2 Your Details >
- 3 Your role >
- 4 Child's Details >
- 5 Children in the household >
- 6 Parent / Carer Details >
- 7 Current Support and Actions Taken >**
- 8 Reason for Request >
- 9 Voice of the Child(ren) >
- 10 Single Agency Chronology >
- 11 Supporting Documentation >
- 12 Submit >

Current Support and Actions Taken

What support are you currently providing?

B *I* U **S** **A** **A** **A** **A** Clear

Are there any other professionals already supporting the family?

Yes
 No

If yes, who are they and what are they supporting with?

B *I* U **S** **A** **A** **A** **A** Clear

Does the family have a current support plan which has been reviewed (e.g. Family Network/EHAP/SEN/School Plan)?

If yes, please attach a copy in the 'Supporting Documentation' section

Yes
 No

[← Previous](#) [Next →](#)

Section 8: Reason for Request

Tick appropriate supporting needs boxes. Explain why support is being requested now. Include the main concerns, strengths, risks, needs and what outcome is being sought.

Be clear and factual so the request can be understood without further background.

Professional Request for Support Form

- 1 Children's Services Professional Request for Support >
- 2 Your Details >
- 3 Your role >
- 4 Child's Details >
- 5 Children in the household >
- 6 Parent / Carer Details >
- 7 Current Support and Actions Taken >
- 8 Reason for Request >**
- 9 Voice of the Child(ren) >
- 10 Single Agency Chronology >
- 11 Supporting Documentation >
- 12 Submit >

Reason for Request

Presenting needs

Select all that apply

- Local Activities/Groups
- Community Engagement/Involvement
- Education
- Early Years
- SEND
- Mental Health
- Physical Health
- Family Relationships
- Abuse
- Neglect
- Exploitation
- Crime
- Domestic Abuse
- Housing
- Financial Stability
- OTHER (please specify below)

What's working well? *

What is working well

B / U **S** • **A** **A** **A** **A** Clear

What are you worried about? *

What are you worried about

B / U **S** • **A** **A** **A** **A** Clear

What do you feel needs to happen? *

What do you feel needs to happen

B / U **S** • **A** **A** **A** **A** Clear

[← Previous](#) [Next →](#)

[Print](#) [Save for later](#) [Create PDF](#) [Close](#) [Cancel](#)

Section 9: Voice of the Child or Children

Record what the child / young person says about their situation where this available.

Use direct quotes where possible.

Include all children in the household you have spoken to using the + button to add additional lines if needed.




Professional Request for Support Form

- 1 Children's Services Professional Request for Support >
- 2 Your Details >
- 3 Your role >
- 4 Child's Details >
- 5 Children in the household >
- 6 Parent / Carer Details >
- 7 Current Support and Actions Taken >
- 8 Reason for Request >
- 9 Voice of the Child(ren) >**
- 10 Single Agency Chronology >
- 11 Supporting Documentation >
- 12 Submit >

Voice of the Child(ren)

What does the child / young person say about their situation?

*Use direct quotes where possible.
Please include all children in the household you have spoken to.*

Child's Name *	Voice of the child / young person *
<input type="text" value="Child's name"/> 	<input direct="" possible\""="" quotes="" type="text" value="\" where=""/> 
<input type="text" value="Other child in household's name"/> 	<input direct="" possible\""="" quotes="" type="text" value="\" where=""/> 

Full screen + -

← Previous Next →

Section 10: Single Agency Chronology

Add relevant chronology information from your own agency. Scroll horizontally to complete all columns and use the + button to add more lines. Select “full screen” to see table in full.

Professional Request for Support Form

- 1 Children's Services Professional Request for Support >
- 2 Your Details >
- 3 Your role >
- 4 Child's Details >
- 5 Children in the household >
- 6 Parent / Carer Details >
- 7 Current Support and Actions Taken >
- 8 Reason for Request >
- 9 Voice of the Child(ren) >
- 10 Single Agency Chronology >**
- 11 Supporting Documentation >
- 12 Submit >

Single Agency Chronology

Please provide a chronology over the last 2 years

Chronology of events

Use a separate table line for each event. Use the '+' button to add more lines.

Date of event	Source of information	Brief description of significant event	Impact for child at time of event
02-06-2026	Source	Description	Red
30-06-2025	Source	Description	Amber

[Full screen](#)

[← Previous](#) [Next →](#)

Section 11: Supporting Documentation

Use Upload Document to add supporting information. Only upload documents that are relevant to the request and appropriate to share. If you do not have any documentation to add, go to the next section.

Professional Request for Support Form

1 Children's Services Professional Request for Support > **Supporting Documentation**

2 Your Details >

3 Your role >

4 Child's Details >

5 Children in the household >

6 Parent / Carer Details >

7 Current Support and Actions Taken >

8 Reason for Request >

9 Voice of the Child(ren) >

10 Single Agency Chronology >

11 Supporting Documentation >

12 Submit >

You will only be able to attach the following file types:

- Word Documents
- PDF Files
- Images (in jpg / jpeg / png format)

Attachment

Upload Document

← Previous

Next →

Print Save for later Create PDF Close Cancel

The screen may go blank for several seconds or show a logging in message. Do not refresh or close the page immediately. Wait for the upload process to finish.

You can upload more than one document. Check each upload is listed under 'Attachment' before you submit the form. You can also remove documents from this section.

Supporting Documentation

You will only be able to attach the following file types:

- Word Documents
- PDF Files
- Images (in jpg / jpeg / png format)

Attachment

Test test.docx

Remove

Upload Document

← Previous

Next →

Submit the request

At any point during the form, you can “save for later” if you are not ready to submit yet or “cancel” if you no longer want to continue with the form. Select “submit enquiry” if you are ready to submit the form.

Professional Request for Support Form

- 1 Children's Services Professional Request for Support > **Submit**
- 2 Your Details >
- 3 Your role >
- 4 Child's Details > **Submit Enquiry**
- 5 Children in the household >
- 6 Parent / Carer Details > **← Previous**
- 7 Current Support and Actions Taken >
- 8 Reason for Request >
- 9 Voice of the Child(ren) >
- 10 Single Agency Chronology >
- 11 Supporting Documentation >
- 12 Submit** >

Please use the 'Submit' button below to send in your information

Submit Enquiry

← Previous

Print Save for later Create PDF Close Cancel

Important: Only select Submit Enquiry when the form is complete and you are ready to send it. Once submitted, you cannot make changes to that version.

A pop up box will check that you want to submit the form.

Submit Enquiry

Have you entered all the information you need to?
You will not be able to make any further changes once you press the "Submit" button.

Cancel **Submit**

Confirmation and submitted forms

After submission, a confirmation message will show on screen.

An email will also be sent with contact details and a unique reference number.

Thank you

Thank you for submitting your Professional Request for Support. You will be contacted by CADS within 10 working days. If you are not contacted please email cadsadmin@norfolk.gov.uk

If you do not receive an email from Children's Services Online confirming your form submission please contact CADS.

Please logout by selecting your name at the top of this page.

[Return to Children's Services online](#)

Click your name on at the top of the page to recover a form saved for later or view submitted forms.

The screenshot shows the top navigation bar of the Norfolk County Council website. The user's name, 'Teresa Green', is displayed in a dropdown menu. The menu options are: 'My account', 'Recover a form', 'Submitted forms', and 'Logout'. The 'Submitted forms' option is highlighted with a mouse cursor. Below the navigation bar, the text 'Thank you' is visible.

Submitted forms show details such as the form description, name, date, response status, unique reference and version.

The screenshot shows the 'Submitted forms' page in the Norfolk County Council system. The page title is 'Submitted forms'. A light blue banner at the top states 'Your form was submitted successfully'. Below this is a table titled 'Recently Submitted Forms (Last 90 Days)'. The table has six columns: Description, Name(s), Date, Response, Unique Reference, and Version. There are two rows of data.

Description	Name(s)	Date	Response	Unique Reference	Version
Professional Request for Support Form	Benny qq Brush	19 May 2026	No response posted	LL-9G-Y2YP-O0N80I	1
Professional Request for Support Form	Percy qq Purple	15 May 2026	No response posted	LL-SB-8L1A-CD6QCP	1

Troubleshooting and frequently asked questions (FAQs)

I cannot sign in or register.

Check that you are using your Children's Services Online account. This is separate from Liquidlogic Children's Social Care system (LCS), Early Help Module (EHM) and other Norfolk County Council staff system logins.

I did not receive an authentication text or call.

Check the phone number linked to the account and follow the on-screen options to request a new code or call.

The upload screen has gone blank or says it is logging in.

Wait for the upload process to finish. Do not refresh or close the page immediately.

I submitted the form but need to change something.

You cannot amend that submitted version. If you have additional information to add to your form, please email cadsadmin@norfolk.gov.uk quoting your Form Submission reference number, or call CADS on 0344 800 8021 if things have changed and the risk of harm is significant

I have an immediate safeguarding concern.

Do not use this portal form. Follow your usual safeguarding procedures and contact CADS where urgent advice or action is needed.

Version control

Version	Date	Author	Changes
1.0	25/05/2026	Jo Waddell	Accessible version created from the Professional Request for Support guidance draft.
2.0	17.06.2026	Jo Waddell	Edited guidance following system changes and accessibility feedback, including heading structure, plain English wording, abbreviation explanations and screen-reader-friendly instructions.