



One Minute Guide



Who can and when should I make a referral?

Anyone can make a referral to the North Yorkshire Multi-Agency Screening Team (MAST) if you are worried about any child and think they may be a victim of neglect or abuse, whether as a member of the public or as a professional.

Professionals in all agencies have a responsibility to refer a child to Children and Families Service Care when it is believed or suspected that a child:

- Has suffered significant harm and /or;
- Is likely to suffer significant harm and/or;
- Has needs which are likely only to be met through provision of family support services (with agreement of the child's parent).

If you believe the child to be at immediate risk please contact 999. It is important to remember your safeguarding responsibility to the child and family does not end with submitting a referral.

What should I include within my referral?

In order to make the right decision at the right time for families it is very important the relevant information is provided in a referral including full details of all children, young people, members of the family and relevant people around the child (including date of births, addresses, telephone numbers, religion, ethnicity).

All sections of the referral form must be completed including details of

- What you are worried about,
- What is working well, and
- What needs to change?

Please give as much child focused and evidence-based information as possible. For example:

- Dates and times of incidents,
- Detailed descriptions of injuries,
- Impact of the concerns on the children
- What you think needs to change to improve the situation, and
- Details of what support is already in place for the family

The information is used to identify the support needed for a child and family.

Informing parents/carers and obtaining consent:

It is good practice that professionals work in partnership with parents and carers to effect positive change. Therefore, it is important that parent and carers are informed of a professional's concerns, and consent is obtained for sharing their personal information with Children and Families Service via a referral. It is important to understand what the parents/carers views are of the referral and what support they would like to access. Consent is required for referrals to services such as Early Help and without it, the services available to the family may be limited.

There are some occasions when consent is not required, including:

- If it places the child/young person at significant harm, or
- could delay support.

In these situations, it is important you record the reasons for not seeking consent. Where consent has not been obtained and a professional feels that after speaking with their safeguarding lead/manager that a referral is still warranted, a professional should submit a referral detailing this conversation and inform parent and carer of their actions and reasons

for this. A professional cannot remain anonymous when making a referral, transparency with families and carers is important and is needed to ensure successful and positive interventions.

What happens to my referral once it's made?

Once your referral is submitted via telephone or email, this will be handled by the Customer Service Centre (CSC) who will notify you when your referral has been successfully received. The CSC will log your concerns on to the electronic Children and Families System and pass this to the Multi Agency Screening Team (MAST) for review and screening. If you raise a concern outside of normal office hours, you should contact the Emergency Duty Team or if a child is at immediate risk contact the police on 999.

MAST use the 'Strength in Relationship' practice model which is underpinned by Systemic Working and Practice, using of Signs of Safety (SofS) to make decisions about contacts in a timely and consistent manner. Appropriate and proportionate multi-agency information is shared, using professional judgement and guided by the Continuum of Need to decide on the best outcome for child and family referral. MAST will contact families or referrers as part of this screening process, to ensure decisions are made collaboratively.

The outcome of contacts are will result in:

- The child does not appear to be a Child In Need, which will result in the provision of information, advice, sign-posting to another agency, and/or no further action,
- Allocation to Early Help Support, or
- Assessment by area safeguarding team as the child appears to be a Child in Need or it is suspected that the child is suffering or is likely to suffer from Significant Harm.

A decision on the contact will be made within **one working day** of your contact being received. If you are a professional or hold Parental Responsibility for the child, you will be notified of the outcome of your contact by the allocated team, or by the MAST if it has been identified there is no further action for Children and Families Service. To follow up the outcome of your referral or if you disagree with an

outcome please contact the Customer Service Centre on 01609 780780 for information.

Where do I make a referral?

If you believe the child to be at immediate risk please contact the police on 999.

If you believe the situation is urgent please contact the Customer Service Centre directly by telephone on 01609 780780. A written referral must be completed and submitted **within 24 hours** of your telephone contact.

Referrals can also be made via the Universal Referral Form or following an Early Help Assessment. Both can be located on North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Partnership website:

<https://www.safeguardingchildren.co.uk/professionals/forms-for-professionals/>

Contact numbers and email

During Office Hours and Outside office hours:

- By Phone: 01609 780780
- Email: Children&families@northyorks.gov.uk

Police

- In an emergency, always ring **999**.
- You should call **101** to report crime and other concerns that do not require an emergency response.

Further information

For further help on making a referral, please see the [NYSCP Referral Procedure](#).

Please refer to the [early help strategy](#) including the continuum of need.