What happens if your doctor is worried about your child being safe?



If a doctor is worried that a child or a young person is not safe, they need to do something.

For example, they might think the child or young person is being **abused** or **neglected**. This means bad things might be happening to them and they could get hurt.



It can be upsetting for the family if the doctor thinks this is happening. They will have to ask the parents a lot of questions to find out more. The doctor has to keep the child or young person safe.

What this leaflet is about

This leaflet tells you more about the questions parents might ask about this. We hope the leaflet will be able to answer some of the questions.



Things the doctor will do if they think your child is not safe

Every situation is different. The doctor might not decide what to do straight away. The doctor will work with you to make sure your child gets the right care and support.



They might talk to another person they work with first. This might be another doctor or nurse. They might get some help and advice from them before they decide what to do. Most of the time they will not tell this person your name or the name of your child.



If they still think your child is being hurt or is not safe then they will have to tell another service that works with children. This might be at the **local social services** or the **NSPCC**, which is a charity.



Talking to you before the doctor does anything

Your doctor should tell you that they are worried about your child staying safe. They should tell you what they are going to do about this.

They might not tell you if they think worse things will happen to your child if you know what they are going to do. You can ask questions about what they say.



The doctor should

- be honest and tell you what they think
- listen to what you have to say
- keep an open mind about what they think might be happening to your child.



Talking to your child

The doctor should talk to your child and listen to what they have to say about things. They might talk to them on their own without you being there.



Asking if you agree the doctor can share information about your child

Most of the time the doctor will ask you to agree they can tell other people about your child. If they think **more** harm will come to your child by doing this, they might not ask you first.



Your child might be able to say whether it is OK for the doctor to tell other people about things. If they cannot do this then you will have to say it is OK for the doctor to tell other people. You will have to do this for you and your child.

The doctor will tell you what happens to the information and who they are going to tell.



Telling the doctor you do not want information to be shared

If you do not want information about you and your child to be shared, the doctor will ask you why. They might say your child is at risk of more bad things happening if they do not share information with other people.



Most of the time doctors will not share information about you or your family unless you say they can. But sometimes doctors have to tell other people things to stop children and young people from getting hurt.



Getting help and advice

You can get help and advice from

The NSPCC

The **NSPCC** is a charity that works for children and young people.



Children and young people can call this number
0800 111

Adults can call this number
0808 800 5000

Or you can go to this website
www.nspcc.org.uk



The Family Rights Group

This group gives free advice and support to families. You can call them free on this number
0808 801 0366



Or send them an email
advice@frg.org.uk

Or you can go to this website and get advice
www.frg.org.uk



The Coram Children's Legal Centre

The **Coram Children's Legal Centre** gives free advice about things to do with the law. They do this for children, young people and their families.



You can call them free on this number
08088 020 008

Or you can go to this website
www.childrenslegalcentre.com



Advice

Citizens Advice gives free advice to everyone.
www.citizensadvice.org.uk

Family Lives



Family Lives is a charity giving help and support to families.

You can call them free
Parentline 0808 800 2222

Or go to this website
www.familylives.org.uk



More websites

You can get help and advice from these websites too.

Home Start

Home Start is a charity that helps children and their families.
www.home-start.org-uk



Family Action

Family Action is a charity that gives support to be people who do not have very much.

www.family-action.org.uk



Victoria Climbié Foundation

This is a charity that gives advice and support to children and their families. They give advice on things to do with culture and religion – this means things like where you are from and what you believe in.

www.vcf-uk.org



Thank you to Raincharm for the words.
www.raincharm.co.uk

Thank you to Photosymbols for the pictures.
www.photosymbols.com

The GMC is a charity registered in England and Wales (1089278) and Scotland (SC037750)
Code: GMC/WHDWCS-ER/0513