

01 Background



There appears to be some confusion as to when to inform and involve parents when you have safeguarding concerns about their children. Clearly, this is an important issue, as parents are crucial to safeguarding their children. If you are referring safeguarding concerns to Children’s Social Care (CSC), you will be asked if you have discussed the concerns with the parents. The implication of this question is that you should have done so prior to the referral.

However, in certain circumstances; when informing parents puts the child (or others) at increased risk, it is not appropriate to inform parents.

If your referral is in these circumstances, you need to make the referral without parental consent.

07 Questions to consider

Are we clear about when to inform parents of safeguarding concerns regarding their children?

And when not to?

Do we always listen to children when they tell us that informing parents will cause harm?

Why it matters 02

In certain cases, informing parents can place children at additional risk, so it is important not to inform them in these cases.

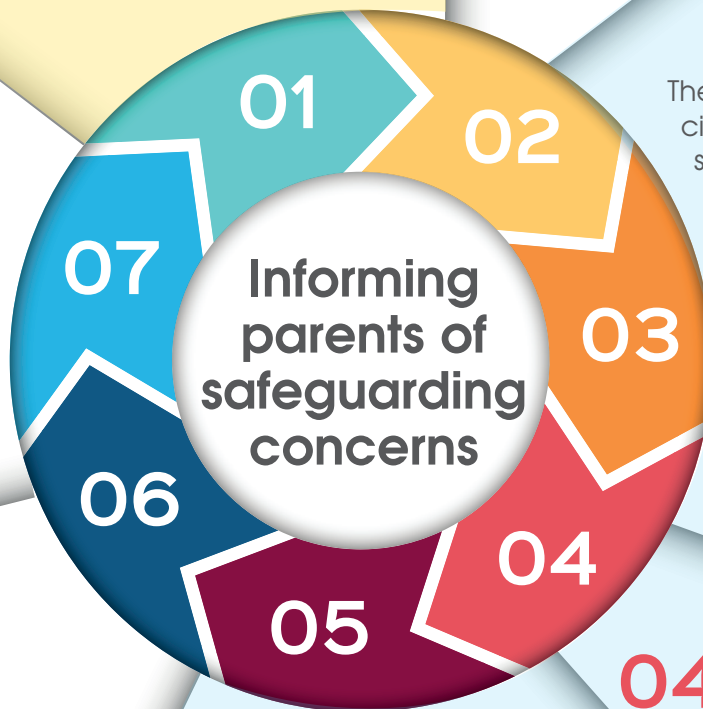
Clearly, the aim of working to safeguard children is to ensure children are safer after the intervention.



03 Information

The three specific sets of circumstances where parents should not be informed about safeguarding concerns are:

1. Fabricated and induced illness is suspected.
2. Forced Marriage is suspected.
3. Familial sexual abuse is suspected.



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What to do

- Ensure that you are clear at all times whether or not to inform parents about your concerns. This decision needs to be based on whether informing the parents will jeopardise the child’s or other children’s welfare.
- Ensure that you are familiar with the LSCB procedures on this.

There is specific reasoning in each case:

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1. In cases of FII, there have been examples where parents/carers have increased the illness-inducing behaviours when concerns were shared with them, and children have been killed through this.

2. In cases of forced marriage, there is a tendency for the marriages to be brought forward or young people being moved out of the country quickly once parents have been alerted that the authorities have been informed.

3. In cases of sexual abuse, where a family member/ member of the household is alleged to be the perpetrator, there is a tendency for children to be pressured regarding their evidence, which means they may withdraw their allegations and risk being further abused.

04 There may also be other circumstances where a child or another person would be subjected to increased risk.

In each case, this will need to be discussed with the Police and CSC.