

1

Background

The Bridge are the team responsible for screening all new safeguarding and support referrals for children in Salford.

We are a multi-agency team comprised of Social Workers, Early Help Practitioners, and partner agencies including police, health, housing, drug and alcohol services, CAMHS, mental health and probation.

We are reliant on information from our partner agencies to make the right decision for the family at the right time.

2

Why it's important

Robust decision making at the front door is dependent on receiving high quality referrals.

Quality referrals lead to better quality screening, and better, timelier, outcomes for families.

We have one working day to screen referrals – having to go back and forth clarifying information eats into that time. If we need to come back to you for more details and you are not available, this could lead to us not having the full picture to inform our decisions, and delays for the family.

Timely and well-constructed referrals help us work together to keep children and young people safe in Salford. Make the referral online:

[Worried about a child • Salford City Council](#)

3

What to include

- Working contact numbers for parents and for yourselves
- What interventions you have tried so far and their outcomes
- Be clear and descriptive in your observations
- Use attachments – i.e. append any photos or tools you have used to support your referral
- The Voice of the Child
- A clear timeline of events, differentiating historical and current concerns
- Evidence of the impact on the child
- Strengths and protective factors for the family
- Parents' responses to your concerns
- Early Help Assessments and Thriving Families Tools should be completed prior to referring in neglect cases

4

What to avoid

- Using abbreviations or initials
- Paraphrasing language – use direct quotes
- Overlooking fathers or other important caregivers in the child's life
- Being judgemental – be careful not to impose your own values or opinions
- Copy and pasting information from your own organisation's recording system – make it specific to us and answer our questions on the referral form
- Delays in submitting the referral, especially when child has made disclosures/allegations
- Vague or stereotypical descriptions – i.e. 'unkempt', 'poor home conditions', 'chaotic lifestyle' – describe what you have seen and heard in detail.

7

Outcomes

The main outcomes of screening will be:

- Advice and signposting
- Referral to, or ongoing support from, targeted support services
- Social care assessment

The outcome of your referral and rationale for the decision should be communicated with you.

If you are unhappy with the outcome of a referral, we are happy to discuss this further with you.

Remember that a referral into the Bridge does not mean your role ends – it is everybody's responsibility to keep children safe.



6

Screening Process

Bridge managers will decide whether a Social Worker or Early Help Practitioner is best placed to screen the referral.

Screening includes in depth discussions with parents/carers, agency checks, reviewing social care history, gaining the voice of the child, and using evidence-based tools to inform decision making.

5

Consent

For requests for support, parents/carers must consent to the referral.

It is best practice to clearly communicate your concerns to parents/carers. There are very few circumstances in which it would not be appropriate to first inform parents you are making the referral (please ring 0161 603 4500 for advice if unsure).