

Making Referrals to Staffordshire Families Integrated Front Door (SFIFD). Guidance for Level 3 (Early Help) and Level 4 (Statutory/Specialist Services)

Education settings work closely with families, taking time to understand their needs and provide a wide range of early interventions. However, some families may require more targeted support. In these situations, we would expect that you have already shared your concerns with the parent or carer, unless doing so would place the child at further risk of harm. You should have discussed and/or offered appropriate support, and either obtained consent, or if this has been declined and concerns continue, you have been transparent that you are making a referral due to the level of concern.

Determine the level of Support

If you are unsure of the level of support required, please consult the [SSCP's threshold framework](#). If following this further advice is needed, and you have consulted your DSL, then please contact ESAS on 01785 895836 or email esas@staffordshire.gov.uk for further advice and guidance.

ESAS provide non-urgent safeguarding advice and information to enhance safeguarding practice to all education settings in Staffordshire. Our intention is to empower members of staff to make informed decisions to safeguard children.

Gain Consent

Speak to the parent / carer to gain consent, unless this would put the child at further risk of harm. **Child protection** referrals should be made **immediately** and **should not** be discussed with the parent / carer as this could put the child at risk of harm. If you have not gained consent, and concerns have not improved have you shared you have determined to make a referral, please make this clear to the call taker.

Be Prepared

- Have basic information ready, the child's name, DOB, address, details of parent / carer, contact numbers, details of siblings if known.
- Have details of the concern, Who? What? Where? When? Have you captured the child's voice? Understood the context and background, considered the impact of this on them etc?
- Provide brief details of previous concerns / history.
- Provide details of any support school have provided, including earliest help / early help.

Step 1 - Before making a referral to SFIFD

- Ensure you have reviewed the Threshold Framework
- Have you considered Early Help (Level 2 and 3) where appropriate?
- Have you completed an Early Help Assessment EHA (if relevant) GCP2 for neglect or other tools? If not, has the EHA been considered / offered?
- Have you discussed concerns with parents/carers and sought consent?
- Have you put appropriate school interventions/support in place?
- Have you checked if other professionals are involved?

Step 2 - Making the referral to SFIFD, currently this is completed verbally on 0300 111 8007

Be prepared to answer the following when making a call to SFIFD:

- Have you contacted ESAS? If you have assessed that the case meets [Level 3 or 4 threshold](#), explain this clearly and that ESAS were *not* contacted for this reason. If this is determined, you should not contact ESAS as this will delay the referral.
- What is the reason for contacting SFIFD?
- Have you consulted the threshold document; what level do you think this sits at?
- Have you completed an early help assessment?
- What support have you put in place?
- Are parents / carers aware of the call and has consent been given?

Be Clear - Start with the reason for the referral. State the level of support required. Confirm if you have gained consent.

Explain - provide details of what has happened, what actions you have taken and the impact on the child. What has made you determine this level of support. Consider if there are any other concerns, documents etc that support your referral. This could be your child's voice tools, a brief safeguarding chronology, GCP2 for neglect, Early Help Assessment, the CE Active Risk Screening Tool etc.

Record - Obtain the person's name taking the call to add to your records and the outcome / acceptance / further action / enquiries etc to be made. If the referral has been accepted by SFIFD then ESAS should not be contacted for further advice as SFIFD should provide further guidance.

Step 3 - Following the verbal referral to SFIFD

After your call:

- Record the referral details clearly on your safeguarding system, including the child's chronology
- Notify your Designated Safeguarding Lead DSL / DDSL if they are not already aware, and share the outcome of the referral
- Inform relevant professionals (if appropriate)
- Follow up if you do not receive confirmation or next steps

Professional Challenge

- Where a professional does not agree with the outcome of a referral, initially there should be a discussion between fellow professionals. Professionals should consider why they do not agree with the outcome, and what they think should have happened and why.
- If an agreement is not able to be reached then the [SSCP's Escalation Process](#) should be followed.
- When initiating the formal escalation process the other professional should be informed and this should be documented on the child's chronology/record.
- The escalation process has five stages. Professionals should continue with the stages until a resolution is met.