# This is a logo of hands holding children . The logo Bolton Safegaurding Children Partnerships.

# Is this Significant Harm?

Whilst there is no absolute checklist for [significant harm](https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-protection-system/child-protection-definitions), much is dependent on the home environment, family circumstances and age of the child. Therefore, considering the points below may go some way to supporting workers to better identify those children at risk of, or suffering abuse or neglect. These can be applied to either ‘one-off’ significant events or to an emerging pattern of behaviour.

* Describe in detail what your concerns are about the child. What is it that is worrying you?
* How long and how often has the child has been experiencing the concerning circumstances?
* What is the impact of the concerns on the child’s development and emotional well-being?
* Is the child being treated differently within the family?
* Is there any indication that parents/carers of the child have deliberately been abusing the child?
* Have the concerns arisen as a consequence of parenting behaviour/attitudes?
* Is there any indication of threat, force, sadism and bizarre/unusual elements being present in the concerns and to what extent?
* What is the history of the perpetrator/parents/carers and does this indicate a pattern of behaviour? If yes, then what is that.
* Are there any particular risk or vulnerability factors associated with the child, e.g. disability, young age, substance misuse, self-harm, sexual or criminal exploitation, missing from education etc.?
* Are there any particular risk or vulnerability factors associated with the parent/perpetrator/carer e.g. disability, mental health, domestic abuse, housing, communication etc.?
* How well is the parent/carer able to meet and respond to the child’s needs?
* What is your view of parents/carers co-operation and understanding of the issues?
* What have you done to work with the family?
* What is the child actually saying about their circumstances that give you cause for concern?
* What is the child’s views of how safe they are, what’s worrying them, what they would want to change and how?
* Are there any circumstances/elements in the family or wider child’s network that may keep the child safe?
* What are the parents/carers views and attitudes towards any concerns you have discussed with them?
* What is the likelihood of parental capacity for change or the likelihood for improvements in parenting and care of the child?

## What do you need to do?

* If you are the Designated Safeguarding Lead, you need to discuss these points with any workers who have concerns a child may be at risk of significant harm. This needs to be balanced and considered alongside the strengths and protective factors you have identified in the child’s life. You may find it helpful to use the ‘Significant Harm or Additional Needs’ template – attached to this document.
* If you then decide a child protection referral should be made you need to do this in accordance with Bolton Safeguarding Children Partnership and refer to the Integrated Front Door using the [**Online Referral Form**](https://bolton.portal.uk.empro.verintcloudservices.com/site/empro-bolton/request/cs_child_referral).
* If you decide that the child is not a risk of significant harm but has needs you should consider Early Help or Targeted Help (refer to **Bolton’s** [**Framework For Action** thresholds document](https://www.boltonsafeguardingchildren.org.uk/downloads/file/36/framework-for-action-threshold-document))

## Recording

Whatever your decision you need to ensure you record:

* The circumstances of the case
* What course of action was agreed and why
* The outcome of any action taken
* If no action taken, the reason for this

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| Significant Harm or Additional Needs You can use this template to record your discussions and action | | |
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| **Worries**  What is happening with the child/young person that is making you think the child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm? |  | **Strengths**  What are the strengths and protective factors you have identified in the child’s life? |

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| **Child/Young Person’s Perspective**  What is the child actually saying about their circumstances that give you cause for concern? What is the child’s views of how safe they are, what’s worrying them, what they would want to change and how? | **Parent/Carers Perspective**  What are the parents/carers views and attitudes towards any concerns you have discussed with them? What is the likelihood of and capacity for change and improvements in parenting and care of the child? |

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| **Decision and Action:-** |