



Children's Advice and Duty Service FAQ

What is the aim of the Children's Advice and Duty Service?

CADS is a telephone based service with which aims to get the right support to children and families first time. By talking through concerns and solutions with professionals we can work even better together and get support earlier to families. The service does not take written referrals.

What is MASH?

The MASH is a partnership between Norfolk County Council (Child and Adult Services), Norfolk Constabulary, children's health services, domestic abuse organisations. There are also virtual links to education, mental health, adult health services, probation, housing. It includes a police team who process domestic violence disclosures (Claire's Law Applications) and also manages referrals relating to Child Criminal Exploitation.

What is the number for CADS?

All agencies and children service providers have been issued with contact details for the Children's Advice and Duty Service. If you are a professional and have concerns about a child that does not have a social worker or family practitioner, you can call **0344 800 8021**.

What number do members of the public call?

They will continue to call our Customer Service Centre number **0344 800 8020**.

Does it take long?

The average time over the 6 month period between April - Sept '23 it takes to answer a call was 3 minutes 45 seconds, with the average call taking 9 minutes and 15 seconds.

What sort of things can I call the service about?

If you are a professional working with children and families, you can call with any concern you might have about a child.

Do I have to get parents' consent before I make a call?

It is good practice and the expectation that you will talk to the family about your worries and any potential support they agree to from the family network, professionals and Children's Services. If you feel you need to call CADS for advice you must inform the family that you will be doing so and why.

There are occasions when to seek consent could put a child at risk or undermine the investigation into a serious crime. In these instances, we would accept a call without this conversation with the parents. Reasons for not seeking consent should be clearly stated when speaking with CADS and recorded on internal systems for your records.

If there is no written referral, how do I evidence that I have made contact with Children's Services? How will information be recorded?

It is best practice to keep a record of the contact you have made, the discussion and any decisions made within your own agency recording system. You should also record whether you have obtained parental consent and if not, why not. CADS also provides written feedback on calls.

What records of the conversation will be made and how will they be kept?

This will depend on the individual discussion and the risks identified to a child. It will also depend on whether you have got consent from the child's parent. However, we will record all of the conversations on our system; by having a record, we will also be able to see when there might be a repetition or accumulation of concerns about a child.

What is the difference between a conversation, consultation and referral?

All calls will result in a conversation. The outcome of the conversation will depend on the levels of concerns raised and the agreed course of action. We are moving away from the restrictions of terminology like consultation and referral, however, the Consultant Social Worker and caller will agree and record the outcome of any conversation.

What are the opening hours of the Children's Advice and Duty Service?

The service will run from 9am to 5pm.

What do I do outside of these hours?

You can continue to contact our Emergency Duty Team on 0344 800 8020.

What happens if I disagree with what the social worker recommends?

The aim of the new service is to work together to come up with the right support or service for a child or family. We hope that professional disagreements will be rare but if you wish to escalate you can follow the NSCP's [resolving professional disagreement policy](#).

How can I provide feedback about the service?

When the caller receives the record of the conversation, there will be a link included to a short survey so that all callers can feedback on the service provided.

How can I contribute to the FAQs?

This is an iterative document and will be reviewed regularly. Callers can email the NSCP Business Unit with questions as they arise on nscb@norfolk.gov.uk and they will be passed to the Children's Advice and Duty Service.