

# LEGAL EAGLE



DAVID GRAY  
Solicitors LLP

WITH CLAIRE HUNTER

## Dealing with social workers

**T**here are few situations more stressful and upsetting than having a social worker knock on your door to talk to you about your child. Here are some tips in case that should ever happen to you – or somebody you care about.

**1.** It is easy and natural to assume the worst and that you could lose your child but it is important to understand that a defensive and unhelpful attitude on the doorstep risks you getting exactly what you may most fear.

A Social Services department has a duty to all children living in its area and it must investigate any issues about a child's welfare or any potential risk to a child.

Answering a few questions may be all that is needed to satisfy the social worker that there has been a mistake or a misunderstanding and there is nothing of concern.

**2.** Just because a social worker calls a meeting about your child does not mean that they are going to take you to court or try to remove your child from you.

It is, however, important to keep appointments with the social worker, answer questions and turn up to meetings on time.

This is because Social Services have to try to work together with a child's parents to deal with any problems and you will need to show that you can work with your child's social worker.



Photo posed by model.

**3.** If Social Services are calling a meeting about your child then do take some legal advice from a solicitor who specialises in that area of work. Many experienced care lawyers are members of a national Children Panel

and you can ask about this. **4.** If it is suggested that you should agree for your child to go into foster care or move to the home of a relation (such as a grandparent) to avoid you having to go to court do not simply agree.

Social Services must have your consent to do this and without it they will have to apply to the court. This gives you an opportunity to take advice, be represented and have the local authority's case looked at closely. If a social worker is having this sort of conversation with you then you most certainly should have an experienced and skilful care solicitor advising you.

**5.** You will almost inevitably have trust issues with any social worker involved with your child. This is normal. But many social workers are committed to working with parents to keep their children at home and working with them will help that happen.

**6.** However we do come across social workers who are not always open or constructive in their approach and that is why it is essential to have a trusted lawyer by your side.

**7.** Seek support to get you through. Your lawyer can refer you and [survivalsafeguarding.co.uk](http://survivalsafeguarding.co.uk) is a great website written by a mum who has walked this particular walk

**David Gray Solicitors has a team of Children Panel members with over 100 years of care law experience. Claire Hunter is a member of that team and regularly represents parents and children in care proceedings. Call the team now on 0191 243 8163.**

### IS YOUR BUSINESS OWED MONEY?

WE CAN HELP YOU.

**Good cash flow is essential to any business but chasing debts can be tiresome and difficult. You may feel it isn't worth chasing. But why write off money that is due to you?**

At David Gray Solicitors, our Business Team can take care of your debt recovery. We offer bespoke packages, from pursuing debts from the point they fall due to issuing court proceedings and enforcing County Court Judgments. We know it isn't always good business sense to pursue every debt, so we will advise you as to the merits of any action and the best way to recover money due.

**Don't write off your debts. Pursue them and keep your business in good financial health.**

DAVID GRAY  
Solicitors LLP

We can help you, call our team today on **0191 243 8160**. Help & advice available at our South Shields & Newcastle offices.

[www.davidgray.co.uk](http://www.davidgray.co.uk)