

## ECIRS referral guide

**ECIRS acts as a single 'front door' for all enquiries and referrals into Ealing Children's Services from professionals and the public, where there are concerns about the welfare or safety of a child (pre-birth to aged 18 years).**

This guidance has been developed to assist professionals/practitioners to make good quality referrals where there are safeguarding concerns about a child/young person or there is a request for a service for children/families who may need help or support.

Steps to consider before making a referral to ECIRS

Consent to make a referral

How to make a referral to ECIRS

Section 7 guidance

Challenges and tips

What happens next

Red, amber, green status

Professional disagreement and escalation

Detailed guidance on understanding and responding to concerns for a child/young person can be found in Ealing's Thresholds of Need and Assessment Protocols 2019/20

### Steps to consider before making a referral to ECIRS

- If you are unsure about whether to refer to ECIRS you can contact the ECIRS consultation line. This is a 'no name' advice line available to professionals unclear about the appropriateness of a referral. The consultation line is open Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm. The contact number is 020 8825 5236.  
Note If it is considered the child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm, you will be advised to make an immediate referral to ECIRS.
- Consider whether there are services within your own agency or other professionals involved with the child and family that may be able to help. If the child you are concerned about has an allocated social worker, you should contact them directly - if they are unavailable please contact the duty worker in the social worker's team to avoid delay
- Where you consider a multi-agency or targeted approach is needed, the Early Help Assessment and Plan (EHAP) process may be appropriate. Contact Ealing Family Information Service for more information. Tel:020 8825 5588
- Where it is clear a referral to Children's Social Care is needed, contact ECIRS on 020 8825 8000. If a child is in immediate danger call the Police on 999.

### Consent to make a referral

It is essential that professionals/practitioners work in partnership with families and talk to them about their concerns unless to do so would put the child and family at immediate risk of harm. Please ensure that parents/carers understand that relevant information will be shared with partner agencies where it is considered appropriate to do so in line with Data Protection legislation.

You should obtain the consent of parent/s to making a referral unless seeking consent would:

- Put the child at further risk of harm
- Compromise a criminal investigation
- Cause undue delay in taking action to protect the child.

You should record when consent has been obtained or the reason why consent has not been sought.

You will be asked by ECIRS if you have obtained consent. If not and unless this is for one of the reasons above, you will be asked by ECIRS to seek consent before the referral will be accepted. It will remain your responsibility to take action to obtain consent and re-submit your referral in a timely manner in order that ECIRS can take appropriate action.

### How to make a referral to ECIRS

Follow your own agency guidance for making referrals to Children's Social Care. Depending on your agency you may need to liaise with a Safeguarding Lead before making the referral.

Note: You should not delay a safeguarding referral if you do not have all the information required or cannot contact a Safeguarding Lead, as a delay may place the child /young person at further risk.

Call ECIRS on 020 8825 8000 Available Monday - Friday, 9am – 5pm.

Out of hours calls will go to Ealing's Emergency Duty Team (EDT) on the same number.

- Complete a referral form within 48 hours of contacting ECIRS by phone.
- Send your completed form to ECIRS: [ECIRS@ealing.gov.uk](mailto:ECIRS@ealing.gov.uk)

The referral form does not need to be sent via secure email as the above address is secure.

- Health Referrals go to: [ecirs.nhsrequests@ealing.cjsm.net](mailto:ecirs.nhsrequests@ealing.cjsm.net) or [ECIRS@ealing.gov.uk](mailto:ECIRS@ealing.gov.uk)
- Police Referrals are sent to ECIRS as MERLINS via CJSM.

### Referral form/s

Here is the [ECIRS referral form](#) (pdf)

**Health:** Professionals / practitioners can complete their own agency referral forms but should include information required by ECIRS as set out in this guidance for Section 7 below. Where possible please send the referral whilst the patient is still in your care. Please contact the families by phone before you make the referral unless there is immediate danger and it can't wait.

**Education:** Professionals/practitioners will need to complete the ECIRS referral form. We are exploring whether this can be made available via SIMS.

It is important to complete the form as clearly and fully as possible as this will inform initial decision making about the priority of the response and next course of action. As far as possible, your referral needs to be evidence-based and include what you have witnessed and what you have learned from discussions with the child/young person/family.

## ECIRS referral form guidance

This section sets out some specific guidance for completing Section 7 of the ECIRS referral form.

### What are you worried about?

Please consider whether the child's primary need is for protection and requires urgent statutory intervention or a need for support services.

**Where there is a safeguarding concern: If harm has occurred – say by who, where and when? How often does the harm occur? If you think the child is at risk of harm explain why.**

Where it is a request for help or support: What current need is not being met; Reason for needs being unmet; How long this has been the situation?

### What is the immediate risk?

Be clear about immediate risk to child's/ren and wider family (Think Family), or external risk to other (Contextual Safeguarding)

### Based on your concern what is the impact on the child/young person?

Consider the likely impact on the child's safety or well-being if no action is taken now.

### What is keeping the child/young person safe?

Consider things like extended family or community support, participation in services etc.

### What intervention or support have you given the family?

Outline how long you have been aware of the current situation? What have you done so far and what was the outcome of any action you took?

### What are the views of the parent/s or carer/s and young person?

Briefly describe the views and comments of parents/carers on the situation/ concerns and their response to these and this referral/request for a service.

Unless inappropriate due to age or understanding or it would place the child/young person at risk of significant harm, it is good practice to obtain the child/young person's views and inform them of the referral.

### Other comments

Please tell us if there are any further challenges when working with the family e.g. no support network, physical or mental health needs or disabilities, no recourse to public funds, housing issues.

## Top tips

**Don't delay** and fill out as much of the form as you can. The earlier in the day ECIRS receives your referral the better as this means more timely and proportionate decisions can be made for the child/young person. This is especially helpful if a child is in school or nursery. NB. If you are concerned for a child and do not have the time to complete the referral form during the day, please phone ECIRS and speak to a social worker so ECIRS can respond accordingly and ensure the child is safeguarded.

**Include relevant documentation:** If you have undertaken any recent reports or assessments, please include with the referral e.g. EHAP, Barnardo's Risk Matrix for Domestic abuse or Ealing Vulnerabilities Screening Tool (Contextual Safeguarding).

**Check your spelling:** Be mindful of differing spelling of names and providing correct DOB's. Incorrect information at referral stage can cause delays for ECIRS.

## What happens after I have made a referral?

Once you have made a referral you will receive an automated acknowledgement email from ECIRS. If you do not receive this call ECIRS on 020 8855 8000 without delay.

Upon receipt of a referral ECIRS will make decisions about the level of need in line with Ealing's Thresholds of Need Guide within one working day. [Thresholds of Need and Assessment Protocols 2019/20 | Ealing Council](#)

ECIRS will prioritise referrals using a RAG (Red/Amber/Green) rating. Some referrals will be discussed at the daily MASH meeting if the risk of significant harm is unclear.

| RAG status | Description   | ECIRS Action   |
|------------|---|--|
| Red        | A child with acute needs who requires safeguarding, intensive statutory support or specialist services. | Within 4 hours - Refer to MAST for a Child and Family Assessment (S17) or Child Protection Investigation (S47) |

| RAG status | Description  | ECIRS Action   |
|------------|--|--|
| Amber      | A child with complex needs who needs specialist support, sometimes longer term, to keep them safe and/or promote their wellbeing.  | Within 24 hours - Refer to SAFE or to MAST (or CWD/UMT team if eligible) for Child and Family Assessment                 |
| Green      | A child with identified or emerging needs who may be vulnerable and showing early signs of abuse and/or neglect; or their needs are not clear, not known or not being met. | Within 72 hours Refer to Early Help services e.g. EHAP, SAFE; Parenting support; Early Start Ealing 0-19; SEND services; |

### Professional disagreement and escalation

At times there may be genuine differences of opinion about how to respond to a referral or how to help a child or family. Ealing Safeguarding Children Partnership has adopted the London Child Protection Procedures guidance on conflict resolution [11. Professional Conflict Resolution \(londoncp.co.uk\)](#).

NB. It is important that if any professional/practitioner thinks the actions taken or proposed will not adequately safeguard or help a child or family that they raise these concerns through their line management or via a designated safeguarding children senior professional (doctor/nurse) in Health.

### Feedback to referrer

ECIRS will inform referrers of the outcome of their referral by email once screening has been finalised and a decision has been made. This will happen within 72 hours. If you have not heard back from a social worker in ECIRS within 72 hours, please contact [ECIRS@ealing.gov.uk](mailto:ECIRS@ealing.gov.uk) for an update.

### Was this page useful?

- [Yes](#)
- [Neutral](#)
- [No](#)

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