

Q When do I need a Child Care solicitor about my children

If social workers are telling you they are worried about your children or expected baby, then you can talk to us about what might happen. This is so even if your child has not been born yet.

Q Will my children be taken away from me if a social worker takes me to court?

The future care of your children is up to a judge. Not every child care case ends up with children staying away from their parents and/or family. Sometimes the application to court is not even to ask that the child should be removed into foster care. What happens at court depends on the facts of your case. You should come and talk to us as soon as possible if this is happening to you. We can give you advice about what might happen and often we can suggest things to do to try to make your situation better.

Q Don't social workers just want children to be adopted to make their statistics look good?

Parents and family members often think this, or have heard this. Sometimes it feels like that if it is your child or relative and you don't agree with what the social worker is saying. Adoption of a child is such a huge step to take that a judge will only allow this to happen if there are no other realistic ways for a child to stay in their family. A social worker has to look at all of those ways. Adoption is a last resort for everyone.

Q My child is old enough to tell the judge that they don't want to go into foster care, will that be able to happen?

Children don't often go to court to talk to the judge, but the judge will know what your child is saying.

Each child has an adult speaking on their behalf. The adult is called a Children's Guardian. They tell the judge what the child is saying, and will recommend to the judge what should happen, independently of the social worker (and you). Your child will also have their own solicitor who works with the Children's Guardian and makes sure what your child is saying is known to the judge. There are no promises that what your child says will be what happens, but the judge will hear their view and take that into account.

If your child is mature enough, and doesn't agree with the Children's Guardian, then they might have their own solicitor who will put their views to the judge, and, though this is quite rare, will arrange for your child to attend court with the permission of the judge, to talk to the judge directly.