

## Before and after

### **About this document-**

'Parenting in the United Kingdom' was created by members of the [Regional Refugee Forum North East](#), all refugees and asylum seekers who are parents. They wanted new arrivals to understand how different life is here in the UK, so that they could avoid problems. This presentation is full of the knowledge that they wished someone had told them when they arrived. Rates of child removal are higher among immigrant families, and this guide aims to give parents the information they need so that they don't fall foul of schools and social services. The session forms part of the [North East Migration Partnership's](#) Welcome & Induction programme.

### **The role of English Unlocked-**

The Refugee Forum's membership also translated the content into the most used 10 languages, which allowed concepts and contrasts to be explained. But what about the minority languages, that only a few people speak? They rarely receive translated information and have to cope with an English version. So the RRF asked us to reword this information for people who are learning English. It was for a script that would be read aloud - we voiced this too. You can listen to the end result [here](#) - it is much easier to understand than the original.

### **How we did it-**

[English Unlocked](#) provides a rewriting service. It is harder than you think to make things simple without dumbing down or diluting the meaning. We have many years of experience at this. Some of the things we did were-

- Reduce sentence length and complexity.
- Change the order sometimes, in order to get straight to the point and build up layers of understanding.
- Avoid certain words. Eg 'like' was changed to 'similar to' because *like* has another meaning.

These are just three of the things we did, as you read you may notice many more. Get in touch if you would like us to rewrite something for your company.

[info@englishunlocked.co.uk](mailto:info@englishunlocked.co.uk)

| Original                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Simplified by English Unlocked                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
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| <p><b>PARENTING IN THE UK</b></p> <p><b>Slide 1:</b></p> <p><b>Welcome to this session called 'Parenting in the United Kingdom'.</b></p> <p>It will give you important information about the laws and expectations</p> | <p><b>PARENTING IN THE UK</b></p> <p><b>Slide 1:</b></p> <p><b>Welcome to this presentation.</b></p> <p>Are you a mother or father from another country? You may be surprised by life here. We will help you understand this country so you can help</p> |

around bringing up a child in the UK, as some may be quite different to your home country.

This session is part of the North East Migration Partnership's Refugee and Asylum Seeker Orientation Project.

By Parenting we mean the actions a parent makes to bring up their child.

All parents want to make sure their children are safe, healthy and happy, and have opportunities for their future. Moving to a new country has many challenges, as there are different laws, different systems, different expectations and of course a different language. Families have also faced trauma escaping from danger in their own countries. And they'll be feeling additionally stressed and anxious whilst waiting for a decision on their asylum case.

Parents want to ensure their children get the most out schools and find pathways to future study and careers. So first we'll look at the UK's education system, at what parents can expect of schools and also what schools expect of parents.

Then we'll look at some of the laws and expectations designed to protect children from physical or emotional harm. We'll explore how this impacts on the way parents supervise and discipline their children.

The information in this session has been selected by people who are and were themselves asylum seekers. It's based on what they wish they'd known when they first arrived. They hope it can help you avoid problems arising with Local Authorities because what seems normal to you might actually create trouble here. It also has information that

your children.

The advice in this presentation comes from families similar to you. Refugees and Asylum Seekers have collected all this advice for you because they want to help you to avoid problems. They remember how difficult it was to arrive in this country and not understand life here. This presentation tells you about family life in the United Kingdom.

Your life is probably difficult. You are new here. You have painful memories and you are learning English. Perhaps you are waiting for a decision on your asylum case. All of this is stressful and difficult.

You want your children to be safe, healthy and happy. All parents want the same. How can you help your children in this new country? You need to understand how this country is different from your home country. You need to understand the education system, local services and the local authority.

If you don't understand this country your family can have problems. You may have problems with other parents, with schools or with the local authority.

Here are two examples. How much freedom do you give your children? How do you punish your children if they misbehave? These examples can cause problems. Some behaviors that seem normal to you and normal in *your* country can cause problems in *this* country. British attitudes are probably different from your attitudes. British laws are probably different from the laws in your country. You need to understand this, and we hope that the information here will help you.

You love your child. We understand this. You want your child to have a good education and a good future. You want your child to feel safe and to make new friends. Next you will hear *how* you can keep your child safe in Britain. You will hear that parents do not do this alone. Parents receive help from The Local Authority.

Local Authorities want *all* parents to know.

There's a printed handout which summarises the information. And another leaflet which gives contact details for local services and organisations that can offer advice and support to parents for the issues raised.

### **Slide 2: Protecting a child from physical and emotional harm**

Parents play the central role in looking after their children and ensuring no harm comes to them, but it's useful to know that Local Authorities also have a legal duty to "*safeguard, protect and promote the welfare of children*" in their area and legal powers to deliver this.

By Local Authorities we mean the Local Council and its Social Workers, who are professionals that help families solve problems and ensure children are safe from physical and emotional harm. It also includes Health Visitors, Schools and the Police. The role they play in the life of a child here might be quite different to the role they play in your home country. Many people find them much more involved in a child's life, and with more powers to intervene when they believe a child is at risk of being harmed. If anyone raises a concern about a child with the local authorities, Social Workers or the Police have a duty to investigate. They'll contact the parents and explore concerns with them, and decide if any action should be taken to protect the child.

Every country develops an approach to keeping children safe from harm and understanding childhood development. The UK has its own particular approach, both in Law and in what's expected of Parents. Every parent new to the UK needs to know this as soon as possible. Otherwise parents could get into difficulty with Local Authorities and even have their child taken away. Nobody wants that to happen of

A **handout** is a document with useful information. There are two handouts you can have after this presentation.

- One handout shows all this information.
- One handout shows extra information. It shows organisations and places you can go for help.

### **Slide 2: Protecting a child from physical and emotional harm**

Here you can see photos of all the different people who keep children safe and well. The Local Council, parents, the police, Social Workers, Health Visitors and schools. They all protect children. Of course the most important are the parents. But the organisations in the photos also have a legal duty to keep children safe and well. These organisations check on the children living in their local area. If they hear a child isn't safe, they must investigate. If they find a child needs protection, they can take the child away from its parents.

Of course nobody wants that to happen. This information will help you understand what the law is here, and what the local authority expects parents to do.

What is the Local Council? Every area has a Local Council. Another name for this is the Local Authority. 'Social Workers' are people who work for the local authority. Their job is to make sure children living in the area are safe and parents get the support they need to look after their children. A social worker will visit a family if they are worried about a child.

course. The information you'll hear today can prevent problems arising in the future.

As well as helping you understand your responsibilities as parents, this session will also help you understand your rights as parents.

### **Slide 3: The UK education system**

First we'll explore the UK's Education system.

In UK Law, children must be in full-time education between the ages of 5 and 16 and children aged over 16 and up to 18 must be in some form of education or training. Parents are legally required to ensure their children go to school.

Children under 5 have the option to go to pre-school, which is called 'Nursery'

Health Visitors are people who work for the National Health Service, which we call the 'NHS'. They check the health of children up to 5 years old.

Of course Schools have a big role in a child's life. Schools also have legal duties to make sure children are safe and well.

And the Police also have a legal duty to protect people, including children.

If a person reports **a concern** about a child with these organisations, they have a duty to investigate and take action to protect the child. What is 'a concern'? A concern is a worry. If a person is concerned about a child it means they are worried.

This may be different to the way children are kept safe in your country. We hope this information will help you understand your responsibilities under the law here. And also your rights.

### **Slide 3: The UK education system**

First let's look at the Education system in the UK.

School is not optional here. School is compulsory. If your child misses days of school it can cause problems. Children aged 5 to 16 years old must go to school. It is your job as a parent to ensure that your child goes to school.

If a child leaves school when they are 16 years old they must continue

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| <p>It's compulsory for Children aged 5 to 11 to go to Primary School</p> <p>Children aged 11 to 16 must go to Secondary School</p> <p>Children aged over 16 and up to 18 must be in some form of education or training</p> <p>We'll give more detail about each of these stages.</p> <p>Education is free in schools funded by the state. There are other schools which charge fees. These are called independent or private schools. Universities and Colleges charge tuition fees.</p> <p>Most state-funded schools are mixed schools. It means they teach boys and girls together.</p> <p>All Schools teach a core curriculum set by the national government, which includes English, maths and science. Children's progress is tested at the age of 7 and 11. And when they're 13, children choose which subjects to study for their General Certificate of Education, which they take at 16. Based on these results, they can then choose subjects to study for Advanced Level exams, which they take at 18. Or they can choose skills-based courses, apprenticeships and training. Some children may then go on to study for a degree at University, or they may choose college courses leading to work-based qualifications.</p> <p>In addition to the core curriculum, each school offers other subjects and activities. Ask the school for details and check its website. Always try to read the information the school sends to parents, such as school newsletters, so you know about opportunities for your child.</p> | <p>their education in a different place. For example in a college. They cannot stop their education until they are 18 years old.</p> <p>School is optional for children under 5. Children under 5 can go to a nursery or pre-school. This is not compulsory.</p> <p>Children start Primary School when they are 5 years old. They attend Primary School from age 5 to age 11.</p> <p>Children change schools when they are 11 years old. They go to a secondary school from age 11 to age 16.</p> <p>Is education free? In most schools yes. Most schools are state funded so you don't pay any fees. Independent schools or private schools charge fees. Universities and Colleges charge fees. The fees are called tuition fees.</p> <p>Are schools mixed? Yes. Most schools teach boys and girls together.</p> <p>All schools teach the same subjects, the same information and the same exams. This was decided by the government and is called the <b>Core Curriculum</b>. In addition, schools offer other subjects and activities.</p> <p>Schools send parents information for example newsletters. Always try to read it. If you read letters you will know about opportunities for your child. Please ask someone to help you if your English is limited.</p> <p>All children learn the same subjects until they are 13 years old. When they are 13 they choose which subjects to study. At age 13 they start studying for some important exams. They do their <b>GCSE</b> exams when they are 16. GCSE means General Certificate of Secondary Education.</p> |
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Please ask someone to help you if your English is limited.

#### **Slide 4: 1) Before your child is 5: Nursery**

Pre-school education, before your child is 5, isn't compulsory, but it's an opportunity to help children get ready for school so they can get the most from it.

Families on certain types of Asylum Support are entitled to free early-years childcare for 2 year olds.

All children aged 3 and 4 qualify for 15 hours' free education a week, during school term time. This is called '**Nursery**'. They can start the term after their 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday

Every family with a child under 5 will also have a Health Visitor who'll visit them at home from when the child is born until it starts Primary School.

Health visitors work for the National Health Service – known as the 'NHS'. They're qualified and registered nurses or midwives with additional training in public health. Health Visitors support the health of the whole family. They check the child's health and development, provide advice on feeding and managing child behaviour, and help mothers and fathers adjust to becoming new parents. You may find some of their advice differs from your own experience and practice back home. For example, in the UK, it's advised that a baby should be introduced to solid foods at the age of around 6 months. This may be earlier or later than you're used to.

After GCSE exams different children study very different things. Some children choose skills-based courses, **apprenticeships** and training. Some children study **A level qualifications**. A levels means Advanced level exams. After A levels, some children go to university.

#### **Slide 4: 1) Before your child is 5: Nursery**

Every child starts going to school **full time** at age 5. Some children start school when they are 3 or 4 years old. It is optional and it is **part time**.

It is a good idea to send your child to school age 3 or 4. This way they begin gently, just part time, and later they feel more confident when full time school begins.

School for 3 and 4 year old children is called '**pre school**.' It is also called '**nursery**'. All children can have this education for free. It isn't full time, it is just 15 hours per week. Children can start nursery after their 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday.

Maybe you can have free childcare when your child is two years old. Some types of Asylum Support give free early-years childcare for 2 year old children.

In this photo you can see a Health Visitor. She is visiting a family at home. Her job is to check on the health of the baby. Health Visitors continue to visit until the child is five.

Health visitors work for the 'NHS'. The NHS is the National Health Service. The job of Health Visitor is done by nurses or midwives. Their job is to help families with small children. They can give you advice, for

You can discuss any concerns with your Health Visitor, and they can provide a lot of helpful and up to date information about local services.

#### **Slide 5: 2) Education from 5 to 11: Primary School**

After Nursery a child will go on to **Primary School**.

Children start primary school, full-time, in the school year in which they turn 5. The school year runs from September to July. If your child was born in September, it'll be one of the oldest in the class and if they were born in August they'll be one of the youngest, with some children nearly a year older.

The school year is split into three terms – Autumn, Spring and Summer - with a one week long half-term holiday in the middle of each. School is on Monday to Friday and starts between 8.30 and 9 in the morning and ends between 3.30 and 4 in the afternoon. It may close earlier on a Friday. Each school will have its own timetable.

The first class they'll attend is called the Reception class. Then the

example they can advise you on how to feed your child and how to manage your child's behavior.

Sometimes you may be surprised by the advice a health visitor gives you. For example here in the UK, babies start eating solid food when they are about 6 months old. Perhaps it is different in your country? Maybe in your country you give babies food much earlier or later than this. All countries are different.

If you are worried about your child, the health Visitor will be happy to help you. They can give advice and they can also tell you about local services.

#### **Slide 5: 2) Education from 5 to 11: Primary School**

When do children start Primary School? All children start in September. The new school year always starts in the beginning of September.

The first year of school isn't called Year 1. It is called **Reception Class**. Your child will start Reception Class when they are 4 years old.

How old will your child's classmates be? Will they be older or younger than your child? This depends on the birthday date of your child. The oldest children in the class are the children born in September. The youngest children in the class are born in August.

There are three '**terms**' in one school year. The first term starts in September and finishes at the end of December. This is the **Autumn Term**. Next is the **Spring Term**, and after that is the **Summer term**. There is a long holiday at the end of every term (two weeks or more.)

classes are called Year 1 through to Year 6.

When you first arrive in the UK, the local council's priority is to help find a school place for your child as soon as possible so it doesn't miss out on education. If the closest school to you is full, your child will need to go to one further away. If you talk to the council, you may be able to arrange for your child to change schools later if a place at a closer school becomes available.

Schools will provide the text books your child will need. You won't need to buy them for your child.

Children must wear **School Uniform**. This'll be different for each school. You can buy them new or used in various shops. And your child's school and some charities might offer free uniform. Again, check with your school. And let them know if you have difficulty, as Schools will raise concerns about possible neglect if a child doesn't come to school with a clean and neat uniform.

Children are entitled to **free school meals** if their parents receive Section 95 Home Office asylum support. If you're on Section 4 support, you'll need to check with the school or local council as it'll be at their discretion. School menus can be adapted by the school for both medical and religious needs, such as halal.

Your children may be eligible for free **transport to school**. If they have a mobility problem or a special educational need, they'll qualify for free transport from 5 upwards. Other children aged between 5 and 16 qualify if they go to their nearest suitable school and live at least 2 miles from it if they're under 8, and 3 miles if they're 8 or older. Councils may also support travel costs to 6<sup>th</sup> form college if your child is over 16. You should contact them for full details.

There is also a short holiday in the middle of the term. The name of this holiday is 'half term.' The half term holidays are one week long.

School is every day Monday to Friday starting before 9 in the morning and finishing after 3pm

After Reception Class, your child goes up to Year 1. They stay in Primary School until Year 6.

Which school will your child go to? Will it be very near to your house? Maybe, maybe not. The local council decides which school your child will go to. The school does not decide this. If you live near to a school, but that school is full, then your child will go to a different school. It may be possible to change this later. You should speak to the council.

Textbooks are free. The school gives children the text books they need. School uniforms are not free. Most families pay for school uniform. But if paying for the uniform is difficult for you, speak to the school. Sometimes the school can help, or charities can help. It is important that your child has the correct uniform. If a child comes to school looking dirty, or with the wrong clothes, the school will worry about the child's safety. For this reason it is much better to speak to the school if you have difficulty paying for the uniform. The school will understand and they will try to help.

Children eat lunch at school. Some children have a **free school meal**. Do you receive Section 95 Home Office asylum support? Then your child can have free school meals. Do you receive Section 4 support? Then maybe your child can have free school meals. You should ask the school or the local council.

If your child needs to eat something different, tell the school. For

Children under 16 can get **reduced fares** on buses and trains if you buy them an Under-16 Travel Card. You'll need evidence of your child's age and a photo. Children must always travel with their card, as they must be able to show it if asked.

Schools will set **Homework** for children. They'll expect parents to support their children to complete it on time. It's advisable to check your child's school bag, as teachers often ask children to carry letters and information for parents, and a child may forget this. You can also check details of their homework tasks.

It'll be difficult for parents with limited English to help their children, so you can ask the school if they run a homework club, or if there's a local community group offering homework support. Some parents may want to increase their own literacy and numeracy skills to help their children with their homework. You may qualify for free adult education courses run at local colleges, including in English language.

**Standard Assessment Tests** – known as SATs - are taken when a child is 7 and again at 11 when they're in the final year of Primary School. They're important for the child's future as many Secondary Schools use the results to assess a child's ability and place them in sets for subjects, and even to predict performance right through school.

There are some days when children can dress up in a costume to go to school. One example is National Book Day, when children dress up as a character in their favourite book. Again, check the school's newsletter and website for details so your child doesn't miss the

example if your child has an allergy, or if your child needs to eat Halal food or vegetarian food. The school can change the school meal for your child's needs.

Does your child travel by bus or train to school? Children under 16 can pay a cheaper price. The name is a **reduced fare**. Children can have a reduced fare if you buy an **Under-16 Travel Card**. To buy this you need evidence of your child's date of birth and a photo. Your child should keep their card in their pocket or bag at all times. They may need to show it.

Homework is an important part of your child's education. Teachers expect you to help your child remember to do their homework. Check your child's school bag every day after school. You can see their homework this way, and you may also see letters from the school.

If you can't speak English well, it is difficult to help your child with their homework. The school will understand this and maybe they can help. Ask the school if they have a homework club. Also ask the school if there is a local community group which can help. Would you like to improve *your* English and maths? Sometimes you can find a free course at a local college.

All children have tests when they are 7 years old in maths, English and science. There are more tests age 11. The name of these tests is **SATs**. SATs means Standard Assessment Tests. Teachers use the test results to put the children in the right groups for learning. They put your child in a group with other children who have a similar level. The name of this learning group is a **set**.

Most days, children wear school uniform, but there are special days when children don't wear uniform. For example National Book Day in March. On National Book Day, children dress up as a character from a

chance to join in.

**Children with Special Educational Needs** will be assessed and will receive support. You can ask to speak to your schools' Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator if you feel your child needs support. Schools will also organise additional support for children who don't speak English. This is known as **English as an Additional Language** support or 'EAL'.

Some Local Councils have a team of professionals who support **Ethnic Minority Achievement**. They include teachers, teaching assistants, educational welfare officers, and family support workers. They work with schools and families to support pupils who speak English as an additional language, to help them achieve their potential.

#### **Slide 6: Attendance at school**

Parents are legally required to ensure their children attend school from the age of 5, so it's not a choice!

All Schools **monitor attendance** every day. Missing school means a child can fall behind on their learning. Parents should aim for 100% attendance for their child. Parents can't keep children at home unless

book. If your child wears school uniform on National Book Day, they will feel very different from their friends. There are other days when children don't wear uniform. It's a good idea for parents to read school information so that your child can participate.

Some children need extra help learning. Here are two examples.

1. Children who don't speak English at home need extra help. The name is **EAL**. EAL means **English as an Additional Language**. Schools give extra help to children with EAL.
2. Children who learn more slowly need extra help. The name is **SEN**. SEN means **Special Educational Needs**. Schools give extra help to children with SEN. One teacher organises this. Their job title is '**SEN Coordinator**.' Speak to the SEN Coordinator if you think your child needs extra help.

Some schools have another organisation that can help you. Its name is the **Ethnic Minority Achievement** team. They can give extra help to EAL children.

#### **Slide 6: Attendance at school**

School is compulsory. Under British law, parents are responsible for children going to school. It's not a choice!

One of the jobs of the school is to check a child is coming to school every day. It means they check your child's **attendance**. What does attendance mean? Good attendance means a child goes to school every day. Bad attendance means the child misses lots of days of school.

Of course if your child is ill they will miss school. The important thing is to **communicate** with the school. You should always phone and tell the

there's a valid reason and they've informed the school. If a child misses school without a valid reason, the school records it as an unauthorised absence. If a child is absent regularly, the school can make a home visit to check on the child. A school can offer parents advice and support if they're struggling to make sure their child attends school regularly. Ultimately local councils can use legal powers, including imposing fines and court orders on parents, to make Parents improve attendance.

So it's really important for Parents to **communicate** with the school. Parents *must* telephone the school by 8.30 in the morning

- If a child is ill and can't attend school that day
- Or a child will get to school late, and explain why
- Or a child can't attend school that day for any other valid reason
- Or the child has been hurt, for example whilst playing, and has a bruise or injury. Parents need to explain what happened

You should try and learn the English words you'll need to use to report your child's absence so you can leave a message on the school answerphone. There are suggestions in the handout.

Every school has set holidays and parents shouldn't take children away outside of these. You'll need to ask the school's permission for any other absence. Granting absence is at their discretion. Please talk to your school in advance about faith holidays such as Eid or Diwali or Nawroz. You should also try to book any appointments for your child after school hours, for example with a doctor.

school if your child is ill. Phone before 8.30am.

If your child misses a lot of school because of illness, the school will worry. If your child is ill and you forget to phone the school, the school will worry. They may visit your home. If the school is worried about your child, they can contact the Local Authority.

Sometimes parents have to pay a **fine** if their child has missed too much school . A fine is a financial penalty.

Here are some things you should always tell the school.

1. If your child is too ill for school, **phone** the school. Say "My child's ill today and they can't come to school." Say your child's name.
2. If your child will arrive late, **phone** the school and tell them.
3. **Tell** the teacher if your child has an injury. For example a bruise or a cut. Just explain how they hurt themselves.

If you don't tell the school, they will need to investigate to check if the child is safe.

Never take children on holidays during school time. Only go on holiday during school holidays.

What about special religious days? Can your child miss school if there is a festival for example Eid, Diwali or Nawroz? You have to ask for permission. Maybe the school will say yes, maybe not.

What about weddings and funerals? If you want to take your child out of school for a special reason, you need to ask the school first and they will decide if you can.

Schools also expect Parents to get involved with the school. It's important to build a relationship with the school as it will help you support your child's progress. So parents should attend Parents' evenings, where you can discuss your child's progress with teachers, ask any questions and discuss any concerns you have. You can meet other parents too. It's also valuable to talk to teachers when you're dropping off or collecting your child.

#### **Slide 7: Role of schools in protecting children from harm ('Safeguarding')**

Under UK law, schools have a duty to ensure children are safe from physical or emotional harm. It's useful for parents to know how schools deliver their protection responsibilities.

Schools will monitor for possible signs of neglect or abuse. Such as,

- If a child is dirty, hungry, or too tired to focus in class and participate in school life
- Or if they display any behaviour of concern, such as the child being upset, being aggressive or being withdrawn or not participating in school activity
- Or if they've got any injuries or signs of physical abuse
- Or if they're their journey to and from school is safe

What about medical appointments? Can children miss school to see the dentist or the doctor? Try to make appointments after school. If you can't, tell the school.

Engage with the school. What does this mean? It means build a relationship with the school. It's good if you know the teachers and they know you. Say hello to them when you take your child to school and when you collect them. Speak to them about your child's progress and about any problems you are having. If you are invited to an appointment, don't miss it.

#### **Slide 7: Role of schools in protecting children from harm ('Safeguarding')**

Schools have to protect children. Here are four examples.

Number 1. If your child has an accident at school, the teachers have to tell you. They have to explain how it happened.

Number 2. If your child is being abused by another child, the school has to protect your child. Abuse could be physical or verbal. The school has to do something if another child is abusing your child.

Number 3. At the end of the day, young children can't go home alone. An adult must collect the child. A stranger cannot collect the child. It must be the parent. If you can't collect your child, you must give the name of the adult who will collect them. Most schools ask parents every September to write the names of two adults who can collect the child if the parents are busy.

Number 4. Schools have to think about the journey to school and how children can travel safely. Can a child aged ten travel safely without an

All staff are obliged to record any concerns about a child's safety and wellbeing on a central computer system, which is checked to identify any multiple or recurring issues with a child.

If a child's record shows it has, on several occasions, come to school unclean or hungry, the school will contact the parents to try to find out what's happening. If the parents are struggling, the school can offer help from an Early Help team, who will create a support plan for that family. But if the parents don't communicate with the school or don't take up the support offer, the school will refer their concerns to a Social Worker, who will contact the parents and develop a plan of action to improve the care of the child.

Some issues will trigger an automatic referral from the school to a social worker. These are concerns about child abuse. If a child says, "My mother hit me", the school will make an immediate referral and a social worker will contact the parents to investigate. We'll explore the UK law about using physical punishment to discipline a child in the part 2 of this session.

Whatever the concern, intervention will always escalate if parents don't engage in discussions, or accept offers of support, or change the way they do things. Ultimately it could involve the child being taken into the care of the local authority.

Schools must inform parents if a child has had an incidence or injury while at school and explain what happened. And schools must take action to protect a child if they know it's being physically or verbally abused by another child whilst at school.

adult? What about age 11? The school decides. Every school has a policy on this. Most schools say that parents must accompany children under 12 to school and home again. Ask the school what age they recommend.

Another important thing that schools do to keep children safe is that they report it to the Local Authority if they think a child is not safe a

School is not optional here. School is compulsory. If your child well.

Some children are not safe at home. If a school realises that a child is not safe, happy and well, they pass this information on to the local authority. The local authority investigates. They will send a **Social Worker** to meet the family and check on the child.

Here are some signs which schools look for-

- If a child is dirty, or hungry, or extremely tired in class.
- If a child behaves strangely. For example they are often upset, or they are aggressive, or they don't participate in school activity.
- If a child often has injuries, because this can be a sign of physical abuse.
- If parents often forget to collect their child.
- If a young child travels alone to school.

If these things happen again and again, the school will notice. This is because they keep records on a computer.

Here is an example. If a child comes to school hungry on multiple occasions, the school will contact the parents to ask if everything is OK at home. Maybe this family needs help? Professionals will try to help. These professionals are from the **Early Help** team. They will make a

Each school has a policy on the age they consider it's safe for a child to get to and from school without adult supervision. It can depend on the location of the school, for example if there are major roads to cross which will expose children to greater risk of harm. Always check what your school's policy is. Children aged 6 to 12 are usually considered too young to get to and from school on their own and parents are expected to accompany these young children to school, to drop them off and pick them up. It's also important to be on time when collecting your child as teachers will need to wait until all children are collected.

Schools won't allow a child to be collected by a stranger. Parents must contact the school if they need to arrange for someone else to collect them that day. At the start of the school year, most schools ask parents to nominate 2 other people who can collect their child, and who to contact in an emergency.

Schools will be concerned if there are signs the child isn't getting enough sleep. Tiredness can harm a child by affecting its ability to grow, learn and play. It's recommended that children at Nursery School get 11 to 12 hours sleep each night. Primary School children should get between 9.5 and 11 hours sleep a night, and Secondary School children get between 9 and 9.5 hours.

support plan for that family.

The worst thing this family can do is reject the offer of help and support. If the family refuse to cooperate with the Early Help team, next they will hear from a Social Worker. This is because if the family keep silent or don't cooperate with the Early Help team, then the team can't be sure the child is safe.

Here is another example. Imagine if a child says "My mother hit me." This is more serious than a child being hungry. In this case, the school don't contact the Early Help team. Instead they contact a Social Worker immediately.

In both of these examples there is a possibility that the child could be '**taken into care**.' This means that the child stops living with their parents. Social Workers try to help families to stay together by helping the parents. But eventually, if a child is not safe and well at home, the Local Authority must take the child into care. This is the law.

In the examples above, how can the parents avoid losing their child? This is what they need to do-

- Always talk to the Early Help team and Social Worker. Answer phone calls and attend appointments.
- Accept offers of help and support.
- Change their behavior. For example, stop hitting the child.

Another thing you can do to help your child is give them enough sleep. Schools worry about children who are always too tired to learn well. The recommendation is that children who are 3 or 4 years old should sleep for 11 to 12 hours every night. Primary school children need to sleep between 9.5 and 11 hours. Secondary School children need between 9

### **Slide 8: 3) Education from 11 to 16 : Secondary School**

After primary school, children go on to **Secondary School**.

Children start Secondary School in the school year they turn 11. It starts with Year 7 and finishes with Year 11, when they turn 16.

School places aren't automatically allocated. You can apply for a place at a state school online or by using your council's application form. You apply through your local council even if you're applying for schools in another council area. Councils can't guarantee your child a place at the school you apply to, even if you live in the catchment area or have another child already at the school, as this will depend upon the number of applications the school receives. Ask the ethnic minority achievement team for more information and help on the application process, and about how decisions are made. You can appeal against a decision if you don't think it's fair.

When a child is in Year 9 – when they're 13 or 14 – they need to make Important decisions about what subjects to study for national General Certificate of Education exams, known as GCSEs. The GCSE exams are at the end of Year 11, when the child is 15 or 16. There's some choice around subjects selected. Three core subjects, English, Maths and Science, are compulsory. Other subjects are optional and can be chosen from 4 categories which are the arts, design and technology, the humanities and modern foreign languages. Optional subjects vary between schools.

Each school determines the number of GCSE subjects its pupils can take, which could be between 7 and 12 subjects. The subjects

and 9.5 hours of sleep.

### **Slide 8: 3) Education from 11 to 16 : Secondary School**

After primary school, children go on to **Secondary School**.

Children start Secondary School When they are 11. Secondary school starts with Year 7 and finishes with Year 11.

How does your child get a place at secondary school? It doesn't happen automatically. You must fill in the form. If you forget, you may have problems.

What if the school you want is in a different area with a different council? How do you apply? You apply through your local council.

The form asks you to write the name of the school you prefer for your child. The council will try to give your child a place at the school. Sometimes there is not enough space for all the children. If that happens to you, your child may be sent to a different school in a different area.

What if you are not happy with the decision? You can appeal if you think the council decision is wrong. Ask the ethnic minority achievement team for more information and help.

Children have more homework at Secondary School. Children should do all their homework. Teachers will expect you to help your child. You should remind your child to do their homework on time. How much homework do children have in Secondary school? At first your child will probably have 1 or 2 hours of homework every day. When they are 14

chosen will have a real significance for the child's future so parents can support their child to pick subjects needed for the career they'd like to follow, as well as ones that interest them and ones they're good at. GCSEs are awarded through a mixture of assessing course work and taking exams. Results are sent out in August, a couple of months after the exams. Grades awarded range from 9 (highest) to 1 (lowest).

Grades will determine which 6<sup>th</sup> form college the child can apply to and which subjects they can select to study for Advanced Level, which are known as A levels. Each college will set what they require for entry, usually at least 5 GCSE's at grade 4 or above. And they usually require GCSE grade 6 or 7 in a subject to continue it at A level. Check college websites for details.

GCSE grades are also used by Universities and Further Education colleges as an indication of the student's abilities. Universities often require a minimum of GCSE grade 4 in English, maths and at least one science for acceptance on a degree course. Many Further Education College courses require a minimum of 5 GCSEs at grade 4 or above.

Homework will increase at Secondary School and parents are expected to make sure children complete it on time. Expect your child to be given between 1 and 2 hours each day to start with, rising to between 2 and 3 hours a day in when they're 14 to 16. Homework is particularly important when children start studying for GCSEs to make sure they've covered the syllabus in enough depth and to revise before the exams. Check the school's website for details of their homework policy and resources that can help parents support

this will increase to two or three hours.

If a child keeps forgetting to do their homework, the teacher will probably ask you to come to school and talk about the problem.

Many schools have a homework club where children do their homework. It happens after school with teachers there to help. These clubs can be very useful.(note)

When a child is in Year 9 – when they're 13 or 14 – they need to make Important decisions about what subjects to study next. They will study their chosen subjects in year 10 and 11, and at the end of year 11 they will do important exams. The name of the exams is **GCSE**. GCSE means General Certificate of Secondary Education. All children do English, Maths and Science, but they can choose the other subjects.

You should help your child decide which subjects to do, because this will affect their adult life. GCSE results come out in August. The result is based on children's exam performance and their course work. A pass is a grade 4. The best grade is 9 and the lowest grade is 1.

If a child has good GCSE grades, they have more choice about what to study next. For example, imagine that a girl wants to do A level biology. Without a good GCSE grade in biology she can't continue to study this subject at A level. She also needs to have 5 or more GCSEs with grade 4 or higher. If she doesn't have 5 good GCSEs she can't do any A levels and she will have to either choose a different path, or repeat the GCSEs.

The most important GCSEs are English and maths. If a child passes 5 GCSEs this is probably good enough to get a place at a **Further Education College**.

After GCSEs, some children stay in the same school. If the school has a

children to manage their homework and ensure its completed on time. If a child persistently fails to hand in their homework, a school will usually ask parents to come in and discuss the problem.

Many schools have an after-school homework club where children do their homework, with teachers or support staff there to help. These clubs can be useful if your child needs to use school resources to do assignments, such as the library or the internet, or if it's difficult to focus at home.

#### **Slide 9: 4) Education and training over 16 and up to 18**

After 16, children must do one of the following until they're 18:

They must either stay in full-time education, for example at a 6<sup>th</sup> form college, and study for A levels or other skills-based qualifications such as National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs)

Or they can start an Apprenticeship or Traineeship in a vocational skill. These combine practical training with study. Apprenticeships last between 1 and 5 years with the young person earning an income whilst studying. A Traineeship can last up to 6 months. It's a course with work experience that gets a person ready for work or for an apprenticeship.

**Sixth Form**, children can stay in the same school. In some schools this is not possible because the school has no Sixth Form.

If the school has a Sixth Form, the child can stay there if they like. Or they can move to a college. The name is **Sixth Form College**. Another name is **Further Education College**.

#### **Slide 9: 4) Education and training over 16 and up to 18**

After 16, children have to continue with education. It could be full time or part time. There are three different paths.

1. If they stay in full time education they can do **A levels**, or they can do NVQs. People who want to go to university usually study A levels. **NVQ** means National Vocational Qualification. People learn **skills** on an NVQ course, for example how to be an electrician or a hairdresser.
2. They can do an **Apprenticeship** or a **Traineeship**. This is a way to learn a skill and work at the same time. Apprenticeships last between 1 and 5 years and the young person earns money whilst studying. A Traineeship lasts 6 months or less. It's a course with work experience. After the traineeship the person can find a job or start an apprenticeship.
3. They can study part time and work part time. The work could be paid or unpaid (unpaid work is called **volunteering**.)

If your child wants to go to university, they will need to study A levels. With good A level grades they can get a place at a university. Most A level students do 3 subjects. For example biology, physics and chemistry. A small number of students do 4 or 5 A levels but this is unusual. A levels are difficult and 3 subjects is enough.

A level courses last 2 years with exams at the end. Students begin in

Or they can spend 20 hours or more a week working or volunteering, while in part-time education or training

Most students aiming to study for a degree at University take 3 A levels, which is the minimum Universities require to offer a place. A few students take the maximum of five A Levels. But each A level involves a lot of study, and a lot of homework, so more than 3 could cause grades or extracurricular commitments to slide.

A level courses take 2 years, covering Years 12 and 13. Exams are the end of Year 13, in May and June, with results notified in August. Grades are awarded on an A\* to E scale, with A\* being the highest. Grade C is considered as a pass

People with fewer than 3 A levels can still go on to study for Foundation Degrees or other higher level courses.

Schools support children to make choices about their future. Every secondary school must offer independent careers guidance for all Year 8 to 13 pupils. You can ask for advice on the choices and options when your child is selecting which subjects to study, and whether to aim for academic or skills based courses.

By law a child must be in some form of education or training from 16 up to the age of 18. But a child that's turned 16 is considered to be old enough to make decisions for themselves. So while a parent should be encouraging their child to continue their education or training, the parent can't be held responsible if the child refuses.

**Slide 10: 5) Education after 18**

year 12 when they are 16 years old. In May and June of year 13 they do the exams and they learn their results in August. If their exam results are good enough they begin university in September. Most students are aged 18 when they start university.

If a child has a grade C or higher they have passed their A level. If they have grade D or E they have failed. The highest grade they can possibly get is an A\*.

If a student doesn't pass 3 A levels what can they do? They can do a Foundation Degree. Or they can find another course to do.

It is difficult for children to decide which job they would like to have in the future and which subjects to study. Schools help with this. Schools give careers advice, starting in Year 8.

You can also help your child to make decisions. But remember that when they are 16 they don't have to follow your advice. A 16 year old is considered to be old enough to make decisions independently. You are not responsible for their decisions any more.

**Slide 10: 5) Education after 18**

School is free but university is expensive. University courses are called degrees. A degree is the name of the qualification. Most degree courses last 3 years. One year of study usually costs £9000. A degree usually

If your child wants to study for a degree at University, you'll need to consider the fees involved, which are around £9,000 a year. Most courses take 3 years. And if living away from home, there'll be living costs too. Asylum Seekers aren't eligible to apply for the Student Loans, which cover fees and living costs. However, some universities offer **Sanctuary Scholarships** which allow asylum seekers to study at University for free. Check University websites or google 'Sanctuary Scholarships'. Some of the 5 universities in the North East region offer sanctuary scholarships too.

Most students apply to University before they take their A levels, so they can start in the September after they leave 6<sup>th</sup> form. Your child can apply to University through their 6<sup>th</sup> form or online through the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service.

You should ask for advice about your child's eligibility for a student loan if you receive Leave to Remain from the Home Office, or if your child turns 18.

Or your child may want to go to a **Further Education College**, which offer a range of courses and vocational study as well as apprenticeships and training. Check with the college which courses your child could be eligible to study for free.

If your child can't secure a free university or college place, they're likely to be very frustrated they can't progress their studies when other friends can. And they won't be allowed to work if you're still waiting for a decision on your asylum claim. They'll need something meaningful to do. You can help them consider volunteering

costs £28,000. In addition there are living costs, for example food and transport. Living costs are more expensive if a student goes to university in a different city.

How can asylum seeker families pay for this? Some people can borrow money, the name is a **Student Loan**. But Asylum Seekers can't apply for Student Loans. They have to wait until they have permission to remain in the UK. However, some universities offer **Sanctuary Scholarships** for asylum seekers. If your child gets a Sanctuary Scholarship they can study for free. Search 'Sanctuary Scholarships' on the internet to check which Universities offer them. Some universities in the North East offer Sanctuary Scholarships. If you receive Leave to Remain, or when your child is 18, ask for advice.

Students usually apply to universities *before* they know their A level results. When the results come out they discover if they have the necessary grades to go to the university they prefer.

Students don't apply to universities directly. They apply via **UCAS**. UCAS means the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service. On one application form the student writes the names of all the universities they want to apply to.

Another option may be a Further Education College. After A levels some students continue at a Further Education College. Ask the college if they have any courses your child can do for free.

If your child has tried to get a free university place and been unsuccessful, this will be a difficult time for them. It is difficult because their friends continue studying and get jobs. If you are still waiting for a decision on your asylum case, your child can't work. They will need something meaningful to do. What about **volunteering**? Volunteering is unpaid work. It impresses future employers. It can also help your child to feel more positive about their life if they are busy gaining experience or helping other people. Ask about opportunities at the local volunteering

opportunities. Volunteering impresses future employers, and it can provide young people with valuable personal references. This can keep them positive about the future. Find out about opportunities at the local volunteering office.

#### **Slide 11: Protecting your child from bullying, hate, cyber abuse**

If a child targets another child with the intention of hurting them, either physically or emotionally, it's known as 'Bullying' and is very damaging to a child. Parents should try and encourage their child to talk to them and share any concerns they have about school, otherwise they may be suffering in silence. Parents can find it very stressful and confusing wondering what they can do to stop the bullying and protect their child. Sometimes a child doesn't want anyone to make a fuss about it, or they don't want any action to be taken against the other child as they worry they'll be picked on even more. It's important for parents to know they can take action to stop it happening again, which can start off as small informal steps but can escalate to more action if you aren't satisfied the bullying has stopped.

Firstly, speak to your child's class teacher and explain your worries. You shouldn't try to deal with it yourself by talking to the other child or their parents. You can ask the teacher to keep an eye on the situation, and for their suggestions for the best way of resolving things. All schools must have a behaviour policy, which will say how they'll manage behaviour of children at school. If bullying continues,

office

#### **Slide 11: Protecting your child from bullying, hate, cyber abuse**

What is bullying? **Bullying** is when a child hurts another child intentionally and repeatedly. The abuse could be verbal or physical.

It will help if your child knows that they can speak to you. Always listen to your child and ask them how they are. Sometimes children feel afraid to speak about their abuse.

It is stressful for parents if their child is bullied. You may want to speak directly with the parents or the other child but this is a bad idea. It can cause more problems. The best thing is to speak to the school.

Begin by speaking to your child's class teacher. You could start small, for example ask the teacher to notice how the children behave together. Or ask the teacher for ideas on what to do.

If you feel like the school is ignoring this problem, continue to tell the teachers about it. Schools cannot ignore bullying. Ask to see the school's **behavior policy**. Every school has a behavior policy. It is a document that says how the teachers will manage behavior problems. Another good person to speak to is the head of year. Their job is more senior than a teacher.

It can be a good idea to write a daily record of the bullying. This is evidence. Write what happened. Also write the times, dates and the names of witnesses.

Sometimes, if bullying is very stressful, children refuse to go to school. If this happens, it is very important to speak to the school. Explain the problem. Don't keep your child at home without explanation. The school could contact a Social Worker if they don't understand why your child is

try to keep a diary of what your child says is happening, including dates, times and details of incidents together with any witnesses. Ask for a follow up meeting with the class teacher or head of year. Schools have a duty of care to their students, and allowing a child to be continually bullied when the school has been alerted to the problem could be seen as a breach of that duty. Finally, you can make a complaint against the school if you feel they haven't responded appropriately to the information you've given to them.

Your child may be so stressed and frightened by bullying that they can't face going to school. Unless you talk to the school about what's happening, they'll treat this as unauthorised absence and they could take action against the parent for failing to ensure the child attends school. You can also explain things to local Ethnic Minorities Achievement Team and ask them to intervene with the school to get the bullying stopped.

Some forms of bullying are illegal. This includes violence or assault, theft, repeated harassment or intimidation, and hate crimes. Hate is where the child is targeted because of their religion or race. This won't be tolerated. The preferred advice is for parents to report this to the police and let them take action.

Children go online at a young age and are quick to learn to explore the web. They can be at risk from **cyber bullying and abuse**, and from accessing inappropriate and harmful material via their smartphones or other digital devices. This is a real worry for all parents. It can have a serious impact on a child's confidence, self-esteem and health.

Again, it's important parents talk to their children about these dangers, and the risks of the websites and apps they're using.

missing school.

Remember that the school has a legal duty to keep children safe. This is called a 'duty of care.' If you tell the school that your child is being bullied they must take action. If they don't it is a breach of their legal duty. You can make a complaint against the school. Another option is to explain things to the local Ethnic Minorities Achievement Team. They should help.

Some forms of bullying are illegal. You should go to the police if the bullying is illegal. It is illegal to steal or to use physical violence. Repeated harassment is illegal too.

If a person is bullied or attacked because of their religion or race, this is very serious. It is called **hate**. If you or your children experience hate, tell the police. Hate is illegal.

Sometimes bullying can happen via a mobile phone or the internet. This is called **cyber bullying and abuse**. Another problem with mobile phones is that children can see things on the internet which they should not see. For example images of sex or violence, or extreme opinions.

It is important to talk to your child about these dangers. Encourage them to talk to you about anything bad they experience online.

How can you protect your children online? There are tools you can install on phones and computers. For example apps and filters. There are organisations that give advice. They can also help you report incidents to the authorities.

### **Slide 12: Helping your child stay inside the law**

Here are some examples of things that children shouldn't do. They can

Encourage them to talk to you about anything that's happened to them or any concerns they have.

Parents can get advice on how to protect their children from online harm, such as using parental control tools and filters, and know how to report cyber bullying and abuse. There are organisations that provide practical tips as well as helping you report incidents so that action can be taken to stop it happening again.

### Slide 12: Helping your child stay inside the law

In any country, some children will behave in a way that's disruptive to others in society and Authorities will have different ways of responding. Children may do things that harm or lack consideration for others. Examples are being noisy or intimidating in a public space, spraying graffiti, verbally abusing others, and deliberately damaging property. In the UK this is known as '**Anti-Social Behaviour**' or '**ASB**'. Police will take action against young people found committing ASB and punishments will increase if they don't follow the rules.

Your child isn't allowed to buy **alcohol** before they're 18. It's also illegal for anyone else to sell alcohol to or buy alcohol for someone under 18. The minimum legal age for **smoking** is 16. But a child isn't allowed to buy cigarettes until they're 18. So shops selling alcohol and cigarettes can ask anyone who looks under the age of 25 to show identity to prove their age.

Anyone caught using, possessing or selling **illegal drugs** can be arrested. Parents should warn their children about the dangers of being asked to carry or deliver any package for someone else. Some

have problems with the police if they-

- Spray graffiti
- Are very noisy
- Break things intentionally
- Verbally abuse people.

The name of this is '**Anti-Social Behaviour**' or '**ASB**'. Police will take action against young people who commit ASB. Punishments start small but increase if the child doesn't stop.

The minimum age for buying **alcohol** is 18. Children can smoke when they are 16 but they cannot buy **cigarettes** until they are 18. Only adults can buy cigarettes. If a person looks 25 years old (or less), they have to show an identity card to the shop assistant if they want to buy alcohol or cigarettes. It is against the law for an adult to buy alcohol for a person under 18.

You should warn your child about drug dealers. A drug dealer sells **illegal drugs**. If a person uses, carries or sells illegal drugs the police can arrest them. Sometimes drug dealers force children to deliver drugs. They begin by offering free drugs to the child. Next they tell the child to deliver some drugs to a customer. If the child refuses to deliver the drugs, the dealer threatens violence.

Police can help you understand this. They can give you advice if you are worried.

**Sex** under 16 is illegal. Imagine a girl is 15 and she wants to have sex with her boyfriend. If the boyfriend is over 16 he breaks the law if he has sex with her. Maybe he thinks she is 16? This is not a valid excuse in the law.

Unwanted sexual activity is called rape or sexual assault. Rape and sexual assault are crimes. The maximum prison sentence is 15 years.

drug dealers deliberately target children to deliver their drugs, thinking they're less likely to attract Police attention. They offer children free drugs first, then demand they deliver drugs for them and threaten them with injury if they refuse. The Police can help parents understand more about this and give advice on how to protect your child if you're concerned about them.

It's illegal for a boy or a girl to have **sex** with anyone under the age of 16, even if they're willing. It's important not to assume a person is over 16 just because they're somewhere like a pub or a club. Sex with someone over the age of 16 must always be with their consent. Sexual activity without consent is rape or sexual assault, which is a crime. The penalty can be a prison sentence of up to 15 years.

In England, the minimum legal age someone can get **married** is 16. They must however have their parent's consent. Marriage is allowed at 18 without parental consent.

### **Slide 13: Managing expectations: 'Sleepovers'**

A sleepover is a party where one or more friends are invited to stay the night at a friend's house. It could be to celebrate birthdays or other special events. Sleepover parties have become popular in the UK, especially with girls. Most children now consider them a normal part of childhood life.

So it's best to be prepared how you will respond if your child has a sleepover invitation, or asks you to organise one for their friends. Of course parents will make their own decision whether to allow a sleepover or not. Understandably, many parents will be anxious about their child staying with people they don't know well, and if they'll be safe and supervised. So If you don't want your child to join a

In England, the minimum legal age to get **married** is 16. Your child cannot marry without your consent until they are 18 years old.

### **Slide 13: Managing expectations: 'Sleepovers'**

What is a **sleepover**? A sleepover is a party where friends are invited to stay the night at a friend's house. For example to celebrate a birthday. Sleepover parties are popular in the UK, especially with girls. Most children think sleepovers are normal.

What will you say if your child wants a sleepover, or is invited to a sleepover? It is a good idea to plan in advance what you will say. This is completely your decision. Perhaps you feel too anxious about your child's safety?

If you say no to a sleepover, your child will probably feel disappointed. Especially if all their friends think sleepovers are normal. It is a good idea to think of an alternative activity. For example can you arrange a daytime activity with your child's friends?

If you allow your child to go to a sleepover, it is OK to ask for the name and address of the parents. You can ask for the phone number too.

What if you host a sleepover in your house? Remember that children should not watch films or TV with adult content. For example evening television can be too sexy or violent for children. Cable TV and Sky TV show adult content after 8pm. Channels 1 to 5 show adult content after 9pm.

Some schools may organise a sleepover at the school. They will give children the 'sleeping bags' and teachers will be there all night. The children are supervised at all times.

sleepover, it could be a good idea to think of alternative activities you can arrange for your child to support their friendships with other children. For example, you can organise a daytime play date for them.

If you do allow a sleepover, you can make sure you have the address and telephone number of the parents hosting it. And you can let them know about any food or medical needs your child has. If you're hosting a sleepover, remember children should not be watching television shown after 8 in the evening on cable and Sky channels, or 9 on channels 1 to 5, as this is when more adult programmes are shown.

Some schools may organise a sleepover at the school. They'll provide the 'sleeping bags' and teachers will be there all night, so children will be supervised at all times.

Children are also keen to have the latest fashionable things, such as the coolest smart phone or trainers. These items are very expensive and impossible to buy when you're receiving asylum support and not allowed to work to earn the money to pay for them. Children are likely to be very frustrated if they're told they can't have the things their school friends have. So it could be a good idea for you to talk to your child and explain to them the family's financial situation whilst you're waiting for your asylum claim to be decided. This'll help them to manage their expectations, so they don't imagine their parents are deliberately denying them things.

**Slide 14: Supervising children at home to keep them safe from harm**

In the second part of this session, we'll look at differences which

Another problem you may have is when your child wants to buy things. Children usually want to have the same things as their friends. For example expensive trainers or a new mobile phone. How can you buy these things when you are receiving asylum support and not allowed to work? It's impossible.

Children can feel very frustrated about this. It may be a good idea to talk to your child honestly. If they understand the financial situation they will understand the reason why you can't buy these things. They will know that you love them but don't have enough money. This may be better for the child.

**Slide 14: Keeping children safe in the house (or some simpler title...)**

Now we'll look at how parents keep their children safe while they are in the house or playing outside.

We'll look at how parents **supervise** their child. 'Supervise' means how parents watch children to check they stay safe.

And then we'll look at how parents **discipline** their child. Discipline means the way parents manage their children if they behave badly.

This information is really important. The asylum seekers that collected this information really want you to understand this because they were surprised by this when they arrived in the UK.

In the UK children are supervised a lot. Children do not spend much time alone. In the house or outside the house.

Also, physical punishments are not used on children who behave badly.

In the past it was different. Children had more freedom, and it was

parents new to the UK may find in the UK law and expectations around supervising and disciplining children, and keeping them safe from harm in the home.

Can I ask for your attention please, as these are really important differences which you'll want to be aware of.

An unsupervised child is at risk of harm because they may not know how to avoid danger, or who to trust. If a parent fails to supervise a child so that it places them at risk of harm, they'll be considered negligent.

The UK has national guidelines on how much parental supervision is needed. These may differ to what you're used to.

- Babies and very young children should never be left alone, even for 15 minutes while you quickly go to the local shop.
- Children under 12 are rarely mature enough to be left alone, or to look after younger children, or cook for themselves without adult supervision.
- Children under 16 shouldn't be left alone overnight.
- Children over 16 shouldn't be left alone frequently for long periods of time or for multiple nights

So parents need to think carefully about leaving children unsupervised – whether alone at home, or in a car, or letting children play outside without an adult watching them, or letting children go somewhere on their own, such as to the park, the school or a friend.

The law doesn't specify an age when you can leave a child on their own, because children mature at a different rate. But it's an offence to leave a child alone if it places them at risk. Local authorities have a duty to investigate if they receive reports of unsupervised children. A

normal in many families to smack naughty children. This has all changed. Refugees and Asylum seekers are often surprised by this. These are very important differences. You need to know the law.

First you are going to hear British ideas about keeping children safe inside the home.

Remember. In the UK, child safety is not only your responsibility. It is also the responsibility of the local authority and the police. This includes inside the home. If a child isn't safe in the home the local authority can take the child away.

Parents need to supervise children a lot in this country. If a parent does not supervise a child enough, people will say the parent is **negligent**. The law says that parents cannot leave their children unsupervised.

Here are some examples.

- Babies and very young children should never be alone in the house. You cannot quickly go to the local shop without them. Take the children with you.
- It is not a good idea for a child under 12 to be alone in the house, or to look after younger children with no adult nearby. Some children are very mature, but most children under 12 are not mature enough for this.
- Children under 12 should not cook independently, without adult supervision.
- Children under 16 should not spend all night in a house without adults.
- Children aged 16 to 18 can be alone all night, but not frequently and not for many nights.

So how can you know if your child is old enough to be unsupervised?

Social Worker could visit you to explore what's happening and discuss things you may need to do to make sure the child isn't placed at risk. Police can prosecute parents if they feel their actions put children at risk.

Use your judgement on how mature your child is before you decide to leave them alone anywhere. Just because a child is older it doesn't necessarily mean they're ready to look after themselves or other children. Ask yourself, will your child know what to do in an emergency, or be able to cope if something unexpected or scary happens? Parents should also assess the safety of the location, and eliminate risks before leaving them alone or with other younger children. Ask are there any obvious risks, such as a sharp knife left out, or an open window a child could fall out of, or broken glass where the children are playing? The child should always be able to contact you or a trusted person, and you should be able to return home quickly if they need you.

#### **Slide 15: Supervising children outside the home**

Young children should also be supervised by an adult if they're playing outside. An adult will need to go with them to a park and in any local areas where they have to cross roads. Children need to be encouraged to learn how to use appropriate crossing zones, such as a Zebra Crossing, or waiting at lights for the Green Man.

All this may contrast with what is acceptable back in your country, where children may be given responsibility at an earlier age. But it's very important to understand the different approach in the UK.

#### **Slide 16: The law about children and cars**

The law is not specific about age because all children are different. The law asks parents to think about the capabilities of their child. It is against the law to leave a child alone if they will be at risk.

Here is what you should think about.

- Think about the child's capabilities. Will they know what to do in an emergency? What if something scary or unexpected happens? Will your child know what to do?
- Think about the location. Is it safe? What are the dangers? For example could a child fall out of an open window? Is there a sharp knife on the table?
- Think about your availability. Can they easily contact you if they need you? Do they know how? Are you nearby? The child should always know how to contact you or another trusted person.

If your children are unsupervised, somebody may worry about them. They may tell a social worker. The social worker has to investigate. They will ask you to explain why you decided it was safe to leave your children unsupervised on that occasion. Police can prosecute parents if they think the children are not kept safe.

#### **Slide 15: Supervising children outside the home**

If young children are playing outside, they must be supervised by an adult. Young children can't cross roads alone or go to the park with friends and no adults. Children need to learn how to cross a road safely. You have to teach them how.

It may be very different in your home country. Perhaps children have responsibility when they are younger? It is very important that you understand how different it is here.

#### **Slide 16: The law about children and cars**

You should also never leave your child in a car with no adult. Not even

You should also never leave your child alone in the car, even for 5 minutes.

To protect children's health, it's illegal to smoke in a car if there's anyone under 18 in it. And it's illegal to fail to prevent smoking in a car if there's someone under 18 in it. The law still applies if the windows or a sunroof is open, or if you have the air conditioning on and even if you're sitting in the open doorway of the car. The rules don't apply to e-cigarettes.

For the same reason, smoking isn't allowed in school grounds.

In UK law, when travelling in a car, children must use a child seat that is appropriate to their age, height and weight. The Law says:

- A child must be in a rear-facing baby carrier or baby seat, with harness restraints, until it's 15 months old.
- After 15 months, children can use a forward-facing child car seat with harness restraints. They must use this until they're 12 years old or 135 centimetres tall, whichever comes first.
- Children over 12 or more than 135cm tall must wear a seat belt.

Exceptions are only made if a child is travelling in a taxi and the driver doesn't provide a correct child seat, or if you're having to make an emergency or unexpected journey over a short distance.

**Slide 17: The law around disciplining children**

for 5 minutes.

You should not smoke in a car if children are with you. If you and your children are with a smoker, do not let them smoke in the car. It is your responsibility to protect your child from cigarette smoke. This is the law. Opening the windows makes no difference, it is always illegal to smoke in a car with children. E-cigarettes are different. It is legal to smoke e-cigarettes in a car with children.

Smoking is not allowed in schools.

Car accidents are dangerous for children. You can protect your child by using the correct **child seat**. The law says a child must have a car seat that is the correct size.

- Babies under 15 months must travel in a baby seat. The baby seat must be rear-facing. (Rear-facing means that the baby is travelling backwards.)
- After 15 months children can use a child-seat. It isn't rear-facing. They must use this until they're 12 years old OR until they are 135 centimetres tall.
- Big children don't need a car seat but they must wear a seat belt. This is children over 12 years old or over 135cm tall.

There are three exceptions to this law. It is legal to travel without a child seat if-

- The journey is short and unexpected. Or-
- It is an emergency. Or -
- You are in a taxi with no child seat.

**Slide 17: The law about disciplining children**

The UK law on protecting children from harm also affects how parents can discipline their children. Many problems arise if Local Authorities learn that physical punishment is being used to discipline a child.

In many countries it's considered acceptable to use physical punishment, such as smacking, to discipline a child. It used to be the same in the UK. But attitudes, as in many countries around the world, have been changing and it's now considered to be abuse. It's very important for parents new to the UK to understand what the consequences can be if you do continue to use physical punishment or even the threat of using it. Again, front line professionals such as Health Workers, Social Workers, Teachers and the Police have a duty to act if they have information a child may be at risk of abuse in the home.

For many parents, smacking a child may feel like the fastest and most effective way to change a child's behavior. It may work in the short-term. But, studies show using physical punishment on children has long-term consequences and links to psychological problems in adulthood. Hitting children for misbehavior can reinforce the idea that violence is the way to resolve a problem or get someone to do what you want.

The simplest message is, ***do not use any physical punishment to discipline your child. And don't threaten your child with physical punishment either.*** If you do, you could end up having your child taken away from you. This is extremely likely if you use any kind of implement to smack your child with, such as a belt or a spoon or if you threaten to use something, for example if you tell your child *"If you do that again I'll smack you with this spoon"*.

Physical punishment means:

Many problems arise if Local Authorities learn that parents use **physical punishment**. What is physical punishment? For example if your child misbehaves and you smack or hit them, this is physical punishment. In many countries it is OK to smack children or use other physical punishment. It was the same here but now it is not accepted. It is very important that you understand the consequences if you use physical punishment when your children misbehave. If you physically punish your child in the UK, it is called abuse.

Here are the reasons why the law changed.

Children who receive physical punishment can experience psychological problems later. Also, if parents use physical punishment it gives a bad message. It gives the child the message that it's OK to use violence to solve problems, and it's OK to use violence to make a person do what you want.

***Do not use any physical punishment to discipline your child. And don't threaten your child with physical punishment either.*** If you use physical punishment, your children could be taken away. Health Workers, Social Workers, Teachers and the Police have a duty to act if they are worried about a child. If they have information that a child may be at risk of abuse in the home, they must investigate.

It is especially bad if you use an object to smack your child. For example a belt or a spoon. Or if you say you will hurt them with the object. For example don't say *"if you do that again I'll smack you with this spoon."*

What is physical punishment? All of these punishments are physical-

- smacking, slapping, hitting with a hand or an object

- smacking, slapping, hitting with a hand or an implement
- kicking, shaking or throwing
- scratching, pinching, biting
- pulling hair or ears
- forcing children to stay in uncomfortable positions, such as standing for long periods
- burning, scalding
- forcing a child to eat something

No form of punishment should ever leave a child with swelling, bruises, cuts or grazes, reddening of the skin, abrasions, or scratches

Anyone can report incidents of child abuse to local authorities, whether they've witnessed it or heard about it. Many local services are required by law to report any knowledge of physical punishment of children or other abuse. Reports will lead to a visit from a Social Worker or the Police, who will investigate. If they consider the child is at continuing risk of harm, they have the power to remove that child into the care of the local authority.

So if a Social Worker visits you, it's vital you listen to the concerns they raise and are willing to discuss the situation with them. If you keep silent they can't do their job, which is to satisfy themselves that a child is safe from harm. If you don't co-operate with them, they can't investigate, which means they're more likely to have to remove the child into local authority care. So it's advisable to build a relationship

- kicking, shaking or throwing.
- scratching, pinching, biting.
- pulling hair or ears.
- forcing children to stay in uncomfortable positions (for example standing) for a long time
- burning, scalding.
- forcing a child to eat something.

Don't use these punishments to discipline your child. In this country these punishments are called abuse.

No punishments should cause marks on the skin. For example-

- swelling
- bruises,
- cuts or grazes,
- reddening of the skin,
- abrasions,
- Scratches.

If a child often has marks on the skin, teachers will ask questions. Repeated marks on the skin can be a sign of abuse.

Everyone can contact local authorities if they are worried about a child. People can contact them if they *see* abuse, or *suspect* it, or *hear about* it. If a person works for the local authority, they are required by law to do this. For example if a person works for a school and they see you smack your child, they must report it. It is a compulsory part of their job.

with the Social Worker and recognise you share a mutual concern in your child's wellbeing. Its best to work with them to uncover any issues that may be putting the child's safety at risk and then be willing to find remedies for these. If you're willing to work with them, a Social Worker can support you to adjust to life in the UK. They can support you with the parenting challenges you face.

Parenting can be more challenging when a whole family is experiencing high levels of stress and anxiety whilst adjusting to a new life and waiting for a decision on their asylum claim. And family members are likely to be dealing with trauma from things they experienced back home. All this can lead to heightened tensions at home, and parents may be quicker to react to things, and with more anger, than usual. Research also shows trauma significantly affects a child's behaviour. For example, teenagers can find it harder to manage their anger. All this can make managing a child's behaviour additionally challenging for parents.

The first step is that the Police or a social worker will investigate. They speak to the parents and the child. If they think that the abuse is real AND if they think that the abuse will continue, they have the power to remove the child from their family. The child will be taken away to live in another place.

If you get a visit from the police or a social worker this is what you should do.

Listen to the social worker and speak to them about your situation. Social workers prefer to leave a child with his or her parents, but they can only do this if the child is safe. The social worker's job is to learn the child's real situation. Their job is to protect the child. If you show them that the child is safe with you, the social worker will be satisfied. If you keep silent and if you don't cooperate they can't do their job.

Show the social worker that you want your child to be safe. Answer all their questions. Build a relationship with the social worker. If necessary, change your behavior. The social worker should help you to do this. Why is the social worker worried about your child? Maybe you are punishing your child physically? Tell the social worker that you want to find new ways to discipline your child. The social worker's job is to support you and help you.

Your situation is difficult. It is stressful to wait for a decision on an asylum case. In addition, you experienced trauma and loss before you arrived here. When children misbehave, stressed parents feel angry more quickly. Teenagers often feel very angry too. Teenagers who have experienced trauma find it more difficult to control their anger. If everyone in your house feels angry and stressed, how can you stay in control? It is especially difficult. You may need help.

**Slide 18: Alternative methods for managing a child's behaviour**

If you used physical punishment to discipline your child back home, you'll need to find alternative methods to manage your child's behaviour now you're in the UK.

There is local support available for parents to help them do this. You can get this support from your local council's **Early Help Team**. They run workshops on alternative methods and they can also come to your home to help you use these methods if your child has particularly difficult and challenging behaviour. You can ask to be referred to them or you can approach them yourself. They're there for both mothers and fathers.

Early Help can help address difficulties with:

- children's behaviour
- family relationships
- parenting
- managing a low income
- home conditions
- getting support from the right professionals.

Social Workers and Early Help Teams will be able to explain these alternative methods and help you practice them. These approaches use discipline that is aimed at learning, rather than punishing.

In the next section you will hear about non-physical methods for controlling a child's behavior.

**Slide 18: Alternative methods for managing a child's behaviour**

How do parents discipline their children without using physical punishments?

The **Early Help Team** can help. They are professionals who work for the local council. They organise lessons, called workshops. In the workshop they teach alternative methods for managing a child's behavior. If you prefer, they can visit your home to help you use these methods. They help mothers *and* fathers.

How can you contact the Early Help Team? You can ask a person who works for the local authority, for example a teacher or Health Visitor. Or you can contact the local council.

The Early Help Team can help you with many problems. They can help with-

- children's behaviour
- family relationships
- parenting
- living with little money
- Things you need in the house
- finding other professionals who can help.

Instead of punishing children, the alternative is to teach them. You teach

These methods include:

1. Place your child in what's called 'time-out'. This teaches children how to calm themselves down, which is a useful life skill.
2. Take away privileges, such as a favourite toy or a fun activity for the day. Make it clear when the privileges can be earned back. They'll be reminded not to repeat that mistake.
3. Ignore mild misbehaviour. Selective ignoring can actually be more effective than smacking. If the child's misbehaviour is aimed at gaining your attention, don't give it to them. As long as the child isn't in danger, look the other way, pretend you can't hear them, and don't respond. Then, when they ask nicely or they start to behave, return your attention to them. Over time, they'll learn that polite and positive behaviour is the best way to get their needs met.
4. Provide logical consequences. For example, if your child doesn't eat their dinner, don't let them have a bedtime snack. Or if your child refuses to pick up their toys, don't allow them to play with them for the rest of the day. Linking the consequence directly to the behaviour problem helps children see that their choices have direct consequences.
5. Allow for natural consequences. Natural consequences allow children to learn from their own mistakes. For example, if your child says they're not going to wear a coat, let them go outside and get cold—as long as it's safe to do so. Use natural consequences when you think your child will learn from his own

your children which behavior is good. The child learns that all their behavior has consequences. Good behavior results in rewards. Bad behavior has negative consequences, but not violent consequences.

Here are 7 methods that parents use if a child misbehaves-

1. **Use 'Time out.'** Remove the child from the activity and ask them to stay quiet for a while. This will help them learn how to calm down.
2. **Take away a privilege.** A privilege is something nice, for example a favourite toy. Explain that they can have the toy again if they behave well.
3. **Ignore mild misbehavior.** Often, a child misbehaves because they want the parent to look at them. They want attention. Don't respond, don't look, don't listen. Only pay attention again if they behave nicely. Over time they will learn that polite and positive behaviour is the best way to get attention from you.
4. **Provide logical consequences.** For example if your child refuses to tidy their toys in the morning, don't allow them to play with those toys in the afternoon. Slowly children learn that things they do have consequences.
5. **Allow for natural consequences.** This gives the child an opportunity to learn from their mistake. For example if they say they don't want to wear a coat, allow the child to go outside without a coat and feel cold. Keep the child safe but let them learn.
6. **Give rewards for good behavior.** For example, if your child fights with their brother or sister, give a reward if they don't fight. Tell them in advance about the reward. Rewards help children to focus on what they need to do to earn privileges. This is better than emphasising their bad behaviour.
7. **Praise good behaviour.** Notice if your child is good and tell them you are happy with them. For example when your child is playing nicely with others. Say, "You're doing such a good job sharing your toys today." Another good idea is to give the most attention

mistake.

6. Reward good behaviour. Instead of smacking a child for misbehaviour, reward them for good behaviour. For example, if your child fights with their brother or sister, set up a reward system to motivate them to get along better. Providing an incentive to behave can turn around misbehaviour fast. Rewards help children to focus on what they need to do to earn privileges, rather than emphasize the bad behaviour they're supposed to avoid.
7. Praise good behaviour. For example, when your child is playing nicely with others, point it out. Say, "You're doing such a good job sharing and taking turns today." When there are several children in the room, give the most attention and praise to the children who are following the rules and behaving well. Then, when the other child begins to behave, give them praise and attention as well.

#### **Slide 19: Relations between parents at home**

Evidence shows that abusive or violent behaviour between a husband and wife can harm a child, even if the child isn't the actual target of that abuse.

So Parents also need to understand the UK Law on domestic abuse, which means abuse that goes on between partners in the home. It can involve

- Physical abuse, such as hitting a partner, or being violent
- Verbal abuse, such as shouting and screaming at someone
- Sexual abuse
- Psychological or emotional abuse

and praise to the children who are following the rules and behaving well. If there is a group of children, ignore the child who misbehaves and praise the children who behave well. Don't give a child much attention until they start behaving well.

#### **Slide 19: Relations between parents at home**

Relationships between parents are important too. If the adults have a relationship that involves abuse, and the child sees or hears this, it can harm the child. Abuse can be verbal, physical or emotional. Social workers worry about children who live in homes with domestic abuse. A child is considered unsafe if they live with domestic abuse.

There are different types of domestic abuse. Here is a list.

Physical abuse is physical violence, for example punching.

Verbal abuse is shouting and screaming.

Sexual abuse is unwanted sex.

Psychological or emotional abuse

Threats and intimidation

Controlling and coercive behaviour. For example one person stops the other from having friends, going places or making their own choices.

Police and Social workers investigate domestic abuse. Domestic abuse is against the law. Children suffer emotionally if they live with domestic abuse. For this reason, children are taken away from their parents if domestic abuse continues and doesn't stop. If your relationship with your partner is abusive, you may lose your children. Another possibility is that the social workers make the abuser go and live separately. The social workers may insist on this.

Why do Social Workers take children away from a family with domestic

- Threats and intimidation
- Controlling and coercive behaviour designed to contain and limit a partner

There are consequences for family unity if local authorities learn domestic abuse is happening. Again the Police or a Social Worker will need to come to the house and investigate. If a child lives in that house, they'll need to consider the emotional impact on that child and whether it's safe for the child to remain in the house. It can lead to a child being taken into care, or they may decide the abusive partner needs to leave the house in order for the child to stay.

The Royal College of Psychiatrists has evidence which shows the impact domestic abuse has on children who witness it or hear it.

Younger children may become anxious. They may complain of stomach-aches or start to wet their bed. They may find it difficult to sleep, have temper tantrums and start to behave as if they're much younger than they are.

Older children react differently. Boys seem to express their distress much more outwardly, for example by becoming aggressive and disobedient. Sometimes, they start to use violence to try and solve problems, and may copy the behaviour they see within the family. Older boys may deliberately miss school and start to use alcohol or drugs, which are common way of trying to block out disturbing experiences and memories.

Girls are more likely to keep their distress inside. They may become withdrawn from other people, and become anxious or depressed. They may think badly of themselves and complain of vague physical symptoms. They're more likely to have an eating disorder, or to harm themselves by taking overdoses or cutting themselves. They're also

abuse? It is because of scientific research. Research shows that children are psychologically damaged if they see or hear domestic abuse. Here is some more information about this.

If the children are young they will probably become anxious. As a result, they can have stomach aches or wet the bed at night. Or maybe they can't sleep, or they get very angry. Some children behave like babies when they feel anxious.

If the children are older, they react differently.

Boys usually become aggressive and disobedient. Some boys copy the violence they see in the parents. Older boys may miss school and start using alcohol or drugs. They use drugs and alcohol to forget traumatic experiences.

Girls more often hide their bad feelings, they keep their bad feelings inside. They can be very anxious or depressed. They may say they feel ill. Some girls have an **eating disorder**, for example anorexia. Some girls cut their skin and some take an overdose of pills. Girls who see their father abusing their mother often choose a bad husband or partner later.

Children can have **PTSD**. PTSD means 'Post-traumatic Stress Disorder' This can happen to children who experience abuse or see abuse. Here is a list of symptoms of PTSD-

- Nightmares
- Flashbacks
- Headaches
- Other physical pains
- Fear of sudden noises

Children often have bad school results if they live with domestic abuse. They can't concentrate on studying. Or they refuse to go to school,

more likely to choose an abusive partner when they're adults.

Children of any age can develop symptoms of what's called 'Post-traumatic Stress Disorder'. They may get nightmares, flashbacks, become very jumpy, and have headaches and physical pains. Children dealing with domestic violence and abuse often do badly at school. Their frightening experiences at home make it difficult to concentrate in school, and they may refuse to go to school if they're worried about leaving their abused parent alone.

Remember again that a couple who've lost all they had back home, and experiencing stress and anxiety while waiting for their asylum decision, could find that tensions at home increase and tempers escalate more quickly than before. Especially if they're in the house 24/7. So it can help to get involved in local social networks and local activities that take you out of the house and prevent tensions boiling over. It can help you manage stress in your life. You can find information about these in the Local Welcome Pack provided by your housing provider, and on the Migration Partnership's website.

Anyone suffering domestic abuse can get help via the AIRE helpline operated by Migrant Help and from specialist services set up to support victims. There's more information in the handout. You can protect your child by taking action to stop domestic abuse continuing.

maybe because they want to protect the abused parent.

It can be difficult to have a happy relationship with your partner if you have experienced bad things that forced you to leave your country. And if you are anxious because you are waiting to hear about your asylum decision. If you have a stressful life with many worries, it is normal to feel angry or get angry quickly. And relationships are hard if you have to spend all day together because you can't work and have nothing to do. It can help if you meet people and go out.

Where can you go? Which local activities can you participate in? You can find ideas in two places. You can look on our website. You can also look at the pages from your housing provider. The name of these pages is a Local Welcome Pack.

Are you a victim of domestic abuse? You can get help. Phone the Asylum Help line. The number is in the handout. This is not the only place that can help you, there are other specialist services for victims. You can protect your child by asking for help with this problem.

#### **Slide 20: The law on Female Genital Mutilation or Female Circumcision**

FGM is against the law in the UK. FGM means **Female Genital Mutilation**. Another name for this is Female Circumcision.

When a girl under the age of 16 experiences FGM, this is child abuse. It is illegal because it causes physical and psychological harm. This harm lasts a long time.

A person that performs FGM is breaking the law. But also the people who arrange FGM or help it to happen are breaking the law. It is a criminal offense to encourage FGM. It is also a criminal offense to take a

#### **Slide 20: The law on Female Genital Mutilation or Female Circumcision**

Female Genital Mutilation is against the Law in the UK. It's referred to as 'FGM' and also known as Female Circumcision.

When a girl under the age of 16 is subjected to FGM, it's considered to be a form of child abuse, causing long lasting physical and psychological harm.

Arranging, performing, helping or encouraging FGM in any way is a criminal offence. Penalties can include being put in prison for up to 14 years, and children being taken into care. It's also a criminal offence to take a child out of the UK to have FGM carried out.

Some refugees have campaigned against FGM in their home countries and continue to do so here. Anyone who's worried their child may be at risk of FGM can take action to protect them. There are local and national organisations that'll help you protect your child,

girl to another country to have FGM. The maximum prison sentence is 14 years. The child is separated from her parents and taken into care.

Some refugees have campaigned against FGM in their home countries and they continue to campaign here. If you are worried that your child is at risk of FGM, you can protect them. There are organisations to help you protect your child. Some organisations are local, some are national. They help parents understand the harm caused by FGM.

What about women and girls who have already had FGM? They can get help from the NHS. They can also get help from specialist agencies.

#### **Slide 21: The child's voice**

The child's voice is important. What does the child think? How does the child feel? This is called the child's voice.

When professionals are deciding what is best for the child, they must think about what the child wants. Social Workers and the Police will talk to the child and listen to them. What does the child want for their future?

Of course children can't have everything they want. Some things are not allowed and children can't do everything they would like. But good parenting includes good communication between the parent and the child. If parents listen to their child and understand their child, they can help the child. Parents can guide the child toward a better future if they know and understand their child.

#### **Slide 22: Parents' rights**

What is a **child protection case**? A child protection case is if Social Workers become involved in keeping your child safe. There is a

and which help parents understand the harm FGM does to girls. The NHS and specialist agencies provide healthcare and support for women and girls who've already had FGM.

#### **Slide 21: The child's voice**

If local authorities get involved in child protection, they'll expect to speak the child as well as the parents. Professionals, such as Social Workers and the Police, will talk to the child and listen to them. Hearing the child's voice is considered an essential part of safeguarding. Professionals will want to find out what the child wants to happen, as the child has the right to be heard in any safeguarding decisions made about their own future.

Of course in general life, children can't just expect to do whatever they want, or things that aren't allowed. But it's considered that good parenting involves good communication between parents and their children. Listening to the child, to understand what it's concerned about, or what it wants to achieve in life, can help a parent guide a child towards that or give them opportunities to consider the longer term rather than their immediate future.

#### **Slide 22: Parents' rights**

If you become involved in a child protection case, you should be clear about your rights and entitlements as a parent – both mothers and fathers.

You have the right to ask for an **interpreter** to make sure you can understand the information the social worker is giving you, including any documents. And so you can communicate your own feelings and explanation fully. You shouldn't feel pressurized to sign any document

possibility your child will go into care and stop living with you. **What are your rights if your child is in a child protection case? What can the parent do?**

You have the right to understand the information the social worker is giving you, including documents. You have the right to communicate your feelings fully and your explanation fully. This means you have the right to an **interpreter**. You don't pay for your interpreter.

You have the right to say no if a professional asks you to sign a document. Only sign it if you understand it fully. You should understand what the document says AND what the consequences will be if you sign it.

You have the right to **legal representation**. Legal representation means that a solicitor argues your case. The Social Worker should give you information about this. You can also get information on this from the local Citizens Advice Bureau ('CAB'). Another option is to contact a local solicitor yourself. You will need a solicitor that practices Family Law.

A solicitor is important because they will listen to what you say and help explain your point of view to your local council. The law about children being taken into care is very complicated. Your solicitor can explain it to you. They also make sure your local council is following the law.

Solicitors cost money. If you are receiving Home Office asylum support you may get legal representation for free. The Legal Aid scheme sometimes pays for solicitors.

Act quickly. Get legal representation and learn your rights as quickly as possible.

unless you're clear what it's saying and what the consequences are if you do sign it.

The Social Worker should inform you of your rights to **legal representation**, and how to access this. You can also find out about these at your local Citizens Advice Bureau ('CAB') and you can contact a local Solicitor that practices Family Law.

A solicitor is important because they'll listen to what you say and help explain your point of view to your local council. The law about when a child can be taken into care is very complicated. Your solicitor can explain it to you and make sure your local council is following the law.

People receiving Home Office asylum support may be able to access this legal representation for free, through the Legal Aid scheme.

You should always act quickly to know your rights and make sure you access the legal representation you're entitled to, at the right time.

### **Slide 23: Further information**

Please see the handout you'll get after this session. It'll have a summary of the main messages given.

There's also a handout with details on where you can go for help or for more information about the issues raised today.

Thank you for listening

### **Slide 23: Further information**

A **handout** is a document with useful information. There are two handouts you can have after this presentation.

- One handout shows all this information.
- One handout shows extra information. It shows organisations and places you can go for help.

Thank you for listening.