Making a referral to Children's Services – progress is on the way

You've told us that making a referral to Hertfordshire Children's Services needs to be clearer. We've heard you.

Hertfordshire Children's Services new online referral form will launch on Monday 25 March 2024.

The new online referral form is an easy process, where urgent situations are picked up quickly and you can track what happens to your referral.

From Monday 8 April 2024 all referrals from professionals will be made using the online form– referrals by email and phone from professionals will no longer be accepted.

Why this is better

Through 2023 you helped us understand what you need. Your priorities in order were:

You said …	We did …
My referral is handled quickly and effectively by the correct team.	We screen all online referrals within 1 hour. Urgent matters are fast-tracked. There will be less back and forth because referrers will be prompted to give all the information we need.
There is one place to make my referral.	There should be no confusion about which referral method to use. All professionals' referrals are made using the online referral form.
I am assured that my referral has been sent and received securely.	We'll email referrers to confirm submission and they can see it in their online account. As a referrer, you can save your work and return to complete it later. We'll email you a link so you can pick back up where you left off.
I get updates about my referral.	We'll email referrers when the status of their referral changes. You can log into your account any time to check a referral's status.
My referral has all the required information.	The quality of referrals will improve as referrers will be prompted to give all the information we need, including family member demographics, involved professionals and 6 key questions.
There is guidance to help me make the correct referral.	We have refreshed the online referral webpage. It gives basic information, including examples from the Continuum of Need to support referrers to think about a child's level of need.
I can save and print a copy of my referral.	One click transforms the referral into a PDF document so it can be downloaded or printed.
I can attach documents to my referral.	The referrer can attach documents to the online referral form.

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The process

- **You create a new online account.**
- **You get a code sent to your work email address when you log in, so information sharing is secure.**
- **All your referrals are in one place.**
- **The form helps you check you have the correct consents before you fill in further information (i.e. you've told the parents about the referral and sought their consent to make the referral and share information with relevant agencies).**
- **The demographic information on the child and family members is needed to undertake information sharing checks with professionals, duplicate information such as addresses can be automatically pulled through to family members.**
- **There are 6 questions for the referral.**
- **You can attach any documents you think add further information, such as a chronology of events.**
- **You submit the online referral.**
- **You can save a PDF of the referral for your own records.**
- **You can log in at any time to check progress, but you'll receive emails when there is an update**

The referral questions

What is the reason for this contact?	(Explain your concerns / what you are worried about. Explore the impact for the child today and in the future.)
Has an incident taken place?	(Why you are making this referral today.)
Have concerns built up over time?	(You may want to add a timeline / chronology.)
What is working well?	(Who and what support is available to the family? Has something helped before?)
What is the child's voice?	(What their behaviour tells you. Words the child has used to describe the situation / concerns. Are there any observations that you have seen that may support the voice of a baby or infant?)
What have you done to safeguard the child?	(Steps you have already taken or plan to take in response to the worries. Details of other agencies / supports / referrals.)

We'll share more information in the coming months, including a 'how to guide' and a launch event. If there is specific information that you would find helpful to begin using the new online referral form from the end of March, contact HoSAdminApsley@hertfordshire.gov.uk

Children, parents, families, and members of the public will continue to refer using the phone. Due to the distinct nature of police referrals, we're exploring a bespoke digital solution for their referrals, and they will continue to email referrals in the meantime.