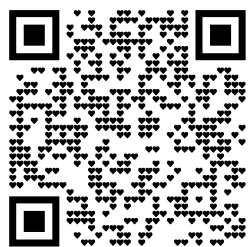


WHAT'S THE HARM?

*A Practical Guide for
Professionals*



Find out
more,
access
resources
and get
involved



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In partnership with:



BARNSELY
RECOVERY
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What is Hidden Harm?

Hidden Harm is the impact that a parent, carer or significant adult's alcohol or drug use can have on a child. The harm is often called "hidden" because it may not be obvious to others, and children may not talk about what they are experiencing.

Children and young people affected by parental alcohol or drug use can often go unnoticed. They may attend school regularly, appear resilient, or never disclose their experiences, yet still be living with significant challenges at home.

This guide has been developed to help professionals across health, education, early help, safeguarding, youth services, voluntary organisations and community settings recognise Hidden Harm, understand its impact, and feel confident in responding to children, young people and families.

Why This Guide Matters?

Hidden Harm is often unseen, under-identified and misunderstood. Early recognition and compassionate support can improve outcomes for children, strengthen family resilience and help families access the right support at the right time.

Throughout this guide you will find:

- Key information about Hidden Harm
- Signs and indicators to look out for
- Children's lived experiences
- Practical conversation tips
- Tools to support professional curiosity
- Information about local support services

Every interaction matters. By noticing, listening and responding with curiosity and compassion, professionals can make a lasting difference to the lives of children and families.

Barnsley 'What's the Harm' Campaign

Supporting Your Child, Your Family and You

Throughout this workbook, the term "parent" is used to refer to any adult who plays an important caring role in a child's life, including parents, carers, guardians, family members and other significant adults.

The term "children" refers to any child aged between 0 and 17 years old, unless it states the specific age.



Understanding Hidden Harm

Hidden Harm is the term used to describe the negative experiences of children and young people growing up with parents who drink alcohol or take drugs.

Some parents who drink alcohol or take drugs do so in a way that does not cause harm to children. However, when a parent is dependent on alcohol or drugs, uses large amounts, or uses substances frequently, it can affect their ability to meet their children's needs. This can impact a child's physical health, emotional wellbeing, safety and development.

We describe this harm as **hidden** because it often happens behind closed doors and is not always recognised by professionals, family members or the wider community. Children may appear to be coping well, attend school regularly, or avoid talking about what is happening at home. Parents may also feel worried about stigma, judgement or the consequences of asking for help.

As a result, many children and young people who are affected by their parents drinking alcohol or taking drugs remain unidentified and unsupported.

Why Hidden Harm Matters?

Hidden Harm is often unseen. Children living with parents who drink alcohol or take drugs may experience:

- Uncertainty and unpredictability at home
- Worry about a parent or family member
- Changes in routines and family relationships
- Increased caring responsibilities
- Impacts on their emotional wellbeing, physical health and development

The effects can range from subtle and short-term to significant and long-lasting. Some children may not show obvious signs of distress, making professional curiosity and early identification particularly important. Many families don't seek support due to fear, stigma or concerns about being judged.

Hidden Harm Everyday Examples

- Missing football practice because nobody can take them
- Not inviting friends home because they're embarrassed
- Having to make tea for siblings
- Lying awake listening to arguments
- Worrying about a parent getting home safely

What Professionals Can Do

- **Listen** - create safe opportunities for children and families to talk about what is happening.
- **Notice** - be alert to changes in behaviour, attendance, presentation, emotional wellbeing and family circumstances.
- **Respond** - approach families with empathy, compassion and a non-judgemental attitude.
- **Connect** - help children, young people and families access the support they need as early as possible.



Core Principles

Child-centred | Trauma-informed | Whole-family approach | Inclusive and non-judgemental |
Early intervention | Shared responsibility

Professional Reflection

Could the child I am working with be experiencing challenges at home that have not yet been recognised or talked about relating to parents drinking alcohol or taking drugs?

Key Message

“Hidden Harm is everyone's business. By recognising the signs, asking the right questions and responding early, professionals can help children and families get the support they need before problems escalate”.

Source: NSPCC Learning – Parental Substance Misuse
NSPCC Learning: Parental Substance Misuse

The Scale of Hidden Harm in Barnsley

- 1,020 parents received treatment for alcohol or drug use in Barnsley during 2025/26. This represented 38.5% of all people in treatment
- 60% of parents in treatment had children living in their household
- Many children remain hidden - around 60% of parents in treatment had no recorded Children's Social Care involvement, highlighting that many affected children may not be known to services.
- 405 children assessed by Children's Social Care in Barnsley in 2025 had a parent with an alcohol use concern (11% of assessments)
- 428 children assessed by Children's Social Care in Barnsley in 2025 had a parent with a drug use concern (12% of assessments)

What Professionals Could Consider

- Hidden Harm can affect any family
- Children may not talk about what is happening at home
- Concerns are not always visible and joined up working is vital to provide better outcomes for families
- Early support can prevent problems escalating
- Every professional has a role in identifying, responding and signposting families to support and being professionally curious is key



Key Message

Many children affected by Hidden Harm are not known to specialist services. By staying professionally curious, working closely with partners and responding early, we can help ensure children and families receive support before difficulties escalate.

Impact on Children

Understanding the Impact

Parents drinking alcohol or taking drugs does not automatically mean a child will experience abuse, neglect or poor outcomes. Many children are supported by strong protective relationships, family strengths and positive experiences.

However, taking drugs or drinking alcohol can affect a parent's ability to meet their child's needs. There can be impacts on a child's health, wellbeing, safety and development. These impacts may be greater when parental drinking/drug use occurs alongside other challenges such as poor mental health, domestic abuse, poverty or housing difficulties.

The impact of Hidden Harm can look different at different stages of a child's life.

Before Birth

A baby may be affected before they are born if alcohol, drugs or some medications are used during pregnancy.

Potential impacts include:

- Increased risk of miscarriage, increased risk of still birth
- Premature birth, low birth weight

Key message: There is no safe amount, no safe time and no safe type of alcohol or drug use in pregnancy. Any alcohol at any stage can harm a baby's developing brain and body. Please speak with a Pharmacist, Midwife, or GP for medical advice if taking any medications during pregnancy.

[Medicines in pregnancy - NHS](#)



Babies and Toddlers (0–2 Years)

At this age, babies rely entirely on adults to meet their needs.

Possible impacts include:

- Difficulties forming secure attachments
- Feeding or breathing difficulties
- Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (withdrawal symptoms after birth)
- Difficulties associated with Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)
- Less consistent emotional warmth and responsiveness
- Missed health appointments and developmental checks
- Challenges with feeding, sleep and routines
- Reduced opportunities for play, interaction and stimulation
- Increased risks where safer sleep guidance is not consistently followed, which can lead to Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy (SUDI). Please consider - **ICON** www.iconcope.org and www.lullabytrust.org.uk for further advice and guidance.



Early Childhood (2–5 Years)

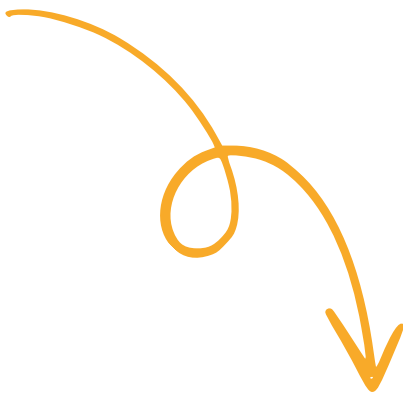
Children begin exploring the world and developing important social and emotional skills.

Possible impacts include:

- Irregular nursery or preschool attendance
- Delays in speech, language or social development
- Difficulty managing emotions
- Limited opportunities for play and learning
- Exposure to adult situations they may not understand
- Accidental ingestion of medication, alcohol or substances that are not safely stored

Professionals may notice:

- Tiredness
- Missed appointments
- Behaviour changes
- Developmental concerns
- Poor attendance



School Age (5–12 Years)

As children grow, they become more aware of what is happening around them.

Possible impacts include:

- Worrying about a parent or family member
- Difficulty concentrating in school
- Poor attendance or lateness
- Anxiety, low mood or emotional distress
- Difficulties with friendships and peer relationships
- Taking on caring responsibilities for parents or siblings

Professionals may hear:

"I was worried about Mum last night."
"I look after my little brother before school."



Adolescence (13+ Years)

Young people may take on increasing responsibility while also navigating their own development.



Possible impacts include:

- Increased caring responsibilities
- Poor emotional wellbeing, anxiety or depression
- Difficulties with behaviour regulation
- Reduced engagement with education
- Risk-taking behaviours such as drinking alcohol or taking drugs at a younger age
- Greater risk of antisocial or criminal behaviour
- Challenges in relationships and future aspirations

Professionals may notice:

- Withdrawal
- Anger or frustration
- School absence
- Risk-taking behaviour
- Young carers' responsibilities

Every Child's Experience is Different

Some children may experience significant challenges, whilst others may demonstrate remarkable resilience and benefit from strong protective factors such as:

- A trusted adult/parent, grandparent, older sibling
- Supportive social networks
- School attendance and support
- Stable and consistent routines
- Early intervention parent or child
- Family and community support



Professional Reflection

How might a child's behaviour, attendance, wellbeing or presentation be communicating what they are experiencing at home?

Key Message

Children affected by Hidden Harm may not always tell us directly what is happening. Recognising the potential impact at different stages of development helps professionals identify concerns earlier and provide timely, child-centred support.

"Talking didn't fix everything straight away, but it meant I wasn't carrying it on my own anymore."

Spotting the Signs: Child

Hidden Harm is not always obvious. Children affected by parents who drink alcohol or take drugs may not talk directly about their experiences and may present with a range of emotional, behavioural, educational or physical indicators.

Important: None of these signs are proof that parents are drinking alcohol or taking drugs. Many may also be associated with domestic abuse, neglect, poverty, parental mental ill-health or other adverse childhood experiences (ACE's). Always consider the wider context and build a picture over time.

What Might You notice?

- Frequent absence, lateness or poor school attendance
- Falling behind with schoolwork or homework
- Appears tired, exhausted or struggles to concentrate
- Behaviour changes or difficulties regulating emotions
- Appears anxious, withdrawn or worried
- Reluctance for school or services to contact parents/carers
- Poor hygiene, inappropriate clothing or concerns about care
- Frequently hungry or signs of poor nutrition
- Missing health appointments or unmet health needs
- Talking about arguments, drinking or drug use at home
- Appears worried about a parent or family member
- Taking on caring responsibilities for siblings or parents
- Secretive, guarded or reluctant to discuss home life
- Difficulties maintaining friendships or social connections
- Shows age-inappropriate knowledge of alcohol, drugs or substance use
- Has access to alcohol, medication or drugs at home
- Using alcohol or drugs themselves, particularly at a young age
- Frequently responsible for getting siblings ready, fed or to school
- Talks about not wanting friends to come to their home
- Appears preoccupied with what is happening at home

Questions to prompt professional curiosity?

- What might this child be experiencing at home?
- Is there a pattern to the concerns I am noticing?
- Could this child be carrying responsibilities beyond their age?
- Who does this child turn to for support?
- What strengths and protective factors are present in this child's life?

Remember

- Look beyond individual signs and consider the whole picture
- Children may minimise or normalise what is happening at home and become defensive of their parents' behaviours
- Parents may need support as well as children
- Early conversations can prevent concerns escalating
- Trust your professional curiosity and seek advice if you are unsure

Key Message: Children affected by Hidden Harm can often go unnoticed. Small signs, when viewed together, can provide important opportunities to identify concerns early and help children and families access support.

Spotting the Signs: Adults

Looking beyond drinking alcohol and taking drugs

Parents drinking alcohol or taking drugs should not be viewed in isolation. The impact on children is often influenced by a range of factors, including parenting capacity, emotional availability, family relationships, physical health, finances, support networks and wider life circumstances.

Remember: Drinking alcohol or taking drugs alone does not determine a child's outcomes. Many families have significant strengths and protective factors that help children thrive.

Risk Factors and Protective Factors

Areas to Consider	Potential Concerns (Risk Factors)	Protective Factors
Drinking alcohol/Taking Drugs	Increasing use, dependency, regular intoxication, withdrawal symptoms, missed treatment appointments, Not ready for change.	Parent engaged with support and motivated to make changes.
Parenting Capacity	Difficulty maintaining routines, supervising children, attending appointments or meeting needs.	Consistent routines, warm relationships and responsive parenting. Willingness to engage with wider children services.
Emotional Availability	Parent appears emotionally unavailable, distracted or unable to respond to their child with warmth and empathy.	Child feels listened to, valued and emotionally connected.
Home Environment	Unstable household, unsafe storage of medication/alcohol, poor home conditions. Multiple unknown visitors to family home.	Safe, stable and nurturing home environment.
Family Relationships	Frequent conflict or crisis, relationship difficulties, family stress and anxiety. Lack of trust and connection.	Positive family relationships and supportive adults.
Financial Wellbeing	Financial difficulties impacting food, clothing, activities or household stability, opportunities and basic needs.	Basic needs consistently met and support accessed when needed.

Areas to Consider	Potential Concerns (Risk Factors)	Protective Factors
Social Support	Isolation from family, friends or community support.	Strong support networks and trusted adults involved.
Health and Wellbeing	Unaddressed physical health, mental health, disability or wellbeing concerns for both parents and children. Parents appearing exhausted, overwhelmed or struggling to cope.	Parent and child accessing appropriate healthcare and support.
Pregnancy and Early Years	Missed antenatal appointments, alcohol[WM1] and /or drug use during pregnancy, concerns about infant care or safer sleep.	Good engagement with maternity, health visiting and early years support.

Risk Factors and Protective Factors

Remember there is no safe amount, no safe time and no safe type of alcohol or drug use in pregnancy. Any alcohol at any stage can harm a baby's developing brain and body. Please speak with a Pharmacist, Midwife, or GP for medical advice if you are taking any medications during pregnancy. Medicines in pregnancy - NHS

Questions to Support Professional Curiosity

- How is the parent's alcohol, drug or medications affecting day-to-day family life?
 - Are children's needs being consistently met?
 - What strengths, resilience and protective factors are present within the family?
 - Who does this family turn to for support?
 - Are there any additional pressures affecting the family, such as financial stress, housing difficulties, poor physical, mental health or relationship challenges?
 - What support could make a difference right now?
 - Shall I undertake the Graded Care Profile 2 (GCP2)?
- 

Remember

- Focus on the child and the family, individually and as a whole family unit.
- Be curious, not judgemental.
- Consider strengths as well as concerns.
- Small worries can add up to a bigger picture so don't look at things in isolation.
- Early support can help prevent difficulties from escalating.

Key Message

Hidden Harm is rarely about one issue alone. Understanding the whole family context helps professionals identify strengths, recognise emerging concerns and provide timely, trauma-informed support to children, young people and families.

Having Conversations about Hidden Harm

Starting the Conversation

Talking about alcohol, drugs and family life can feel difficult for everyone involved. Children may worry about getting themselves or their parents into trouble. Parents may be concerned about stigma, judgement or involvement from services. Professionals may feel unsure about asking sensitive questions or worry about damaging relationships.

However, open, honest and compassionate conversations can help families feel understood, reduce stigma and create opportunities for support.

Why Conversations Matter

The way we ask questions can influence whether families feel safe enough to share their experiences and accept support.

A helpful mindset:

- Be curious, not judgemental.
- Focus on understanding, not investigating.
- Build on strengths as well as concerns.
- Listen more than you speak.
- Keep the child at the centre of the conversation.
- Recognise that trust may take time.



Conversation Do's and Don'ts

Do...	Try not to...
Ask open and curious questions	Jump to conclusions or make assumptions
Acknowledge that talking about drugs and alcohol can be difficult	Use blaming or judgemental language
Provide a calm, safe and private environment	Rush the conversation
Explain clearly what will happen next	Make promises you cannot keep
Involve children and young people where appropriate	Talk about families rather than with them
Focus on strengths as well as challenges	Focus solely on risks and deficits
Offer support and practical next steps	Leave families without information or support

Helpful Questions for Parents and Carers

These questions can help build understanding without creating defensiveness:

- "What does a typical day look like for your family?"
- "What things are going well at the moment?"
- "What challenges are you facing right now?"
- "How do you think the children are feeling?"
- "Who supports you when things feel difficult?"
- "How are family routines working at the moment?"
- "What would make life easier for you and your children?"
- "Have alcohol, drugs or medication ever affected day-to-day family life?"
- "What support would feel helpful right now?"
- How would your child describe you when you drink alcohol or take drugs?

Helpful Questions for Children:

- "How would you describe life at home at the moment?"
- "Tell me about the important people in your life?"
- "What happens when you're worried about something?"
- "Who do you talk to when things feel difficult?"
- "What are the best things about home?"
- "Are there things that make you feel worried, upset or unsafe?"
- "What needs to happen to make things feel better for you?"
- "What does a typical day look like for your family?"

Supporting Reflection

Sometimes small questions encourage big conversations:

- "Tell me what life is like for your family on a good day?"
- "Are there things you notice are different on a difficult day?"
- "What do you notice when things are going well?"
- "What would make things feel safer, calmer or easier for you and your family?"

Remember

- Families are more likely to engage when they feel respected and understood.
- Many parents already feel shame, guilt or fear about asking for help.
- Children may be worried about the consequences of speaking openly.
- Honest conversations can be the first step towards positive change.
- You do not need to be a substance misuse specialist to start a conversation.

Key Message

You do not need all the answers. Often the most important thing a professional can do is create a safe space, ask thoughtful questions and listen without judgement. Those conversations can be the first step towards support, safety and positive change for children and families.



Assessing Need

The right response to Hidden Harm depends on how parental drug and alcohol use is affecting the child, family and home environment, or how it has affected them in the past. Your assessment should consider the child's lived experience, parents parenting capacity, use of drugs or alcohol, protective factors and immediate safety. Use the below prompts to guide your professional curiosity.

If considering Neglect, utilise the Graded Care Profile 2 (GCP2) and also consider the following prompts around Hidden Harm to support your response.

Remember: Drinking alcohol or taking drugs does not determine risk. Focus on the impact on the child, their daily experiences and the strengths and protective factors within the family.

Hidden Harm Assessment Prompt Sheet

1. Drinking Alcohol or Taking Drugs Associated Risks

Consider:

- What substances or prescribed medications are being used?
- How often are they being used?
- Is the parent regularly intoxicated, withdrawing or recovering from taking drugs or drinking alcohol?
- Does the substance carry significant health or overdose risks?
- Is the parent accessing treatment or support?
- Has the pattern of use recently changed or escalated?



Professional Reflection:

How is the parent drinking alcohol or taking drugs affecting the parent's ability to care for their child?

2. Home Environment and Safety

Consider:

- Are drugs, alcohol, medication or equipment stored safely?
- Are children exposed to drink or drugs within the home?
- Is there safe and appropriate supervision?
- Are there concerns around criminal activity, exploitation or unknown adults entering the family home?
- Is the home safe, clean and suitable for children?
- Are basic needs consistently met?



Professional Reflection:

Is this child safe, supervised and cared for on a day-to-day basis?

3. Pregnancy, Babies and Young Children

Consider:

- Is there alcohol or drug use during pregnancy?
- Are antenatal appointments being attended?
- Are maternity and health visiting services involved?
- Having the ICON discussion?
- Is safe sleep guidance being followed?
- Is co-sleeping occurring where alcohol, drugs or medication may affect parental alertness?
- Is there another safe adult available to support caregiving when needed?



Professional Reflection:

Are there any immediate risks to an unborn baby, infant or young child?

4. Parenting Capacity and Daily Life

Consider:

- Are routines in place for meals, sleep and school attendance?
- Are children attending education regularly and on time?
- Are parents emotionally available and responsive to their children?
- Are appropriate boundaries, supervision and expectations in place?
- Are children's physical and emotional needs being consistently met?



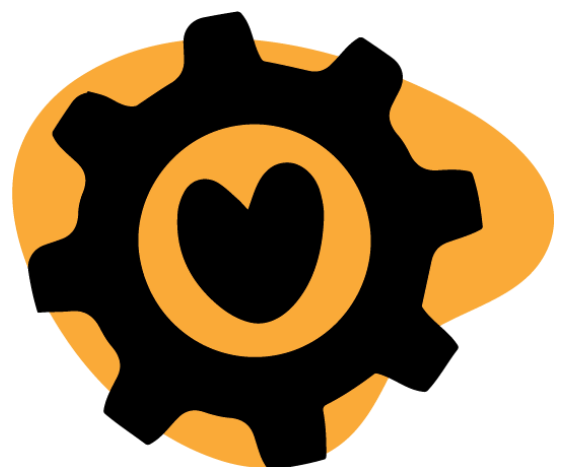
Professional Reflection:

What is day-to-day life like for this child?

5. Protective Factors

Consider:

- Is there a non-substance-using parent or caregiver?
- Does the child have a trusted adult they can turn to?
- Are there supportive family members, friends or community networks?
- Does the child engage positively with school, clubs or activities?
- Is the family willing to engage with support?



Professional Reflection:

What strengths and protective factors can we build upon?

6. Young Carers

Consider:

- Does the child care for a parent when they are unwell, intoxicated or withdrawing?
- Does the child regularly care for siblings?
- Is the child undertaking adult responsibilities at home?
- Is caring affecting education, friendships or wellbeing?
- How does the child feel about these responsibilities?



Consider a Young Carer's Referral via the Integrated Front Door where appropriate.

7. The Voice of the Child

The child's experience should remain central throughout the assessment.

Ask yourself:

- What worries this child?
- What helps them feel safe?
- Who do they trust?
- What do they enjoy and value?
- What support do they want?
- What would they like to happen next?



If we don't understand the child's experience, we cannot fully understand the impact of Hidden Harm.

When Additional Action May Be Needed

Consider escalation, consultation or safeguarding procedures in line with your own organisational safeguarding policies.

Key Message

Good assessment is not about completing a checklist. It is about understanding the child's world, recognising both risk and resilience, and ensuring children and families receive the right support at the right time.

What to do next

Responding to Hidden Harm

Recognising Hidden Harm is only the first step. The next step is deciding how best to support the child, young person and family.

Remember: Not all concerns require a safeguarding referral, but all concerns deserve a response. Early support, professional curiosity and shared responsibility can make a significant difference to outcomes for children and families.

A Simple Four-Step Response

1). Notice and Record

If you identify signs of Hidden Harm:

- Record observations and concerns clearly
- Consider the child's lived experience, not just the parent's substance use
- Look for patterns rather than isolated incidents
- Consider both risks and strengths

Ask yourself:

What am I seeing, hearing or noticing that makes me concerned?

2). Talk and Explore

Where safe and appropriate:

- Speak to all family members individually and together
- Use open, non-judgemental questions
- Explore strengths as well as concerns
- Consider the child's wishes and feelings



Remember:

Curiosity builds understanding. Judgement creates barriers.

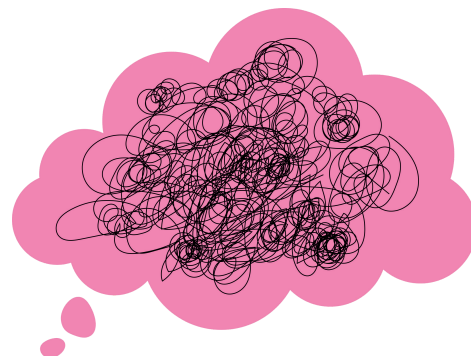
3). Consider Safety

Ask yourself:

Is anyone at immediate risk?

Consider:

- Unsafe supervision
- Physical neglect
- Unsafe storage of drugs, alcohol or medication
- Children exposed to substance use, criminal activity or unsafe adults
- Concerns during pregnancy or infancy
- Domestic abuse, mental health concerns or other safeguarding risks
- Children undertaking inappropriate caring responsibilities



If there are immediate safeguarding concerns, follow your organisation's safeguarding procedures without delay.

4). Get the Right Support

The right response depends on the level of need.

Universal Support

Where concerns are emerging and needs are low: **Early Help**

- Continue conversations
- Monitor and review
- Signpost to local support
- Build on family strengths

Where multiple needs are identified:

- Discuss accessing Early Help Support and undertaking an Early Help Assessment
- Contact the Integrated Front Door for a conversation around the family/referral
- Coordinate support around the family
- Consider support for young carers
- Encourage engagement with drug and alcohol specialist services where appropriate

Specialist Support

Where drug and alcohol use is having a clear impact on children or parenting:

- Seek specialist advice and consultation
- Support referral to treatment services
- Work alongside partner agencies

Safeguarding

Where there is actual or likely significant harm:

- Follow safeguarding procedures
- Consult with Safeguarding Leads
- Contact the Integrated Front Door for a Conversation around the family

Professional Reflection

Before deciding what happens next, ask yourself:

- What is life like for this child day to day?
- What strengths and support networks already exist?
- What is worrying me most?
- What support could make the biggest difference right now?
- Have I listened to the child's voice?

Remember

- Respond early
- Record clearly
- Involve the child where appropriate
- Work with families, not against them
- Share information appropriately
- Seek advice when unsure
- Hidden Harm is everyone's responsibility

Key Message

You do not need to have all the answers. Your role is to notice concerns, understand the child's experience, act on emerging risks and help families access the right support at the right time. Early conversations and coordinated responses can prevent concerns from escalating and improve outcomes for children and families. Utilise professional tools to support your analysis.



Barnsley Support Directory

Getting the Right Help for Children, Young People and Families

Purpose: Help professionals quickly identify the most appropriate support when Hidden Harm concerns are identified.

Key Message: No single service can respond to Hidden Harm alone. Effective support often requires a coordinated, whole-family approach involving children, parents and wider support networks.

Immediate Safeguarding Concerns

Service	What can they help with?	Contact details
Integrated Front Door	Immediate safeguarding concerns regarding a child	Phone: 01226 772423
Adult Social Care	Immediate safeguarding concerns regarding a vulnerable adult	Phone: 01226 773300
Emergency Services	Child or adult at immediate risk of harm	Phone: 999
South Yorkshire Police	Non-emergency concerns	Phone: 101
NSPCC Helpline	Advice regarding child safeguarding concerns and support with referrals	Phone: 0808 800 5000
NHS 111	Urgent health advice that is not a 999 emergency	Phone: 111



Drug, Alcohol, Smoking and Vaping Support

Service	What can they help with?	Contact details
Barnsley Recovery Steps	Treatment, recovery support and peer support for adults affected by alcohol or drug use	Phone: 01226 779066 Email: brs.referrals@waythrough.org.uk www.barnsleyrecoverysteps.org.uk
SPACE	Young people's drug and alcohol support service (Under 18's)	Phone: 01226 779066 Text: 07483 367805 https://barnsleyrecoverysteps.org.uk/support/young-peoples-support/
Smokefree	Support to stop smoking	Telephone (free from landlines): 0800 612 0011 Telephone (free from most mobiles): 0330 660 1166 Text: Text YSF to 80800 for a callback service

Family and Hidden Harm Support

Service	What can they help with?	Contact details
M-PACT	Whole-family support for families affected by parental substance misuse	Phone: 01226 779066 Email: brs.referrals@waythrough.org.uk www.barnsleyrecoverysteps.org.uk
Early Help	Parenting support, family support, targeted interventions and coordinated support plans	Phone: 0800 0345 340 Email: earlyhelp@barnsley.gov.uk



Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Support

Service	What can they help with?	Contact details
Compass Be. Mental Health Support	Emotional wellbeing support within schools	01904 666371 info.barnsleymhst@compass-uk.org
CAMHS	Specialist child and adolescent mental health support	01226 107377 barnsleycypmhrequestsupport@swyt.nhs.uk
Kooth	Free online counselling and wellbeing support for young people	https://www.kooth.com/
Childline	Confidential advice and support for children and young people	0800 1111
Night OWLS	Evening and overnight emotional wellbeing support	0800 148 8244 Text: 07984 376950 Chat online through the website www.wynightowls.org.uk
Papyrus HOPELINE247	Suicide prevention and crisis support for young people	0300 102 2470 https://www.papyrus-uk.org/
Chilypep	Early support mental health and emotional wellbeing hub for young people aged 11–25 in Barnsley,	01226 213 123 HOME@chilypep.org.uk
SWYPT	Mental Health Crisis Support for Adults	01226 645000
NHS	Barnsley Talking Therapies 16+	01226 644900

Health Services

Service	What can they help with?	Contact details
0-19 Health Visiting Service	Child health, development and family support	01226 774411
Smoking in Pregnancy Service	Stop smoking support during pregnancy and early parenthood	01226 431621 maternity.stopsmoking@nhs.net

GP Practices iheart Barnsley	Non-emergency medical care Out of hours GP appointment	Contact your own GP Surgery 01226 242419
Midwifery Services	Pregnancy and early parenthood support	Barnsley Hospital: 01226 730000
Spectrum	Free and confidential sexual health and contraception support and relationship advice	0800 055 6442 Barnsley.SH@spectrum-cic.nhs.uk

Young Carers Family Support and Universal Services

Service	What can they help with?	Contact details
Young Carers Service	Support for children and young people with caring responsibilities	01226 770619 (via Targeted Early Help)
IDAS	Domestic abuse advice and support	03000 110 110 info@idas.org.uk
Citizens Advice Barnsley	Debt, welfare and financial advice	0800 144 8848 use landline no: 01226209365
Barneslai Homes	Housing and tenancy support	01226 787878
Self-Neglect and Hoarding Service	Support around self-neglect, hoarding and property concerns	01226 773555 safer@barnsley.gov.uk
BSARCS	Specialist support for people affected by rape, sexual abuse, sexual assault or sexual violence	01226 320140 info@bsarcs.org
Byouth	Early intervention and youth support for young people aged 11–19	byouthenquiries@barnsley.gov.uk or call 01226 753406



Crisis Support (Any Age)

Service	What can they help with?	Contact details
Samaritans	24/7 emotional support	116 123
SHOUT	Free confidential crisis text support	Text SHOUT to 85258

Professional Reminder

- Consider the needs of both the child and the parent
- Explore support at the earliest opportunity
- Think about the whole family, including unborn babies, siblings, young carers, stepchildren, hidden partners and wider family members
- No single agency holds all the information
- Early support can prevent concerns from escalating

Key Message

Hidden Harm is everyone's business. Knowing where to signpost families and when to seek additional support can make a significant difference to outcomes for children, young people and families.

You do not need to work in isolation. A range of practical tools and resources are available to support confident, child-centred and trauma-informed practice.

Professional Reflection

Which tools would help me feel more confident recognising, discussing and responding to Hidden Harm within my role?

For local tools, training opportunities and documents to support professionals working with children families and young people please consult the Hidden Harm Toolkit and landing page for more information access: <https://barnsleyrecoverysteps.org.uk/advice/hidden-harm/>



Final Thoughts: What's the Harm?

Hidden Harm can be easy to miss. It may be the child who always says they are fine. The young person who is tired, distracted or angry. The parent who loves their child deeply but is struggling behind closed doors. The family who appears to be coping, while children are quietly carrying worry, responsibility or fear.

Sometimes the question is asked: **“What’s the harm?”**

- The harm may be a child lying awake at night listening for footsteps
- It may be a young person getting their sibling ready for school
- It may be missed appointments, unpredictable routines, unsafe storage of medication, or a child feeling they have to protect the adults around them
- It may be emotional, physical, practical or hidden in the everyday moments that others do not see.

As professionals, we may not always know the full story straight away. But we can notice the small signs. We can ask curious questions. We can listen without judgement. We can record clearly, share information appropriately and help families access support before difficulties escalate.

Hidden Harm is not about blaming parents. It is about seeing the child, understanding the family context, and recognising where early support could make a difference.

Every child deserves to be seen, heard and safe. Every family deserves the chance to be met with compassion, honesty and support.

So when we ask, “What’s the Harm?” we must also ask, “What can I do?”

Be curious. Be compassionate. Be brave enough to ask. Because one conversation, one observation, or one timely referral could be the moment that helps a child feel less alone and a family begin to move towards support.

Hidden Harm is Everyone's Business. Spotting it Early Can Change Lives.

