

Right Services, Right Time, Right Place

Multi-agency Guidance on Access Criteria to help support Children, Young People and their Families in Dudley



Dudley Children & Young People's Partnership



Working together to keep children and young people safe

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Dudley's Multi-agency Guidance on getting support services to children, young people and their families – the right service in the right place at the right time.

We aspire to provide support through the provision of flexible and responsive services which provide targeted support at the earliest possible stage, through to specialist and statutory interventions where needs are complex. The aim is always to help children and young people achieve the best possible outcomes.

Many agencies and professionals, parents, carers, volunteers, children and young people and other family members are involved with providing support. The service criteria and thresholds set out in this document are designed to help all concerned meet children's needs through identifying the best type of support.

Whatever setting you work in, we hope you will find the guidance helpful in supporting you to improve the lives of children and young people and their families. A copy of the guidance and a poster can be found on the Safeguarding Board website at <http://safeguardingchildren.dudley.gov.uk>.



Dudley Children & Young
People's Partnership



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HOW TO USE THE THRESHOLD FRAMEWORK

The Dudley Threshold Framework, “Right Services, Right Time, Right Place,” should be seen as overarching guidance for the whole of the children and young people’s workforce within Dudley. It should be seen as a guide for all agencies, professionals and volunteers, to consider how best to meet the needs of individual children. Agencies will remain in control of their own thresholds for intervention, however, they all support this document as a guide for their own agency responses.

The framework follows the ‘windscreen model’ which is shown on the following page. The aim is that as far as possible children’s needs should be met within universal provision, but that flexible support should be introduced to meet additional needs with the consent of the child and parents, at the earliest possible stage, thus helping to achieve good outcomes.

Guidance on the types of needs and possible service responses is set out on pages 6 to 12. The model is designed to support professional practice and is not a substitute for professional judgement. It is designed to help everyone to:

- Think clearly and achieve a holistic approach
- Understand the child and young person in the context of their family and wider community
- Develop ideas and solutions with children, young people and their families, in order that children and young people can receive timely additional support whenever this is needed.

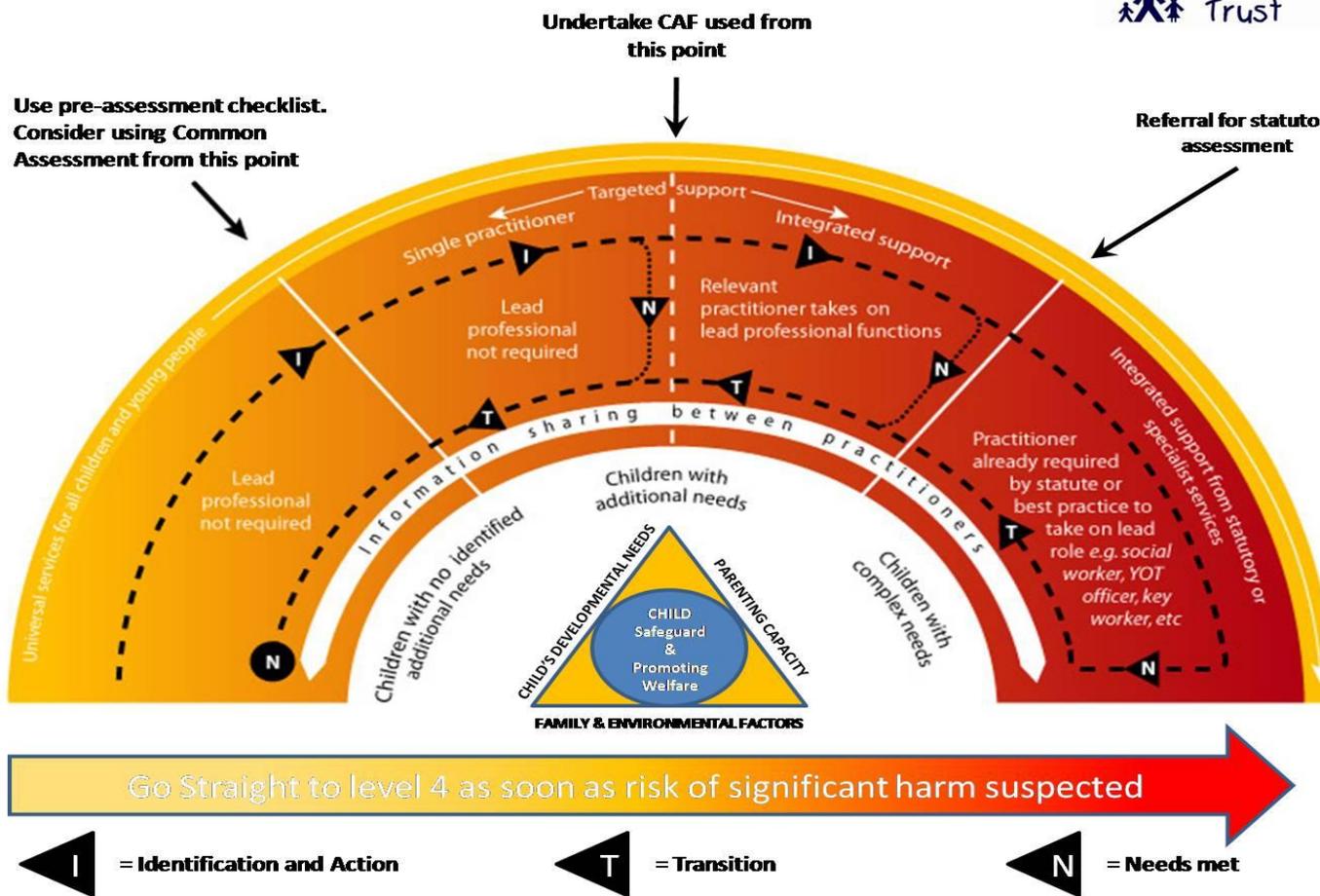
The model describes how the Common Assessment Framework can be used by all services to provide a standard holistic assessment. At Level 3, where needs are more complex, the model describes a multi-agency ‘Team Around the Child/Family’ approach facilitated by a Lead Professional. Level 4 describes children with acute specialist needs where statutory/specialist assessments are required and the ‘Team Around the Child’ will need to be led by a statutory/specialist service.

It should be noted that Safeguarding Procedures must always be followed and a referral made directly to Children’s Social Care where there is a concern that a child might be suffering significant harm. Further guidance can be found in the Safeguarding Procedures which are available at <http://safeguardingchildren.dudley.gov.uk>. The Safeguarding Board website also holds information about our local Substance Misuse Protocol and how agencies will work together to address this type of need.

The Dudley Family Information Service is a useful source of information about activities, support and childcare provision and can be found at <http://fis.dudley.gov.uk/fsd> (telephone 01384 814398).

Further guidance about criteria for short breaks for children with disabilities and the short break statement can be found at <http://www.dudley.gov.uk/health-social-care/children-and-family-care/children-with-disabilities-services/short-breaks/>.

Promoting Children's Wellbeing in Dudley



Level 1 Threshold - Universal

<p>Key Features</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Needs met within universal provision May need limited help within setting to prevent needs arising Children, young people and parents/carers can access these services directly 		
<p>Child's Developmental Needs</p> <p>Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physically and psychologically well Adequate diet/hygiene/clothing Meeting developmental milestones, including speech and language Accesses health services, including dental and optical care <p>Education and Learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good attendance at school/college/training No barriers to learning Achieving key stages <p>Emotional and Behavioural Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good quality early attachments Growing competencies in practical and emotional skills <p>Identity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive sense of self and abilities Demonstrates feelings of belonging and acceptance An ability to express needs <p>Family and Social Relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stable and affectionate relationships with care givers Good relationships with siblings Positive relationships with peers <p>Social Presentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appropriate dress for different settings Good level of personal hygiene <p>Self –care skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Age appropriate independent living skills 		<p>Parents and Carers</p> <p>Basic Care, Safety and Protection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carers able to provide for the child's physical needs, and protect them from danger and harm. <p>Emotional Warmth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carers able to provide warmth, praise and encouragement <p>Guidance, Boundaries and Stimulation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carers provide appropriate guidance and boundaries Carers support development through interaction and play <p>Family and Environmental Factors</p> <p>Family History and Functioning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supportive family relationships, including when parents are separated <p>Housing, Employment and Finance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing has basic amenities and appropriate facilities Not living in poverty Appropriate hygiene/ cleanliness maintained <p>Family's Social Integration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good enough social and friendship networks exist <p>Community Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good enough universal services in neighbourhood
<p>Assessment Process</p> <p>Children, young people and families have their needs met through universal services. Universal assessments will apply such as those provided through health and education.</p>		
<p>Key universal services who provide support at this level are:</p> <p>Schools, Colleges, Training Providers, Connexions, Children's Centres, Early Years Settings, Midwifery Service, Health Visiting Service (Healthy Child Programme), School Nursing Service, General Practitioners, NHS Direct, Parenting Programmes, Play Services, Youth Service, Police, Housing Services, Leisure Services, Voluntary and Community Sector</p>		

Level 2 Threshold – Children in Need of Early Intervention

Key Features

- Requires additional support, usually within the setting
- Needs are well established and can usually be met within identified resources
- Children, young people and parents/carers can access these services using the CAF assessment process

Child's Developmental Needs

Health

- Slow in reaching development milestones
- Additional health needs
- Missing health checks/immunisations
- Susceptible to minor health problems
- Minor concerns re: diet/dental health, hygiene/clothing
- Disability requiring support services
- Starting to have sex (under 16)
- Previous pregnancy

Education and Learning

- Occasional truanting or non-attendance, poor punctuality
- At risk of exclusion
- School action or school action plus
- Not achieving educational potential
- Not in education, employment or training
- Few opportunities for play/socialisation
- Identified language and communication difficulties

Emotional and Behavioural Development

- Low level mental health or emotional issues requiring intervention
- Some concern about the child's substance misuse
- Involved in behaviour that is seen as anti-social
- Poor self esteem

Identity

- Some insecurities around identity
- May experience bullying around perceived difference, or bully others

Family and Social Relationships

- Some support from family and friends
- Some difficulties sustaining relationships
- Undertaking some caring responsibilities
- Child of a teenage parent
- Low parental aspirations

Social Presentation

- Can be over friendly or withdrawn with strangers
- Personal hygiene starting to be a problem

Self –care skills

- Not always adequate self care – poor hygiene
- Slow to develop age appropriate self care skills
- Over protected/unable to develop independence

Parents and Carers

Basic Care, Safety and Protection

- Parental engagement with services is poor
- Parent requires advice on parenting issues
- Professionals are beginning to have some concerns around child's basic needs being met
- Professionals beginning to have some concerns about substance misuse by adults within the home
- Some exposure to dangerous situations in home/community
- Teenage parent(s)
- Inappropriate expectations of child/young person for age/ability

Emotional Warmth

- Inconsistent parenting but development not significantly impaired
- Post natal depression
- Perceived to be a problem by parents

Guidance, Boundaries and Stimulation

- May have different carers
- Inconsistent boundaries offered
- Can behave in an anti-social way
- Spends much time alone
- Child not exposed to new experiences

Family and Environmental Factors

Family History and Functioning

- Parents have relationship difficulties which may affect the child
- Experienced loss of significant adult
- May look after younger siblings or parent
- Parents has health difficulties
- Some support from family and friends

Housing, Employment and Finance

- Family affected by low income or unemployment
- Parents have limited formal education
- Adequate/poor housing
- Family seeking asylum or refugees

Family's Social Integration

- Some social exclusion problems
- Family may be new to area

Community Resources

Good enough universal services in neighbourhood but family may have access issues

Assessment Process

Additional needs at this level can be met within the setting with some identified additional support.

Universal assessment procedures may be sufficient. However, the CAF pre-assessment checklist is a useful tool to help identify whether needs can be met within the setting or whether there is a need for a co-ordinated, multi-agency response. If a multi-agency response is needed, a Common Assessment should be offered, with the consent of the family/child/young person.

The Common Assessment Framework is a standard holistic assessment that can be used by all services working with children and young people. It is suitable for use in early intervention work and beyond. It supports practitioners to work in partnership with parents/carers and provide co-ordinated multi-agency support and actions.

Key services who provide support at this level are:

Schools, Colleges, Training Providers, Connexions, Children's Centres, Early Years Settings, Midwifery Service, Health Visiting Service (Universal Plus), School Nursing Service, General Practitioners, NHS Direct, Play Services, Youth Service, Police, Housing Services, Leisure Services, Family Support and Parenting Support Services, Voluntary and Community Sector, Prevention Programmes.

Level 3 Threshold – Children with complex needs

Key Features	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires co-ordinated multi-agency response Lead professional required High level of unmet need 	
Child's Developmental Needs	Parents and Carers
<p>Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has some chronic/recurring health problems or terminal illness Concerns around mental health, self harm Missing routine and non-routine health appointments Concerns about diet/hygiene/clothing Conception to a child under 16 Inappropriate sexual behaviour Substance misuse impacts negatively on their risk taking behaviour Disability requiring significant support services to be maintained in mainstream provision <p>Education and Learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short term exclusion, persistent truanting or poor school attendance Previous permanent exclusions Persistent NEET Statement of Special Educational Needs <p>Emotional and Behavioural Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical and emotional development raising significant concerns Difficulty coping with anger, frustration and upset Early onset of sexual activity (13 to 14) Problematic substance misuse Inappropriate sexual behaviour/risk of sexual exploitation Offending or regular anti-social behaviour <p>Identity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subject to discrimination Extremist views <p>Family and Social Relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peers also involved in challenging behaviour Regularly needed to care for another family member Involved in conflicts with parents/siblings <p>Social Presentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inappropriate in behaviour and appearance – unwashed, hygiene problems, provocative behaviour/appearance <p>Self –care skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor self care for age – hygiene Takes inappropriate risks in self care 	<p>Basic Care, Safety and Protection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parent is struggling to provide adequate care Substance misuse (including alcohol) is impacting on parenting ability Parental learning disability is impacting on ability to provide care Teenage parents Previously subject to Child Protection Plan or Looked After Private fostering or young carer <p>Emotional Warmth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child is often scapegoated Child receives inconsistent care/has multiple care givers Child is rarely comforted when distressed Parents have no other positive relationships Parents have lack of empathy for child <p>Guidance, Boundaries and Stimulation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Erratic or inadequate guidance provided Parent rarely manages disputes between siblings Inconsistent parenting which impairs emotional or behavioural development <p>Family and Environmental Factors</p> <p>Family History and Functioning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of domestic violence, potential honour based violence, forced marriage Acrimonious relationships Family members have physical and mental health difficulties Parental involvement in crime Parental involvement in problematic substance misuse <p>Housing, Employment and Finance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overcrowding, temporary accommodation, homelessness Serious debts/poverty impacting on ability to care for the child <p>Family's Social Integration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family social excluded Escalating victimisation <p>Community Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents socially excluded with access problems to local facilities and targeted services Children from families experiencing a crisis likely to result in a breakdown of care arrangements

Assessment Process

Additional needs at this level will need a "Team Around the Child/Family" approach. The child may already be known to a statutory service. If not, the pre-assessment checklist and a Common Assessment (using the Common Assessment Framework) should be completed. Completion of a Common Assessment should not delay any appropriate referral to a statutory service.

A "Team Around the Child/Family" at Level 3 may be appropriate as a "step down" from statutory intervention at Level 4. For example, when a child is no longer in need of social care services, with consent from the family, a new lead professional can be identified to enable continued support when social care is no longer involved. The Level 4 Assessments and Plans will inform this approach rather than completing a further assessment.

Key services who provide support at this level are:

SEN Services, Special Schools, CAMHS, Schools, Colleges, Connexions, Training Providers, Children's Centres, Early Years Settings, Midwifery Service, Health Visiting Service (Universal Partnership Plus), Paediatric Services, Speech and Language Therapy, School Nursing Service, General Practitioners, NHS Direct, Play Services, Youth Service, Drug and Alcohol Services, Family Support and Parenting Support Services, Voluntary and Community Sector, Children with Disabilities Services, Inclusion Services, Children's Social Care (see Appendix 1).

Level 4 Threshold – Children with acute specialist needs

<p>Key Features</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At risk of becoming, or has become, a child in care Multi-agency plan failing In need of a formal Child Protection Plan Often poor co-operation 	
Child's Developmental Needs	Parents and Carers
<p>Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has severe chronic/recurring health problems, including severe obesity and dental decay Fabricated/induced illness Non-organic failure to thrive Sexual exploitation/abuse Sexual activity under the age of 13 Serious/complex mental health issues requiring specialist intervention Disability requiring the highest level of support Persistent substance misuse <p>Education and Learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Permanently excluded from school or at risk of permanent exclusion Significant development delay due to neglect/poor parenting <p>Emotional and Behavioural Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Puts self or others in danger Failure to address serious (re)offending/anti-social behaviour Endangers own life through self harm, suicide attempts, substance misuse and eating disorder Child abuses others Frequently missing from home for long periods Presenting sexualised behaviour <p>Identity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates extremist views Socially isolated and lacking appropriate role models Alienates self from others Participates in gang activity <p>Family and Social Relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child in care or care leaver Family breakdown related in some way to behavioural difficulties Subject to physical, emotional or sexual abuse/neglect Is main carer for family member Adoption breakdown Forced marriage of a minor <p>Social Presentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor/inappropriate self presentation <p>Self –care skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Neglects to use self-care skills due to alternative priorities e.g. substance misuse Severe lack of age appropriate behaviour and independent living skills likely to result in harm Takes inappropriate risks in self care 	<p>Basic Care, Safety and Protection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parent unable to provide 'good enough parenting' that is adequate and safe Parents unable to care for previous children Parents' mental health problems or substance misuse significantly affects care of child Child subject to public law proceedings in the family court Continuous instability and violence in the home Parents unable to keep the child safe Parents involved in criminal activity <p>Emotional Warmth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents inconsistent, highly critical or apathetic towards child Child is rejected or abandoned Parents are negative and abusive (verbally, emotionally, mentally) towards the child <p>Guidance, Boundaries and Stimulation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No effective boundaries set by parents Regularly behaves in an anti-social way in the neighbourhood Inconsistent and violent discipline Subject to a parenting order which may be related to their child's criminal behaviour, anti-social behaviour or persistent absence from school. <p style="background-color: #ff0000; color: white; text-align: center;">Family and Environmental Factors</p> <p>Family History and Functioning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant parent discord, domestic violence/honour based violence/forced marriage Child privately fostered (cared for by non-relative) Destructive relationships in extended family Parents deceased and no family/friends options Parents are in prison and there are no family/friends options <p>Housing, Employment and Finance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical accommodation places child in danger No fixed abode or homeless Extreme poverty/debt impacting on ability to care for child <p>Family's Social Integration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family chronically socially excluded <p>Community Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non engagement with services

Assessment Process

Additional needs at this level will need a "Team Around the Child/Family" approach led by a statutory/specialist service (Social Worker, Youth Offending Service, Education and Inclusion Staff, CAMHS, specialist Health etc). The child may be the subject of a formal Child Protection Plan or a Child in Care Plan.

The types of assessments will include:

- National Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families
- Child Protection Investigation
- Other specialist assessments including health and education

These assessments may build on earlier assessments under the Common Assessment Framework

Key services who provide support at this level are:

Children's Social Care, CAMHS, specialist Health Services, Children with Disabilities Services, Education Inclusion Services, Connexions, Parenting Programmes, Substance Misuse Services, Youth Offending Service, working in partnership with other services including the voluntary and community sector.

Children's Social Care Thresholds

1. This section of the guidance relates specifically to Children's Social Care. It outlines the thresholds, assessment processes and key services for children and young people in need of Children's Social Care intervention.
2. The majority of children, young people have a number of basic needs that can be supported through a range of universal services. These services include education, early years, health, housing, youth services, leisure facilities and services provided by voluntary organisations. However, some children may have additional needs for which they need support in order to achieve good outcomes. Within this group, a small proportion will have more complex needs which meet the threshold for statutory involvement by Children's Social Care. These are:
 - children and young people who need a child protection assessment or are the subject of a child protection plan
 - looked-after children and young people
 - care leavers
 - children and young people for whom adoption is the plan
 - children and young people with complex disabilities or complex health needs
 - children and young people who are privately fostered
3. **Child in Need of Children's Social Care Intervention**
 - 3.1 ***The threshold for referral to Children's Social care*** is that the child appears to be in need as set out under the Children Act 1989. It is anticipated that needs at Level 3 would only be referred where other interventions (including Common Assessment and Team Around the Child/Family) at Level 3 have not resolved the issue.
 - 3.2 The key factors taken into account in deciding whether a child is in need are:
 - What will happen to the child's health and development without services being provided; and
 - The likely effect the services will have on the child's standard of health and development
 - 3.3 ***The provision of services at Level 3*** occurs after an Initial Assessment has been completed and indicates one of the following levels of need:
 - Child in need of specialist support from children's social care
 - Child in need of protection
 - Child in need of care
 - 3.4 ***Child Protection:*** It should be noted that Safeguarding Board Procedures must always be followed and a referral made to Children's Social Care where there is concern that a child is suffering or is a risk of suffering significant harm. Further guidance can be found in the Safeguarding Procedures which are available at <http://safeguardingchildren.dudley.gov.uk>.
 - 3.5 ***Children in Need of Services at Level 4*** are those who are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm and those who are in need of care or are in the care of the Local Authority
 - 3.6 A summary of the levels of need and threshold criteria is shown on the following chart.
 - 3.7 Further guidance about criteria for short breaks for children with disabilities and the short break statement can be found at <http://www.dudley.gov.uk/health-social-care/children-and-family-care/children-with-disabilities-services/short-breaks/>

Thresholds for Children's Social Care		
Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
<p>Key Features</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Need for early intervention ▪ Parents seeking community services ▪ Child registered as having a disability 	<p>Key Features</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Highly complex ▪ High level multi-agency support to work with compromised parenting ▪ Significant risk of family breakdown or harm ▪ Likelihood of significant harm but where Initial Assessment suggests the risk can be managed outside a Protection Plan 	<p>Key Features</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Child suffering or likely to suffer significant harm ▪ Child in need of care or who has previously been in care
<p>Criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No major concerns 	<p>Criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Issues not resolved by other interventions at Level 3 including CAF and Team Around the Child arrangements ▪ Significant parenting capacity problems which impact to the extent of the child being on the 'threshold of care' ▪ Child posing a risk to self or others that without intervention may result in significant harm and the consequent need for a Protection Plan or Care ▪ Adoption breakdown ▪ Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker ▪ Complex needs relating to disability ▪ Request for a Court report where there is significant current/previous social care involvement ▪ Homeless and vulnerable 16/17 year olds 	<p>Criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Actual or likely significant harm through abuse/neglect ▪ Reported pregnancy where there have been previous child protection concerns ▪ Forced Marriage of child ▪ Parents involved in serious criminal acts which may impact on the child ▪ Sexual exploitation ▪ Adult assessed as having a risk to children having contact with a child ▪ Child witnessing violence, including sexual violence ▪ Child abandoned – no family or friends options ▪ Parents in prison – no family or friends options ▪ Welfare can only be safeguarded through care ▪ Unaccompanied asylum seeker ▪ Remanded to care ▪ Child placing him/herself at serious risk ▪ Eligible and relevant care leavers ▪ Highly complex needs relating to disability ▪ Specialist short breaks for disabled children
<p>Level of Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Informal ▪ Possible Common Assessment by another agency ▪ Non-statutory ▪ Signposting 	<p>Level of Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Initial Assessment ▪ Possible Core Assessment 	<p>Level of Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Core Assessment ▪ Section 47 ▪ Reports for Reviews/Conferences