

Hampshire Children's Services

Guidance for Thresholds of Statutory Intervention

This guidance is to assist managers and social workers to determine what features should warrant the commencement of an initial assessment and when the initial assessment should move to a Section 47 and/or core assessment

Key headline features	Concerns that may inhibit the ability to care for a child adequately	Cause for concern <i>A child in need, or risks will become unacceptable without intervention (non Section 47)</i>	Reasonable suspicions of abuse <i>Evidenced significant concerns about a child's health, care and development, or higher end child in need (non Section 47)</i>	Likely/actual abuse <i>Child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm</i>
Level of assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Informal (often verbal only) Possible common assessment framework (CAF) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial assessment Pre-birth assessment Potential core assessment to gain a fuller understanding of needs and the services required to meet those needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As features within this column emerge within the initial assessment, consideration should be given to progressing or fast tracking to a core assessment Core assessment to be commenced once the initial assessment is closed down 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 47/assessment Core assessment Report for initial child protection conference
Circumstances and key features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing issues Contact/residence issues Parents seeking community services Finance issues/benefits query DP1 form (children registered as having a disability) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dysfunctional parent/child relationships Challenging behaviour Poor supervision Previous children abused Level of co-operation evident Young carers without appropriate support Failure to seek medical help as requested by other professional Pattern of minor concerns being expressed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repeated failure to carry out aspects of care Unwilling/unable to respond to advice Evidence of non co-operation Evidence of continuing dysfunction Unacceptable parenting due to substance misuse/ domestic abuse/mental health/learning difficulties and/ or disabilities Frequent moves Unaccompanied asylum seekers Children with disabilities Repeat initial assessments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suspicion of sexual abuse Rejection/abandonment of a child No co-operation with agencies, leading to unmet need Non accidental injury Child placed in Police protection Bruising to pre- or non-mobile child Contact with suspected or known offender of child abuse
Features of child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No major concerns <p>Or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A targeted/isolated concern, eg, depression, teenage self harm, bullying etc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unexplained bruising/marks Inappropriate behaviour Change in behaviour affecting achievement Child living away from parent(s) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beyond control Failing to develop Withdrawn/anxious Unexplained suspicious bruising Withdrawal from school Complex needs Alcohol/substance misuse Mental health Child has a learning difficulty and/or disability Unaccompanied child from abroad needing support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant changes in behaviour Medical assessment raises concerns of non-accidental injury etc Isolated/withdrawn Disclosure by child Pregnancy of a child under 13
Parental capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistent parenting Parent(s) being proactive in seeking information, advice and services Child focussed parenting Acknowledging that help may be needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inconsistent parenting Parental co-operation Awareness of presenting issue Able/willing to make changes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Domestic abuse pattern Alcohol/drug dependence Mental health impacting on parenting Unsatisfactory explanation of injury Ambivalent of need to change Failure to safeguard/protect+ Struggling with the complex needs of the child (i.e. child with disabilities) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No co-operation or disguised compliance Denial/non-acceptance in face of evidence Refusal to engage No change made Parent fabricating injury or illness
Family and environmental factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Isolated social pressure Good support from family friends and/or agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social pressures e.g. finance/housing May have support networks Referrals from family/community Could be a larger family i.e. with multiple siblings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimal support network/isolation from family/ community Significant social pressures Minimising concerns Repeat referrals, particularly from family members/ community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No support network or support network not effective Significant social pressures Refusal to involve family for support
Type of response (Section 17/Section 47)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advice Information Signposting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 17 Possible Section 47 based on outcome Possible Section 20/exploration of informal family/friend options 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As concerns are evidenced, establish need for Section 47 enquiry and/or core assessment Possible Section 20 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Likely to be Section 47 from outset May result in Section 20 accommodation/Public Law Outline/legal proceedings
Timescale for response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be signposted out within three working days 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment to commence within 24 hours and completed within 10 working days 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Close down initial assessment and progress to Section 47 and/or core assessment, to be completed within 35 days 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment to commence within 24 hours but usually an immediate response would be required (same day)
Possible specialist assessment to consider (always after completion of at least an initial assessment)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-statutory community based assessments using the CAF 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parenting assessment Assessment by other partner agencies Pre-birth assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parenting assessment Assessments by other partner agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parenting assessment Assessment of attachment 'Expert' assessments
Key guiding principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If the Children's Reception Team recommends an initial assessment and a decision is taken in a Referral and Assessment team not to undertake an initial assessment, then the reason for this must be clearly explained, authorised by the Team Manager and recorded on the child's electronic file. An initial assessment must be initiated if any of the features within this matrix are present (apart from the first column) unless a decision is made to progress to Section 47. Unless the safety of a child is compromised, all professionals must inform parents before a referral is made. It is acceptable for Social Workers to gather information without first advising parents when in a potential safeguarding situation. Social Workers should gather information with the parent's permission and complete a consent to share form, which should be recorded in a profile note and the document scanned into SWIFT. If parents refuse permission to allow a Social Worker to contact other agencies, Social Workers can go ahead if this action is within a potential safeguarding remit. Section 47 enquiries must be initiated, even if an initial assessment has been commenced, whenever the threshold criteria are met. Section 47 must not be initiated solely to enable a worker to contact agencies without the parent/carers consent. Any specialist assessment must take place after the completion of at least an initial assessment, but usually after a core assessment. An initial child protection conference must be convened at all times when the agreed criteria is met, as stated within the child protection procedures Strands of intervention, i.e. Intensive Support Service, should take place as a outcome of an assessment. Initial assessments should be led by qualified Social Workers. 			
Glossary	<p>Section 17 - enquiries to determine the need for support to children and families within the community</p> <p>Section 20 - the voluntary accommodation of children into the care of the local authority</p> <p>Section 47 - enquiries to determine the need to protect children at risk within the community</p>			

