

**NEATH PORT TALBOT**  
**GUIDELINES FOR JOINT AGENCY REFERRAL**  
**CHILDS DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS AND PARENTING CAPACITY**

This document offers guidelines on the completion of the Joint Agency Referral Form.

The index indicates the references to each part of the referral form, from page 5 of the referral form onwards. The initial 4 pages of the referral form are self explanatory and merely require factual information.

The guidance has been developed in line with the Common Assessment Framework, which is a forthcoming requirement of the Welsh Assembly government. The Common Assessment Framework is intended for use with children and young people who have additional needs and those at risk of poor outcomes. It is being developed for use by practitioners in all agencies, to enable them to identify needs and provide appropriate support and interventions at an earlier stage.

By undertaking the initial holistic assessment of a child or young person's needs, which this form encourages, it will help all agencies determine the level of need and identify an appropriate response.

There is a definition of each dimension on the referral form in this guidance, that is, Health Education, Emotional and Behavioural development, Identity and Social Presentation, Family and Social Relationships and Family and Environmental factors.

There are also shaded boxes at the end of each section, offering examples of at what level of concern, the referring agency is basing the referral. There are 2 sets of boxes under each dimension definition. The first offers thresholds of concern examples in relation to Parenting Capacity and the dimension, and the second box offers thresholds of concern examples in relation to the dimension itself and the child's development. The thresholds of concern are graded from, 'mild' to 'moderate' and then to 'serious'.

For example, under the dimension of 'Health', a mild level of concern in relation to parenting capacity is, 'indicated if a child requires glasses or a hearing aid and is not encouraged to wear them'. Another example, under the dimension of 'Education', of a serious concern, is, 'indicated if the child regularly truants or refuses to attend school and is involved in risk taking behaviour; the child is significantly underachieving in all areas at school.'

**If referring to Social Services, the forms should be sent to:**

**The Child Assessment Team,  
Children and Young People Services,  
12 Talbot Road,  
PORT TALBOT  
SA13 1HG**

**The Child Care Disability Team  
The Laurels,  
87 Lewis Road,  
NEATH  
SA11 1DJ**

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## **HEALTH**

### **Definitions**

#### **Development of baby, child or young person**

**General health** ~ The baby, child or young person's current health condition (for example, conditions of relevance to a baby, child or young person, including growth, development, physical and mental well-being).

Also includes consideration of:

- Health conditions or impairments which significantly affect everyday life functioning;
- Access to and use of appropriate health services, such as those provided by a GP/dentist/optician, immunisations and appropriate developmental checks;
- Number and frequency of hospital admissions and accidents;
- Access to and use of appropriate health advice and information, for example including diet, sexual health and management of any health condition such as diabetes or asthma.

**Physical development** ~ The baby, child or young person's means of mobility, level of physical or sexual maturity/delayed development.

Also includes consideration of:

- Being well-nourished, being active, rested and protected, gaining control of the body, acquiring physical skills;
- Vision and hearing;
- Fine and gross motor skills including:
  - crawling, walking, running and climbing;
  - participation in football or other games;
  - ability to draw pictures, do jigsaws etc.

**Speech, language and communications development** ~ The ability to communicate effectively, confidently and appropriately with others.

Also includes consideration of:

- Preferred means of communication;
- Use of first language;
- Ability to gain attention and make contact, access positive relationships, be with others, encourage conversation;
- The impulse to communicate, exploring, experiment, labelling and expressing, describing, questioning, representing and predicting, sharing thoughts, feelings and ideas;
- Listening and paying attention to what other say, making playful and serious responses, enjoying and sharing stories, songs, rhymes and games, learning about words and meanings;

- Ability to communicate meaning, influence others, negotiate and make choices, understanding of others;
- Vision and hearing;
- Language for communicating and thinking;
- Linking sounds and letters;
- Reading and writing;
- Willingness to communicate;
- Articulation skills and language structure;
- Fluency of speech and confidence;
- Appropriateness of social and communications skills, for example, body language, excessive use of expletives or inappropriate language, for example brusque manner.

**Mental Health** ~ see Emotional and Behavioural Development , page 12.

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Also consider

- How far are the parents able to meet the child's health needs?
- To what extent do wider and environmental factors impact upon the child's health needs?
- Do you have concerns about the child's developmental progress in this area?
- How can the child's family or the immediate community meet the needs you have identified?
- Which if any of the needs identified require referral to/assistance from voluntary or statutory agencies?
- What are the parents' views?

### **EXAMPLES OF LEVELS OF PRIORITY OF CONCERN**

#### **Parenting Capacity**

**Mild Concerns** are indicated if a child requires glasses or a hearing aid and is not encouraged to wear them.

**Moderate concerns** are indicated if the child has frequently been taken to casualty or GP, suffering from accidental injuries; if the child is not receiving or following treatment for a recognised medical condition.

**Serious concerns** are indicated if the mother refused to accept anti-natal care. Babies and young children should be under the care of a responsible adult at all times.

## EXAMPLES OF LEVELS OF PRIORITY OF CONCERN

### Child's Development

**Mild concerns** are indicated if a child shows some behaviour which is not consistent with the expected level of development.

**Moderate concerns** in this area are indicated if children have frequent periods of illness unexplained by a recognised medical condition, or are not achieving normal developmental milestones.

**Moderate concerns** are indicated when a child is accommodated in a health setting for longer than three months.

**Serious concerns** are indicated if: children of this age are failing to thrive and there is no medical explanation; another child in the family has died as a result of injury or faltering growth; this or another child in the family has suffered permanent health impairment as a result of injury or malnourishment.

## EDUCATION

### **Definition**

**Understanding, reasoning and problem solving** ~ The ability to understand and organise information, reason and solve problems.

From birth children need stimulation in order to develop their intellectual capacity. Children need the support of parent or parent figures if they are to achieve their academic potential.

Also includes consideration of:

- The impact of any disability or impairment or special needs and of any potential for these outcomes;
- Making connections through the sense and movement, finding out about the environment and other people, becoming playfully engaged and involved, making patterns, comparing, categorising, classifying;
- Being creative, exploring and discovering, experimenting with sound, other media and movement, developing competence and creativity, being resourceful;
- Being imaginative, imitating, mirroring, moving, imagining, exploring and re-enacting, playing imaginatively with materials using all the senses, pretend play with gestures and actions, feeling and relationships, ideas and words;
- Exploring, experimenting and playing, discovering that one thing can stand for another, creating and experimenting with one's own symbols and marks, recognising that others may use marks differently;
- Play and interaction;
- Demonstration of a range of skills and interests;
- Numbers as labels and for counting;
- Calculating;
- Shape, space and measures;

- Progress in learning, including any special educational needs identified;
- Knowledge and understanding of the world.

**Participation in learning, education and employment** ~ The degree to which the child or young person has access to and is engaged in education and/or work based training and, if he/she is not participating, the reasons for this.

Also includes consideration of:

- Attendance;
- The degree to which prior non-participation has led to current needs and circumstances;
- Access to appropriate and consistent adult support;
- Access to appropriate educational resources for example, books.

**Progress and achievement in learning** ~ The child or young person's educational achievements and progress, including in relation to their peers.

Also includes consideration of:

- Adult interest in the child or young person's educational activities and achievements;
- Progress, for example measured against prior attainment in learning, national curriculum levels achieved and their peers;
- Basic skills ~ the ability to read, write and speak in English and use mathematics at a functional level;
- Key skills ~ the ability to learn, work with others, carry out tasks;
- Participation in opportunities to take part in activities in the community and /or develop particular strengths or skills for example, in sports, arts or vocational training;
- Special educational needs ~ whether the child or young person has a learning difficulty or disability and needs additional or different support to access the curriculum;
- Whether the child or young person needs help to catch up when education has been disrupted;
- Disability ~ whether the baby, child or young person has a disability and reasonable adjustments are being made to support their access to the curriculum and school life generally.
- Caring role ~ whether the child has caring responsibilities at home.

**Aspirations** ~ The ambitions of the child or young person, whether their aspirations are realistic and they are able to plan how to meet them. Note there may be barriers to a child or young person's achievement of their aspirations for example, the child or young person's other responsibilities in the home.

**Bullying and harassment – see definition of Identity (page 8)**

Also includes consideration of:

- The child or young person's view of progress;
- Motivating elements;
- The child or young person's level of self-confidence;

- Perseverance.
- How far are the parents able to meet the child's education needs?
- To what extent do wider and environmental factors impact upon the child's education needs?
- Do you have concerns about the child's developmental progress in this area?
- How can the child's family or the immediate community meet the needs you have identified?
- Which if any of the needs identified require referral to/assistance from voluntary or statutory agencies/
- What are the parents' views?

### **EXAMPLES OF LEVELS OF PRIORITY OF CONCERN**

#### **Parenting Capacity**

**Mild concerns** are indicated if the parent does not provide adequate stimulation within the home and does not encourage and support the child to attend school. Parents should take an interest in their child's achievements.

**Moderate concerns** are indicated if a child with a learning disability has no individual education plan; the child is not sent to school (if of school age) or if there is no contact between the school and the child's family. The child has frequent unexplained absences from school and numerous unscheduled changes of school.

**Serious concerns** are indicated if the parent/carer rarely talks or plays with the baby/child and /or leaves him/her alone for significant lengths of time. Also if younger children are frequently not collected or collected late from school.

### **EXAMPLES OF LEVELS OF PRIORITY OF CONCERN**

#### **Child's Development**

**Mild concerns** are indicated if there is a slight delay in a child achieving developmental milestones or if the child fails to attain the average level of achievement in the national curriculum.

**Moderate concerns** are indicated if a child has been excluded from nursery or school for behavioural reasons and is at risk of permanent exclusion; Child excluded from, at risk of being excluded from, or not attending school where this leads to serious deterioration of intellectual development.

**Moderate concerns** are indicated if a child is accommodated in an education setting for longer than three months.

**Serious concerns** are indicated if the child regularly truants or refuses to attend school and is involved in risk taking behaviour; the child is significantly underachieving in all areas at school. The child has been permanently excluded.

## **IDENTITY AND SOCIAL PRESENTATION AND SELF-CARE SKILLS**

### **Definition**

#### **Identity**

The growing sense of self as a separate and valued person.

Children are most likely to develop a strong sense of self-esteem if their physical needs are promptly met and they are encouraged to take care of their appearance, if they receive physical affection and praise and if adults show an interest in their activities and achievements. Children who do not live with both birth parents need to be helped to feel positive about the absent parent.

Children should be confident in themselves and their abilities. They will expect to be liked by both peers and adults and to view adults as dependable and trustworthy.

Children should see themselves as individuals, separate from their parents. They should feel comfortable with their appearance including their race and gender. They should know their names and ages. Children should be learning the skills necessary to adjust their behaviour to a wider range of situations.

Also includes consideration of:

- Growing awareness of self, realisation of separateness and differences from others, recognition of personal characteristics and preferences, finding out what they can do;
- Importance of gaining self-assurance through a close relationship, becoming confident in what they can do, valuing and appreciating their own abilities, feeling self-assured and supported, a positive view of themselves;
- Knowledge of personal and family history;
- Access to recognition, acceptance and comfort, ability to contribute to secure relationships, understanding they can be valued by and important to someone, exploring emotional boundaries;
- Sense of belonging, being able to join in, enjoying being with familiar and trusted others, valuing individuality and contributions of self and others, having a role and identity within a group, acceptance by those around them;
- Race, religion, age, gender, sexuality and disability – may be affected by bullying or discriminatory behaviour;
- Understanding of the way in which appearance and behaviour are perceived and the impression being created.
- The effects of bullying on children can be far reaching and can affect their development eg educational, emotional, health, mental health and social needs and can occur in a wide range of settings

#### **Self-care skills and independence**

The acquisition of practical and emotional and communication competencies to increase independence.

Also includes consideration of:

- Discovering boundaries and limits, learning about rules, knowing when and how to ask for help, learning when to say no and anticipating when others will do so;
  - Discovering and learning about their body, demonstrating individual preferences, making decisions, becoming aware of others and their own needs;
  - Early practical skills for example, coping with routine such as washing, dressing and feeding including swallowing, chewing and weaning, in the case of the very young;
  - Opportunities to gain confidence and practical skills to undertake activities away from the family;
  - Independent living skills for older children for example, appropriate use of social problem solving approaches.
  - Child's independent living skills where these are curtailed by disability or parenting
- 
- How far are the parents able to meet the child's needs in these areas?
  - To what extent do wider and environmental factors impact upon the child's identity and social presentation needs?
  - Do you have any concerns about the child's developmental progress in this area?
  - How could the child's family or the immediate community meet the needs you have identified?
  - Which, if any, of the needs identified require referral to/assistance from voluntary or statutory agencies?
  - What are the parents' views?

### **EXAMPLES OF LEVELS OF PRIORITY OF CONCERN**

#### **Parenting Capacity**

**Mild concerns** are indicated if the child is occasionally unkempt or is not dressed appropriately.

**Mild or moderate concerns** are indicated if the child is rarely clean or appears poorly cared for, is mostly undressed and the home cold; if the parents are highly critical of the child and show little warmth; if they find it difficult to meet the child's needs; if the child is expected to provide emotional support to the parent; if the child is encouraged to take a negative view of a parent.

**Serious concerns** are indicated if the parent has rejected the child or cast him/her in the role of scapegoat.

## **EXAMPLES OF LEVELS OF PRIORITY OF CONCERN**

### **Child's Development**

**Mild to moderate concerns** are indicated if children are not encouraged to develop self-care skills.

**Serious concerns** are indicated if the child's personal hygiene and/or appearance leads them to be rejected and victimised by their peers and they are at risk of social exclusion.

**Serious concerns** are indicated if children of this age are inappropriately assuming parental roles and responsibilities within the home.

## **FAMILY AND SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS**

### **Definition**

The ability to empathise and build stable and affectionate relationships with others, including family, peers and the wider community.

Children need to develop close attachments with carers and other significant adults upon whom they can depend. It is through such relationships that children acquire a sense of security. Children need to meet other children with whom they can develop friendships and learn social skills.

Children should develop a secure attachment with a parent or carer. They should develop sufficient security to enable them to cope well with short separations from parents

Also includes consideration of:

- Stable and affectionate relationships with parents or care givers;
  - Sibling relationships;
  - Involvement in helping others;
  - Age-appropriate friendships;
  - Association with predominantly pro-criminal peers or lack of non-criminal friends;
  - Understanding of others and awareness of consequences;
  - Association with substance misusing friends/peer groups
- 
- How far are the parents able to meet the child's needs in this area?
  - To what extent do wider and environmental factors impact upon the child's family and social relationship?
  - Do you have any concerns about the child's developmental progress in this area?
  - How could the child's family or the immediate community meet the needs you have identified?

- Which, if any, of the needs identified require referral to/assistance from voluntary or statutory agencies?
- What are the parents' views?

### **EXAMPLES OF LEVELS OF PRIORITY OF CONCERN**

#### **Parenting Capacity**

**Mild concerns** are indicated if the parent describes self or partner as having a poor relationship with baby/child; the child is rarely encouraged to meet or play with other children.

**Moderate concerns** are indicated if there is a history of violence between the adults in the household; the child is never encouraged to meet or play with other children. Continuing or deteriorating attachment issues between parent/carer and child.

**Moderate concerns** are indicated if the child has experienced several different changes of primary carer; changes of carer continue (eg child moves back and forth between relatives/parents); the child is not being looked after by either birth parent. The child does not take part in any social or group activities with other children outside school.

**Serious concerns** are indicated if the child receives no physical affection or reassurance from at least one parent/carer.

**Serious concerns** are indicated if the child is exposed to dangerous adults who pose a risk to children.

### **EXAMPLES OF LEVELS OF PRIORITY OF CONCERN**

#### **Child's Development**

**Mild concerns** are indicated if the child has difficulty relating to other adults and children.

**Moderate concerns** are indicated if the child is not usually liked by adults or other children. Older children are not able to name one friend they have had for more than six months.

**Serious concerns** are indicated if the child shows little or no sign of attachment to parents; the child does not appear to have had a long-term, stable relationship with at least one adult; the child is unable to name one friend.

**Serious concerns** are indicated if the child exhibits signs of fearfulness and watchfulness to parent /carer or other adult.

## **EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIOURAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **Definition**

Children need to feel secure and to be able to trust adults and seek comfort from them when distressed. Parents should set clear and consistent boundaries within a safe and loving environment. Children should be given some responsibility, in accordance with their age and ability.

Many young and some older children have poor control over bladder and bowels, and have temper tantrums when they are frustrated.

They may have particular difficulty in controlling their own emotion and behaviour if they regularly witness violence. They may cope with upsetting parental behaviour by withdrawing.

### **Emotional and Social Development**

The emotional and social response the baby, child or young person gives to parents, carers and others outside the family.

Also includes consideration of:

- The importance of being special to someone, being able to express feelings, developing healthy dependence, developing healthy independence.
- Nature and quality of early attachments;
- Self-harm or risk of self-harm eg drug and alcohol misuse; actual self harm; socialising with dangerous adults; absconding frequently; engaging in risky sexual behaviour.
- Phobias or psychological difficulties;
- Temperament, coping and adjusting abilities for example, after experiencing domestic violence, bereavement or family relationship breakdown;
- Disposition, attitudes and motivation to change.
- Whether the child undertakes a caring role.
- Non-engagement with support services
- Whether the child is subject to bullying and harassment ~ see page 7

### **Behavioural Development**

The behaviour of the child or young person.

Also includes consideration of:

- Lifestyle and self-control (including participation in reckless activity and need for excitement);
- Behaviour in class or other environments where the child or young person comes into contact with their peers;
- Substance use;

- Anti-social behaviour for example, destruction of property, aggression towards others, harm or risk of harm to others;
  - Sexually inappropriate behaviour and attempts to manipulate or control others;
  - Offending behaviour and risk of (re)offending;
  - Violent or aggressive behaviour at home or school;
  - Attitudes to offending.
- 
- How far are the parents able to meet the child's needs in these areas?
  - To what extent do wider and environmental factors impact upon the child's emotional and behavioural and self-care skills?
  - Do you have any concerns about the child's developmental progress in these areas?
  - How could the child's family or the immediate community meet the needs you have identified?
  - Which, if any, of the needs identified require referral to/assistance from voluntary or statutory agencies?
  - What are the parents' views?

### **EXAMPLES OF LEVELS OF PRIORITY OF CONCERN**

#### **Parenting Capacity**

**Mild concerns** are indicated if there is an inconsistency in setting clear boundaries and inappropriate chastisement of child.

**Moderate concerns** are indicated if parents frequently smack a child, parents 'blame' a child for reflex behaviour (eg wetting); the child is being brought up in an atmosphere of conflict. If parent is not receptive to advice from professionals.

**Serious concerns** are indicated if a child receives physical punishment in any form or another non-accidental injury severe enough to cause bruising; a child has received physical punishment (or another non-accidental injury) severe enough to warrant medical attention; a child has been subject to some form of 'pathological' physical abuse, eg cigarette burns, pinching; there are allegations that the child has been sexually abused.

**Serious concerns** are indicated if the parent is highly critical of the child; if the child is expected to provide emotional support to the parent .

## **EXAMPLES OF LEVELS OF PRIORITY OF CONCERN**

### **Child's Development**

**Mild concerns** are indicated if the child displays inappropriate age related behaviour.

**Moderate concerns** are indicated if the child's behaviour including sexualised behaviour is of concern to professionals and others involved with the child. the child is exhibiting a conduct disorder or behavioural problem sufficient to place her/him at risk of permanent exclusion from school.

**Serious concerns** are indicated if the child is demonstrating clinical signs of behavioural disturbance; the child habitually displays 'adult' sexual behaviour or interests; the child deliberately injures him/herself; there is significant non-engagement with services.

## **FAMILY AND ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS**

### **Definition**

#### **Family History, functioning and wellbeing**

The impact of family situations and experiences.

This element includes consideration of:

- Culture, size and composition of the household – including changes in the people living in the accommodation since the child's birth'
- Family history – including any concerns about inheriting illnesses from a parent;
- Family routines;
- Disorganised/chaotic lifestyle;
- Failure to show care or interest in the baby, child or young person;
- Impact of problems experienced by other family members such as physical illness, mental health problems, bereavement or loss;
- Allowing the baby, child or young person to witness violent behaviour, including domestic violence (both physical and verbal);
- Involvement in criminal activity/anti-social behaviour;
- Experience of abuse;
- Family relationships – including all people important to the baby, child or young person for example, the impact of siblings, absent parents and any serious difficulties in the parents' relationship;
- History of family breakdown or other disruptive events;
- Parental physical and mental health (including depression) or disability;
- Involvement in alcohol misuse;

- Parental history of involvement with social services including experience of abuse, poor role models, poor care and history of being in care.
- Parental history of experiencing domestic abuse as a child
- Involvement in substance misuse;
- Whether anyone in the family presents a risk to the baby, child or young person.
- Adults who pose a risk to children either resident or visiting the family home.

### **Wider family**

The family's relationships with relatives and non-relatives.

It includes consideration of:

- Formal and informal support networks for the baby, child or young person;
- Formal and informal support networks for the parents or carers;
- Wider family roles and responsibilities for example, including employment and care of others;
- Appropriate level of support from family members.

### **Housing, employment and financial considerations**

**Housing** – What are the living arrangements? Does the accommodation have appropriate amenities and facilities?

This element includes:

- Who has the baby, child or young person been living with;
- The exterior of the accommodation and immediate surroundings;
- The interior of the accommodation with specific reference to the baby, child or young person's individual living arrangements;
- Water, heating, sanitation, cooking facilities, sleeping arrangements, cleanliness, hygiene, safety;
- Reasons for homelessness.

**Employment** – Who is working in the household, the pattern of their work and any changes.

This element also includes:

- The impact of work upon the baby, child or young person;
- How work or absence of work is viewed by family members;
- How work affects the family's relationship with the baby, child or young person.

**Financial considerations** – Income available over a sustained period of time.

This element also includes:

- The family's entitlement to, and receipt of, benefits;
- Sufficiency of income to meet the family's needs;
- The ways in which the family's income is used;

- How the family's financial circumstances affect the baby, child or young person for example, inadequate legitimate personal income;
- Whether the family is suffering financial hardship due to an emergency for example, loss of possessions/homelessness

### **Social and community elements and resources, including education**

Explores the wider context of a baby, child or young person's neighbourhood and its impact on the baby, child or young person, including details of the facilities and services available.

Also includes consideration of:

- Neighbourhood characteristics for example, levels of crime, disadvantage, employment, high levels of substance misuse/trading etc;
  - Relationship with neighbours;
  - Availability and accessibility of universal services, including schools, day-care, primary health care, places of worship, transport, shops and leisure activities and family support services;
  - Quality of the learning environment and educational support services;
  - Physical access to facilities and services;
  - Degree of child or young person's social integration or isolation;
  - The influence of peer groups, friendships and social networks for example, substance or alcohol misuse.
- 
- What is your assessment of the child's environment?
  - How could the child's family or the immediate community meet the needs you have identified?
  - Which, if any, of the needs identified require referral to/assistance from voluntary or statutory agencies?
  - What are the parents' views?

### **EXAMPLES OF LEVELS OF PRIORITY OF CONCERN**

**Mild concerns** are indicated, eg if the home is insufficiently heated in winter; the home is dirty but not to the extent that child health is endangered; the home is overcrowded; there are not enough chairs for all members of the household, there are no curtains or floor coverings; the family have had more than two 'permanent' addresses in the last year; the family receives little support from relatives, neighbours, or the wider community; parents are deep in debt.

**Moderate concerns** are indicated if house is unheated in winter; gas and electricity have been disconnected and there are no means of cooking; there are not enough beds and bedclothes; a small child can reach saucepans on a cooker or the flex of an electric kettle; resources such as schools, clinics and playgroups are inaccessible; parents receive no practical, financial or emotional support from relatives or friends; the house is infested, eg by rats (but action is being taken); there are animal faeces on the floor; windows are broken; the toilet does not work properly; the house is visibly damp. Parents have no role model, do not understand the importance of routines. Experienced abuse and/or accommodated by the local authority as a child

**Serious concerns** are indicated if the child is homeless, the house is used as a brothel or a meeting place for drug addicts; syringes or other drug paraphernalia are left within the child's reach; the only form of lighting is through candles and there are children in the household; there are human faeces on the floor; the house is infested (eg by rats) and no action is being taken.

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