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One Minute Guide: Children and Families Single Assessment

What is it?

[The Munro Review of Child Protection](#), DfE, May 2011, recommended reducing the statutory guidance on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in order to promote local autonomy and increase the scope for practitioners to exercise their professional judgement.

Part of this development is the implementation of the single assessment which allows social workers to draw on their professional judgement to analyse and reflect on information gathered regarding a child or young person, and focus the assessment on the specific needs identified in order to produce a child focused high quality assessment.

The aim of the new Children and Families Single Assessment Form is to use the [Framework for the assessment of children in need and their families](#), DoH, April 2000, as an underpinning framework to assess a child's developmental needs, parents' or care givers' capacity to respond appropriately and family and environmental factors which are relevant to the assessment of that child.

The form has been streamlined so that there are fewer 'tick boxes' and/or sub-sections for each of the dimensions (e.g. health, education, emotional and behavioural development) of the Assessment Framework so as to encourage and empower social workers to exercise their professional judgement about what information to record.

Assessment

(a) Identify the purpose of the assessment

Consider the following questions when completing what the purpose of assessment is:

- Why?
- What are the risks?
- What are we assessing now?

Do not just copy and paste the referral into this section. Instead be specific about the concerns and why this child and family require the involvement of a social worker.

(b) Child/young person's developmental needs

Consider each of the needs and development areas identified within the Assessment Framework triangle and focus on the areas which are particularly pertinent for the child

you are assessing – note the strengths but what is essential is to identify the areas of difficulty which lead to concern.

(c) Parent/carer's capacity to respond to need

- Consider how a parent/carer meets the needs of the child/young person by relating it to the Assessment Framework.
- Consider how each parent provides for and responds to their child / young person's needs and what both the strengths and weaknesses there are in this area.
- Consider the specific sources of vulnerability for the child / young person and how they could or do impact upon the parenting required by that child.

(c) Impact and influence of wider family, community and environmental factors

Consider the wider factors which affect the family that may impact and affect the care given to the child / young person.

Consider where the strengths may lie and any weaknesses which may be indicated either through historical social care or wider agency involvement with both the child and their family.

(d) Analysis

Consider the following key questions:

- What are the key issues for the child and why was the decision made to initiate the assessment?
- What is the current impact on the child?
- What is the potential impact on the child if the circumstances do not change and the risks are not reduced?
- What does research tell us is key to the decision making and planning for this child?
- Do the parents and wider family take on board the concerns raised throughout the assessment?

The benefits of the Children and Families Single Assessment Form include allowing social work practitioners to focus on engagement and sustainability for families, focus on the child, are clearer about purpose of the assessment and facilitate professional judgement.

How can I find out more?

For more information and guidance in relation to the Single Assessment and Protocol, contact the [ICS Helpdesk](#).