

Children, Young People and Education

Child and Family Assessments



Introduction

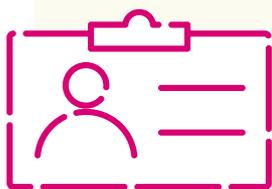
This leaflet is to help you understand what service you and your family can expect should you become involved with a Social Worker.

Meeting You

We may need to come and see you because you have asked for help or support, or perhaps because someone else has contacted us because they are worried about your child/ren.

When this happens, we will let you know that someone has contacted us about your family and we will arrange a time for a Social Worker to visit you. During their visit, they will introduce themselves, explain their role and how they might help you. They will make sure you have their contact details, which you can record in the box below.

Your contacts



Your Social Worker's name and number

Who to call outside of 9am -5pm, in an emergency only – **03000 419191**

What is a Child and Family assessment?

In the majority of cases, to make sure we can support you in the right way, we need to know more about you and your family and we do this by completing an assessment with you. The purpose of this assessment is to gather information by visiting you, and other family members/friends if appropriate and safe to do so, to discuss the referral, speak to your child/ren and communicate with involved professionals. The Social Worker will consider the needs of your child/ren and how you respond to these needs and work with you to bring a plan together.

What will happen?

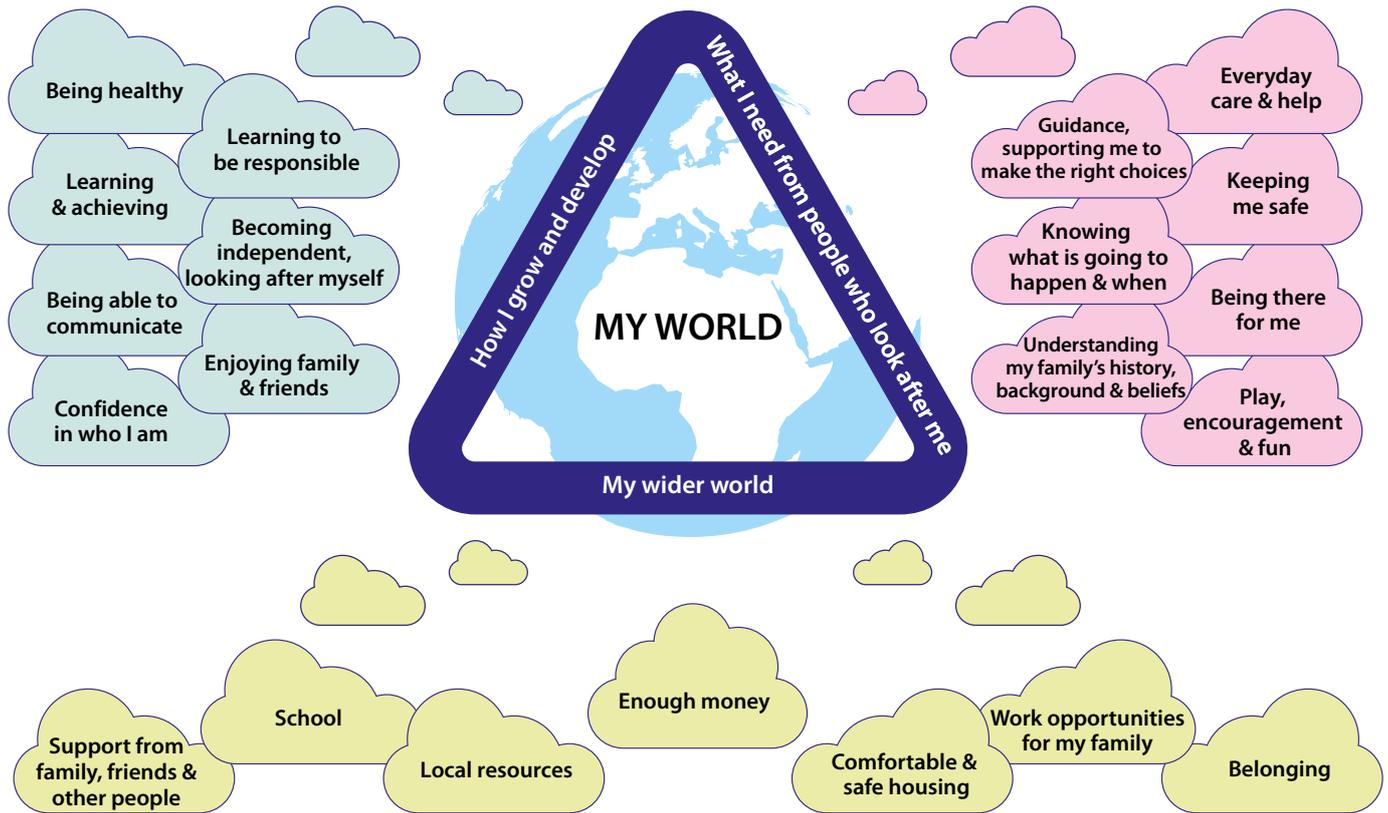
Whilst the Social Worker and other professionals will take the lead in completing the assessment, this will always be done in a way which helps you to have your say and encourages you to take part. We will protect your confidentiality and only share information about you with others when we have your permission, or in special circumstances when the safety of children or young people requires it. If this is the case, you will be told what your rights are in this situation.

The assessment will take into consideration your ethnic and cultural background and any meetings will be held in the language you and your family feel more comfortable in using. If required, help will be provided in your first language.

The assessment will be completed within 45 days from the point of referral but often takes less time. If you do not agree with what the Social Worker writes in the assessment, there will be an opportunity for you to record your point of view on the assessment record.

The assessment will always consider the child at the 'centre', meaning that their wellbeing sits at the heart of what we do. The image below helps us to think about how families help children to grow up feeling loved, safe and respected so that they can realise their full potential.

My world triangle



The whole child or young person: Physical, Social, Educational, Emotional, Spiritual & Psychological development

(based on Scottish Government model, 2016).

Talking to Children

Where children are old enough to take part in the assessment, the Social Worker will encourage and help them to do so by exploring, in an age-appropriate way, their wishes and feelings. We like to see children in the presence of their parents as it helps Social Workers understand their lived experience and relationships.

What if I do not want my child to be interviewed independently?

Every assessment must be informed by the views of the child, as well as the family. Social Workers are required to ascertain the child's wishes and feelings about the provision of services and they should be seen alone, wherever possible. If a parent does not provide consent for the Social Worker to speak to the child on their own, you will be told what your rights are in this situation. If it is felt your child is unsafe, our involvement may be escalated.

Children with Disabilities

Children and young people with a disability, aged under 18, should have an assessment to determine their level of need and should have an up-to-date plan if they are receiving a service such as a direct payment or overnight short-break, or a social work intervention.

How will this help me?

The assessment will help you and other people talk about any difficulties you and your family are having, what your child/ren need and what is working well in your family so that a helpful plan can be made as to how any difficulties or worries can get better.

What can you expect of us?

We know that some families can feel worried, anxious or even angry about having a Social Worker involved in their lives. It is our job to be open and honest about what the worries are and work with you to create the best way of supporting you and your family.

We will work with you and agree how you think things are at the outset of our work together, to set goals around change and to review throughout our work. We know that with a little help most families can sort out their own problems and our aim is to help you do that. Families can also help with this, by telling us what works for them and being open and honest too.

In some situations, the level of worry for a child can mean that we need to take particular actions, such as establishing a child protection plan or to request that a Court agree for us to make arrangements for a child or young person to live outside of their family. We know that these are very difficult experiences for families and if any of these actions are being considered, you will always be kept informed and told what your rights are. We will always work honestly with you, being clear about what we need to achieve together in the interests of your child/ren.

What will be expected of you?

We know that most parents want to do their best for their children and completing the assessment will help us recognise and build on the strengths you and your family have, as well as your difficulties. We can best help you if you tell us about what you do well in your family and what you find difficult.

What happens after the Children and Families assessment?

When the assessment is complete, your child's Social Worker will talk to you about the outcome (what happens next). You will be given a copy of the Children and Families assessment and you will be involved in designing a plan. The outcome of the assessment might be:

No involvement from the Children's Social Work Team

This will happen if your family is coping well or would benefit from support from a different service (perhaps Early Help).

We will discuss with you what services could help. We can refer your family for help to a different service, if you are happy for us to.

If your situation changes or you are still worried about your child/ren you can contact us again. Your case will then be closed. The Social Worker will no longer work with your child/ren.

Child In Need:

This will happen if your family needs more help and support.

We will make a Child In Need (CIN) plan with you. The CIN plan will clearly say how we and other services will support you to give your child/ren what they need.

The CIN plan will also help you understand what we expect from you.

The Social Worker will make sure that an initial Child in Need Meeting is arranged as soon as your child is identified as needing more support. This may be before the completion of the Child and Family Assessment. Good practice suggests that meetings will take place every 6 – 8 weeks, dependant on the level of concern to review the plan and ensure everything that we agreed is being done.

Child Protection:

This will happen if children's services think your child/ren are at risk of significant harm.

The child's Social Worker will request an Initial Child Protection Conference (ICPC).

Your child/ren may be supported by a Child Protection (CP) Plan. If this is so:

- ▶ The CP Plan will clearly state the concerns about your child.
- ▶ It will also say how children's services and other services will support you to give your child/ren what they need.
- ▶ The CP plan will also help you understand what we expect from you.
- ▶ Meetings will be held every four weeks to review the plan and ensure everything that we agreed is being done.
- ▶ Your child's Social Worker will see your children every two weeks or more often than this. These visits will be both announced and unannounced.

Most children seen by the Children's Social Work Teams do not 'go into Care'. This will only happen if a child/ren will be at serious risk if they stay living with their family. A Social Worker cannot decide to take away child/ren; only a Court or the Police can do this. If a Social Worker feels that a child is at risk in your care, they will be open and honest with you and you will be told what your rights are in this situation.

Professional Standards

In Kent, we have a clear vision for Children's and Young People's Services where children and families will always receive the help and protection they need when they need it. We want children and their families to be successful. We will work to ensure that positive opportunities and effective help are available at the earliest opportunity enabling children and their families to make the choices that mean they can thrive and achieve.

The Professional Standards set by Social Work England are the threshold standards necessary for safe and effective practice. They set out what a Social Worker in England must know and makes it clear what can be expected when they are working alongside people. By applying these practice standards, Social Workers in Kent will be able to deliver a consistent and quality service that leads to better outcomes for children and their families.

- 1) Promote the rights, strengths and wellbeing of people, families and communities
- 2) Establish and maintain trust and confidence of people
- 3) Be accountable for the quality of my practice and decisions I make
- 4) Maintain my continuing professional development
- 5) Act safely, respectfully and with professional integrity
- 6) Promote ethical practice and report concerns.

Complaints and compliments

We want to hear what you think about the service you have received. Your Social Worker will make sure that you have information on raising issues and giving ideas to help improve the service. The feedback you provide will be used to make further improvements to the service for other families. The Social Worker will give you information on how to give feedback about the service you received.

We want to provide you with the best service we can. If you feel that we have not responded to your views and ideas appropriately you have the right to make a complaint. You can do this by contacting:

Kent Children's Social Services Customer Care,
Kroner House,
Eurogate Business Park,
Ashford,
Kent TN24 8XU

Call **03000 41 03 04**

E mail cscomplaints@kent.gov.uk

text 07860 008025

start your message with the word COMPLAINT.

We can help you put your complaint in writing or give you advice.