

Information on Single Assessment for Young people

Children and their families

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1. What is a single assessment?

Either you or someone else on your behalf has asked for help with some difficulties you or your children are having which affects your child (or children). Before we can help you, we need to know more about you and your family. This will involve collecting information, talking the issue through with you and agreeing what needs to be done. We call this a single assessment. The assessment will help us to look at your situation and see what help you and your family need, and who could give that help.

In a very small number of cases, there will be serious concerns about a child's safety. Making sure the child is safe is our first concern. Please ask your social worker to explain this to you.

2. Where does the information for the assessment come from?

Information is gathered from:

- You and your family - the worker will talk to you your children, their parents, and perhaps to other members of your family.
- Other professionals and those who know you and your child - some include teachers, health visitors, doctors, housing officers and voluntary groups.
- Records which are already held by children's social care.

3. What will happen during my assessment?

During your assessment, information will be gathered and written down by the social worker and other professionals. You will always be encouraged to take part and have the opportunity to say what you think is best for yourself and your family.

We know that almost all parents want to do the best for their children, and completing the assessment will help the social worker to see the

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strengths you and your family have, as well as some of the difficulties you and your family may be experiencing.

When children are old enough to take part in the assessment, the social worker will encourage and help them to do so.

The assessment will take into consideration your ethnic and cultural background. If required, assistance will be provided in your first language.

4. What will the assessment cover?

When completing the assessment the social worker will look at a number of issues that may be affecting your child (or children) and family. The worker will find out about the strengths and difficulties in the family by asking questions around:

- Your family's situation - including who is employed, money issues, housing, relationships within the family and those who support the family.
- How your children are - including their health, behaviour, school and friends, as well as their social and emotional well-being.
- The care of the children - including how well parent(s) or carer(s) are offering basic care, keeping the children safe, helping them learn, offering guidance and a stable home.

5. Are my views taken into account?

Yes. There is an explicit expectation that any assessment completed includes and reflects your wishes and feelings as well as those of your child.

Your views will be considered in deciding how help is to be provided, but because of the demand for services, it may not always be possible to meet your preferences.

6. What can I expect?

When you or someone on your behalf contacts our department, a decision about whether or not to offer an assessment will be made within 24 hours.

A professional contacting our department on your behalf will have talked to you and obtained your agreement to involve us, unless the professional has serious concerns about your child.

We will seek your consent before talking to other people and sharing information about you and your child, unless we have concerns about the safety of your child.

A worker will be identified to do the assessment and you will be given the name of the worker.

7. How long will my Assessment take?

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 is clear that assessments should be undertaken within a maximum of 45 days.

It is a priority for Luton Council that children and their families receive a timely assessment and with this in mind you will be kept informed about the progress of your assessment and the likely timescale for completion.

8. What if I do not agree with what the social worker says?

You will be able to correct any factual errors, and, if you do not agree with what the social worker says in the assessment, there will be an opportunity for you to record your point of view on the assessment record.

9 What happens next?

Following the assessment if it is decided that services should be offered, then a new worker will be allocated to your family from one of the other teams within Children's Social Care.

10. Care Planning

The purpose of the Single Assessment is to draw up a plan of action to address the needs of your child (or children) and how you might need to respond to these. This is called care planning. The care plan will set out what services are to be provided and who is responsible for providing them. It will also say what changes are expected and how long this will take.

11. Comments, Compliments and Complaints

It is good for us to know what we are doing right and useful for us to hear your ideas about how we could be doing things better. If you have any compliments or comments about the service you have received, you can either contact the staff who have been working with you and let them know or contact their Team Manager in Children's Social Care.

12. What if I am unhappy with the service I have received?

If you are unhappy with the service that you have received, in the first instance, you should speak to the staff who have been working with you, or their manager. If you feel unable to speak to them, or you feel that they have not dealt with your concern satisfactorily, you can contact our Complaints Manager: LBC FEEDBACK
Feedback@luton.gov.uk