



# One minute guide

## Child and Family Assessment

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### What is the Child and Family Assessment?

The Child and Family Assessment is the assessment used by children's social workers to understand the presenting issues and the impact on the child/ren in the context of the whole family. The assessment informs support and planning for the child/ren and their family. In Leeds as part of our restorative practice, the Leeds Practice Principles underpin the assessment.

The Child and Family Assessment is an excellent fit with the findings of the [Munro Review of Child Protection](#) and the principles within [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) (e.g. child centred, focused on strengths as well as difficulties, a continuing process not an event) and also practically with our social care record system Mosaic.

### What are the timescales for a Child and Family Assessment?

The Child and Family Assessment can take a maximum of 45 days to complete. There is a review point at 10 days after the initial enquiries are made and some assessments can conclude at that time. This ensures that should the longer period be required, the assessment can be extended past the 10 days.

### What needs to be included in the Child and Family Assessment?

The assessment should be focused on and capture the child's individual needs including understanding of their culture and identity in the context of their family.

The areas explored in the assessment are informed by the three domains: Child Developmental Needs; Family and Environmental Factors; and Parenting Capacity in the [Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families 2000](#)).

Any identified support needs should be addressed during the course of the assessment and practitioners should not wait until the end of the assessment to explore support.

The assessment needs to:

- Be undertaken with parental consent unless there is significant risk of harm to the child and the assessment is being completed as part of a [S47 enquiry](#);
- Be restorative and strength based;
- include information from other agencies;
- include the voice of children and young people;
- include the voice of both parents and family;
- Be outcome focused with clear analysis and recommendations;
- Be transparent so families do not wait until the end to know the outcome; and
- Be shared with families and their views recorded.

## What are the benefits of the Child and Family Assessment?

The benefits of the Child and Family Assessment are that it:

**Is one single assessment**—families are not subjected to a number of different assessments by social workers. Social worker time is maximised, for example there is no need to do a separate report for court.

**Is a less prescriptive format**—social workers are provided with guidance throughout the assessment but are able to exercise their professional judgement about what is included in the assessment.

**Emphasises direct work** with the child and the family— the child's voice in addition to the voice of the family should be evidenced from the start and throughout the assessment.

**Focuses on analysis and action**— analysis is prompted throughout the assessment including reviewing the original reason for the referral. Any actions or services to be provided can be acted on as soon as they are identified (with manager approval) without needing to wait for the assessment to be concluded.

## What should practitioners do?

The Child and Family Assessment is carried out by qualified social workers who will need to plan their work carefully to ensure completion within the 10 day or 45 day timescales.

The assessment work is likely to include consultation with practitioners from other agencies and anyone consulted should prioritise ensure that they provide their views and other information in a timely way to help make the assessment as robust as possible so that the child, young person and their family are helped as required.

## For more information

For more information you can read:

[Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) and

[The Munro Review of Child Protection](#)