Threshold Tool

August 2015
Contact Details updated Sept 2018

Practice guidance for improving outcomes for children and young people through early identification of need and vulnerability

www.dorsetlscb.co.uk
Forward

Dorset Local Safeguarding Children Board Multi-Agency Threshold Guidance

This document and guidance is aimed at every agency, statutory, voluntary, private and independent which works directly or indirectly with children, young people and families. The purpose of this guidance is to help agencies identify a child’s degree of need and respond appropriately. The guidance does not remove the need for workers to make a professional judgement when considering the identified needs of children.

This is a guidance document for the Multi-Agency Early Support and Safeguarding Thresholds in regard to needs and services in Dorset. The core function of Dorset Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) is to publish a threshold document that includes:

- the process for the early help assessment and the type and level of early help services to be provided;
- the criteria, including the level of need, for when a case should be referred to local authority children’s social care for assessment and for statutory services under:
  - section 17 of the Children Act 1989 (children in need);
  - section 47 of the Children Act 1989 (reasonable cause to suspect children suffering or likely to suffer significant harm); - section 31 (care orders); and
  - section 20 (duty to accommodate a child) of the Children Act 1989.
- clear procedures and processes for cases relating to the sexual exploitation of children and young people.

(Working Together 2018)

Multi-Agency communication is the key to developing a full picture of the child and their family circumstances, using independent interpreters if necessary. It is important that all involvement with a child and their family is recorded on your agency’s files. If there are any queries, practitioners should seek advice and support from the Safeguarding Leads within their own organisation.

Nick Jarman – Interim Director of Children’s Services
Sarah Elliott – Chair of Dorset Safeguarding Children Board
This is a tool for everyone to use to support inter-agency working, information sharing and common assessment. This tool will support improved understanding of Family Support Services provided by Dorset County Council. It also allows for the signposting of referrers to additional specialist services not provided by Family Support but by partners.

The Dorset Safeguarding Children Board (DSCB) has adopted this continuum of need model to provide a multi-agency, whole system approach to assessment, prevention and intervention for children, young people and their families. It also directly supports the full implementation of Dorset’s Assessment Framework.

The adoption of the model provides consistency for professionals working across geographical areas. This dynamic model provides a needs led, outcome focussed matrix of need and vulnerability which, when used effectively can match the child/young person’s needs with the appropriate assessment and provision.

At no time must disagreement prevent a child from being safeguarded. If you are not getting the response you feel is appropriate, please refer to the Escalation Policy. This provides the procedures to be followed when disputes cannot be resolved through discussion and negotiation between practitioners at front line level.

1. Levels of Vulnerability
The Threshold Tool identifies four levels of vulnerability and need to assist practitioners to identify the most appropriate service response for children, young people and their families. These are:
Level 1 Universal – mainstream community services provided to all – e.g. education, GPs, the Healthy Child Programme
Level 2 Universal Plus – Additional support which may or may not require multi-agency work with other professionals
Level 3 Universal Partnership Plus – Help and support from a range of professionals for families with complex needs
Level 4 Specialist – High priority needs including other specialist services

2. Continuum of Need
The Continuum of Need/Windscreen diagram in this document sets out the levels and indicates the expected response in most cases.

3. Descriptors
A set of descriptors and indicators have been laid out in the document to enable partner agencies to use shared terminology and develop a shared understanding of levels of need and vulnerability.

They provide a detailed breakdown of the three domains and dimensions of the Framework for Assessment of Children in Need and their Families:
- The child’s developmental needs
- Parenting capacity
- Family and environmental factors

The descriptors and indicators are indicative rather than definitive, but will help to provide an evidence base for professional judgement and decision making.

The descriptors and indicators cannot reflect or predict sudden changes in the child’s world and any sudden change in a child’s presentation should be explored to establish if there is a cause for concern. In addition, the age of the child and any protective factors that may enhance resilience need to be taken into account. The lack of impact of previous or on-going service involvement should also be noted as a concern.

4. Matrix
The Threshold Matrix can be used to create a picture of individual needs and vulnerability. It is not a formal assessment and you are not required to send this or share this with anyone. It is a means of enabling you to set out your thoughts to help you make a decision about what to do next. It is not necessary to complete all areas of the matrix if you do not have the evidence to do so. The needs of children and young people rarely fit into neat categories and often change over time. It has been designed to inform the early identification of vulnerability and need and can be used to start the process to clarify concerns and/or monitor progress.
Intervention is most likely to be successful if:

• It is child centred and non-stigmatising
• It involves and empowers the family
• It is provided within the community, with a good understanding of what support and facilities are available e.g. certain school based staff
• It can be provided straight away and not after a long wait for an appointment.

Vulnerable And Complex Children (Green / Amber section)
A child or young person identified as vulnerable can be defined as needing some additional support without which they would be at risk of not reaching their full potential. The additional support may relate to health, social or educational issues. They may have difficulty making a transition from primary to secondary school, their development may be delayed, they may break the law or have emotional difficulties. Others are always vulnerable because of their own development, family circumstances or environmental factors. Vulnerable children may have or develop additional needs that are defined as “Complex”.

Children with Complex and Acute needs (Amber/Red Section)
Within our communities a smaller number of children have complex or acute needs for various reasons. These include children who are disabled, or who have serious difficulties in school or severe mental health disorders, children suffering abuse or rejection by their families, children whose parents are disabled. Although these numbers are small, it is important these children are also identified early so that appropriate specialist services, including immediate protection if necessary, can be provided quickly.

Children and young people with acute needs who are subject to specialist assessment include those who are:

• At risk of significant harm and all children on the Child Protection Register
• Looked After by the local authority, including children accommodated under S.20 of the Children Act 1989 (voluntary accommodation)
• Not in education, employment or training
• Experiencing some mental health disorders
• Persistent offenders
Where there is an immediate need to protect a child because they are being harmed or at risk of significant harm, contact the Dorset Mash on 01202 228866.

When there is an immediate risk to a child, call the Police on 999.

For Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Procedures - [www.dorsetlscb.co.uk/site/home/](http://www.dorsetlscb.co.uk/site/home/)

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**Continuum of need (commonly known as The Windscreen)**

This diagram describes the spectrum of support and the relationship between the different levels of need:

- A child’s level of need can move forward and backwards across the continuum, highlighting the importance of integrated service delivery, providing a seamless process to ensure continuity of care when a child moves between different levels of support.
- The whole system highlights the importance of always having a practitioner in place to co-ordinate service activity and to act as a single point of contact.

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**Universal Plus**

Children with additional needs

*Children whose health and/or development may be adversely affected and would benefit from extra help in order to make the best of their life chances.*

**Universal Partnership Plus**

Children with complex additional needs or Child in Need

*Children whose health and/or development is being impaired or there is a high risk of significant impairment.*

**Specialist**

Children who are experiencing significant harm

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**Levels of Vulnerability and Need**

Continuum of need (commonly known as The Windscreen)
THIS IS A TOOL TO HELP YOU. IT IS NOT AN ASSESSMENT. YOU ARE NOT REQUIRED TO COMPLETE IT IN FULL OR SHARE THIS WITH ANYONE.

Plot relevant descriptors on this matrix to give a visual representation of the child or young person’s level of need. The matrix reflects your professional judgement and informs decision making. This is a TOOL to help you make your decision as to roughly where your concerns sit. It will enable you to focus on the complex needs of the child and will give you an idea of how Family Support, Social Care will respond and in what way. If a threshold for intervention is met – at any level – you should then follow your agency’s procedures for escalating your concerns e.g. directly or via a manager.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Child:</th>
<th>Date:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Universal
- No additional needs

### Universal Plus
- Child with additional needs

### Universal Partnership Plus
- Children with complex additional needs

### Specialist
- Children in need of protection

#### Development (1: Health)
- General Health
- Physical & Sensory Development
- Speech, language and Communication

#### Development (2: Wellbeing)
- Emotional and Social
- Behaviour
- Identity, Self-esteem, Image
- Family and Social Relationships
- Self Care Skills and Independence

#### Development (3: Learning)
- Understanding, Reasoning & Problem Solving
- Participation in Education or Work
- Progress and Achievement in Learning
- Aspirations

#### Parents & Carers
- Basic Care/Ensuring Safety and Protection
- Emotional Warmth and Stability
- Guidance, Boundaries and stimulation

#### Family & Environmental Factors
- Family History, Functioning and Well-being
- Wider Family
- Housing, Employment and Finance
- Social and Community Elements

#### Vulnerability Assessment
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Universal</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Med</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Med</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Med</th>
<th>High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RESPONSE</td>
<td>Universal Services</td>
<td>Additional support in setting. Consider agency led TAC/TAS or CAF. Involve partners as appropriate</td>
<td>Consider enhanced support under Universal Plus Services or discuss with and/or make a referral to your local IDT</td>
<td>Seek advice from MASH for Child Protection Services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Where there is an immediate need to protect a child because they are being harmed or at risk of significant harm, contact the Dorset Mash on 01202 228866

When there is an immediate risk to a child, call the Police on 999.

For Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Procedures - [www.dorseflscb.co.uk/site/home/](http://www.dorseflscb.co.uk/site/home/)
### Threshold of Need and Intervention Criteria

**Development of Child or Young Person 1 – Health**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Universal</th>
<th>Universal Plus</th>
<th>Universal Partnership Plus</th>
<th>Specialist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>General health</strong></td>
<td>No additional action required</td>
<td>Additional support in setting. Consider agency led TAC/TAS or CAF. Involve partners as appropriate</td>
<td>Consider enhanced support under Universal Plus Services or discuss with and/or make a referral to your MASH</td>
<td>Seek advice from MASH for Child Protection Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Physically well</td>
<td>• Overweight/underweight</td>
<td>• Chronic health problems with a severe impact on everyday functioning</td>
<td>• Failure to thrive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Adequate diet/hygiene/clothing</td>
<td>• Concerns re: diet/hygiene/clothing</td>
<td>• Failure to access appropriate health care</td>
<td>• Suspected non-accidental injury/abuse/neglect</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Developmental checks/immunisations up to date</td>
<td>• Starting to miss on health appointments</td>
<td>• Persistent excessive alcohol consumption, smoking or other substance misuse</td>
<td>• Class A/serious drug misuse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Health appointments are kept</td>
<td>• Defaulting on immunisations/checks</td>
<td>• Serious mental health issues</td>
<td>• Acute and serious mental or physical health needs or behavioural difficulties, including life-threatening self-harm, suicide</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Regular dental/optical care</td>
<td>• Susceptible to minor health problems</td>
<td>• Pregnancy and Sexually Transmitted Infection in young person under 16</td>
<td>Children who are accessing acute health services including sexual health clinics which indicates significant harm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Physical and Sensory Development</strong></td>
<td>• Not registered with GP/dentist</td>
<td>• Multiple A&amp;E attendances causing concern</td>
<td>• Not registered with GP/dentist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Physical and sensory development milestones are met</td>
<td>• Soiling/wetting self</td>
<td>• Frequent unexplained minor injuries and/or delay in seeking medical attention</td>
<td>• Suspicions or evidence of female genital mutilation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Age appropriate involvement in physical activity</td>
<td>• Low level substance misuse</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Speech, language and communication</strong></td>
<td>• A&amp;E attendance giving cause for concern</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Age appropriate development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Fluency of speech and confidence</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Willingness to communicate</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Verbal and non-verbal comprehension</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Language structure and vocabulary and articulation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Reluctant communicator</td>
<td>• Language structure and vocabulary and articulation</td>
<td>• Severe disorder and impairment in understanding spoken language</td>
<td>• Sexually inappropriate language /behaviour for age</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Not understanding age-appropriate instructions</td>
<td>• Confused by non-verbal communication</td>
<td>• Communication difficulties have a severe impact on everyday life</td>
<td>• ‘Frozen watchfulness’ (see glossary for explanation)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Confused by non-verbal communication</td>
<td>• Difficulty listening for an appropriate length of time</td>
<td>• Requires alternative or augmented means of communication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Difficulty listening for an appropriate length of time</td>
<td>• Immature structure of expressive language</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Immature structure of expressive language</td>
<td>• Speech sounds immature</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Threshold of Need and Intervention Criteria</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### Development of Child or Young Person 2 – Wellbeing

Note: this is an illustrative rather than comprehensive list of indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Universal</th>
<th>Universal Plus</th>
<th>Universal Partnership Plus</th>
<th>Specialist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No additional action required</td>
<td>Additional support in setting. Consider agency led TAC/TAS or CAF. Involve partners as appropriate</td>
<td>Consider enhanced support under Universal Plus Services or discuss with and/or make a referral to your MASH</td>
<td>Seek advice from MASH for Child Protection Services</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Emotional and Social
- Good quality early attachments
- Feelings and actions demonstrate appropriate responses
- Able to adapt to change
- Able to demonstrate empathy
- Involved in leisure and other social activity
- Difficulties in relationships with peer groups and/or with adults
- Over-friendly or withdrawn with strangers
- Finds coping with change difficult even with support
- Difficulties expressing empathy
- Impulsive/lacks self-control
- Child causing concerns over use of internet and/or social media
- Concerns about possible bullying/cyber bullying
- Disordered attachments that have a negative impact
- Relates to strangers indiscriminately without regard for safety or social norms, parents’ awareness of risk appears limited
- Reaction to change triggers prolonged inability to cope
- Phobias that affect function
- Association with delinquent/substance misusing/serious risk taking peers
- Suffers from periods of depression or anxiety which could include negative patterns of behaviour, lower level self harm or disordered eating patterns
- Endangers own life through self harm/substance misuse/eating disorder
- Child has suffered or may have suffered physical, sexual or emotional abuse or neglect/has been subject to Looked After Children (LAC) proceedings
- Involved in or suspected to be involved in child sexual exploitation or trafficking

#### Behaviour
- Appropriate self-control
- Appropriate social behaviour
- Appropriate sexual development and activity
- Disruptive/challenging behaviour, including in school or early years settings
- Concerns about sexual development and behaviour
- Child suspected of having an inappropriate relationship with adult or peers
- Disruptive/challenging behaviour at school and in neighbourhood and at home
- At risk of permanent exclusion
- Regularly missing from education, employment or training (NEET)
- Young person regularly involved in anti-social criminal activities/violent/risk taking behaviour
- Young person subject to antisocial behaviour order (ASBO) or acceptable behaviour contract (ABC)
- Children withdrawn and isolated
- Significant evidence child is involved in child sexual exploitation
- Puts self or others in danger through reckless activity
- Disappears or is missing from home for long periods
- Multiple criminal incidents/involvement in activities that would constitute arrestable offences/behaviour that would constitute criminal activity
- Sexual development and behaviour which may be indicative of abuse
- Child suspected to be involved in child sexual exploitation
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### Development of Child or Young Person 2 – Wellbeing

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Universal</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Action</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Identity, self-esteem, image</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family and Social Relationships</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-care skills and independence</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Development of Child or Young Person 3 – Learning

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Action</strong></td>
<td>No additional action required</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Understanding language, reasoning and problem-solving</strong></td>
<td>• Milestones for cognitive development are met • Demonstrates a range of skills and interests</td>
<td>• Milestones for cognitive development are not met • Mild to moderate learning difficulties • Identified learning needs from School Support SEN Code of Practice</td>
<td>• Complex learning and/or disability needs • Serious developmental delay • Additional special educational needs support including Education, Health and Care Plan</td>
<td>• Complex learning difficulties and communication needs leading to safeguarding vulnerabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participation in education or work</strong></td>
<td>• Access to educational provision appropriate to age and ability • Access to employment (including work based learning) appropriate to age and ability • Regularly attends education or training, or in full-timework</td>
<td>• Poor school/early years attendance/punctuality • Gaps in school/learning • Behaviour likely to lead to risk of exclusion • Multiple changes of school/early years setting • No access to early developmental experiences • Often appears tired in school which appears to impact on participation and achievement • Not accessing work-appropriate skills • Children missing from education</td>
<td>• Parent/child subject of statutory intervention for poor attendance; persistent poor attendance with parental acceptance • Multiple fixed-term exclusions • At risk of or permanently excluded • Multiple changes of school without notification • Has no school place and meets hard to place criteria • Emotionally-based school refuser • Not in education, employment or training and experiencing barriers to progress</td>
<td>• NEET and additional significant risk factors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Progress and achievement in learning</strong></td>
<td>• Acquiring a range of skills and interests • No concerns about achievements or cognitive development • Access to books/toys, play</td>
<td>• Requires a modified curriculum and timetable • Learning expectations are not met • Not making progress in line with national expectations or children with similar needs across the ability range</td>
<td>• Requires alternative curriculum/timetable • Unable to access mainstream curriculum • Not making progress in spite of interventions • Educational (or social or mental health needs) may result in educational placement out of school or away from home</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aspirations</strong></td>
<td>• Well motivated and self-confident</td>
<td>• Seeing little or no value in education</td>
<td>• Total disengagement from learning</td>
<td>• High level concern of radicalisation or extremism • Click here for the Government Prevent Strategy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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When there is an immediate risk to a child, call the Police on 999. For Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Procedures - www.dorsetlscb.co.uk/site/home/
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Basic care and ensuring safety and protection**

**Parents and Carers**

Note: this is an illustrative rather than comprehensive list of indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unborn:</th>
<th>Unborn:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Antenatal appointments kept</td>
<td>Majority of antenatal appointments missed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical advice followed</td>
<td>Medical concerns remain eg, smoking and use of alcohol</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Parents unable or unwilling to provide appropriate supervision
- Parents struggling to meet child or young person’s needs without support
- Child’s disability makes parenting challenging
- Poor social skills of parents and/or child
- Child or young person exposed to hazards/risks
- Parent struggling to prioritise child’s needs over their own
- Parents over-controlling
- Medical attendance issues
- Elective home education
- Unborn: Some antenatal appointments missed
- Some concerns that medical advice not followed
- Relationship difficulties identified

- Food, warmth and basic care erratic and inconsistent
- Parent struggling to provide ‘good enough’ care with significant impact on child
- Parents involved in criminal activity potential impact on child welfare
- Parents’ mental health or substance misuse potentially affecting care of children
- Inability to recognise child’s needs such that child’s development may be significantly impaired
- Parents not offering adequate supervision to child based on age, maturity and development
- Previous history of parents unable to care for children
- Parent overly controlling or inappropriate use of sanctions/punishment
- Unexplained absences from school or home leading to possible sexual exploitation concerns

- Parents unable to provide ‘good enough’ care that is adequate and safe which places the child at risk of significant harm
- Persistent instability and violence in the home
- Parents do not take appropriate action if child goes missing
- Child not protected from sexual exploitation
- Suspicions or evidence of female genital mutilations
- Crime or incident which has or may have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family or community (honour based violence)
- Suspicions that child may have been or potentially made to marry against her will (forced marriage)
- Child left alone or unsupervised based on age, development and/or maturity
- Allegations of serious injury/abuse
- Pre-birth assessment identifies unborn child at risk of significant harm
- Mental or physical health problem, learning disability or chaotic substance/alcohol misuse that severely impacts on ability to provide basic care for child
- Unable to protect from significant harm including contact with unsafe adults
- Allegation or reasonable suspicions of serious injury or abuse
- Extreme/continuous domestic abuse
- Unborn: Significant drug or alcohol use
- Serious domestic violence/relationship issues
- Signs of serious neglect of self and living conditions

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### Threshold of Need and Intervention Criteria

#### Parents and Carers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Universal</th>
<th>Universal Plus</th>
<th>Universal Partnership Plus</th>
<th>Specialist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Emotional warmth and stability | Parents provide secure and consistent care  
Parents show appropriate warmth, praise and encouragement | Inconsistent responses to child/young person  
Erratic or inconsistent care from multiple carers  
Family disputes impacting on child/young person  
Poor home routines  
Over-protective care which inhibits child’s social and emotional development | Child has experienced multiple main carers  
Parents highly critical of child and provide little warmth, praise or encouragement  
Chaotic parenting of child/young person  
Parents unable to exercise control of child/young person | Child beyond parental control  
Child rejected by parent  
Abandoned child or unaccompanied minor seeking asylum  
Child/parent relationship at risk of imminent breakdown  
Parents not confident in assessing the risks of posed by potential carers |
| Guidance, boundaries and stimulation | Sets consistent and appropriate boundaries taking account of age/development of child/young person  
Enables child to access appropriate activities and to experience success | Parent provides inconsistent boundaries  
Parent provides limited interaction/stimulation for child  
Child or young person spends considerable time alone  
Lack of response to concerns raised about child or young person  
Parent does not support access to positive new experiences or social interaction  
Child accessing social media sites without age appropriate parental supervision | No effective boundaries set  
Parents unable to provide appropriate role model  
Child/parent relationship at risk of imminent breakdown  
Development of child impaired thought lack of appropriate stimulation and play  
Persistent condoned absence from school  
Exposure to inappropriate or harmful material and people (eg, via internet)  
Parents in conflict with statutory services  
Not engaging with constructive leisure activities  
No access to support for education/social interaction | No effective boundaries set – child out of control/offending and developmental delay  
Parents do not know child’s whereabouts and there are concerns child may be associating with inappropriate adults |

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For Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Procedures - [www.dorsetlscb.co.uk/site/home/](http://www.dorsetlscb.co.uk/site/home/)
### Threshold of Need and Intervention Criteria

#### Family and Environmental Factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Universal</th>
<th>Universal Plus</th>
<th>Universal Partnership Plus</th>
<th>Specialist</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family history, functioning and well-being</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Good family relationships, including where parents are separated or bereavement or parental disputes not impacting on the child and is well managed, and child is supported.</td>
<td>No additional action required</td>
<td>Additional support in setting. Consider agency led TAC/TAS or CAF. Involve partners as appropriate</td>
<td>Consider enhanced support under Universal Plus Services or discuss with and/or make a referral to your MASH</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Physical or mental health difficulties in immediate family, but not impacting on child/well managed and supported</td>
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<tr>
<td>• No concerns regarding parental engagement</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Family stresses but coping well</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Few significant changes in family composition</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Family conflicts or parental disputes that may involve children</td>
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<tr>
<td>• History of involvement with statutory services</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Physical or mental health difficulties in immediate family</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Difficulty with parental engagement</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Loss of significant adult through bereavement or separation impacting significantly</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Suspected/occasional domestic abuse</td>
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<td>• Multiple births/high number of young children</td>
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<td>• Sibling/parent involved in criminal activity</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Family not coping</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Young carer (parent/siblings)</td>
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<td>• Privately fostered-unapproved or not notified (immediate referral to social care)</td>
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<td>• Living with other family members</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Concerns of domestic abuse and/or substance misuse</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Moderate mental or physical health difficulties within the immediate family</td>
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<td>• Family with history of CP registration</td>
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<td>• Family involved with criminal activity/received custodial sentence</td>
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<td>• Family at risk of breakdown related to child’s behavioural difficulties</td>
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<td>• Suspicions of potential female genital mutilation within the family, or significant others</td>
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<td>• Family seeking asylum or refuse</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wider family</td>
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<td>• Sense of larger familial network and/or good friendships outside of the family unit</td>
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<td>• Family is socially isolated</td>
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<td>• Family has poor relationships or no contact with extended family</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Destructive relationships with wider family including historical and inter-generational issues</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Household members/Adult in contact with children who is subject to multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA) or multi-agency risk assessment conference (MARAC) meetings</td>
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#### Housing, Employment and finances
- Accommodation has basic amenities and appropriate facilities
- Parents able to manage working or unemployment arrangements adequately and do not perceive them as unduly stressful
- Reasonable income over time with resources used appropriately to meet individual needs
- Barely adequate/poor/temporary accommodation
- Housing causing family stress
- Difficult to obtain employment due to poor basic skills
- Parents experience continuing stress due to unemployment or 'overworking'
- Difficulties managing household finances
- Low level debt/in need of financial advice
- Low income/financial hardship
- Lack of affordability for basic amenities including household fuel and food
- Chronic and long-term unemployment due to significant lack of basic skills
- Or longstanding issues such as substance misuse/offending etc
- Debt/poverty issues impacting on family
- Accommodation places child at serious risk of harm
- Extreme debts/poverty impacting on ability to meet family’s basic needs

#### Social and community elements
- Generally good universal services in the neighbourhood
- Family feels integrated into the community
- Adequate social and friendship networks
- Community are generally supportive of family and/or child
- Unemployment affecting parents/family significantly
- Family is socially excluded
- Frequent housing moves
- Learning difficulties of parents or child leading to marginalisation
- Social exclusion
- Victimisation of family in their local area

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Glossary of Terms

CAF  Common Assessment Framework
IDT  Integrated Duty Team
NEET Not in Education, Employment or Training
TAC  Team Around the Child
TAS  Team Around the School
Key Guidance

All children have the right to grow up safe from harm and the Children Act 1989 and 2004 place duties on all agencies to promote and safeguard the welfare of children in need and at risk in their local area. A child is defined within the Children Act 1989 as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday.

Practitioners should hold in mind that disabled children are three to four times more vulnerable to abuse (Ofsted 2012). The “Parent” should be taken to refer to anyone who has parental responsibility for the child, or any birth/natural father or any other adult within the family who can reasonably be regarded as having a parenting role. When there are issues of consent, it will be important to distinguish who has parental responsibility.

The Children Act encourages all agencies to work in partnership wherever possible with families and make onward referrals with their consent. This should be possible in Levels 2 and 3, but it is acknowledged that gaining consent for Level 4 could at times place a child at further risk and the practitioner should gain advice if time allows from their Safeguarding Lead. Further guidance on Information Sharing can be found here.

Sometimes “Significant Harm” will be a single traumatic event, but more often it is an accumulation of significant events, both acute and longstanding over time, such as in situations of persistent neglect. There are no absolute criteria in making judgements regarding children’s wellbeing. Practitioners are encouraged to professionally raise concerns and escalate those concerns with other agencies, if they feel in their judgement that a child’s needs or safety are being overlooked. Refer as appropriate to the Escalations Policy here.

The Local Authority Designated Officer (Tel: 01305 221191) should be alerted, within one working day, to all cases in which an allegation has come to an employer’s attention, that a person who works or volunteers with children has: behaved in a way that has, or may have harmed a child; possibly committed a criminal offence against children or related to a child; behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates that s/he is unsuitable to work with children (Working Together 2015)