

Why would my family need an assessment?

If you or a member of your family are experiencing difficulties which may be affecting your child/ren, the council may suggest that we come and talk to you, and carry out a family assessment.

This means talking to you and your child/ren and the people in your family and household.

During the assessment, we look at your situation to get a clear picture of what help and support you and your child/ren might need and who the best people are to give you that help.

What happens during an assessment?

An assessment is an important part of the council's work with your family and is carried out by a social worker. Everything that is discussed during the assessment is written down for you to see.

At an assessment, the social worker will meet with and talk to:

- you and members of your family, including your children and anyone else living in your home
- professionals who know you and your family, such as your child's teacher or doctor.

In most cases we will ask for your permission to talk to these people. If we are concerned about your child's safety, we might talk to them without getting your permission first.

How will the assessment help me?

The assessment helps you and other people who know your family to share views about any problems or difficulties you are facing, your child's needs, your family strengths and any other important things that may be affecting members of your family.

Your social worker will talk to you in detail about:

- who is in your family and your relationships
- your child's health, education, behaviour and development
- what affects you as a parent
- what help and support you get and would like.

The social worker will write down all the information they gather and give their professional opinion as to what they think is going on and what will help. This information includes your views, your children's views and information from other professionals that know your family; they will take into account your family's ethnic, religious and cultural background and any specific needs that you and your children may have. If required an interpreter can be provided.

The assessment is designed to help you: we will listen carefully to what you have to say, we will offer advice and, if necessary, we will offer you extra services to support you with the care of your children and to make any changes that would benefit your family.

How long does an assessment take?

A social care single assessment can take up to 45 days to complete in total. We give social workers 35 days and their managers 10 days to read, ask for amendments and sign-off.

This will be dependent however on your child's needs and your family circumstances.

If a different specialist assessment is necessary for your child then this will be discussed with you and may take a little longer.

What happens when the council is concerned about a child's safety?

Sometimes we may have serious concerns about a child's or young person's safety.

Your social worker will always talk to you if we have these kinds of concerns about a child or young person in your family.

If this is the case we may need to undertake further enquiries to ensure your child's safety and we will aim to work with you to help keep your child safe from harm.



What happens after an assessment?

After the assessment, we will be able to make a recommendation about whether you, your child/ren and family would benefit from further support.

- 1) If the recommendation is that you and your family need further support from the council's Children's Services and Social Care teams, we will meet with you and your child (if appropriate) to develop a Child in Need Plan.

This plan will clearly set out how the council and other agencies can support you to ensure your child's needs are met. The plan will also help you to understand what will be expected of you as the parent or carer.

After the plan has been agreed the case will transfer to another team who will meet regularly with you, your child and other agencies to make sure that it is working, and is meeting your needs, and those of your child and wider family.

- 2) If the recommendation is that you and your family do not need any further help or support from Children's Services or that you may benefit from the help of another agency, we would make any necessary referrals on your behalf and close the case.

Either way, your social worker will let you know what the outcome of the assessment is, and will ask you whether you agree or disagree with the recommendation. You will also receive a copy of your children assessment record.



Confidentiality

As a rule the information which you and your child provide will only be shared with your family's consent. However there may be certain times when the people working with you need to share information. For example:

- When they need to find out urgently if your child or someone else is at risk of harm
- To help you, your child or someone else who is at risk of harm
- To help stop a crime

Contact

If you would like further information about any of the services that we provide or need any further advice then please visit:

<http://www.dudley.gov.uk/resident/care-health/children-and-family-care/>

Children's Services

The Assessment Service



Dudley Council
Children's Services
3-5 St James's Road
Dudley DY1 1HZ

05/17

Dudley
Metropolitan Borough Council



A guide for parents and carers

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