

MANAGEMENT ACTION NOTE 06: Assessment of vulnerability and risk (Covid-19)

CONTEXT

Devon children's services were recently judged to be inadequate. This was because we did not have good enough line of sight to a small number of our most vulnerable children and young people. If we do not have that line of sight, we cannot act promptly and proportionately to safeguard and support them.

In the added context of operating within the changing and challenging situation of the Covid-19 outbreak, it is vitally important that we know who our most vulnerable children and young people are, and what we are doing to manage the changing risks that they face.

Interim practice guidance has been issued and will be re-issued as and when appropriate. Changes will be authorised by the Head of Service or Director of Improvement in their absence.

Interim practice guidance will be published in our [online policies and procedures website](#).

It is a **minimum expectation** that for every child and young person open to children's services, the following is in place:

- **Every** child or young person should have an assessment of risk, completed by close of play on **Monday 6 April** and reviewed / updated at **least monthly** during the period of this Covid-19 national response (the frequency of the review is a professional decision based upon the level of risk and vulnerability identified).
- The risk assessment tool to be used [can be found here](#).
- For every child or young person of school age, you have had a conversation with the parents/carers and determined whether the child can be safely cared for at home or whether the child should be at school. This will be recorded in a case note and captured in the case summary. If you do not agree with a parental view that the child can be safely kept at home during the school day, this will inform your risk assessment and planning.

You must use the tool to determine the level of vulnerability and risk of the young person and to inform your planning.

Remember: you are the **experts** and you all know your children and young people well.

Consider existing risk assessments (*Exploitation, Safer Me, etc.*) and already known vulnerabilities.

Consider the following risks and vulnerabilities*:

- The age of the child (pre-mobile and pre-school children may be particularly at risk)
- Any history of Domestic Violence and Abuse
- Any history of parental substance or alcohol misuse
- Parental mental ill-health
- Is the child in the Public Law Outline (pre-proceedings or proceedings) because of the concerns that we have?
- Is there evidence of chronic neglect?
- Is the family entitled to Free School Meals?
- Are the family experiencing increased financial hardship as a result of recent developments?
- Is there a risk of exploitation?
- Does the child or young person go missing from home or from care?
- If the child/children have underlying health issues, how will this **impact on the child** and their vulnerability within the context of the current Covid-19 outbreak?

**This list is indicative and not exhaustive.*

How will you be assured that the child/children is/are safe and that you are monitoring the child's lived experience?

- How often will you visit?
- Does the child need to be in school?
- What other agencies need to be involved?
- How often will you update your risk assessment?
- Do your concerns need to be escalated?

How to record and file your risk assessment in the child's Eclipse file.

Follow the guidance provided by the Eclipse team. [More details here....](#)

Next steps:

We are creating a form within Eclipse within which you will be asked to record the outcome of your assessment of vulnerability and risk in the form of a small number of simple tick box answers to questions such as what is the RAG rating for vulnerability? Should the child be in school? How often will you visit? The form, and guidance on how to complete it will be available shortly.

Actions Agreed	Date	Manager Responsible
Every child will have a risk assessment completed to inform the decision-making about vulnerability, recorded in Eclipse	6 th April 2020	Senior Manager / Locality Director for the relevant service.

Darryl Freeman

Head of Children’s Social Care (Deputy Chief Officer)
Children’s Services

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