

Single Assessments in Children's Services

A Guide for Parents and Carers

What is a Single Assessment?

Either you or someone else on your behalf has asked for help with some difficulties you or your child are having. Before we can help you, we need to know more about you and your family. This will involve collecting information, talking the issues through with you and agreeing what needs to be done. We call this a Single Assessment. Completing the Single Assessment with you will help us all to understand what is happening and to see what help and support you and your family need, and who could give that help. Your participation is really important!, and we want to help you and your children to be as involved as possible.

What does the Single Assessment involve?

We bring together information from various sources to build a picture of how things are for your child and your family. This will include contacts with:

- You and your family - the worker will talk to you, your children, their parents or carers, and sometimes other members of your family.
- Other professionals and those who know you and your child - this will include teachers, health visitors, doctors, housing officers and voluntary groups who may already be involved.
- We will also look at records which may already be held by Children's Social Care.

What will happen during the Single Assessment?

During the assessment, information will be gathered and written down by the social worker and other professionals. We will always encourage and help you to take part and have the opportunity to say and share what you think is best for you, and your children.

We know that parents and carers want to do the best for their children, and completing the assessment will help the social worker to see the 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 support them to do this, which can involve them being seen alone.

The assessment will always take into consideration you and your family's ethnic and cultural background. We will always ask and find out if you need information to be provided in your first language.

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What will the assessment cover?

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

- ➔ 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.

Are my views taken into account?

Yes. All assessments need to include your wishes and feelings as well as those of your child. Your views and opinions will be considered in deciding how help is to be provided although it may not always be possible to meet your preferences.

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.

How long will the Assessment take?

We want to ensure that Children and their families receive a timely assessment and we will keep you informed about the progress of your assessment and planned timescales for completion.

What if I don't agree with what the social worker says?

As a parent or carer we would like you to be as involved as possible in the Assessment. If you haven't had this opportunity or are unhappy about any aspect of the Assessment please let the social worker know. We will record your views and change inaccurate

details although this may not change the conclusions of the Assessment. If you haven't been able to resolve any problems with the social worker, you can make a complaint via the Customer Feedback and Complaints Service on 01452 427232. The social worker will provide you with more written details about this.

What happens next?

Following the assessment recommendations will be made if services should be offered

- A new social worker may be allocated to your family from one of the other teams within Children's Social Care to work with you to progress any necessary plans.

What can I expect?

You will be told when our involvement has stopped and the reasons for this. We will let you know what other sources of help and assistance might be available.

Who do I contact for further information?

Parents, carers and family members have a right to have clear information about professional involvements nets and how decisions affect them and their children. If you're not sure about the Assessment process or why different services re involved with your family – please ask the social worker to explain. Additional free and confidential advice is available from the **Family Rights Group:** www.frg.org.uk/ 0808 801 036.



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