



Practice Guidance for Child and Family Assessments



This guidance should be read alongside [West Sussex Assessments \(proceduresonline.com\)](#) and the [Five Anchor Principles of Assessment](#). Child and Family Assessments should use [strength based language](#) and [Motivational Interviewing Resources](#) throughout to actively involve the child(ren) and their families;

Contact should be made to the family within 1 working day to arrange to **visit the child within 5 working days**.

All Child and Family Assessments should:

- outline the key events which immediately led to the assessment (avoid copying and pasting from the referral);
- the child should be seen alone to capture their voice, lived experience and views on referred concerns. Safety planning should be completed with the child.
- complete a genogram to identify all adults living in the home, partners, and absent parents as well as the wider network. Speak to all significant adults in the child's life. Consider completing a [Family and Friend's Network Meeting](#);
- use evidence-based tools to explore strengths and needs i.e neglect toolkit, CE screening tool;
- include evidence of [Cultural Competence](#) and an understanding of how [Social GGGRRAAACCEESS](#) impact the child and family;
- include an analysis of the impact chronology and how the history impacts both on the present situation and the ability of the parents to meet the child's needs now and in the future;
- include contributions from all relevant agencies (GP, health professionals, school, probation, Early Help etc), when they last saw the child or adult and their opinion of the family's current situation and the referred concerns;
- triangulate information to test out parent self-reports.
- conclude with a clear analysis of the information gathered, the parent's ability to make and sustain changes to meet the child's needs and recommendations for future support;
- each assessment should conclude with an outcome focussed plan that has [SMART](#) actions;
- be succinct and use clear language used within the [record](#).

The majority of Child and Family Assessments should be completed, and quality assured by the social worker's team manager, within 20 working days of the referral.

There may be circumstances whereby the assessment will require more time. In these cases, management oversight is required. The team manager will need to record the reasons for an extension of the 20 day timescale.

Visits to the child(ren) should take place at least every 20 days and a [Case summary](#) will be required, by day 20, if an assessment is progressing beyond 20 days.

All assessments must be completed by the social worker within 40 days of the referral to enable management review.

Review / Contacts / References

Document title:	Child & Family Practice Guidance
Date approved:	29/09/23
Approving body:	Policy & Practice Meeting
Next review date:	September 2024
Document owner:	Rebecca Walsh