



BCP - Parenting Assessment Manual (PAMs)

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Who Must Comply with this Guidance?	All BCP childcare practitioners
Who must be aware of this guidance?	All BCP childcare practitioners
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Policy Lead and Approval Body	Quality & Assurance
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What is it a PAMS assessment?

The Parent Assessment Manual (PAM) is a comprehensive, assessment tool for use with vulnerable families, including parents with learning disabilities.

PAMS 4.0 is a complete Parent Assessment Application used by Social Workers, Psychologists and other professionals across the UK and abroad. It has been developed to present information within a format that interfaces well within the Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families (2000) and the Common Assessment Framework (DfES, 2006).

The PAMS assessment was developed by Dr Sue McGaw a nationally renowned Clinical Psychologist in the field of working with parents with learning disabilities) and South Coast Solutions.

The PAMS assessment tool was originally written for parents with Learning Disabilities; it allows all parents to access the system fairly whatever their level of ability. When working with parents with a Learning Disability, practitioners should always refer to the Good Practice Guidance on Working with Parents with a Learning Disability, Department of Health and Department for Education and Skills, 2007 (www.dh.gov.uk/en).

PAMS provides an evidence-based assessment which is intended to reflect more accurately parents' knowledge, skills and practice. The assessment looks at a wide range of areas and includes;

- Child-care and Development
- Behaviour Management
- Parents' Independent Living Skills
- Safety and Hygiene
- Parents' Health
- Relationships and support
- The impact of the environment and community on parenting

Each parenting skill area within a domain is assessed for Parental knowledge, Quality of parenting skills and Frequency of parenting practice. This is done through a combination of worksheets, knowledge cartoons and direct observations.

By breaking elements of parenting down into testable components PAMS starts to make an assessment of quality that is evidence-based. After completion, the assessor has a clear visual family profile of functioning that target parenting support needs, as well as child protection issues. Based on the Parental Knowledge-Skills-Practice Model the PAM provides professionals with a structured and practical approach to the assessment of parents and their children (0-19 years).

A Single Assessment Report processes and displays assessment data for one parent; a Joint Assessment Report processes and displays assessment data for two parents. It enables the Assessor to see if parents can work together to safely parent a child and if one parent has gaps in their parenting ability, whether the other parent can make up for that deficit.

PAMS assessments within BCP

All members of the Parenting Assessment Team in BCP are PAMS trained and able to undertake the assessment.

It is a standard tool when working with parents with a learning disability but can also be used with vulnerable parents, such as those with significant mental health problems or struggling with chaotic lifestyles.

Assessments are undertaken on children for both Child in Need and Child Protection and is often undertaken as part of the Court process.

A referral can be made by completing a referral form and sending it to artbrokerage@bcpcouncil.gov.uk. It will then be passed on to the Team Manager for review and allocation to a Family Assessment Practitioner.