

CHILD & FAMILY ASSESSMENT

Information for Parents, Carers and Families

Newcastle Children's Social Care



WHAT IS A CHILD AND FAMILY ASSESSMENT?



A Child & Family Assessment is completed by a social worker or practitioner who works for Children's Social Care (CSC) to understand what is happening for you and your family and to understand the impact of this upon the child/ren.

The assessment will consider:

- what the positives and strengths are within your family and network
- any worries you or others have about your child/ren
- your child/ren's well-being and development
- any other pressures that you may be facing and,
- who or what could help you and your family

The practitioner will work with you, your child/ren and other important people in your lives.

The practitioner will speak to people who work for other organisations who might know your family, like someone from your child's school or health visitor. This is to get their views on how you are doing as a family, what is going well and if they think you are experiencing any struggles.



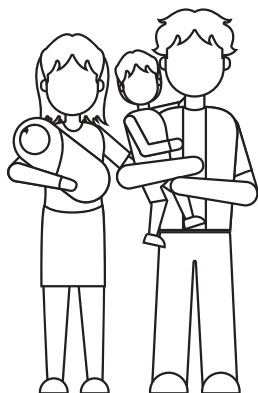
WHEN WILL A CHILD AND FAMILY ASSESSMENT HAPPEN?

There are a number of reasons why a social worker or social care practitioner may be involved with your family. You may have requested help, or someone may have requested help and support on your behalf.

Sometimes CSC become involved in families lives because a 'referral' has been received. This means someone has contacted CSC to say that they are worried about a child or that a family may need more support.



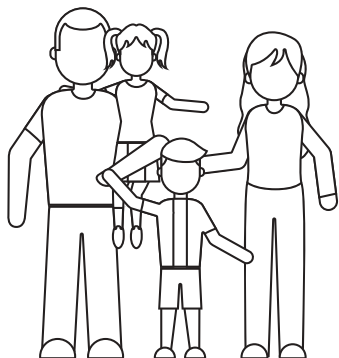
The purpose of a Child & Family Assessment is to consider if a child is a 'Child in Need' meaning that help and support from a social worker is required for the child to achieve and maintain a reasonable level of health and development – making sure they are healthy, happy and safe.



If your child/ren is already open to CSC, and there is already a plan of support in place (either a Child in Need Plan, Child in Care Plan or a Child Protection Plan), then a Child and Family Assessment will be completed at least once every year but also when there have been changes in your family situation or to consider any changes to the plan.

WHAT HAPPENS DURING THE ASSESSMENT?

The practitioner will visit your home, and you may be asked to meet the social worker elsewhere, such as a Family Centre or the Social Work Offices.

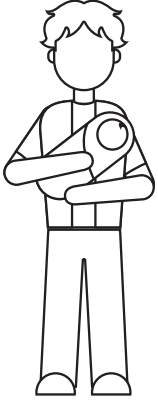


When the practitioner comes to visit you and the child/ren at home they will ask to see where your child sleeps and where they eat their meals and play. This is to understand more about what your child's life is like and makes sure that they have everything they need to be happy and safe at home.

The practitioner may go to see and spend time with your child/ren in nursery, school or college to understand their experiences and hear about their views and feelings about what is happening in their life.

This helps the practitioner get to know your child/ren and think about if there is any further support or help that they might want or need. You may hear practitioners calling this 'direct work'.

CONSENT



If the assessment is 'Child in Need', then you will be asked to give your consent. You have the right to withdraw your consent at any time.

If there are concerns your child/ren has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm, (Section 47, Children Act 1989), your consent is not needed as CSC are legally required to undertake an assessment.

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE?

A practitioner has a maximum of 45 working days to complete the Child & Family Assessment. There is a review point at 10 days after the initial enquires are made and depending on the circumstances some assessments may end at that time.

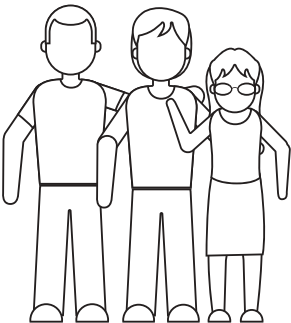


INVOLVING YOU, YOUR CHILD AND YOUR NETWORK

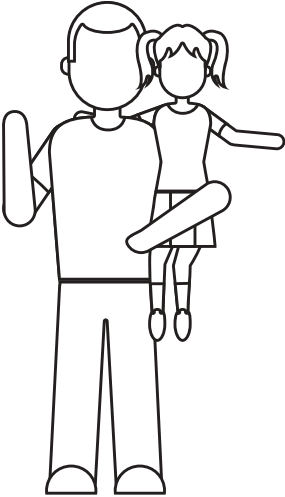
We want you to be really involved in the assessment as your views and feelings are incredibly important as you know you and your child/ren best!

The practitioner will also ask you about and may speak with the important people in your family's life, such as the people who help and support you and the people who are important to your child/ren.

This might be family members, good friends that you have and neighbours or people in your community that you trust..



WHAT HAPPENS AT THE END OF THE ASSESSMENT? 06



The practitioner will write up the assessment, this will set out any recommendations for what needs to happen next and will be overseen by a team manager. The manager will consider all of the information in the assessment and authorise the assessment outcome if they agree with the social workers recommendations.

The practitioner will explain the outcome of the assessment to you and what will happen next, they will also give you a copy of the assessment. If English is not your first language, the assessment can be translated or an interpreter will be arranged to go through the assessment with you and the social worker.

WHAT IF I DON'T AGREE?

The practitioner will make sure that you are involved throughout, and have a good understanding of what will be included in the Child & Family Assessment.

However, you might not agree with everything that has been said during the assessment period, or what has been written. It is important to speak with someone if you are not happy with the assessment process. You should speak with the practitioner in the first instance or ask to speak to a manager.



WHERE WILL MY INFORMATION BE KEPT?

When your child/ren are open to CSC, information that is collected about you and your family will be recorded onto the recording system. This will be saved in line with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018.

CSC are allowed to share this information with other services such as the Police but ONLY for very specific reasons, such as to protect a child from significant harm or to prevent a crime.

You can request to see the information we hold about you and your children at any time.

Your Social Worker/ CSC Practitioner:

How to contact them:

Useful contact numbers

Initial Response Service (IRS) - 0191 277 2500

Long Term Service - 0191 211 5485

Children in Care & Care Leavers - 0191 278 2700

Children with Disabilities - 0191 277 4700

Children's Safeguarding and Care Standards (IRO Office) - 0191 277 4636

