### Parents playing with child

# Reunification Pre-Screening Tool

## Completed by:

**[Social worker]**

**Introduction and purpose of the report**

The pre-screening tool should be used prior to undertaking a Reunification Assessment to consider whether sufficient progress has been made by the family or whether reunification is in the best interests of the child/family to progress to a Reunification Assessment.

Certain aspects of consideration can immediately identify that a reunification is “high” or “severe” risk and therefore actions may be required before the Reunification Assessment can take place. If it is expected that a Reunification Assessment would have a “low” or “medium” risk, then the full Reunification Assessment should be completed instead of this tool. Sometimes it will be appropriate to complete the full Reunification Assessment even if the risk may be “high”; this decision should be discussed with the allocated Team Manager/ Reunification Manager.

The Reunification Assessment Framework seeks to ensure that children and young people’s best interests are central to all decision-making. Children should only be returned home when the classification is considered to be ‘Low Risk’ or ‘Medium Risk’.

Where the classification is ‘High Risk’, further support can be offered to the family to attempt to reduce the risk, but alongside this concurrent planning for possible permanent separation may be desirable, especially with young children.

Where the classification is ‘Severe Risk’, reunification should not be considered.

This pre-screening tool does not serve the interest of the local authority or the parent but rather the child/children, **[NAME OF CHILD/CHILDREN]** and their best interests and their right to have a safe, nurturing environment in which to develop.

If at any time a child subject to a Care Order returns to their family for a period of more than 23 hours, then a Placement with Parents must be completed and agreed by an Assistant Director, irrespective of outcome or completion of a pre-screening tool.

# Pre- Screening Tool

(*To be completed prior to consideration of progressing reunification assessment)*

**Section 1**

Details of the child, the parents and any other adults or children living with the parent/person being assessed.

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| **Child’s details** |
| Surname: |  | Forename(s): |  |
| Gender: |  | D.o.B: |  |
| Address: (main foster placement) |  | LCS no.: |  |
| **Child’s details**  |
| Surname: |  | Forename(s): |  |
| Gender: |  | D.o.B: |  |
| Address: (main foster placement) |  | LCS no.: |  |
| **Child’s details** |
| Surname: |  | Forename(s): |  |
| Gender: |  | D.o.B: |  |
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*(Add further sections if required)*

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| **Parents details** |
| Mothers name: |  | Parental Responsibility – yes/no |  |
| Fathers name |  | Parental Responsibility – yes/no |  |

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| **Other persons in the household details** |
| Name | Age | LCS Number | Relationship  | Legal Status/Care Plan |
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*(Add further sections if required)*

**Section 2**

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| **Pre-requisite conditions** – The following must be positive to progress. If any section is “no”, then section 3 should not be completed, and a plan established in “What are we concerned about”. This should be agreed by the Team Manager (section 5) prior to further consideration.  |
| Does the child wish to return home? | Yes 🞏 | No 🞏 |
| Does the parent wish to have the child return home? | Yes 🞏 | No 🞏 |
| Has the parent read the court/assessment recommendations? | Yes 🞏 | No 🞏 |
| Has the parent progressed the court/assessment recommendations? | Yes 🞏 | No 🞏 |
| Is IRO in support of reunification to be considered/assessed – If the IRO is not in support, this does not automatically indicate a negative pre-screening tool, but that discussions between the IRO and Social Work team should be held to understand why the IRO is not in support.  | Yes 🞏 | No 🞏 |

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| **What are we concerned about** - Please bullet point risks, any tasks/actions already discussed and timescales in place*Identify exact areas for change and tasks that need to be completed i.e. abstinence from substance use, mental health treatment, support with domestic abuse as per court recommendations* |
| Area for change | Goal/Action/Task | Timescale set |
| *Example: Parent 1 to address their own childhood trauma to ensure that they are emotionally available for their child.*  | *Example: Engage with Dr Foster in the DBT work identified*  | *Example: There will be at least 18 months of interventions to ensure change is embedded and sustained.*  |
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**Section 3**

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| **Capacity to Change**Evidence change/progress against the risks, tasks, and timescales in section 2. Verify any self reporting.*Including but not exclusively* * *Evidence parent has remained abstinent from identified substances.*
* *Insight and acknowledgement of professional concerns.*
* *Completion of any identified therapeutic intervention or identified courses and evidence/impact of sustained change.*
* *Evidence that parents have engaged with appropriate mental health/domestic abuse support services.*
* *Lifestyle changes i.e have we received any PNN/CYP’s, Housing issues/debt arrears.*
* *Engagement with children’s meetings; i.e CLA Review, PEP etc*
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**Section 4**

**Analysis**

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| **What is going well?**  |
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| **What are we still concerned about?**  |
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| **What does this tell us?**  |
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| **Social Worker’s Recommendation**Please refer to the NSPCC risk classification traffic light tool - [Reunification: an evidence-informed framework for return home practice](https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/media/1095/reunification-practice-framework-guidance.pdf) (page 39-42).You may wish to list each risk/area for change (from Section 2) and categorise – * Low (Unlikely that abuse or neglect will re-occur),
* Medium (Some possibility that abuse and/or neglect may occur),
* High (Strong possibility that abuse and/or neglect will occur if child returns home),
* Severe (Risk of abuse or neglect is too high to permit a return home).

A final summary category is needed for the risk of reunification as a whole – * Low (a return home should be actively considered),
* Medium (reunification should be considered, with written parental agreements, goals, and a package of preparation, support services and monitoring),
* High (further support and evidence of change are needed before a return home can be considered if the child’s timescale allows),
* Severe (the child should remain in care).
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| **Progress to Reunification Assessment Yes/No – if not why and what is the suggested work plan to reduce risk and is this achievable.** (Think SMART goals)If risk is Low or Medium, a Reunification Assessment should be completed. If risk is High, provide a time frame for reclassification following the parent completing the recommended work, if appropriate. |
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**Section 5 – Management oversight**

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| **Child/ren’s Team Manager’s comments:** |
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| **Signed:** |  |
| **Name:** |  | **Date:** |  |
| Agreed [ ]  | Not Agreed [ ]  |
| Date of review (if applicable) |  |

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| --- | --- |
| 1. ***Title***
 | Reunification Pre-Screening Tool |
| 1. ***Purpose***
 | To allow social workers/teams to explore whether the option of reunification is an option, prior to a full assessment. |
| 1. ***Updated by***
 | Elaine Andrews Service Manager NW Looked After Team, Nicola Adesuji, Team Manager Reunification Support Service, Siobhan Walsh Assistant Director Looked After Children and Care Leavers  |
| 1. ***Approved by***
 | Siobhan Walsh  |
| 1. ***Date***
 | 17.12.2024 |
| 1. ***Version***
 | V1 |
| 1. ***Status***
 | Completed  |
| 1. ***Review***
 | December 2024 |
| 1. ***Frequency***
 | Every year |
| 1. ***Next review date***
 | December 2025 |

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| ***Approved by*** | Siobhan Walsh  |
| ***Date*** | 17.12.2024 |
| ***Version number*** | V1 |
| ***Status*** | Final |
| ***Review frequency******Next review*** | 12 months*December 2025* |