

# **Core Assessments**

## **Information for Parents and Carers**

**If you need this information in other languages, in large print, Braille or on audio tape, or any other help to access Council Services, please phone 01454 868008.**

**Social Care Leaflet E520-4-003-08  
April 2008**

## **Introduction**

**This leaflet has been prepared for you because a number of issues have been identified that need to be addressed to ensure the right services are in place to support you and your child[ren]. For example your child[ren] may either have significant health needs, physical disabilities or behavioural problems requiring a number of different services. In these circumstances it is always your choice whether or not a Core Assessment is undertaken. However, where it has been assessed that your child[ren] is at risk or is likely to be at risk of abuse a Core Assessment will always be undertaken given Children's Social Care have a statutory duty to safeguard children under the Children Act 1989.**

### **Why is a Core Assessment taking place?**

**Either you, your child[ren] or another agency such as Health, Schools, the Police will have contacted Children's Social Care and following an Initial Assessment it has been decided that further enquiries and a more detailed assessment is required to address your child[ren] and family's needs. This is called a 'Core Assessment' and it must be completed within 35 working days. During the assessment process the needs of your child[ren] and family may be resolved, in which case the assessment will end there with either services being provided through Children's Social Care's Family Support processes, or in some circumstances no services being provided and the case closed. Where a Core Assessment has been completed and services identified to meet the needs of your child[ren] and family, this will be reviewed on a regular basis with you, your child[ren] and those professionals who are involved to ensure the services continue to be appropriate in supporting your child[ren] and your family. However, in circumstances where Children's Social Care are concerned that your child[ren] is at risk or is likely to be risk of abuse a Child Protection Conference may be held within 15 days of the start of**

**the Core Assessment. The Conference will consider the risks to your child[ren] and decide whether your child[ren] needs a Child Protection Plan. It will also look at what else needs to be covered during the rest of the assessment and put together an action plan with you to keep your child safe in the meantime.**

## **What exactly is a Core Assessment?**

**A Core Assessment involves gathering detailed information about a child and family and coming to a view about future needs. This information will then be used to decide either how your child[ren] and family can be best supported through the provision of services through Children's Social Care's Family Support processes or how best your child[ren] can be safeguarded from any future abuse by way of a Child Protection Plan and whether any other services are required.**

**What information is needed for a Core**

## **Assessment?**

**Your Social Worker will talk to you in more detail about the assessment with your family. The information may include the following details, but it will depend on your particular circumstances:**

- **Who is in your family;**
- **The nature and cause of concern about your child[ren]**
- **Your child's physical and emotional development, health and personality;**
- **Information about where you live;**
- **Information about each family member's background, personality and attitudes;**
- **The relationships between all family members and how you all get on;**
- **The type of contact your family and child has with relatives, friends and links with other professionals or agencies;**
- **Your view of your child[ren] and also your child[ren]'s views**
- **Whether you have any financial difficulties;**
- **The help your child[ren] and family will need and**

**how long it might take for any changes to occur;**

## **What if I don't agree to the assessment or with its outcome?**

**Agencies will want to work together with you to ensure that your child is well cared for, and will try to work out any difficulties and find a way to help. Children's Social Care will seek your permission to share information with other agencies, and for other agencies to share information with Children's Social Care. However, if you do not feel able to co-operate with the assessment, or give your permission to information sharing you are able to do this providing your child[ren] are neither likely to be nor are at risk of abuse. In these circumstances, this will be viewed as serious, and you will be advised to seek legal advice. Children's Social Care will also have its own legal advice. Most parents and carers do find it possible and positive to take an active part in the assessment process. You should talk over any anxieties about this with your Social Worker or their Manager. Agencies will not share information about you without your consent unless they consider that this is necessary to safeguard your child[ren]'s**

welfare.

## **Who will do the assessment?**

The main person will be the allocated Social Worker from Children's Social Care. They will consult with other professional people, as agreed, who know your child[ren] and family such as your health visitor, school nurse, general practitioner, child[ren]'s teacher or a probation officer.

## **Will my views about the assessment be taken into account?**

Yes. It is very important that we work together with you on this assessment and that you understand what it involves. Your Social Worker and the other professionals will want to talk to you and your child[ren] about how you see things. Your Social Worker will consult with you, your child[ren] and other professionals about how you will all be involved and explain what will be expected from you. Your views will be incorporated into the assessment and you will have the opportunity to comment on the assessment.

## **What will be expected of me?**

**The main expectations are that you will be committed to keeping the appointments and that you will co-operate with the assessment being undertaken. The Social Worker will probably want to see each member of the family separately as well as together. This will include talking to your child[ren], as it is very important to listen to their views. In this way the best possible decisions and plans can be made in respect of your child[ren] and family.**

## **What can I expect from you?**

**Your Social Worker and other professionals will discuss with you what is happening during the assessment and will be committed to keeping the appointments.**

## **Where will the assessment take place?**

**The assessment usually takes place at your home or at a Children's Social Care office. It must be completed within 35 working days of the decision that a Core**

**Assessment is needed.**

## **What happens after the assessment?**

**The information is put together in a report. You will be given a copy of the completed report and will have the opportunity to comment on it yourself. In circumstances where your child[ren] have been made subject of a Child Protection Plan the report may be shown to a further Child Protection Conference or sometimes a Court to help them to make informed decisions. The report will help you and the people working with you to address the needs of your child[ren] and ensure that the right services are in place. Where a child is at risk or is likely to be at risk of abuse again this will help you and the people working with you to be clear about the risks to your child[ren] and what needs to change to avoid harm in the future. The assessment will also look at the wider needs of your child[ren] and family in planning any future support that might be needed.**

## **What if I need some more information?**

**We hope that we can work together with you to carry out this assessment. If there is anything that you do not understand, or if you have any questions, please ask your Social Worker.**

## **What happens if I have a complaint?**

**All of the agencies involved have their own complaints' procedures, and will provide you with a copy of these on request. If you consider that your complaint is about the way in which Children's Social Care have acted you should write to the Complaints' Manager at the address below, who will ensure that your complaint is properly dealt with.**

### **The Complaints Manager**

**Department for Children and Young People  
PO Box 2082  
South Gloucestershire Council  
Castle Street  
Thornbury, South Gloucestershire  
BS35 9BQ**

**Tel:01454 866374**

**If you consider your complaint is about the way in which agencies have acted together under the Child Protection**

**procedures, then you should write to the Safeguarding Board Business Manager at the above address, who will also ensure that your complaint is appropriately dealt with.**

**Some useful telephone numbers:**

**National:**

**Childline Helpline: 0800 1111**

**Mothers of Sexually Abused Children - Helpline: 01253 315790**

**Local:**

**Children and Young People's Information Service - 01454 868008**

**In an emergency outside office hours - 01454 615 165.**

**Avon Sexual Abuse Centre - 0117 935 1707**

**N.S.P.C.C 24hr Helpline - 0800 800 500.**

**N.S.P.C.C Asian Child Protection helpline - 0800 096 7719.**

**Police Child Abuse Investigation Team – 01179 455969**

**In an emergency dial 999 or contact your local Police Station.**