

Thresholds for Intervention and the Continuum of Need.

In order to support decision making processes and in an attempt to provide some guidance to staff the LSCB has developed this 'Thresholds Guidance'. Thresholds are the tipping points that define what assessments / interventions should be undertaken with children, young people and their families. The use of threshold is the starting point for a dialogue between relevant agencies that focuses on the child's and families' needs in order to decide what the best action to be taken is.

The continuum of need in Oldham has four levels of descriptors agreed by the LSCB, these levels help professionals to decide what assessments / support the children, young people and their families require. The continuum of need model recognises that the needs of children and their families are dynamic and depend upon a range of circumstances, therefore response from the professionals will need to reflect where they are on the continuum at any given point. Children and families level of need and vulnerability across the continuum of need can increase or decrease at any given time.

Level 1 – Universal services: Children where their needs are being met by universal services, such as Housing, Mainstream Education, Primary Health Care, Community Resources and Children's Centres, with telephone/internet advice and the ad hoc home visit.

Level 2 – Early Help Assessment: Children have emerging or are presenting with additional needs then an Early Help Assessment should be undertaken this may possibly identify some short-term interventions from services. At this stage Children's Social Care is not required, the identification of early stresses and provision of services should reduce the likelihood of escalating problems.

Level 3 – Child in Need: Children where there is a high risk of their health and development being impaired without assessment and intervention; and where there are more complex difficulties. Such children may be likely to move into Level 4 without the provision of services based on assessed needs. These may also include children who have been assessed at Level 4 in the recent past.

Level 4 – Child Protection: When it is believed that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm the local authority must enquire and make an informed decision to ensure the safety and welfare of the child is protected. This must result in a referral to social care.

Level 1: Universal

Children whose needs are being met, there are no identified additional needs.

At this level needs are being met by parents, carers or the community and universal services.

EXAMPLES OF POSSIBLE Descriptors

	Descriptors: Child and Young Person	Tick
1.	Children who have a stable and safe home environment	
2.	Children's cultural needs are generally met	
3.	Children who appear to be emotionally well adjusted	
4.	Children who are reaching developmental milestones and normal growth patterns	
5.	Children whose educational achievement is in accordance with their age, ability, aptitude and attachments	
6.	Children who are engaged in their school and community	
7.	Children who are in education, training or work.	
8.	Children who have effective support networks	

	Descriptors: Parent	Tick
1.	Parents are meeting the needs of their child with occasional support from frontline services	
2.	Parents have the ability to set appropriate boundaries	
3.	Parents are engaging fully with services when required	

	Descriptors: Environment	Tick
1.	Accommodation is appropriate for the size of family	
2.	Cleanliness of the house is adequate	
3.	Parents can manage on income	
4.	Family is accepted within the community and neighbourhood	

Level 2: Early Help Assessment

Children have emerging or are presenting with additional needs and would require an Early Help Assessment to be undertaken, which may identify some short-term interventions from services.

At this stage Children's Social Care is not essential, the identification of early stresses and provision of services may reduce the likelihood of escalating problems.

Some indicators when put together can be indicate that a child might be at risk of or victim of Child Sexual Exploitation please refer to our [CSE procedure](#).

EXAMPLES OF POSSIBLE Descriptors

Descriptors: Child and Young Person		Tick
1.	Emotionally challenging, carer struggling to manage behavioural difficulties, poor attachments.	
2.	Sleep management, routines, toilet training	
3.	Delay in reaching developmental milestones and/or not attending routine immunisations	
4.	Poor personal presentation	
5.	Concern about a child's attendance at health appointments, especially if the child is under 5.	
6.	Attendance at A&E on 3 or more occasions in 12 months for accidental injuries	
7.	Early concerns of weight gain or insufficient weight gain	
8.	Children with mental/physical ill health – Chronic disease not well controlled e.g. eczema, asthma, epilepsy	
9.	Child/Young Person has an educational statement for learning and physical special needs	
10.	Suspicion that the young person is using drugs/alcohol inappropriately	
11.	Requires pre-school support and not receiving it.	
12.	Child placed on school action due to concerns about foundation attainment (age 4-5years)	
13.	Child placed on school action due to concerns about Key Stage 1/Key Stage 2 attainment (age 5-11 years)	
14.	Attending specialist education setting and unable to attain foundation level/Key Stage 1/Key Stage 2/GCSE	
15.	Physical / learning difficulties with adequate support package	
16.	Child displaying socially unacceptable behaviour, including bullying	
17.	Notification by Police regarding young person's offending behaviour	
18.	Concerns about the child's attendance and poor punctuality at school	
19.	Child identified as a young carer	

Descriptors: Parent		Tick
1.	2. Parental Post Natal Depression (PDN)	
3.	4. Vulnerable adult, mental health , physical disability – supported by services	

5.	6. Substance user meeting needs of the child	
7.	8. Parents unable to control the child / young person within the home or the community	
9.	10. Parents are engaged with services and progress is being made.	

	Descriptors: Environment	Tick
1.	2. Poor hygiene within the home	
3.	4. Children experiencing frequent changes of address and schools	
5.	6. Child/Young Person belongs to low income or dependant on State Benefits with financial difficulties	
7.	8. Household with child/young people at risk of homelessness	

Level 3: Children in Need

Children where there is a **high risk of their health and development being impaired** without assessment and intervention where there are more complex difficulties. Such children may be likely to move into Level 4 without the provision of services based on assessed needs. These may also include children who have been assessed at Level 4 in the recent past.

Some indicators when put together can be indicate that a child might be at risk of or victim of Child Sexual Exploitation please refer to our [CSE procedure](#).

	Descriptors: Child/ Young Person	Tick
1.	Physical, learning, mental health with no or inadequate support	
2.	Children with chronic ill health, terminal illness or severe disability	
3.	The development of the child as measured by weight/height both below or above the expected level – diet, medical condition	
4.	Developmental milestones unlikely to be met without intervention from services	
5.	Teenage Pregnancy whereby there are contextual concerns	
6.	Children at risk of or has been cautioned for crime or anti-social behaviour, given an ASBO or received a sentence	
7.	Children known to be using drugs/abusing alcohol inappropriately and regularly	
8.	Child/Young Person being privately fostered	
9.	Young Person experiencing domestic abuse. Link to DA at the end of the document	
10.	Homeless Child/Young Person	

11.	The Child/Young Person is receiving no education input	
12.	Child/Young Person not attending school or alienated from school	
13.	The Child/Young Person has a Statement of Educational Needs	
14.	The Child is isolated/withdrawn	
15.	Children whose cognitive development may be delayed through lack of stimulation	
16.	The Child/Young Person is not in education, training or employment	
17.	The parent/Carers own needs affects Child/ Young Person's ability to make a positive contribution	
18.	Repeated notification by Police regarding the young person's offending behaviour	
19.	Low self-esteem due to inconsistent parenting	
20.	The Child/Young Person is regularly involved in anti-social/criminal activities	
21.	The family have serious debts/ experience poverty which impacts on the ability to have basic needs met	
22.	The Child/Young Person's needs limit their potential to become economically active in the future	
23.	The Child/Young Person is not in full time education/training/employment	
24.	The Child/Young Person's attitudes, temperament or disposition is significantly affecting their ability to achieve economic wellbeing	

	Descriptors: Parents	Tick
1.	Parents have learning disabilities, mental health (including PND) with inadequate support to meet the needs of their children and maintain a house	
2.	Parental non engagement – failure to ensure child's needs are being met	
3.	Substance abuser – failing to meet child's needs fully and not ensuring that drug taking paraphernalia is stored safely	
4.	Incidents of Domestic Abuse is occurring	
5.	Parent/carers lifestyle significantly impacts unborn baby or child's health and wellbeing, e.g. sexual activity, criminal activity, anti-social activity	
6.	The parents/carers place caring responsibilities on the Child/Young person that affects their ability to enjoy and achieve	
7.	Parents are partially engaging with services, progress being made to meet the needs of the children in the family	

	Descriptors: Environment	Tick
1.	Child and family are experiencing frequent changes of address and schools	
2.	Accommodation which is damp, overcrowded, infested	

3.	Issues within the community	
4.	The house is in disrepair, no safety equipment for children in house	
5.	Inadequate bedding for people within the house.	

Level 4: Child Protection

Children and young people **at risk of/suffering from significant harm**. Where it is difficult to achieve change to reduce risk. These might include: -

Children where there is a serious concern about the care, health or development of the child, and / or the child has or is likely to suffer significant harm without intervention. A Child who is experiencing serious family dysfunction, a child who is beyond control where no person has or is able to exercise parental responsibility or the child is abandoned or neglected.

Some indicators when put together can be indicate that a child might be at risk of or victim of Child Sexual Exploitation please refer to our [CSE procedure](#).

	Descriptors: Child / Young Person	Tick
1.	Children whose physical needs are neglected.	
2.	Children who are being abused or at risk of abuse.	
3.	Children with complex disabilities/complex health needs.	
4.	Child acute/severe mental health problems e.g. threat of suicide, psychotic episode, severe depression, self-harming.	
5.	A Child whose cognitive development may be delayed through the parent/carer's inconsistent/ under stimulating/ neglectful behaviour.	
6.	A Child who is not thriving due to number of factors to include disability, environmental factors.	
7.	Children under the age of 13 years assessed as being sexually active.	
8.	A Child/Young Person beyond the control of the parent/carer.	
9.	A Child/Young Person beyond the control of the parent/carer and putting themselves at risk in the community through behaviour.	
10.	Unaccompanied asylum seeking children.	
11.	Vulnerable children home alone.	
12.	Children whose behaviour is sufficiently extreme to place them at risk of removal from home e.g. control issues, risk taking, dangerous behaviour, sexual	

	exploitation, sexualised behaviour, missing from home, Forced Marriage .	
13.	A Child/Young Person who is displaying sexualised behaviour.	
14.	Children with severe and complex Special Educational Needs which are not being met.	
15.	A Child beyond parental control.	
16.	A child not accessing education due to exclusion or breakdown of attendance.	
17.	A Child with a total lack of independence and self-care skills, which does not allow young person to achieve economic wellbeing.	
18.	A Young Person unable to cope with everyday life resulting in significant risk to themselves/others	

	Descriptors: Parents / Carer	Tick
1.	Parents who are neglecting or abusing their children or at risk of abusing their children.	
2.	Parental drugs and alcohol use and violence during pregnancy, which may (or may not) have caused neurological and physical damage to the baby.	
3.	Parental acute/severe mental health problems e.g. threat of suicide, psychotic episode, severe depression, self-harming.	
4.	Parents who are unable to control their child which is resulting in them being involved in anti-social and criminal activity.	
5.	Parents involved in persistent domestic abuse or significant parental discord.	
6.	Domestic abuse incidents within the household escalating/or serious incident may have resulted in injury to child/young person.	
7.	Parents/carers who present with high risk behaviours e.g. violence, criminal activity, anti-social behaviour.	
8.	Non-engagement with services no progress being made to meet the needs of the children within the family.	

	Descriptors: Environment	Tick
1.	A Child for whom food, warmth etc... is frequently not available.	
2.	Homeless families.	
3.	Accommodation which is damp, infested and overcrowded.	
4.	Child and family are experiencing frequent changes of address and schools.	

5.	House in dangerous disrepair.	
6.	A low income which results in parent's inability to manage money in order to meet the basic needs of the child.	

Ratings thresholds for Domestic Abuse

These general guidelines can be used to aid risk assessment for [Domestic Abuse](#) with the Assessment Framework for Children in Need and their families, taking into account the child, parenting capacity and wider family & environmental factors.

The following factors must be considered in each case:

	Factors for consideration when DA occurred	Comments
1.	How severe are the incidents of DA.	
2.	Pattern frequency & duration of incidents.	
3.	Perpetrators use of the children caught up in the abuse.	
4.	Escalation of violence.	
5.	Frequently intoxicated.	
6.	Victim's current fear/beliefs about immediate danger.	
7.	Self-harm, suicide attempts.	
8.	Attempts to get help (police, refuges, courts).	
9.	Availability of emotional and practical support e.g. friends, family.	
10.	Availability of safe alternative accommodation	

Disagreement

If you have any concerns about the interpretation of the level of need or the provision of a service by any provider organisation across the continuum it is important that

- Concerns are raised with the service through the appropriate manager;
- If after speaking to the manager you are still concerned you must talk to your own manager.
- Following discussion if necessary your manager will contact the manager of the agency providing the advice and guidance or refusing the access to a service for further discussion.

- If the issue is not resolved by first line managers it must be escalated within each organisation until a resolution is agreed.

NB if the concern is about child protection this must be escalated immediately and recorded according to the LSCB's policies and procedures.

http://www.oldham.gov.uk/lscb/info/5/policies_and_procedures

Transitions: children escalating and de-escalating on the continuum of need.

Process

Children's needs change over time and the required levels of intervention will also change.

Early Help Assessment

The decision to close an [Early Help Assessment](#) action plan or escalate or de-escalate the level of intervention MUST be agreed at an Early Help Assessment meeting by **all** involved.

If the needs have not been met fully the lead professional will continue with the role until then Early Help Assessment has been close and if necessary, the appropriate worker / organisation leading on the lower or higher level of intervention has been identified.

In situations where the children's needs for protection have been met at level 4 through [a child protection plan](#) and the plan is no longer needed as risk has reduced, children's social care will continue to lead on the intervention for a minimum of 12 weeks as a [child in need plan](#).

If the level of need reduces further then the level of need will drop to a 2 and the Early Help Assessment team will be informed and a [lead professional](#) will be identified and the case will be work an Early Help Assessment until the leave on need changes again.

If a decision is made not to complete an Early Help Assessment an action plan and identify a lead professional, the reason MUST be clearly recorded on the child's file by all agencies involved.

Information Sharing

[Sharing information](#) is essential to promote positive outcomes for children and to ensure they are kept safe from harm.

In the majority of case it is necessary to request consent from relevant parties, including, where appropriate, children and young people.

Information which is not confidential may generally be shared where necessary for the legitimate proposes of preventative work.

There are circumstances when sharing confidential information without consent is justified, these are:

- **When there is evidence that a child is suffering or is at risk of suffering significant harm;**
- **Where there is reasonable cause to believe that a child may be suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm;**

- **To prevent significant harm to children and young people.**

In these circumstances the refusal to give consent to share information should not prevent the sharing of confidential information. The child's safety and interests must be the overriding factor in such decisions.