

Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families

Guidance Notes and Glossary for:
Referral and Initial Information Record,
Initial Assessment Record and
Core Assessment Record

Department of Health

Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families

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Initial Assessment Record and
Core Assessment Records

London
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- national policies
- support to external social care agencies
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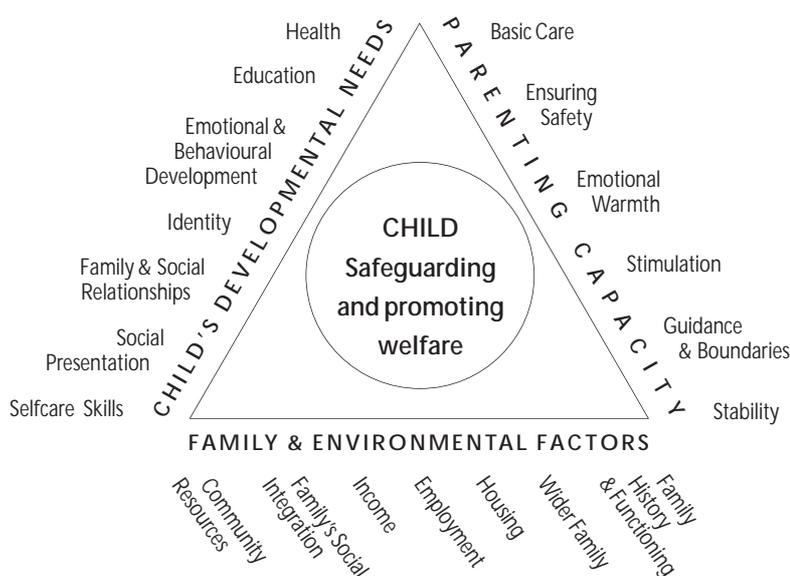
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1 REFERRAL AND INITIAL INFORMATION RECORD

Background

The Referral and Initial Information Record has been developed in response to the *Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families* (2000) and *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (1999). The Referral and Initial Information record begins the process of systematic information gathering about children in need and their families.

This process is continued in the Initial Assessment and Core Assessment Records. The records have been designed to provide an integrated framework for the process of recording and analysing information in line with the Guidance in the *Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families* (2000).



Referral and Initial Information Record

The Referral and Initial Information Record gathers together the essential information about the child including ethnicity, household composition, parental responsibility and agencies currently involved with the child and family.

In order to meet the assessment time scales set out in *The Governments Objectives for Children's Social Services* (1999) a decision should be made on what the response will be to a referral within one working day of it being received.

The Referral and Initial Information Record records the reason the referral or request for services was made and how it was responded to by the SSD. For example, some referrals can be dealt with by the provision of information and advice, or by a referral to another agency. When referrals require a response from a social services department then an initial assessment should be carried out.

The Referral and Initial Information Record therefore has two purposes: to record basic information on the child and family; and to record the SSD and other relevant agencies response to the referral. The Initial Information Record can therefore be used by social services departments to process referrals and to record essential information gathered at the point of referral.

GLOSSARY

1. SSD Case No.

This is the index number given to the referral by the Social Services Department.

2. Is the Parent/Carer aware of the referral?

This refers to awareness at the point in time the referral is being made.

3. Re-referral

A re-referral is defined as a referral about the same child received within a twelve month period, where the child's case has been closed.

4. Address

This is the child's usual or home address. Where parents have shared care, the child may have two addresses.

5. Current Address if different from above

This should be used in situations where the child is not living at their usual or home address. For example, if a child is living temporarily with a relative or is a hospital patient.

6. Principal Carers

This should record the main carers of the child at their usual or home address.

7. Responsible Local Authority

This section should be completed if a referral is being made regarding a child who is the responsibility of an authority other than your own. For example, a child on another authority's Child Protection Register, or a child in the care of another authority who is residing in your local authority area.

8. Agency/Rel to child

This records the relationship of the referrer to the child. If the referrer is making the referral on behalf of their agency then this should be recorded i.e. if a teacher made a referral then 'school' would be recorded. A family member would have their relationship to the child recorded. A neighbour would be recorded as such.

9. Address

This is the referrer's agency address, where appropriate, i.e. St John's School, or home address in the case of a relative or neighbour. If the referral is made anonymously this information should be recorded.

10. Ethnicity

The categories listed are those used by the Government. They will assist authorities in the completion of statistical returns.

11. Other Household members

This section is used to record all those people (children and adults) living at the child's usual or home address.

12. Significant family members not members of child's household

This section is used to record significant family members not living in the child's household. For example, a birth parent or relative who provides care for the child on a shared basis or has a lot of contact with him or her.

- SSD case number if appropriate. This is used if a family member is already a Social Services Department service user. This should include the parent or carer if they are known to adult social services, for example the Community Mental Health Team.
- Tick if also referred to SSD. This should be completed if another household member is being referred to your social services department, at the same time. A separate Initial Information Record should be completed for each child referred. Following the Data Protection Act 1998 it is recommended that each child has a separate file.

13. SSD cases associated with the referred child

In some cases it is important to record links to other social services department cases. For example where half or stepsiblings are looked after by an authority or have had their names placed on an authority's Child Protection Register or are receiving family support services. This section may also be used in situations where there are concerns about, for example, sexual abuse which involve a number of different families.

14. Key Agencies

The name of the key professional from all agencies currently involved with the child and family should be recorded. This includes agencies working with parents. Agencies should be consulted/involved as appropriate as part of the initial assessment and this should be indicated by a tick. Parental permission to contact other agencies should be obtained from parents except in cases where by doing so the safety of the child would be jeopardised (*Working Together to Safeguard Children* (1999)). It will have to be made clear at this point whether other professionals agree to information they provide being shared with the child and/or family.

15. Reason for referral/request for services

In this section brief details are recorded about the reason for the referral, or services requested by, or on behalf of, the family. It is important to note these details, even when the services requested cannot be provided, or can not be provided immediately.

16. Further Action

It is important to indicate what action has been taken and what action is planned, by whom and from which agency. This includes no further action. The referral should be collated with previous referrals and/or files, which should be consulted and information in them drawn upon as part of the analysis and decision making processes.

The worker who has completed the referral should always sign and date the record. The record should then be passed to the relevant manager to confirm the action recommended, in accordance with the Social Services Department's policy.

2 INITIAL ASSESSMENT RECORD

Background

The Initial Assessment Record has been developed in response to the *Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families* (2000) and *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (1999).

The full title of the record, *Initial Assessment of children's needs and issues which impact on parents' capacities to respond to them appropriately*, emphasises the link between the Initial Assessment record and the Core Assessment Record, *Core Assessment record of children's needs and issues which impact on parents' capacities to respond to them appropriately*. The content of both the initial Assessment and Core Assessment Records have been informed by relevant research findings.

The Initial Assessment Record continues the process of systematic information gathering, commenced in the Referral and Initial Information record, and the analysis of this material. This process of assessment is continued if a core assessment is undertaken. The main headings of both records are organised according to the Assessment Framework domains and dimensions.

Initial Assessment

In order to meet the time scales set out in *The Government's Objectives for Children's Social Services* (1999) an initial assessment should be completed within 7 working days of the referral being received.

The Initial Assessment covers:

- The Child's Developmental Needs. These are set out under the seven dimensions in the *Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families*. As it is an initial assessment of the child's needs, some dimensions which are inter-related have been placed together, for example, Identity and Social Presentation.
- Parents'/Carers' Capacities to Respond Appropriately to the Child's Needs. It is important that parent's strengths as well as weaknesses are recorded. Key issues which research has shown to affect parent's ability to respond appropriately to their child's needs have been included.
- Family and Environmental Factors which have an Impact on the Family. The environment within which children and families live can play an important role in reducing or increasing the stresses on families, depending on the support available to them.

The purpose of the Initial Assessment is to decide whether the child is a child in need, the nature of any services required, from where and within what times scales, and whether a more detailed core assessment should be carried out. The fact that a decision is made to carry out a core assessment should not prevent a child or family receiving services which are necessary to support them.

Agencies contacted/involved during Initial Assessment

Agencies should be consulted and involved as appropriate as part of the initial assessment. Parental permission to contact other agencies should be obtained from parents except in cases where the safety of the child would be jeopardised. It will have to be made clear at this point whether other professionals agree to information they provide being shared with the family. Agencies contacted or involved in the Initial Assessment should be recorded by a tick. The name and address of any agency contacted or involved in the Initial Assessment not already recorded on the Referral and Initial Information Record should be added to the Initial Information Record.

Reason for Initial Assessment

Brief details of why an Initial Assessment is being undertaken should be recorded in this section.

Child's Developmental Needs

The child's strengths and current needs should be recorded under each of the developmental dimensions listed. For example, in the case of Daniel Williams aged eighteen months:

Health	Daniel was born profoundly deaf. In areas other than speech, Daniel's development is at the expected level.
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Parents'/Carers' Capacities to Respond Appropriately to the Child's Needs

It is important to record the strengths of all parents/carers as well as any areas of difficulty they are experiencing. In relation to the issues affecting parent's capacity to respond to the child's needs, research has shown that problems with mental health, domestic violence, drug and alcohol misuse, a history of childhood abuse or being a child abuser are likely to affect parenting. It is important to record not simply that an issue is present but to whom it refers and its effect on parenting capacity. For example:

Basic Care	Mrs Williams is at times unable to care for Daniel. However Mr Williams is able to respond to Daniel's needs.
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Physical/mental illness	Mrs Williams has suffered from post natal depression since the birth of Daniel earlier this year. Mrs Williams is receiving medication for this.
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It is also important to record in this section any adult who poses a risk of significant harm to the child. For example, if the grand father is a schedule one offender or a parent is extremely violent to their partner. The social worker should select the most appropriate category(ies) in which to record the information.

Family and Environmental Factors

It is important to record factors that support families as well as those that increase stress. For example, extended family may offer a great deal of support to a young lone parent, alternatively they may compound their difficulties. It is also important to note how family and environmental factors have impact on the child and family. For example:

Housing	The family lives on the 10th floor of a block of flats. The exterior of the building is in poor condition. However Mr and Mrs Williams keep the flat in good condition.
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Immediate Action

This section is used to record any actions taken during or on completion of the initial assessment. More than one box may be completed. For example, a family may be allocated a specific service, such as sponsored day care in addition to a referral being made to another agency and a strategy discussion. It is important to remember that if a core assessment is planned, during the process a family should receive services as appropriate. When deciding which services to offer, it is important to take account of the family's likelihood of being able to access or choosing to access these services.

Strategy Discussion If at any stage during the process there are suspicions or allegations about child maltreatment and concern that the child may be suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm there must be strategy discussions and interagency action in accordance with the guidance in *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (1999).

Immediate legal action to protect the child includes court orders applied for by the local authority, Police Protection and orders applied for by parents to protect a child, such as an injunction.

Further Action

Professional judgement is required to determine whether a Core Assessment is appropriate. In some cases more specialist assessment(s) may be commissioned and this should be recorded. For example, a psychiatric assessment of a parent.

The worker who has completed the Initial Assessment should always sign and date the form. The form should then be passed to the relevant manager to confirm the action recommended. A copy of the completed Initial Assessment should usually be sent to appropriate family members. All decisions will have to take account of the child's safety and whether permission has to be obtained from other agencies to share information. In some cases it will not be appropriate to include all the initial information. For example where a neighbour made a referral but wished to remain anonymous.

3 CORE ASSESSMENT RECORDS

The Core assessment record of children's needs and issues which impact on parents' capacities to respond to them appropriately (Core Assessment Record) is one of series of tools commissioned by the Department of Health to support the implementation of the *Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families* (2000).

Background

The Core Assessment Records were developed over a two-year period. Following a feasibility study in three local authorities, the Core Assessment Records have been revised to take account of the feedback from service users, social work practitioners and managers, and other professionals.

The records have their basis in relevant research findings, which were used to identify the essential information that should be recorded in each dimension. Key research findings have also been included on the left-hand side of each page to act as a sign-post to key areas and to assist practitioners in evaluating the importance of information gathered during the assessment.

Relationship to other Assessment Processes and Tools

A core assessment will typically follow a referral and initial assessment but it may also be used for a re-assessment of a family already known to social services. The Core Assessment Record has been developed to build on the information gathered in the initial information-gathering stages to avoid unnecessary duplication of work. As families report not liking to have to repeat the same information several times to different professionals, it is important to avoid this.

The Core Assessment Record recognises that in order to obtain a clear understanding of the inter-relationship between a child's needs, parents' capacities and the impact of family and environmental factors it is necessary to collect and analyse information from a variety of sources, using a number of different methods.

In many cases a number of professionals and agencies will know the family. Although it is the responsibility of the social services staff member to complete the Core Assessment Record, it has been designed to be inter-disciplinary in its approach. Typically the social services staff member will be collecting and analysing information from a number of agencies. Where detailed and up to date assessments about a family or child are available from another agency, for example a Statement of Educational Needs or hospital assessment on a disabled child, these should be incorporated into the Core Assessment Record (having obtained the necessary consents). This can be done in two ways; Either by using the information from a specialist assessment to complete the relevant area of the core Assessment Record, or by attaching the specialist assessment as an appendix to the Core Assessment Record. In every case the summary section at

the end of the relevant area of the Core Assessment Record should be completed by the social services staff member. So, for, example in the case of a child with a recent statement of Special Educational Needs, the statement could be attached but the social services staff member should complete the social worker's summary at the end of the Education dimension.

The use of Questionnaires and Scales can make a valuable contribution to specific areas of a core assessment. The Core Assessment Record indicates when it may be appropriate to use particular questionnaires and scales. Eight questionnaires and scales are contained in *The Family Assessment Pack of Questionnaires and Scales* (Department of Health, Cox and Bentovim, 2000).

Purpose of the Core Assessment Record

The Core Assessment Record is intended to aid social workers undertaking a core assessment by providing a framework to record information systematically and in a manner which facilitates analysis and planning.

The Core Assessment Records have been structured to ensure that information is recorded in each of the three systems or domains of the *Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families* (2000):

- the developmental needs of children;
- the capacity of parents or care givers to respond appropriately to those needs;
- the impact of wider family and environmental factors on parenting capacity and the child.

The core Assessment Record is underpinned by the same principles as are in the *Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families* and therefore may be viewed as making a major contribution to the operationalisation of the Framework.

It is important to remember that the Core Assessment Record is a tool, and requires the skills, knowledge and professional judgement of practitioners and their managers to use it effectively. Good tools cannot substitute for good practice, but good practice and good tools can achieve excellence.

The Core Assessment Records

There are five age related Core Assessment Records. With the exception of children under 2, the age bands are congruent with those used in the Looking After Children Assessment and Action Records. The age bands for the Core Assessment Records are: 0–2; 3–4; 5–9; 10–14; 15 and over.

Structure of Core Assessment Records

The structure of each Core Assessment Record is the same. Each record can be considered to have two parts; information gathering, and analysis and planning.

Information gathering

- Sources of Information

This section is used to record the sources of information and methods used to gather information during the core assessment. This includes agencies involved, meetings with family members, questionnaires and scaled used. It is recommended that this page is completed as the assessment progresses.

- Details Concerning Core Assessment

This records the background details to the core assessment. The reason(s) the assessment is being undertaken and details of any specific matters, including disability, affecting the child. This section should be completed prior the beginning of the core assessment and will draw on information already known about the child and family from the initial assessment or existing records.

- Child's Developmental Needs/Parenting Capacity

This section records information about the child's developmental needs and the parents' capacities to respond to these needs appropriately. There are two pages for each developmental need of the child; health, education, emotional and behavioural development, identity, family and social relationships, social presentation (for children under five this is combined with identity) selfcare skills (for children under five this is combined with emotional and behavioural development).

The first part of each section records key needs for each child. A Yes/No box is included next to each of the key needs. The purpose of these boxes should be understood clearly. The Core Assessment Record is not a questionnaire. The Yes/No boxes are included to ensure that information identified from research as significant for the child's development or wellbeing is recorded.

They will assist practitioners and supervisors to quickly identify the key factors in an assessment. However ticking the boxes alone is not enough. It is important that further information is included to provide the context for information which is recorded. The space to record this information is limited. This is not to encourage practitioners to be brief, but to be relevant. Practitioners should consider the significance of information before it is entered into the record.

For Example – From Education Dimension, Child Aged 5 –9

Stimulation	Yes	No	
Parent regularly reads, tells stories, plays counting games, watches TV with child	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mrs Foli's depression means that at times she has no energy to play games with Kwane. However Mr Foli regularly plays with him and reads to him each evening
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Following information about the child's needs, information about the parents' capacities to respond appropriately to those needs is recorded. Parents' capacities are detailed across the six areas identified in the parenting capacity domain of the *Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families*: basic care; ensuring safety; emotional warmth; stimulation; guidance and boundaries; and stability. Key parenting responses, identified from research, are included for each area. It is important to record the strengths as well as weaknesses of parents.

If any of the key areas identified are not appropriate for the child or parents, they can be marked N/A. In addition, it is important that the reason the issue is not considered to be relevant is recorded.

At the end of each of the child's developmental dimensions is a summary section. This is to enable practitioners to summarise the child's needs and parents' capacities to respond to them appropriately. In completing this section practitioners should consider the impact on the child's health and development of any needs which are not responded to appropriately. The research information on the left-hand side of the page is intended to help with this process.

- Family and Environmental Factors

The final section of the information gathering part of the Core Assessment Record is concerned with the Family and Environmental Factors domain of the Assessment Framework. The layout of this area is similar to those covering the child's developmental needs.

Summary, Analysis and Plan

Research, the findings of Inquiry reports and Social Services Inspectorate inspections have frequently highlighted weaknesses in this area of assessment. A great deal of time and effort goes into the information gathering stage. This results in an assessment that focuses on describing what is happening. However, often less attention is given to the analysis of the information gathered. Analysis takes the assessment process beyond surface considerations and explores why particular strengths and difficulties are present, the relationship between these and the implications of them for the child and other family members, as well as considering what types of services would best help the child and family members. The second part of the Core Assessment Record therefore is concerned with analysis and planning.

- Summary

The second part of the record starts with a summary of the needs, strengths and difficulties identified in each of the domains. Young people and parents are asked for their views. This provides an opportunity for them to contribute to the assessment summary. If possible they should be encouraged to write their views themselves or to indicate them in some other form of communication, which can then be recorded.

- Analysis

The next section is for practitioners to analyse the significance and consequences of the needs, strengths and difficulties identified in the assessment. This is a key stage in the assessment process. Practitioners should consider the inter-relationship between each of the domains of the *Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their*

Families For example, a child's difficult and demanding behaviour may be a major contributory factor to a parent's depression, which may in turn lead to the home environment being neglected. It will be helpful to list key protective and stress factors in each domain and indicate how they relate to those identified in the other domains. It is important that strengths as well as difficulties are identified. Parental and family strengths should be built on and used to inform the plan. When analysing the information gathered, practitioners should also evaluate the impact on the child and family of any services already provided.

- Objectives and Plans

This section records the objectives and the actions which are to be achieved to ensure that all the child's identified needs are responded to appropriately. The objectives of the plan should be specific, measurable and have clear time scales. The actions should include those to be taken by the child and family members, social services and all other relevant agencies. It is important that the child, as appropriate, and family members are involved in agreeing the objectives and actions to be taken and that they are able to comment on the plan. This will enable the plan to serve as a written agreement.

The review of care plans and child protection plans are set out in Volume 3 of the Children Act 1989 and Guidance and Regulations (paragraphs 2.59 to 2.62) and in paragraphs 5.90 to 5.95 in *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (1999) respectively. It is good practice for children in need plans to be reviewed regularly, at least every six months (see paragraph 4.36 in *Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families* (2000)). There is an outcome section for each objective which should be completed at the review. This enables progress to be monitored and any necessary changes made to the plan.

4 COMPLETING A CORE ASSESSMENT RECORD WITH A DISABLED CHILD – ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE

Introduction

This guidance supplements the Core Assessment Record guidance and is intended to support social work staff completing a Core Assessment Record with a disabled child and their family.

The Core Assessment Records have been developed in consultation with specialists working with disabled children and young people. They are underpinned by the principle that children are children first: however, each child is unique.

The Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families (2000) sets out the inter-related systems or domains that any assessment of a child should consider to achieve a clear understanding of the child's needs. These are:

- the child's developmental needs;
- the parents' or carers' capacities to respond appropriately to these needs;
- the impact of wider family and environmental factors on parenting capacity and the child.

The Core Assessment Records are intended to assist social workers undertaking a core assessment by providing a framework to record information systematically across all domains and dimensions in a manner that facilitates analysis and planning.

An assessment of a disabled child should consider the same domains and dimensions as an assessment of a non-disabled child. The needs of disabled children, however, may be very complex in one dimension: it is important that all areas of their needs receive attention during an assessment.

Using the Core Assessment Record with a Disabled Child

● General Principles

The Core Assessment Records are informed by the principles which underpin the *Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families* (2000). Social work staff undertaking assessments of children in need are expected to be familiar with this Guidance. The accompanying practice guidance *Assessing Children in Need and their Families* (Department of Health, 2000) has a chapter on assessing the needs of disabled children and the Reader which accompanies the training pack, *The Child's World: Assessing Children in Need* includes a chapter on assessing the needs of children with complex needs.

● Using Age-related Records

The Core Assessment Records are age related. As with the Looking After Children Assessment and Action Records, social work staff should use the record which relates to the child or young person's chronological age.

It is recognised that for some children this may result in some sections of the record being inappropriate to their needs. For example, the section of the Education Dimension which records GCSE results may be inappropriate for a young person with profound learning disabilities. However, the preceding question, Young person's educational progress is at expected level provides the practitioner with an opportunity to record the young person's achievements.

It will also be important to record how the parents respond to the identified needs of the child.

It must be remembered that the Core Assessment Record is only a tool and requires the skills, knowledge and professional judgement of the practitioner to use it effectively.

● Links Between the Core Assessment Record and other Assessments

A key concern for many parents of disabled children is the number of assessment processes their child is involved in. These may include general and specific health assessments, psychological assessments, Special Educational Needs and other educational assessments. However, each of these assessments consider a specific area of the child's needs. They do not provide a picture of all the child's needs or of the inter-relationships between the needs of the child, capacities of parents', and family and environmental factors.

The Core Assessment Record is a tool for undertaking a holistic assessment. In order to complete a Core Assessment Record a social work practitioner will draw on information from a variety of sources including the child, parent or carers and other professionals. However a Core Assessment should also draw upon existing reports and specialist assessments concerning the child and family, having obtained the necessary consents to use this information. In some situations basic details from a specialist assessment can be recorded in the Core Assessment Record and the specialist assessment attached to the Core Assessment Record as an appendix. This should mean that disabled children, their parents or carers, do not feel that they are repeatedly covering the same issues.

For some children, the Child in Need Plan in the Core Assessment Record may be used to draw together the objectives from a number of different assessments into one inter-agency plan for the child. It may be useful in some situations to arrange for the review of the Core Assessment to coincide with the reviews of other assessments in relation to the child and family.

One consequence of completing a Core Assessment Record may be that the need for a more specialist assessment may be identified. It is important that any further assessment is fully discussed with the child or young person and their parents or carers.

It may be necessary to undertake a more specific assessment of some areas of the disabled child's abilities in order to access particular services. For example, a more detailed analysis of a disabled child's mobility and selfcare skills may be required to identify the most appropriate day care or respite care resource for the child.

Where a child or young person is receiving respite care for periods exceeding 24 hours at a time, they are looked after under S20 of the Children Act 1989.

● The Core Assessment Record and other Children in the Family

The Core Assessment Record is designed to be completed for each child in need in a family. A disabled child may have an impact on other children in a family, and this may result in siblings requiring support in their own right. In such situations a professional judgement will have to be made about whether a Core Assessment Record should be completed for other children in the family to ensure that support provided is based on a clear understanding of all the children's needs.

Recording Specific Issues regarding Disabled Children

The following section provides guidance for social work staff on recording some of the specific issues that may arise because of a child's impairment(s).

● Details Concerning a Core Assessment

It is recommended that an outline of the nature and extent of the child's impairment is recorded in this section, along with details of routine hospital and outpatient appointments. More specific details about the child's health needs should be recorded in the Health dimension of the child's developmental needs.

Child's Developmental Needs

● Health

This section should include details of the child's medication regime.

● Education

The type of educational provision attended by the child should be recorded in this dimension. If the child has a statement of Special Educational Needs brief details of the main provisions should be recorded. Full details of the Statement can be included, if necessary, by attaching the full statement as an appendix to the Core Assessment Record.

A summary of the nature and extent of any communication difficulties experienced by the child should be recorded in this dimension. The ability of parents or carers to communicate with the child should be recorded under Basic Care in the Parenting Capacity section of the dimension.

● Emotional and Behavioural Development

The nature of any challenging behaviour exhibited by the child, including whether it affects the child's safety, should be recorded under this heading. The amount of supervision the child requires should be also recorded in this dimension. How parents or carers respond to the child's challenging behaviour should be recorded under Ensuring Safety in the Parenting Capacity Section.

● Identify

This dimension is important for disabled children as they may have picked up messages that to be disabled is 'wrong', 'bad' or a burden on others. They, therefore, may reject

who they are and lack confidence and self-esteem. Having determined how the child perceives him or herself, it is important to record how they view their identity as a disabled person.

● Family and Social Relationships

This dimension is concerned with the child's relationships with their family, peers and others; how the child relates to others and how they respond to him or her.

The impact that the child's impairment has on siblings and parents or carers is considered later in the record.

● Social Presentation

In addition to how the child or young person presents socially, the way in which others, particularly outside the family, respond to the child or young person's impairment should be recorded in this dimension. This will help to develop an understanding of the barriers that the child and family may have to overcome when accessing and using community resources.

● Selfcare Skills

Some of the questions in this dimension may not be appropriate for some disabled children and young people. However the first question, Child has age appropriate selfcare skills can be completed for all children and young people. This section can be used to record a summary of the child's abilities, including washing and dressing, eating and drinking, continence, and to go out alone.

The capacity of parents to provide the level of supervision and support required by the child, can be recorded in the parental capacity section of this dimension.

A more detailed assessment of some areas of the child or young person's abilities may be necessary to identify or access the resources which are most appropriate to the child or young person's needs.

Family and Environmental Factors which may impact on the Child and on Parenting Capacity

● Family Functioning

The impact of the child's impairment on other family members is recorded in this section. When recording the impact of the child's impairment on siblings (FE4), practitioners should consider whether siblings are themselves 'children in need' and require a core assessment. Consideration will also have to be given to whether a separate 'Carer's assessment' should be carried out in respect of parents or carers (FE6).

● Family's Social Integration

This is often a major issue for families with a disabled child. Any discrimination experienced by the family as a consequence of the child's impairment should be recorded. Support to the family through membership of support groups for disabled children should also be noted.

● Community Resources

Any difficulties experienced by the child and family in accessing resources in the community as a consequence of the child's impairment should be recorded. This would include difficulties in physically accessing resources, discrimination, or issues arising from the child's behaviour.

Plan for a Child in Need

The plan for the child should take account of the child or young person's wishes and feelings, the views of parents or carers, and any existing specialist assessments of the child. The Child in Need Plan provides an opportunity to draw together into one document individual agency plans and to produce a single inter-agency plan for the child.

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