

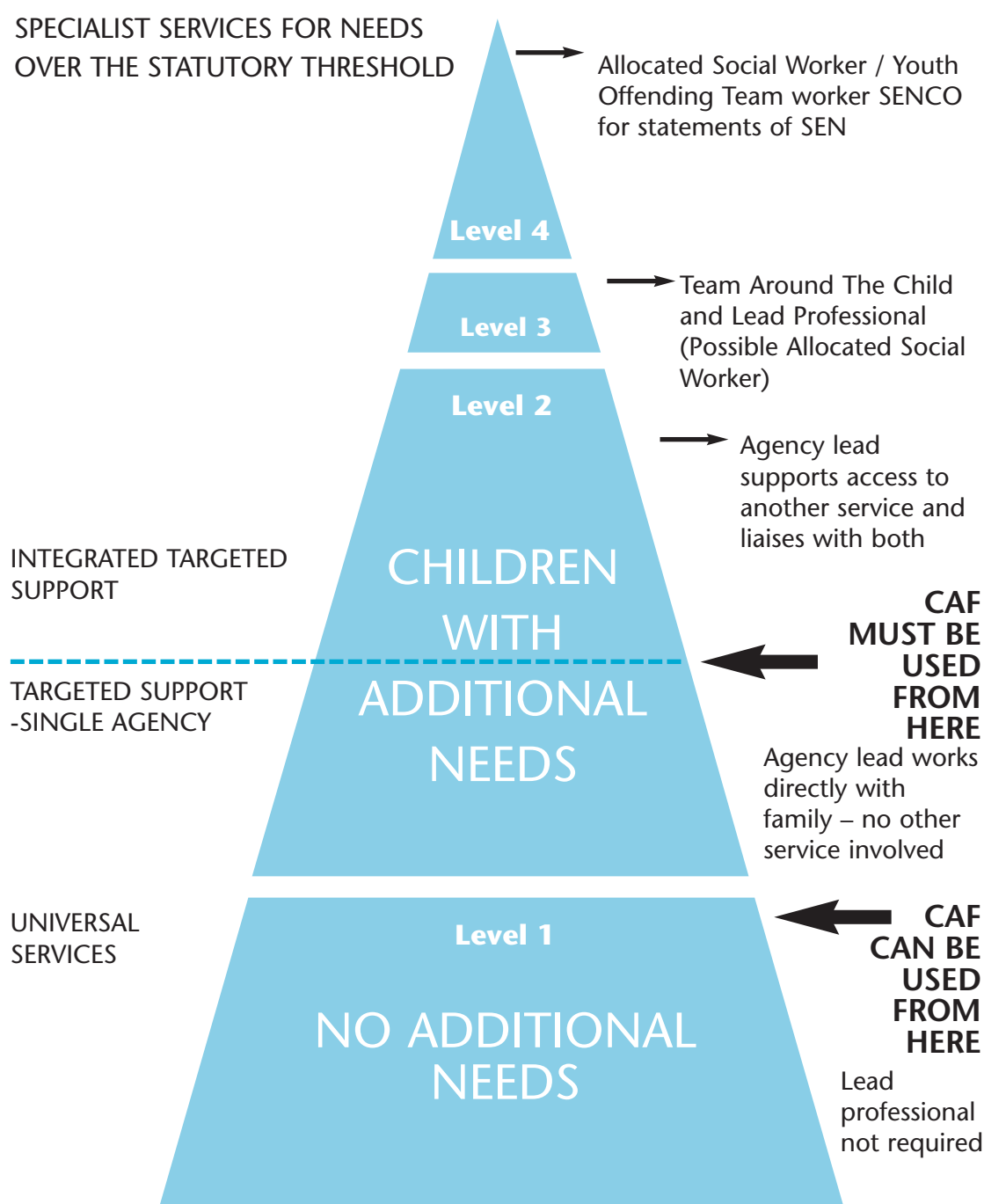
Guidance on Thresholds to Children's Social Care

2009



Triangle of support

The triangle below illustrates a child's level of need from "Universal" (Level 1) to "Specialist" (Level 4). **A referral to Children's Social Care (CSC) should be considered with needs identified at level 3 if the Team Around the Child (TAC) and Common Assessment Framework (CAF) indicates that the child's needs are not being met. A referral must be undertaken to CSC if a child has needs identified at level 4.**



Thresholds

This chart is a guide and every child and family should be assessed taking into account their individual circumstances.

Level of need	Issues/possible indicators	Service response required
<p>Level One - Universal Support</p> <p>Children with no additional needs and receiving universal services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child's health and general development is age appropriate • Child is brought up in stable circumstances where parents are able to meet their child's needs with the support of universal services 	<p>Child's needs are met universally through services such as health care and education, and may also be able to access Sure Start programmes, Play services and Youth and Extended Services.</p> <p>Lead Professional not required</p>
<p>Level Two - Targeted Support (Single Agency)</p> <p>Children who require extra support from a single agency or where one agency is the main provider but also supports access to another service.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child's health, behaviour or emotional well being requires support • Identified issues of harassment, bullying or family relationship difficulties and issues • Extra educational or curriculum support required • Absence from school/ educational potential not being met • Low income/asylum seeking families • Families in poverty • Family stress • Children witnessing or experiencing domestic violence 	<p>A CAF should be considered where the needs of the child are unclear or broader than one agency can meet.</p>

<p>Level Three-Targeted Support (Integrated Targeted Support/ Team Around the Child and Lead Professional)</p> <p>Children with high levels of complex needs requiring an integrated response from several agencies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child is experiencing significant developmental or acquired impairments in their cognitive, sensory or physical development • Has a condition which has a high probability of developmental delay/ whose ability to achieve their potential is impaired • Children with chronic ill health, physical learning disability, significant behavioural or emotional issues • Child with significant offending or anti-social behaviour • Children misusing substances • Parental drug, alcohol misuse, mental ill health or learning disability impacting on parenting capacity • Pattern of family offending • Persistent bullying from peers or network • Children witnessing or experiencing domestic violence - London Child Protection Procedures 	<p>A CAF must be completed as a minimum requirement with multi – agency involvement and input.</p> <p>Lead Professional to be appointed</p> <p>Level of need may indicate that a statutory threshold has been met and a referral to Children’s Social Care may be required to undertake an initial or core assessment</p>
<p>Level Four-Specialist Services/Statutory Threshold</p> <p>Children with highly complex and enduring needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children experiencing domestic violence - where safeguarding intervention is required. Children under the age of 12 months should trigger a child protection investigation that require 	<p>Level of need crosses a statutory threshold</p> <p>Children at the highest level of risk/risk of significant harm</p> <p>CSC allocate a key worker</p>

Children experiencing significant harm and in need of child protection and other statutory processes to safeguard and promote their welfare

(Within this level of need, the Youth Offending Team may allocate a worker in relation to statutory court orders and the AWA service in relation to education supervision orders)

a child protection or a core assessment

- Children who are young carers
- Homelessness
- Children, pre-birth with concerns in relation to parenting capacity
- Children who are subject to a child protection plan, care proceedings, emergency orders or who are looked after
- Children whose parents are no longer able to care for them
- Unaccompanied minors
- Privately fostered children
- Children who are homeless
- Children(or infants) experiencing severe domestic violence who are in need of protection
- Children living with parents with severe drug and alcohol misuse issues
- Children with a statement of special educational needs
- Children with significant offending behaviour under a court order
- Pre-birth situations where there is a significant risk to the unborn child (including domestic violence)
- Parents with a significant enduring mental illness impacting on the child
- Parents with serious deficits in their parenting capacity
- Children at serious risk of sexual exploitation or where there are serious concerns in relation to their cognitive, emotional, and physical development

Level of need determined via a CSC core assessment/risk assessment

Summary/Guidance

This document is linked to and to be read in conjunction with:

- London Child Protection Procedures (3rd edition) by the London Safeguarding Children Board (www.londonscb.gov.uk/procedures)
- Team Around the Child and the Role of the Lead Professional protocol.

A CAF assessment will be necessary when a child/young person is at risk of not achieving one or more of the five Every Child Matters (ECM) outcomes without the provision of additional services

- Be healthy
- Stay safe
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic well-being

A front line professional may have a concern or a parent may have raised a concern. A CAF is designed for use in those situations when the needs are unclear or broader than the one agency can meet.

In many cases they will be able to meet these needs "in house". However, in some cases they may need to share the information (with the consent of the child/young person and parent/carer) with another agency in order to explore accessing additional support.

The CAF is being widely adopted as the single means of referral for a number of services and this will enable referrers to use the same form to access a range of provision, thus reducing unnecessary paperwork and bureaucracy.

If the child has already crossed a statutory threshold, e.g. Child in Need, Child Protection or Special Educational Needs, then a CAF will not need to be completed as these children will need a specialist assessment. (Refer to Triangle of Support Appendix).

Children's Social Care will exercise its duties in relation to Section 17 of the Children Act (1989) to safeguard and promote children in need and in relation to Section 47 of the same Act to carry out enquiries to establish whether or not a child is at risk of significant harm.

Once the case is deemed to need multi-agency involvement then a Team Around the Child may be convened. The TAC will agree on who should be the Lead Professional to co-ordinate the multi-agency action plan which arises from the CAF.

Where necessary, the CAF should also be used for referrals that may result in a child crossing the statutory threshold. Children's Social Care decide on which children should receive a service based on the thresholds in this document.

Where the threshold for intervention by Children's Social Care is met, an initial assessment (in 7 working days) or a core assessment (in 35 working days) is then undertaken using the DOH National Assessment Framework to determine the level of need and the level of support and provision required by the family. In this way, the assessment process outlined above will ensure support is targeted at those children who are most in need.

If the child crosses the statutory threshold, the responsibility for service delivery and monitoring now falls to the key worker in the statutory service e.g. social worker for a Child in Need. It is good practice however for the Lead Professional to liaise with the key worker and, where appropriate, continue to be involved with the family.

Where the threshold for Children's Social Care is not met, referrers will be provided with information and advice where appropriate.

General Guidance

In general, consideration of a referral to CSC may be considered if a child has complex needs in relation to level three in the previous table. At the very least, multiple agency involvement will be in place, a Team Around the Child and a Lead Professional identified.

A child with need indicators of level four must be referred to CSC. A complex needs assessment will be undertaken and a key worker appointed.

Children may present with complex needs and on occasions, professionals may be unsure whether a referral to CSC should be undertaken. In such circumstances, professionals must consult their line manager or contact the duty social worker/CWD team screen social worker for advice.

Glossary of terms

(CSC) Children's Social Care

A range of teams within Children's Services, delivering social work services to children and families

(CWD) Children with Disabilities team

A specialist team within CSC delivering social work services to children and their families where children are assessed to have a disability.

(DV) Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is defined by the Home Office as: 'Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been, intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality'. The main characteristic of domestic violence is that the behaviour is intentional and is calculated to exercise power and control within a relationship.

(ECM) Every Child Matters

The government strategy to ensure that every child is enabled to achieve 5 outcomes necessary for success in life.

(TAC) Team Around the Child

The description of a multi-agency team that works together with the child and family to achieve the actions outlined in the Common Assessment plan.

(LP) Lead Professional

The nominated person from the Team Around the Child who will act as the single point of contact for the child and family and co-ordinate the actions of other professionals in the team and the review of the CAF action plan.

(LA) Local Authority

This is the local government organisation that has a duty to provide services for children and young people in their area, including education and social care. These services are known collectively as Children's Services.

(CAF) Common Assessment Framework

The Common Assessment is intended to provide a simple process for a holistic assessment of a child's needs and strengths, taking account of the role of parents, carers and environmental factors on their development. Practitioners will then be better placed to agree, with the child and family, about what support is needed. Where appropriate, CAF will also help to improve integrated working by promoting co-ordinated service provision.

(SENCO) Special Needs Co-ordinator

This is the teacher in primary and secondary schools who is responsible for co-ordinating the support needed for children with special educational needs.

(PRU) Pupil Referral Unit

This is an alternative educational provision for children/young people in schools who, for a range of reasons, are not able to attend mainstream school.

(CAMHS) Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

This service promotes the mental health and psychological wellbeing of children and young people, and provides multidisciplinary mental health services to children and young people with mental health problems and disorders to ensure effective assessment, treatment and support, for them and their families.

(MH) Mental Health

The assessed mental state of a child or young person, parent or carer.

(LD) Learning Disability

A child, young person, carer parent or carer with an assessed learning disability.

(PD) Personality Disorder

This term is used to describe an assessed mental health condition that impacts on a person's psychological functioning and emotional state which can subsequently impact on parenting capacity.

(NEET) Not in Education, Employment or Training

This term is used to describe young people who have left school and are not yet in education, training or employment. The local authority has a duty to monitor young people who are at risk of becoming NEET and to help them to assess what they need to do next in order to achieve their aims and aspirations for the future.

Child protection investigation

Where a child or young person is identified as either suffering, or at risk of suffering significant harm as a result of abuse or neglect. Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 gives Local Authorities Children's Social Care a duty to make inquiries to decide whether they should take action to safeguard or promote the welfare of the child who is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm.

Terms used to describe abuse

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after. This situation is commonly described using terms such as factitious illness by proxy or Munchausen syndrome by proxy.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to the children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve causing children to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing a child or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape or buggery) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's physical and/or psychological needs and is likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing or appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Professional Misconduct

Any allegation of professional misconduct against a child, for any member of staff, must be reported to the Child Protection Advice Line, regardless of who raised the concern.

Responding to Domestic Violence

Stage 1

CAF referral to Children's Social Care

Significant indicators:

- Age of child
- Actual injury
- Significant threat of an injury
- Police notifications
- History/Chronology
- London DV Procedures

Stage 2 Assessment

Social worker allocated to assess situation

Initial or core assessment undertaken and the child is seen

Case allocated up to 6 months
Lead professional role

Stage 3 Intervention

Care Plan with provision of services

Multi-Agency Domestic Violence Safety Planning Panel

NCH Barika Project - Therapeutic Support

Eva Armsby Look Forward Project

Housing Support Services (includes refuge, homelessness, transfer, sanctuary)

Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)

Stage 4 Review

Child in Need Review

Child Subject to a Child Protection Plan

Child Looked After

Responding to adolescents in need

Stage 1

CAF referral to Children's Social Care (often by School, Police or attendance and welfare Officer or Court)

Significant indicators:

- History/Chronology
- Police notification(s)
- Runaway
- Crime
- Safety
- Violence
- Risk assessment
- Self-harm
- Family breakdown
- Relationship difficulties
- Drugs/alcohol/sexual activity
- Beyond control
- Trafficking
- Forced marriage
- Under age pregnancy

Stage 2 Assessment

Social worker allocated to assess the situation

Initial or core assessment undertaken

Young person referred to the Social Inclusion Panel (SIP)

Stage 3 Intervention

Care Plan with provision of services

Young Carers Project
 Eva Armsby for parenting support for young parents
 Mentoring – Shaati Counselling Project
 NSPCC Young People's Centre
 Families First – Adolescent Outreach Team Norman Grove
 CAMHS – referral
 Young Women's Group – Door of Hope
 Youth Offending Service
 Royal London Hospital – acute
 Coburn Unit
 Lifeline - substance misuse support service
 Secure Accommodation
 Docklands Outreach
 Health Services
 Options Team (sexual health)
 Extended Schools, Youth and Community Services

Stage 4 Review

Child in Need Review

Child Subject to a Child Protection Plan

Child Looked After

Responding to Concerns about Parenting Capacity

Stage 1

CAF referral to Children's Social Care with a CAF

Significant indicators:

- Chronology
- Signs of neglect
- Incremental/chronic patterns
- Age
- Unsupervised/home alone
- Failure to receive medical intervention
- Danger for the child
- Parent capacity affected by health of parent (LD/MH/PD)
- Drug/alcohol/sexual activities
- Hygiene
- Developmental Milestones

Stage 2 Assessment

Social worker allocated to assess situation
Initial or core assessment undertaken
Case allocated - Lead professional role

Stage 3 Intervention

Care Plan with provision of services

Addaction- substance misuse service
Coram parental support service/Building Bridges
Eva Armsby parental support service
Family Support Worker support
Newpin
Family Welfare Association
African Families service
Lead Professional (S/W, HV, EdPsy,
CAMHS worker)
Specialist Nurse Partnership – Royal London Hospital
Gateway Midwives
Children's Centres and Extended Schools
Health Services
Faith Leaders

Stage 4 Review

Child in Need
Review

Child Subject to
a Child
Protection Plan

Child Looked
After

Useful contacts

Tower Hamlets Child Protection Advice Line 020 7364 3444
Emergency Duty Team (5pm – 9am) 020 7364 4079

The Child Protection Advice Line operates between 9.00am and 5.00pm except at weekends and on public holidays. If the concern arises outside of the hours operated by the Advice Line and it is believed the child may be at immediate risk, the Children’s Social Care Emergency Duty Team or the Police should be contacted without delay.

Children’s Information Service (CIS) 020 7364 6495
189 Roman Road, London E2 0QY

CIS provides free information about different types of services available for children and young people from 0-20 years old. Information available includes a range of childcare provision such as childminders and play schemes.

Email: cis@towerhamlets.gov.uk, website: www.childcarelink.gov.uk

Services at Mulberry Place, 5 Clove Crescent, London, E14 2BG

Advice and Assessment Team East, (Bow/Poplar North and Isle of Dogs)	020 7364 5606/5601
Advice and Assessment Team West, (Stepney/Wapping and Bethnal Green)	020 7364 3859/2972
Integrated Services for Children with Disabilities	020 7364 2724
Emergency Duty Team (Out of Hours - For Families)	020 7364 7000
Family Support and Protection Team, (Bethnal Green East and West)	020 7364 3898
Family Support and Protection Team, (Bow and Poplar North)	020 7364 6024
Family Support and Protection Team, (Poplar South and Isle of Dogs)	020 7364 6119
Family Support and Protection Team, (Stepney and Wapping)	020 7364 3898
Children Looked After Team (Central)	020 7364 5553
Children Looked After Team (East)	020 7364 5578
Children Looked After Team (North)	020 7364 5882
Children Looked After Team (West)	020 7364 2842
Recruitment and Assessment Team (for Foster Carers)	020 7364 0400

Services at Royal London Hospital, 4th Floor, Fielden House, Stepney Way, London E1 1BB

Child and Family Social Work Team 020 7377 7225

Further information

‘What to do if you’re worried a child is being abused’ is a publication available from DfES Publications, PO Box 5050, Sherwood Park, Annesley, Nottingham NG15 0DJ. You can also download this publication at www.everychildmatters.gov.uk and www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications.

