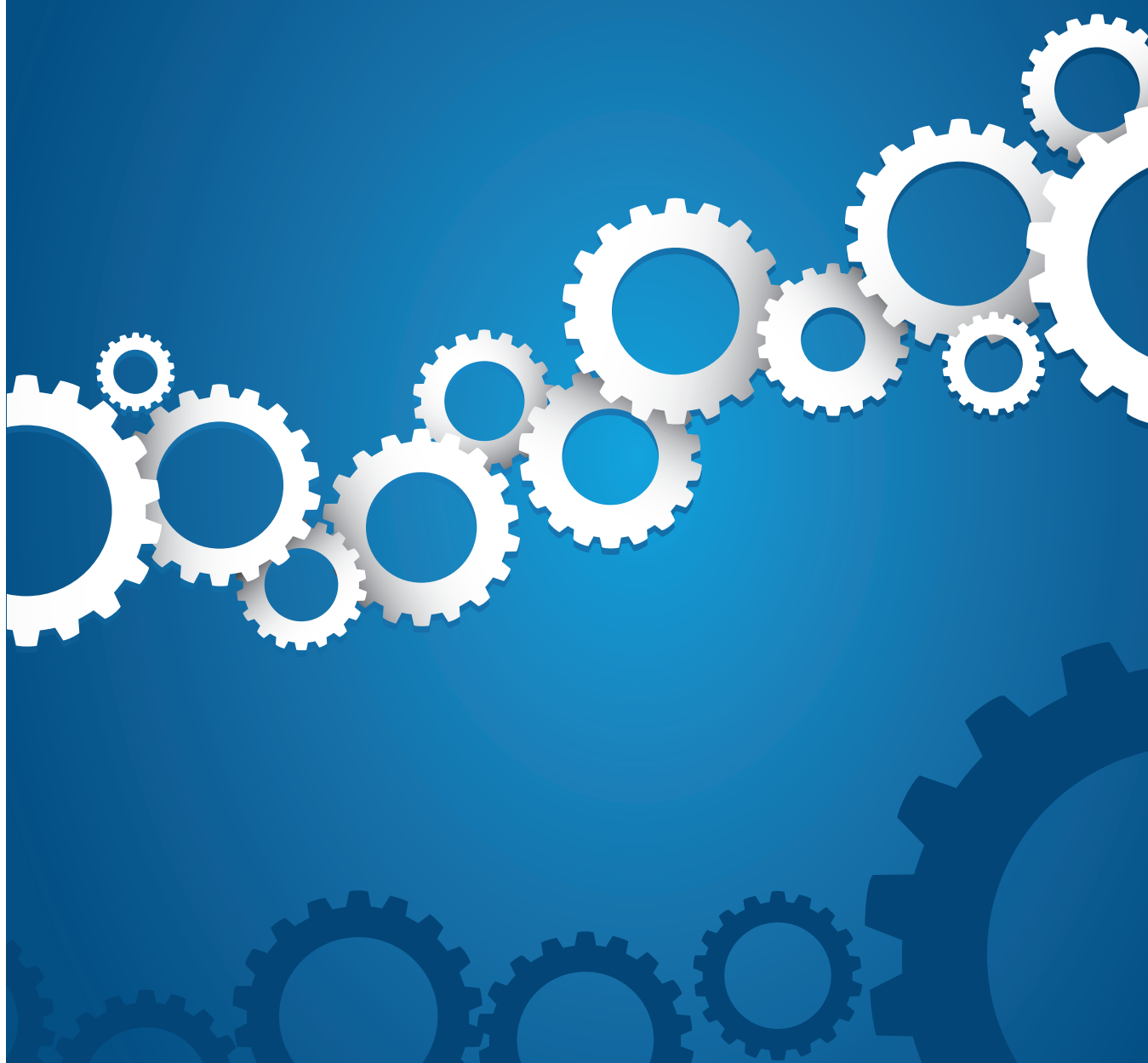


Havering Safeguarding Children's Board Threshold and Assessment Protocol



Havering
LONDON BOROUGH

Havering Safeguarding Children's Board Threshold and Assessment Protocol

This guide is for all practitioners within agencies who work with children, to assist them in the decision making process of which agency should be involved in helping families with different levels of need.

This guide should be used to help practitioners make decisions about which agency to refer to and when. The examples within this guide are neither complete nor rigid in their application; they are there to act solely as guidance and to help enhance professional discussion about children and families.

This threshold guide sits within the overall framework for dealing with children in need as outlined in the London Child Protection Procedures which is published and updated by the London Safeguarding Children Board.

All Children with a disability follow the same assessment procedure; this process will be undertaken by a specialist disability social worker.

Havering Council has a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) in place, which is the first point of contact for all levels of referrals regarding the children. This service provides rapid information sharing and risk analysis to all referrals where there may be risk to a child.

MASH contact details

Multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH)

Phone: Monday - Friday (9am - 5pm) 01708 433 222

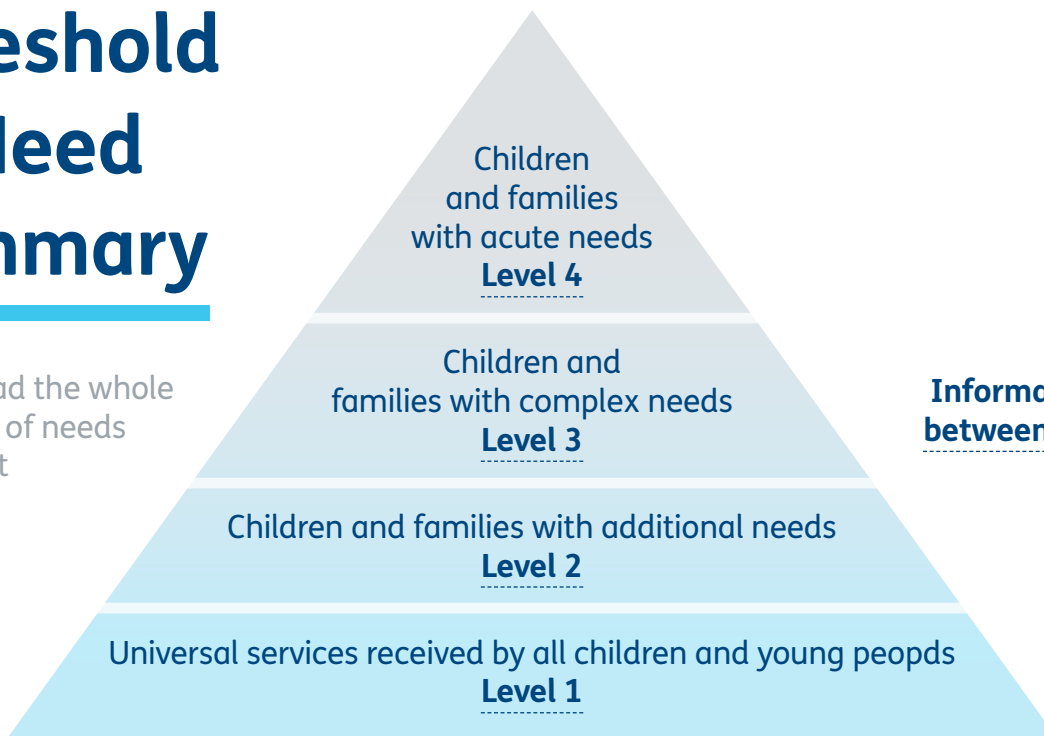
Email: tmash@haverling.gov.uk

Out of hours/weekends 01708 433 999



Threshold of Need Summary

Please read the whole threshold of needs document



Information sharing between practitioners

Level 1 – Universal:

Children with no additional needs; all their health and development needs will be met by universal services.

Level 2 – Early help :

These are children with additional needs, who may be vulnerable and showing early signs of abuse and/or neglect; their needs are not clear, not known or not being met. This is the threshold for a multi-agency early help assessment to begin.

Level 3 – Children and families with complex multiple needs:

These children require specialist services in order to achieve or maintain a satisfactory level of health or development or to prevent significant impairment of their health and development and/or who are disabled. They may require longer term intervention from specialist services. All tier 3 cases will be considered within the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) processes to determine the type and level of response required to meet need.

Level 4 – Children and families with acute need:

Children suffering or are likely to suffer significant harm. This is the threshold for child protection. These children are likely to have already experienced adverse effects and to be suffering from poor outcomes. Their needs may not be considered by their parents. Also includes Tier 4 health services; specialised services in residential, day patient or outpatient settings for children and adolescents with severe and / or complex health problems. This would also include those children remanded into custody and statutory youth offending services.

Threshold Indicators

To help understand the difference between the 4 levels of need we have provided detailed indicators in the below boxes. These are not rigid and act purely as examples. They aim to provide practitioners with an overarching view on what level of support and intervention a family may need.

For further assistance and examples please refer to The London Child Protection Procedures:
<http://www.londoncpc.co.uk/>

Level 1 – Universal

CHILD DEVELOPMENT FACTORS	FAMILY AND ENVIRONMENT FACTORS	PARENTING FACTORS
<p>Learning and Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milestones met • Achieving key stages • Good attendance at school & college <p>Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthy diet • Good physical & mental health • Registered with Doctor & Dentist <p>Identity, social and behaviour</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive relationships with peers • Secure sense of self and abilities • Able to adhere to boundaries and show self-control • Child is gaining independent life skills <p>Family and social relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child is learning practical and emotional skills from their family • Good relationship with their siblings and extended family 	<p>Family and well being</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child is brought up in a positive and safe environment • Supportive family relationships <p>Housing, employment and finance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They offer a clean and warm home • Able to financially support their child/children • Parents are able to manage work or unemployment arrangements in a positive way <p>Social</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good social and age appropriate friendship networks • Family is integrated within the community <p>Community Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular use of age appropriate local activities 	<p>Basic care, safety and protection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents offer a stable and secure home • Meet all the child's health needs • Provide all food & drink • Protect a child from danger & harm <p>Emotional necessities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents meet the emotional needs of their child • Provide secure and caring parenting • Promotes cognitive development • Parents support education aspirations of the child • Supports a young person joining the work force • Provide appropriate guidance <p>Boundaries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear and set boundaries are in place • Young people have curfews

Level 2 – Children and families with additional needs

CHILD DEVELOPMENT FACTORS	FAMILY AND ENVIRONMENT FACTORS	PARENTING FACTORS
<p>Learning and Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mild learning or behavioural difficulties• Lacks interest in education and school activities• Few or no qualifications or NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) Mild learning or behavioural difficulties emerging, poor concentration, lack of interest in education and other school activities <p>Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mild physical or mental health condition or disability• Missing immunisations checks• Young person frequently using drugs and alcohol• No physical activity <p>Identity, social and behaviour</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Low level mental health or emotional issues requiring intervention• Difficulties with peer group, family or other relationships• Early onset of sexual activity• Young person missing from home: repeated incidents• Victim or perpetrator of bullying or discrimination• Early sexual activity (under 13/14 years)• Experimentation with tobacco, alcohol or illegal drugs	<p>Family and well being</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parents or carers have relationship difficulties which affect the child• Parents request advice to manage their child's behaviour• Child affected by difficult family relationships or bullying• Parent or carer has physical or mental health difficulties that may affect the child• Child is a young carer <p>Family and social relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Insufficient facilities to meet need e.g. transport or access issues• Family requires advice regarding social exclusion• Family has limited support or is new to the area• Child is associating with anti-social or criminally active peers• Limited access to contraceptive or and sexual health advice, information and services	<p>Basic care, safety and protection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parent occasionally lacks provision for food, drinks• Parental learning difficulties, substance misuse or mental health issues that may be impacting the needs of a child <p>Emotional necessities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parents often lack emotional warmth and can be overly critical <p>Self – Care and Independence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of age appropriate independent living skills that increase vulnerability to social exclusion <p>Housing, employment and finance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overcrowding Families affected by low income or unemployment <p>Guidance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parents do not support child to reach educational potential• Young person is not supported to join the labour market• Parents have inconsistent boundaries or lack of routine in the home• Lack of response to concerns raised regarding child• History of parenting difficulties with siblings, e.g. exclusion

Level 3 – Children and families with complex multiple needs

CHILD DEVELOPMENT FACTORS	FAMILY AND ENVIRONMENT FACTORS	PARENTING FACTORS
<p>Learning and Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chronic or poor nursery/school attendance/punctuality/poor home and nursery or school link/no parental support for education• Short term exclusion or at risk of permanent exclusion, persistent truanting or no education provision• Statement of Special Education Needs or on-going difficulty with learning and development• No access to books, toys or education materials <p>Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Disability requiring specialist support to be maintained in mainstream setting• Developmental milestones are unlikely to be met/concerns about weight, dental decay, and language development delays• Child has some chronic/recurring health problems: not treated or badly managed/missed appointments• Unsafe sexual activity, teenage pregnancy/smokes/uses illegal substances• Teenage pregnancy or parent <p>Identity, social and behaviour</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Child finds it difficult to cope with or express emotions• Family relationships or with other adults are a cause for concern• Significant poor peer relationships/difficult sustaining relationships/issues of attachment/isolation• Appears regularly anxious or with low self-esteem, significantly impacting on all relationships• Mental health issues emerging requiring specialist intervention• Subject to persistent discrimination or harm from crime• Disruptive/challenging/high risk behaviour at school, home or in the neighbourhood which is unresponsive to level one and two interventions (e.g. running away, underage sex, problematic and escalating drug use)• Concerns regarding behaviour development and the development of appropriate social skills• Starting to commit offences or coming to notice of the police on a regular basis/re-offend/victim of crime• Received fixed penalty notice/reprimand or warning, or triage intervention• Evidence of disregard to risk• Gang affiliation• Repeated incidents of missing from home, care or school	<p>Family and well being</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Acrimonious divorce/separation impacting on child• Risk of relationship breakdown with parent and the child or young person• Young carers/children of prisoners• Privately fostered children• Persistent relationship difficulties• Family has poor relationship with extended family/no support network <p>Housing, employment and finance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Family requires support services as a result of social exclusion or no access to local facilities• Housing conditions impacting directly on children, including severe overcrowding• Children are experiencing frequent moves• Parents or carers have been assessed as intentionally homeless/homeless unaccompanied minors• Extreme poverty impacting directly on welfare of children• Young person aged 16/17 presents as homeless and to be assessed under “youth homelessness” framework <p>Self – Care and Independence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of age appropriate independent living skills, likely to impair development or lead to alienation from peers	<p>Basic care, safety and protection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Physical care or supervisions of child is inadequate• Parental learning disability, substance misuse, mental health or lifestyle which is impacting on parent’s ability to meet the needs of the child• Level 3 on Barnardo’s Domestic Violence Matrix <p>Emotional necessities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inconsistent parenting impairing emotional or behavioural development

Level 4 – Children and families with acute needs

CHILD DEVELOPMENT FACTORS	FAMILY AND ENVIRONMENT FACTORS	PARENTING FACTORS
<p>Learning and Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chronic or poor nursery/school attendance/punctuality/poor home and nursery or school link/ no parental support for education• Short term exclusion or at risk of permanent exclusion, persistent truanting or no education provision <p>Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• High level disability which cannot be maintained in a mainstream setting• Serious physical and emotional health problems• Refusing medical care placing child's health and development at significant risk• Persistent and high risk substance misuse/dangerous sexual activity and/or early teenage pregnancy/sexual exploitation/sexual abuse/self-harming• Non-accidental injury• Female genital mutilation <p>Identity, social and behaviour</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social, emotional, behavioural and identity• Subject to or at risk of physical, emotional or sexual abuse or neglect• Severe and complex learning difficulties requiring residential• educational provision• Severe emotional/behavioural challenges resulting in serious risk to the child and others• Goes missing for long periods of time or on a frequent basis• Victim of sexual abuse, exploitation and underage sex which is considered abusive• Sexual exploitation of a child/young person including prostitution/forced involvement in sexual activity• Forced marriage of a child• Challenging behaviour resulting in serious risk to the child or others• Complex mental health issues requiring specialist intervention including in-patient treatment• Failure or rejection to address serious (re)offending behaviour, as well as being part of a gang• Distorted self-image• Young person experiencing current harm through their use of substances <p>Self – Care and Independence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Self-care and independence• Severe lack of age appropriate independent living skills likely to result in significant harm e.g. bullying, isolation, inappropriate self-presentation• Lack of age appropriate independent living skills, likely to impair development or lead to alienation from peers	<p>Family and well being</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parents are unable to care for the child• Suspicion of physical, emotional, sexual abuse or neglect• Children who need to be looked after outside of their own family <p>Housing, employment and finance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• No fixed abode or homeless or imminently homeless/housing conditions are posing a serious threat to the welfare• Family with a lack of access to finance and living in extreme poverty• Unable to restrict access to the family home from dangerous adults <p>Social and community resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Child or family at immediate risk due to harassment or discrimination• No access to community resources	<p>Basic care, safety and protection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Level 4 of the Barnardo's Domestic Violence Matrix• Parents unable to provide 'good enough' parenting placing child's development at significant risk• Parents are believed to have caused physical injury to a child• Chronic and serious domestic abuse directly or indirectly involving a child• Where previous children placed at risk by parents actions <p>Emotional necessities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evidence of emotionally abusive relationships placing child's development at significant risk <p>Guidance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• An absence of effective parental boundaries placing child's development at significant risk• Child beyond parental/ carer's control/offending/ has no one to look after them• Parent displays or condones serious anti-social behaviour• within the community

Local Assessment Protocol

This section covers the Assessment protocol for professionals who come into contact with Children and families and have a concern about a child or young person in the London Borough of Havering.

Understanding how our local threshold and assessment protocols work, will help professionals to be clear about what to expect from family services and will enable services to work cohesively to create safety and stability for children and young people.

For some areas of need, specialist tools may be required such as the Neglect toolkit and the CAADA DASH domestic violence risk assessment tool. These are available on the LSCB website at <http://www.londonscb.gov.uk/>

Havering has a fully integrated Multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) for all contacts and referrals; we are also able to share a proportionate amount of Information at an early stage. This service is for contacting Family Services to refer a child or consult with the team about doing so.

MASH contact details

Multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH)

Phone: Monday - Friday (9am - 5pm) 01708 433 222

Out of hours/weekends 01708 433 999

Email: tmash@havering.gov.uk

ASSESSMENT OUTLINE

All assessments can follow the framework tool when working with children and their families, the below list helps to understand the assessment process and the level of information required.

- All assessments should identify strengths within the family and what is working well
- Meet the children and young people directly in the family and identify through observation and face-to-face their views, wishes, concerns and feelings within their family
- The capacity of the parents to meet the child's needs
- Assess what changes are required to ensure a child's long term safety, well-being and stability
- Use a whole family approach which takes into account of the perspectives of family and extended family, professionals and naturally occurring networks
- Work with all family members to ensure high levels of communication and that all explanations are free from professional jargon
- Identify if specialist services are required and what needs to happen for services to withdraw
- Assessments should be shared in writing with families.

Assessment Framework

The Assessment framework is a useful tool when assessing children and families; it will help to identify their level of need but is not conclusive.

CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

- Health
- Education
- Emotional and Behavioral Development
- Identity
- Family and Social Relationships
- Social Presentation
- Self-Care Skills

PARENTING CAPACITY

- Basic care
- Ensuring Safety
- Emotional Warmth
- Stimulation
- Guidance and Boundaries
- Stability



FAMILY AND ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

Family History and Functioning

- Wider Family
- Housing
- Employment

Income

- Family's Social Integration
- Community Resources

Level 1 Universal	Level 2 Early Help and Targeted Support	Level 3 Child in Need	Level 4 Child Protection
Schools, Primary Health Care, Early Years Provision, Youth Projects.	<p>Assessments undertaken using a range of assessment tools.</p> <p>Inconsultation with qualified social worker located in or available to early help services.</p> <p>Recorded on case file.</p> <p>May result in referral to another service, a family Support plan or may escalate to children's social work services depending on the level of risk and need identified.</p>	<p>Assessment completed within 45 days.</p> <p>Undertaken by Qualified Social Worker.</p> <p>Recorded on case file.</p> <p>May result in referral to another service, a Child In Need plan, Early Help plan, offer of Looked after Services depending on level of need and risk identified.</p> <p>May trigger Child Protection investigation if not undertaken as part of such an investigation already.</p>	<p>Child protection Enquiry completed within 15 working days, and assessment initiated in parallel and completed within 45 days.</p> <p>Undertaken by Qualified Social Worker.</p> <p>Recorded on case file.</p> <p>May result in a Child Protection plan. May result in a decision to offer Looked After Services either through legal proceedings or with parental consent or following the use of Police Powers of protection.</p>

Access to levels 2,3,4 through our referral method

The levels have been broken down to list the criteria of how each assessment will be undertaken and completed.

Level 1 and 2 Universal and Early help

- An assessment will be undertaken with the whole family to gain a full view of a child's circumstances and functioning in order to coordinate an offer of early help to prevent future problems arising or deterioration in the current situation
- At these levels a range of staff across universal and specialist fields can undertake an Early Help assessment
- Havering Council uses the Common Assessment framework and the family star assessment when working with families.
- Upon completion of the assessment it may be decided that the level of risk and need warrants support from the early help team. These will result in a family support plan being agreed
- If the assessment shows that no help or support is required, it will be recorded as NFA
- If the level indicates a greater risk or need then a further assessment by a qualified social will need to be undertaken
- If during the assessment it is identified that a child needs support immediately, early help will not be delayed and the process can begin before completion

Level 3 Child in Need Assessment

- Assessments will be undertaken by a Qualified Social Worker and the social worker will be supervised by an experienced and Qualified Social Work Manager
- An assessment will be undertaken where the presenting information suggests that a child or young person may be in need of services to achieve a reasonable standard of health or development, and there needs to be an assessment to identify that child's needs in detail
- Be carried out alongside a Child Protection investigation whether or not there is a decision to proceed to initial child protection case conference
- An assessment will be carried out where there has been a decision to commence care proceedings because of significant harm to a child or young person. Delivering supportive services will not be delayed if it is obvious before the end of the assessment that services are required to support child's safety and stability and the quality of parenting within the family
- Assessments will be undertaken where the level of need and risk meets level 3 criteria 'Complex needs' as defined in the Threshold of Need document and should take no longer than 45 days to complete from referral to authorisation
- A referral for a Young Carer will enter at Level 3, this is child or young person (under 18 years old), whose life is significantly affected because of the need to care for a family member who is ill, has a disability or mental illness or is affected by substance abuse(including alcohol) or other debilitating illness

Level 4 Child Protection Investigations

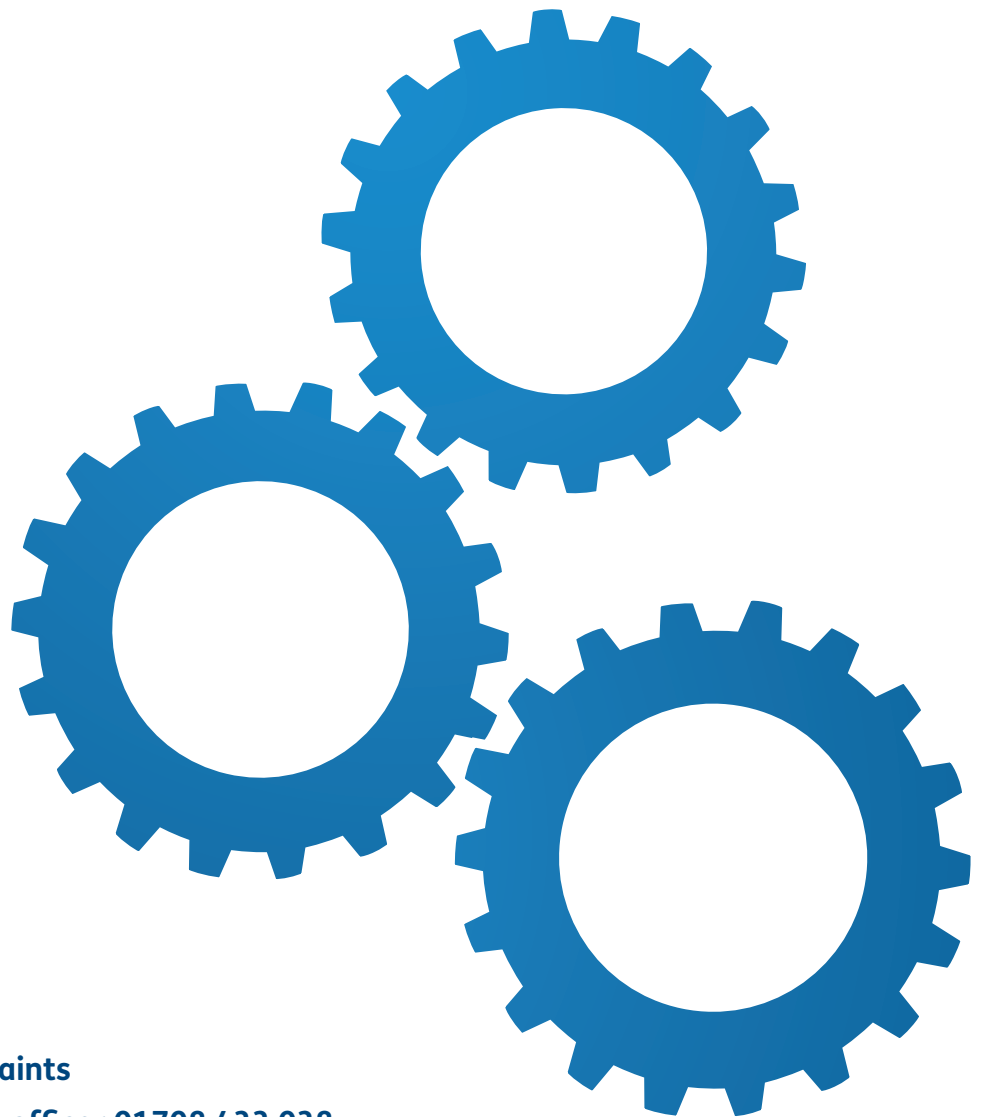
- All child protection investigations will: Be completed within 15 working days of referral by a qualified and experienced social worker who will be supervised by an experienced and qualified social work manager
- Identify the dangers for the children. Identify what needs to happen, (if anything), to secure immediate safety, including for example, safety planning or temporary placement away from home with a relative or foster carer
- Be planned through initial and review strategy meetings with the involvement of police and health professionals. Have MASH check information available to initial and review strategy meetings. Trigger a Child in Need assessment
- Be carried out by Family Services alone (called a single agency investigation), or by family services and officers from the Metropolitan Police Child Abuse Investigation Team (called a joint investigation)
- Whether an investigation is to be joint or single agency will be decided in the initial strategy discussion at the start of the investigation process. Include a video-taped interview with a child carried out by a specially trained social worker and police officer where it is thought a crime may have been committed as part of the mistreatment of the child and that the child may have information that may count as evidence in a prosecution. An Investigation may include a medical examination by a paediatrician
- Children and young people involved in the youth justice system enter at level 4 and their assessments will be undertaken by Social workers who have specialist knowledge. The assessment will engage with the young person, family, carers and a range of sources, examples being, School, Police and health to gain a full understanding of the child's or young person's offending and contributing factors

Once assessments are completed, they need to be shared with parents/carers/families in writing; Explaining the reasons for the assessment or investigation. All outcomes require a clear explanation in a language that the family can understand, using family or children's terms that will enhance understanding for the receiver. Explanations should be free from professional jargon, acronyms and abstractions.

Complaints

If services users are not happy with the service they have received, or the way they have been treated, they should first talk to a member of the team or their manager.

They will look into concerns and try to correct them quickly: however, if service users remain unhappy, they can use the complaint details below to pursue a formal complaint.



Contact details

www.havering.gov.uk/complaints

Phone: children's complaints officer 01708 433 038

Email: social_services_info_complaints@havering.gov.uk

