



Response to Request for Information

Reference FOI 003422
Date 02 April 2019

Child Protection Policy and Procedures

Request:

Please could I have a copy of the Child Protection policy and procedures which are followed by your LA, including any flowcharts you have produced.

I am interested in the steps taken from a child being placed under Section 20, which then proceeds through to Section 47 enquiry and the subsequent arrangements/processes, policy and procedures for going to Family Court, placement with foster carers etc.

If you have a flowchart, showing the trigger points etc that would be very helpful to me.

[In response to your request, please find our response below:](#)

Children & Young People

Social Work Assessment

PURPOSE:

This Policy and Procedure is built on the right of all children who may be in need as defined in the Children Act to have an up-to-date social work assessment of their needs including the views of parents/carers, other professionals and of the child(ren) or young person themselves to enable the delivery of Services as appropriate.

Policy and Procedure

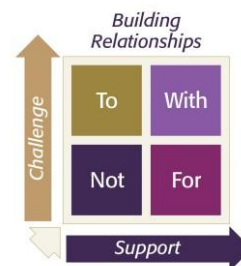
Approved by – Children and Young People Management Team
17.08.2018

Published – August 2018

Review Date – August 2020

RESTORATIVE PRACTICE

All contact and work received by families from the City of Wolverhampton Council within the City will be based around restorative practice principles. This is to ensure we improve the life outcomes for all children, young people and families we work with. In Wolverhampton we intend to use restorative principles and behaviours with colleagues as well as children and families, to help develop positive working relationships.



| REVIEW LOG | | | |
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| Date | Version | Comments | Approved by |
| | 1.0 | Policy previously part of the Tri-X Manual | |
| Dec 2013 | 1.1 | Policy reviewed and amended to reflect new CareFirst Assessment Form (incorporating IA/Core) and the new 45 working day timescale. The Looked After Children Social Care Policy has also been incorporated into this document. | Children, Young People & Families Management Team (12.12.13) |
| March 2015 | 1.2 | Added to ensure consent is gained with parents to contact agencies for information they hold on the child/family. | Children & Young People Management Team (May 2016) |
| July 2016 | 1.3 | Policy amended to reflect where a 15 day assessment is completed and more information is required a new full 45 day assessment must be triggered and undertaken. | Children & Young People Management Team (18.08.16) |
| March 2018 | 1.4 | Added that for CIN cases children will be seen within 5 days of referral or step up from early intervention. Added: clear timescales for the review of a SW Assessment. | Children & Young People Management Team (29.03.18) |
| August 2018 | 1.5 | Added: Section 3.6-Sensitive Health Information | |

| CONSULTATION |
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| <p>The following people have been consulted on this policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Head of Child Protection/Child in Need - Principal Social Worker - Children & Young People Management Team - MASH Manager |

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- 6.0 Sharing Assessments/Outcomes with the Family**

Appendices

- A Assessment Flowchart for Social Work Assessment with and without Child Protection Enquiries (this does not apply to LAC)**
- B Assessment Agreement**

1.0 **INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of a Social Work Assessment is to conduct an assessment of the child/young person's needs, which will inform decisions about their care plan and the services should be provided.

This Policy is divided into the three sections Social Work Assessments (without Child Protection Enquiry), Social Work Assessments (with Child Protection Enquiry) and Social Work Assessment (for Looked After Children)

Within Wolverhampton we have two types of Assessment:

- Social Work Assessment
- Child Protection Enquiry Assessment (CPEA)

A Social Work Assessment is allocated with either a 15 or 40 day timescale depending on the apparent complexity. The assessment will assess the child's needs and inform decision about the services should be provided to meet the identified unmet needs.

A Child Protection Enquiry Assessment combines both the Section 47 enquiry and assessment. The assessment is a thorough and in depth assessment on matters where a child or young person is thought to be or has suffered significant harm which have been the subject of the enquiry.

2.0 **LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK**

The following legislation/guidance underpins this Policy:

- The Children Act 1989 Sections 17 and 47;
- The Framework for Assessment for Children in Need and their Families

3.0 **SOCIAL WORK) ASSESSMENT**

3.1 **Criteria for the Social Work Assessment**

These procedures apply to any Social Work Assessment completed for any child or young person, whose needs are of a moderate to high level, at Level 4 or above of the [Wolverhampton Threshold Policy/Model](#) but not those children thought to be suffering or likely to suffer from Significant Harm.

3.2 **Purpose of the Social Work Assessment(without Child Protection Enquiry)**

The purpose of the Social Work Assessment is to conduct an in depth assessment of the child's needs and to inform decisions about the services should be provided to meet the identified unmet needs.

3.3 **Timescales of the Social Work Assessment (without Child Protection Enquiry)**

At the point of allocating the Social Work Assessment the Manager, depending on the apparent complexity, will indicate a timescale for completion of the assessment this will either be 15 days or 40 days.

All Social Work Assessment must be concluded within a maximum of 45 working days from the date the referral is accepted (normally within 24 hours of a referral being received).

The child or young person must be seen by the social worker conducting the assessment within 5 days from the date of referral or step up from early intervention. This must be clearly recorded within the Social Work Assessment Form on CareFirst.

CIN cases children will be seen within 5 days of referral

A family meeting must be held during the assessment period and should therefore be held within 45 days of a new case allocation. See Family Meeting procedure.

A Social Work Assessment must be updated/reviewed when a child/young persons circumstances change significantly or when the care plan needs to change (see Section 3.8).

3.4 Steps of Support Sessions

Steps of support sessions provide continuing support to the allocated social worker whilst they are undertaking the Social Work Assessment. The steps of support sessions are in three stages as outlined below:

- **Step one**

To be undertaken within 2 working days of the referral being allocated.

Discuss the referral, action taken so far and the process for the on-going assessment. This will include:

- agreeing key issues
- sources of information and seeking the child's wishes and feelings

Discussion to be written up as a Management discussion on CareFirst.

Date for stage two discussion (12 -14 days from referral) set.

Social Care Agreement (Appendix B) to be completed and signed to agree the plan for assessing the case.

- **Step 2**

To be undertaken within 12 -14 days of the referral being received.

For assessment to be concluded within 15 days or a Child Protection Enquiry Assessment the following applies:

Discuss progress and outcomes of the Social Work Assessment. This will include:

- Is the genogram, ecomap and chronology completed?
- Analysis of the information
- Conclusions and agreed outcomes

Discussion to be written up as a Management decision on CareFirst.

For assessments to be concluded within 40 days the following applies:

Discuss the Social Work Assessment. This will include:

- How far is the Social Worker with completing the genogram, ecomap and chronology?
- Agree specific scales and questionnaires and research/theory to be drawn upon
- Any unexpected findings
- Whether any CP issues have been uncovered during the assessment

Discussion to be written up as Management decision on CareFirst.

Date set for stage three discussion (35- 38 working days from referral)

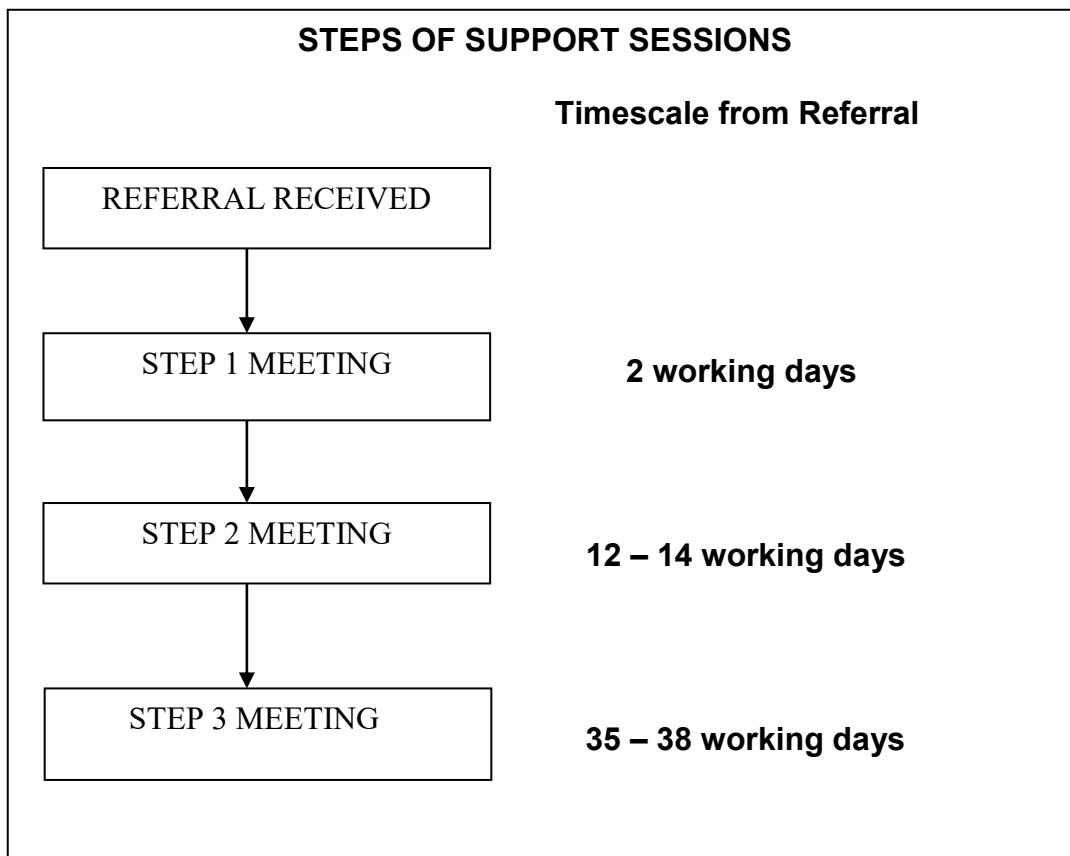
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To be undertaken between 35 – 38 days from referral being received.

Discuss progress and outcomes of the Social Work Assessment. This will include:

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- Analysis of the information
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3.5 Process of the Social Work Assessment.

At the beginning of the Social Work Assessment the parameters of the assessment work will be clarified and agreed with the child and family and put into writing. At this point consent must be gained from parents to enable us to contact other agencies involved with them to obtain information they hold on them. If parents refuse consent then the social worker must consider if any action is required to overrule the refusal of consent to safeguard the child. Consent must be gained using the Social Care Consent Form. The consent form must then be uploaded to the document hub.

The child or young person must be seen by the social worker conducting the assessment within 5 days from the date of referral or step up from early intervention. This must be clearly recorded within the Social Work Assessment Form on CareFirst.

A family meeting must be held during the assessment period and should therefore be held within 45 days of a new case allocation. See Family Meeting Procedure.

See section 3.7 Recording, for details of the records that should be completed.

If the child appears to have any disabilities, the Disabled Children and Young People's 0-25 Team must be consulted.

The assessment method will vary dependent on the child and family's circumstances but opportunities to work directly with the child and the child's family must be incorporated at every stage.

Any existing assessments or the views of other service providers/agencies known to the child/family should be integrated into the Social Work Assessment.

Where information has already been gathered by other agencies as part of their assessments, there is no need to duplicate the information gathering although the social worker should check with the child and family that the information gained from the other agencies is correct. The social worker will still need to complete the Social Work Assessment having regard to its specific purpose.

Where the child has previously lived overseas (outside the UK) or members of the family have been in the armed forces every reasonable effort should be made to obtain information in relation to that period.

It is possible that the obtaining of such information may take more than 45 days, but the timescales of the Assessment should not be compromised unless approved by a Manager. Under normal circumstances, the assessment should be completed within the required timescale and, if information of concern comes to light later, the manager must consider what actions to take.

During the course of the Social Work Assessment it may be necessary to provide or refer the child for services; where the need for services is clearly identified, their provision should not wait for the completion of the assessment.

If, during a Social Work Assessment, information comes to light that suggests that a child is suffering or likely to suffer Significant Harm, a Strategy Discussion/Meeting must be convened with a view to incorporating a Child Protection Enquiry into the Social Work Assessment.

Where attempts to engage the child and parent in the Social Work Assessment are unsuccessful, the social worker and manager must consider what action or approach is required to safeguard the child and take legal advice as necessary.

3.6 Sensitive Health Information

Sensitive information ordinarily remaining confidential (e.g. HIV diagnosis, pregnancy miscarriage, mental health condition, life limiting condition etc.) should only be recorded and disclosed in Social Work Reports if it has direct significance for the safety of the child.

3.7 Outcome of the Social Work Assessment

During the course and upon completion of the Social Work Assessment it will be necessary to decide the services that should be provided.

The services that will be appropriate will be different for each child, depending on his/her needs.

Where the Social Work Assessment concludes that it may be appropriate for the child to be Looked After, a Care Plan and Placement Information Record will be required.

3.8 Recording of the Social Work Assessment

The Social Work Assessment must be recorded on the Assessment form on CareFirst.

3.9 Reviewing/updating the Social Work Assessment

The Social Work Assessment needs to be reviewed/updated when a child or young persons circumstances change significantly or when the Care Plan needs to change this is regardless of status.

Where a decision is made to step a case up or down the Assessment should be updated.

For CIN and CP cases as a minimum an Assessment must be reviewed and updated on a 6 monthly basis alongside a clear review of threshold.

For LAC cases as a minimum an Assessment must be reviewed and updated on an annual basis.

The return home of a child or young person who is accommodated under Section 20 must be on the basis of an up-to-date assessment and the establishment of a Child in Need Plan. Where a parent withdraws agreement to Section 20 Accommodation without notice but no emergency action is considered necessary, then a new Assessment should be undertaken as soon as possible and a new Child in Need Plan established.

| Minimum 6 monthly Review of Assessment | Minimum 6 monthly Review of Assessment | Minimum Annual Review of Assessment |
|--|--|---|
| Or immediately in the following scenarios: | Or immediately in the following scenarios: | Or immediately in the following scenarios: |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Major transitional event - Changes in circumstances - Closure - Step down | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Major transitional event - Changes in circumstances - Closure - Step down | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Transitional arrangements (school change/ placement move etc.) - Changes in circumstances - Return home |

4.0 CHILD PROTECTION ENQUIRY ASSESSMENT (CPEA)

4.1 Criteria for the Child Protection Enquiry Assessment (CPEA)

This procedure is for a Child Protection Enquiry Assessment combines both the Section 47 enquiry and assessment. The assessment is a thorough and in depth assessment on matters concerning risk or harm which have been the subject of the enquiry.

It is conducted upon children in need believed to be suffering or likely to suffer from Significant Harm, See Wolverhampton's Safeguarding Children's Board, Section 47 Enquiries/Assessment procedures. At this point consent should be gained from parents to enable us to contact other agencies involved with them to obtain information they hold on them. If parents refuse consent then the social worker must consider if any action is required to overrule the refusal of consent to safeguard the child. Consent must be gained using the Social Consent Form. The consent form must then be uploaded to the document hub.

4.2 Purpose of the Child Protection Enquiry Assessment

The purpose of the Child Protection Enquiry Assessment is to determine whether there is a continuing risk of Significant Harm to the child.

A Child Protection Enquiry, as required by [Wolverhampton Safeguarding Children's Board Procedures](#), is incorporated into this Assessment.

4.3 Timescales of the Child Protection Enquiry Assessment

It is expected the Child Protection Enquiry Assessment will be concluded in time for the Initial Child Protection Conference, which is normally convened within 15 days of the Strategy Discussion. The ability to achieve this will depend on the complexity and the urgency of the case.

If the Child Protection Enquiry does not result in a Child Protection Conference, the Assessment must be completed or ended within 15 days of the Strategy Discussion.

Where a 15 day Assessment is undertaken and then proceeds to an Initial Child Protection Conference it is expected a new full 45 day Assessment will be triggered immediately afterwards (next working day) to gather more in depth information.

A Social Work Assessment must be updated/reviewed when a child/young persons circumstances change significantly or when the care plan needs to change (see Section 4.8).

Assessments should be updated between review child protection conferences these should commence the next working day after the conference. It is the responsibility of the Social Work Unit Manager to discuss this with the Social Worker, trigger the assessment on CareFirst and initiate Steps of Support.

4.4 Steps of Support

See Section 3.4. Please note that additional steps of support sessions should be held where required.

4.5 Process of the Child Protection Enquiry Assessment

The Child Protection Enquiry Assessment will be completed by the Social Worker; enquiries may be carried out either as a single agency or jointly with a police officer. The process of gathering information is as set out in **Paragraph 2.4** for the Social Work Assessment see **Wolverhampton Safeguarding Children's Board, Section 47 Enquiries/Core Assessments Procedure**.

Detail of the procedures for Child Protection Enquiries, including the arrangements for ABE or other interviews and medical assessments are contained in the [Wolverhampton LSCB's Procedures](#). If the child appears to have any disabilities, the 0-25 Disabled Children and Young People's Team must be consulted.

Where the child has previously lived overseas (outside the UK) or members of the family have been in the armed forces information should be obtained in relation to that period. See keywords Forces Children or Overseas Children for guidance on obtaining this information.

Note re timescales: it is possible that the obtaining of such information may take more than timescales set, but the timescales should not be compromised unless the manager approves it. Under normal circumstances, the assessment should be completed within the required timescale and, if information of concern comes to light later, the manager must consider what actions to take.

Where attempts to engage the child and parent in the Assessment are unsuccessful, the social worker and manager must consider what action or approach is required to safeguard the child and take legal advice as necessary.

4.6 Outcome of the Child Protection Enquiry Assessment

All reasonable efforts should be made to obtain sufficient information to conclude the Assessment in time for the Initial Child Protection Conference, which is normally convened within 15 days of the Strategy Discussion (see **Wolverhampton Safeguarding Children's Board, Section 47 Enquiries Procedure**)[Link](#). However, the ability to achieve this will depend on the complexity and the urgency of the case. It may be necessary for the Assessment to continue beyond the Initial Child Protection Conference. Where this is the case it is expected a new full 45 day Assessment will be triggered immediately afterward the Initial Child Protection Conference to gather more in depth assessment information.

See the following procedures:

- [Wolverhampton Safeguarding Children Board Section 47 Enquiries](#)
- [Wolverhampton Safeguarding Children Board Strategy Discussion Procedures](#)
- [Wolverhampton Safeguarding Children Board Initial Child Protection Conferences](#)

Following a Child Protection Enquiry Assessment a number of outcomes may take place or be authorised by the manager; they are:

1. That an Initial Child Protection Conference is convened and a decision reached to make the child subject to a Child Protection Plan, in which case, a Core Group will be established (10 days from the point of conference) to formulate the Plan. In these circumstances the manager must consider whether or not sufficient information has been obtained. If not, it can continue up to a maximum of 45 days, at which point the Child Protection Plan may be amended in the light of its findings.
2. That an Initial Child Protection Conference is convened but the child is not made subject to a Child Protection Plan.
3. That there are strong indicators that Significant Harm has not taken place and is not likely to; in which case, the manager may authorise that an Initial Child Protection Conference is not convened. In these circumstances the manager must consider whether or not to further the Assessment (please note the assessment must be concluded within 45 days).

During the course and upon completion of the Child Protection Enquiry Assessment, it will be necessary to decide the services should be provided. Even where an assessment concludes that there is no need for social work involvement, the manager must consider whether the provision of other services is necessary and agree with the social worker what steps need to be taken to arrange for these to be delivered. If the child appears to have disabilities, the Disabled Children & Young People's Team must be consulted with a view to deciding whether it is necessary to transfer the case.

4.7 Recording of the Child Protection Enquiry Assessment

During the course of the Assessment, a Child Protection Enquiry Assessment on CareFirst must be completed.

Where the Social Work Assessment concludes that it may be appropriate for the child to be Looked After, a Care Plan and Placement Information Record will be required.

See Care Plans Guidance and see Placement Information Records Guidance.

Otherwise, another Relevant Children's Plan should be drawn up if services are provided.

4.8 Reviewing/updating the Child Protection Enquiry Assessment

A new or further child protection enquiry should be completed if there is another instance/even when it is deemed that the child or young person is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.

The return home of a child or young person who is accommodated under Section 20 should be on the basis of an up-to-date assessment and the establishment of a Child in Need Plan. Where a parent withdraws agreement to Section 20 Accommodation without notice but no emergency action is considered necessary, then a new Social Work Assessment should be undertaken as soon as possible and a new Child in Need Plan established.

5.0 SOCIAL WORK ASSESSMENT FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

Initially an Assessment should be concluded within a maximum of 45 working days of the child becoming looked after (where one has not already been completed prior to the child or young person becoming looked after). Dependent on the nature of the case the assessment might need to be concluded sooner.

Any further assessments undertaken must be completed within 45 working days.

Where a child is looked after and has a plan of long term fostering, permanence or is subject to placement with parents a comprehensive full assessment must be conducted annually.

In addition the assessment should be reviewed and updated in line with the LAC review schedule.

5.1 When should an assessment be completed for Looked After Children

An Assessment for looked after children and young people should take place in the following circumstances:

- Prior to placement with Parents
- Prior to placement with Family & Friends (Connected Person)
- When an external therapeutic placement is considered
- A change in the Care Plan
- At 16 years in order to inform a Pathway Plan (see Pathway Plan Policy & Procedure)

All Looked After Children should have an assessment reviewed and updated annually.

5.2 Process of the Assessment

At the beginning of the Assessment the parameters of the assessment work will be clarified and, if possible, agreed with the child, family and carers and put into writing.

See **section 5.4: Recording**, for details of the records that should be completed.

If the child appears to be disabled, the Disabled Children & Young People's Team must be consulted to consider any specific needs arising from this.

The assessment method will vary dependent on the child and family's situation but opportunities to work directly with the child and the child's family must be incorporated at every stage.

Any existing assessments or the views of other service providers/agencies known to the child/family should be integrated into the Assessment.

Where information has already been gathered by other agencies as part of their assessments, there is no need to duplicate the information gathering although the social worker should check with the child and family that the information gained from other agencies is correct. The social worker will still need to complete the Assessment having regard to its specific purpose.

Where the child has previously lived overseas, outside the UK or members of the family have been in the armed forces information should be obtained in relation to that period.

During the course of Assessment it may be necessary to provide or refer the child for services or to commission additional specialist assessments.

5.3 Steps of Support Sessions

Steps of support sessions provide continuing support to the allocated social worker whilst they are undertaking/updating the Social Work Assessment. The steps of support sessions are in three stages as outlined below:

- **Step one**

To be undertaken within 2 working days of the referral being allocated.

Discuss the referral, action taken so far and the process for the on-going assessment. This will include:

- agreeing key issues
- sources of information and seeking the child's wishes and feelings

Discussion to be written up as a Management discussion on CareFirst.

Date for stage two discussion (12 -14 days from referral) set.

Social Care Agreement (Appendix B) to be completed and signed to agree the plan for assessing the case.

- **Step 2**

To be undertaken within 12 -14 days of the referral being received.

For assessment to be concluded within 15 days or a Child Protection Enquiry Assessment the following applies:

Discuss progress and outcomes of the Social Work Assessment. This will include:

- Is the genogram, ecomap and chronology completed?
- Analysis of the information
- Conclusions and agreed outcomes

Discussion to be written up as a Management decision on CareFirst.

For assessments to be concluded within 40 days the following applies:

Discuss how the Social Work Assessment is going. This will include:

- How far is the Social Worker with completing the genogram, ecomap and chronology?
- Agree specific scales and questionnaires and research/theory to be drawn upon
- Any unexpected findings
- Whether any CP issues have been uncovered during the assessment

Discussion to be written up as Management decision on CareFirst.

Date set for stage three discussion (35- 38 working days from referral)

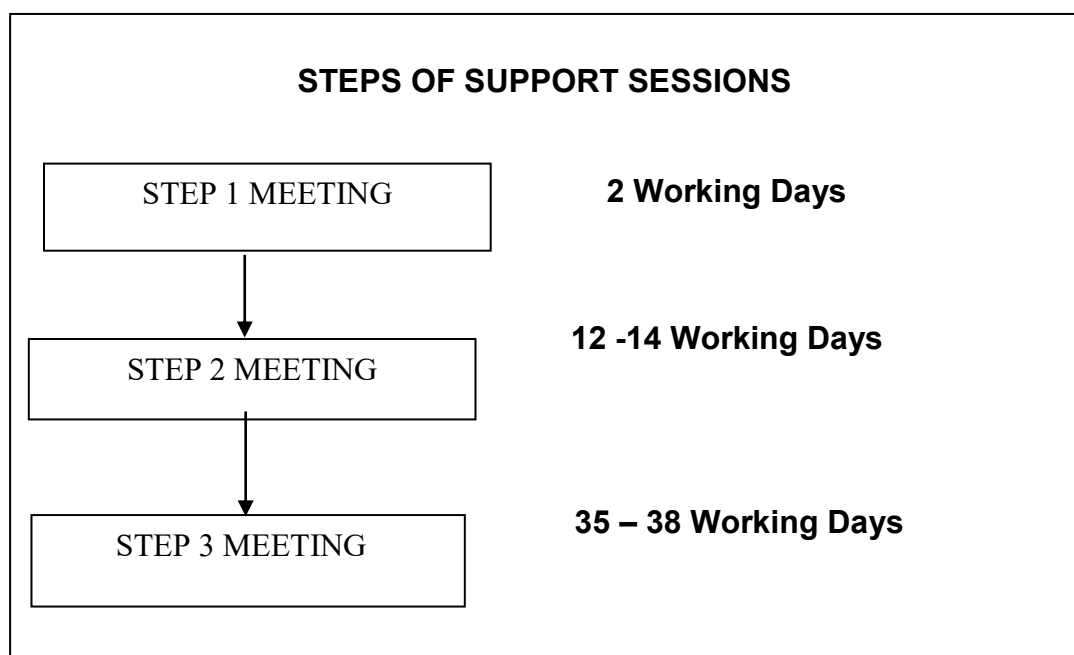
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Discuss progress and outcomes of the Social Work Assessment. This will include:

- Is the genogram, ecomap and chronology completed?
- Analysis of the information
- Conclusions and agreed outcomes

Discussion to be written up as a Management decision on CareFirst.



5.3 OUTCOME OF THE ASSESSMENT

During the course and upon completion of the Assessment it will be necessary to decide the services should be provided.

The services that will be appropriate will be different for each child or young person, depending on his/her needs.

5.4 RECORDING

The Assessment must be recorded on CareFirst using the appropriate assessment form (depending on the nature of the reason for completing the assessment (e.g. where it's in relation to a CP concern it should be the Child Protection Enquiry Assessment etc).

5.5 REVIEWS

The Assessment should be reviewed at a minimum, annually in order to ensure the Care Plan is continuing to meet the child's needs. This review does not require the completion of a new assessment unless any changes/significant events/concerns become evident then the assessment (outlined in Section 5.1) should be reviewed immediately. The social worker should check that the most recent assessment remains relevant and should record on CareFirst that this has been done.

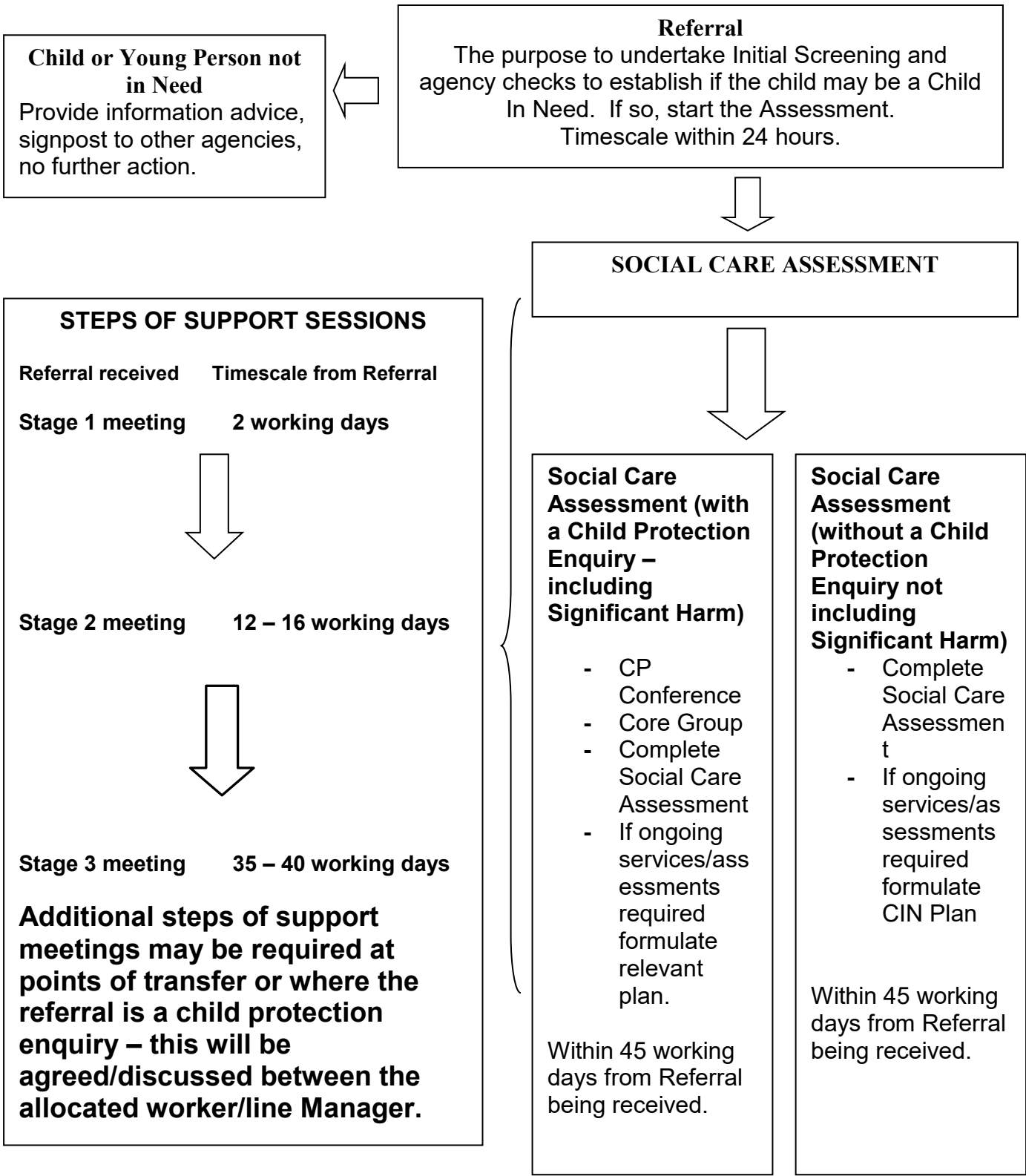
6.0 SHARING ASSESSMENTS/OUTCOMES WITH THE FAMILY

All assessments and outcomes should always be shared with the family. This is to ensure the family is clear on the outcome of the assessment and any actions/inaccuracies are identified.

This can be done either by existing planned meetings, visiting the family or inviting them into the office.

Appendix A

ASSESSMENT FLOWCHART FOR SOCIAL CARE ASSESSMENT WITH AND WITHOUT CHILD PROTECTION ENQUIRIES (THIS DOES NOT APPLY TO LAC)



Expectations of Local Authority:

Expectations of Parents/foster carer:

Wishes and Views of the Children:

Signatures

Mother

Father

Social Worker

Manager

Complaints and disagreements

If Parents have a complaint then this will be looked at first by [name & title]

If it cannot be resolved by the manager then a Formal complaint maybe made through the formal complaint's procedure, which will be supplied upon request.

Contingency Arrangements

If the assessment is not completed, or is stopped by either the family or the workers, then a meeting will be called immediately to decide what will happen.

At all times [child's name] must be protected from risk of significant harm, and action will be taken to ensure this.

What will happen to the Social Work Assessment?

The Completed Social Work Assessment will be discussed with the parents after the contents have been discussed they will be given a copy within _____ days. Any disagreements they have will be recorded at the end of the assessment.

Children & Young People

Social Work Assessment

PURPOSE:

This Policy and Procedure is built on the right of all children who may be in need as defined in the Children Act to have an up-to-date social work assessment of their needs including the views of parents/carers, other professionals and of the child(ren) or young person themselves to enable the delivery of Services as appropriate.

Policy and Procedure

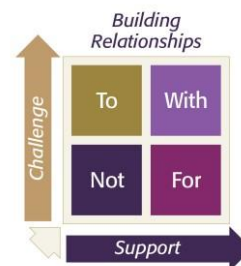
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| CONSULTATION |
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- The Framework for Assessment for Children in Need and their Families

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The purpose of the Social Work Assessment is to conduct an in depth assessment of the child's needs and to inform decisions about the services should be provided to meet the identified unmet needs.

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The child or young person must be seen by the social worker conducting the assessment within 5 days from the date of referral or step up from early intervention. This must be clearly recorded within the Social Work Assessment Form on CareFirst.

CIN cases children will be seen within 5 days of referral

A family meeting must be held during the assessment period and should therefore be held within 45 days of a new case allocation. See Family Meeting procedure.

A Social Work Assessment must be updated/reviewed when a child/young persons circumstances change significantly or when the care plan needs to change (see Section 3.8).

3.4 Steps of Support Sessions

Steps of support sessions provide continuing support to the allocated social worker whilst they are undertaking the Social Work Assessment. The steps of support sessions are in three stages as outlined below:

- **Step one**

To be undertaken within 2 working days of the referral being allocated.

Discuss the referral, action taken so far and the process for the on-going assessment. This will include:

- agreeing key issues
- sources of information and seeking the child's wishes and feelings

Discussion to be written up as a Management discussion on CareFirst.

Date for stage two discussion (12 -14 days from referral) set.

Social Care Agreement (Appendix B) to be completed and signed to agree the plan for assessing the case.

- **Step 2**

To be undertaken within 12 -14 days of the referral being received.

For assessment to be concluded within 15 days or a Child Protection Enquiry Assessment the following applies:

Discuss progress and outcomes of the Social Work Assessment. This will include:

- Is the genogram, ecomap and chronology completed?
- Analysis of the information
- Conclusions and agreed outcomes

Discussion to be written up as a Management decision on CareFirst.

For assessments to be concluded within 40 days the following applies:

Discuss the Social Work Assessment. This will include:

- How far is the Social Worker with completing the genogram, ecomap and chronology?
- Agree specific scales and questionnaires and research/theory to be drawn upon
- Any unexpected findings
- Whether any CP issues have been uncovered during the assessment

Discussion to be written up as Management decision on CareFirst.

Date set for stage three discussion (35- 38 working days from referral)

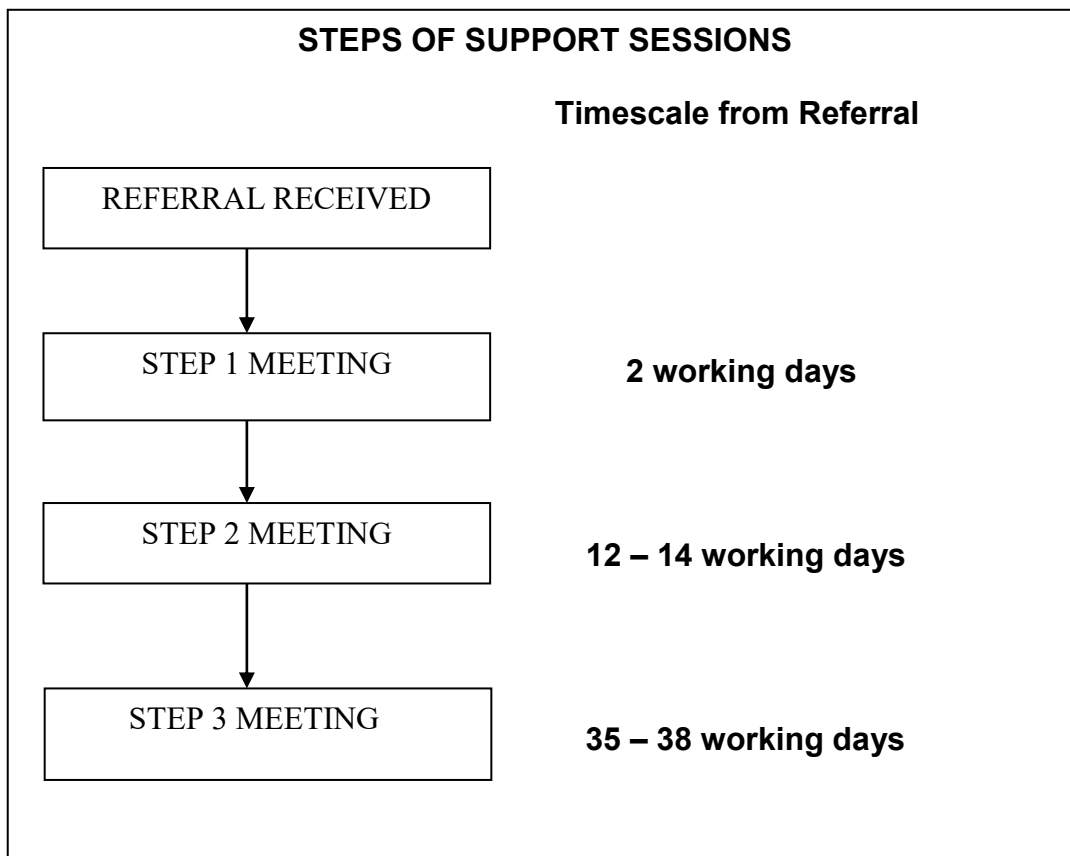
- **Step 3**

To be undertaken between 35 – 38 days from referral being received.

Discuss progress and outcomes of the Social Work Assessment. This will include:

- Is the genogram, ecomap and chronology completed?
- Analysis of the information
- Conclusions and agreed outcomes

Discussion to be written up as a Management decision on CareFirst.



3.5 Process of the Social Work Assessment.

At the beginning of the Social Work Assessment the parameters of the assessment work will be clarified and agreed with the child and family and put into writing. At this point consent must be gained from parents to enable us to contact other agencies involved with them to obtain information they hold on them. If parents refuse consent then the social worker must consider if any action is required to overrule the refusal of consent to safeguard the child. Consent must be gained using the Social Care Consent Form. The consent form must then be uploaded to the document hub.

The child or young person must be seen by the social worker conducting the assessment within 5 days from the date of referral or step up from early intervention. This must be clearly recorded within the Social Work Assessment Form on CareFirst.

A family meeting must be held during the assessment period and should therefore be held within 45 days of a new case allocation. See Family Meeting Procedure.

See section 3.7 Recording, for details of the records that should be completed.

If the child appears to have any disabilities, the Disabled Children and Young People's 0-25 Team must be consulted.

The assessment method will vary dependent on the child and family's circumstances but opportunities to work directly with the child and the child's family must be incorporated at every stage.

Any existing assessments or the views of other service providers/agencies known to the child/family should be integrated into the Social Work Assessment.

Where information has already been gathered by other agencies as part of their assessments, there is no need to duplicate the information gathering although the social worker should check with the child and family that the information gained from the other agencies is correct. The social worker will still need to complete the Social Work Assessment having regard to its specific purpose.

Where the child has previously lived overseas (outside the UK) or members of the family have been in the armed forces every reasonable effort should be made to obtain information in relation to that period.

It is possible that the obtaining of such information may take more than 45 days, but the timescales of the Assessment should not be compromised unless approved by a Manager. Under normal circumstances, the assessment should be completed within the required timescale and, if information of concern comes to light later, the manager must consider what actions to take.

During the course of the Social Work Assessment it may be necessary to provide or refer the child for services; where the need for services is clearly identified, their provision should not wait for the completion of the assessment.

If, during a Social Work Assessment, information comes to light that suggests that a child is suffering or likely to suffer Significant Harm, a Strategy Discussion/Meeting must be convened with a view to incorporating a Child Protection Enquiry into the Social Work Assessment.

Where attempts to engage the child and parent in the Social Work Assessment are unsuccessful, the social worker and manager must consider what action or approach is required to safeguard the child and take legal advice as necessary.

3.6 Sensitive Health Information

Sensitive information ordinarily remaining confidential (e.g. HIV diagnosis, pregnancy miscarriage, mental health condition, life limiting condition etc.) should only be recorded and disclosed in Social Work Reports if it has direct significance for the safety of the child.

3.7 Outcome of the Social Work Assessment

During the course and upon completion of the Social Work Assessment it will be necessary to decide the services that should be provided.

The services that will be appropriate will be different for each child, depending on his/her needs.

Where the Social Work Assessment concludes that it may be appropriate for the child to be Looked After, a Care Plan and Placement Information Record will be required.

3.8 Recording of the Social Work Assessment

The Social Work Assessment must be recorded on the Assessment form on CareFirst.

3.9 Reviewing/updating the Social Work Assessment

The Social Work Assessment needs to be reviewed/updated when a child or young persons circumstances change significantly or when the Care Plan needs to change this is regardless of status.

Where a decision is made to step a case up or down the Assessment should be updated.

For CIN and CP cases as a minimum an Assessment must be reviewed and updated on a 6 monthly basis alongside a clear review of threshold.

For LAC cases as a minimum an Assessment must be reviewed and updated on an annual basis.

The return home of a child or young person who is accommodated under Section 20 must be on the basis of an up-to-date assessment and the establishment of a Child in Need Plan. Where a parent withdraws agreement to Section 20 Accommodation without notice but no emergency action is considered necessary, then a new Assessment should be undertaken as soon as possible and a new Child in Need Plan established.

| Minimum 6 monthly Review of Assessment | Minimum 6 monthly Review of Assessment | Minimum Annual Review of Assessment |
|--|--|---|
| Or immediately in the following scenarios: | Or immediately in the following scenarios: | Or immediately in the following scenarios: |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Major transitional event - Changes in circumstances - Closure - Step down | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Major transitional event - Changes in circumstances - Closure - Step down | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Transitional arrangements (school change/ placement move etc.) - Changes in circumstances - Return home |

4.0 CHILD PROTECTION ENQUIRY ASSESSMENT (CPEA)

4.1 Criteria for the Child Protection Enquiry Assessment (CPEA)

This procedure is for a Child Protection Enquiry Assessment combines both the Section 47 enquiry and assessment. The assessment is a thorough and in depth assessment on matters concerning risk or harm which have been the subject of the enquiry.

It is conducted upon children in need believed to be suffering or likely to suffer from Significant Harm, See Wolverhampton's Safeguarding Children's Board, Section 47 Enquiries/Assessment procedures. At this point consent should be gained from parents to enable us to contact other agencies involved with them to obtain information they hold on them. If parents refuse consent then the social worker must consider if any action is required to overrule the refusal of consent to safeguard the child. Consent must be gained using the Social Consent Form. The consent form must then be uploaded to the document hub.

4.2 Purpose of the Child Protection Enquiry Assessment

The purpose of the Child Protection Enquiry Assessment is to determine whether there is a continuing risk of Significant Harm to the child.

A Child Protection Enquiry, as required by [Wolverhampton Safeguarding Children's Board Procedures](#), is incorporated into this Assessment.

4.3 Timescales of the Child Protection Enquiry Assessment

It is expected the Child Protection Enquiry Assessment will be concluded in time for the Initial Child Protection Conference, which is normally convened within 15 days of the Strategy Discussion. The ability to achieve this will depend on the complexity and the urgency of the case.

If the Child Protection Enquiry does not result in a Child Protection Conference, the Assessment must be completed or ended within 15 days of the Strategy Discussion.

Where a 15 day Assessment is undertaken and then proceeds to an Initial Child Protection Conference it is expected a new full 45 day Assessment will be triggered immediately afterwards (next working day) to gather more in depth information.

A Social Work Assessment must be updated/reviewed when a child/young persons circumstances change significantly or when the care plan needs to change (see Section 4.8).

Assessments should be updated between review child protection conferences these should commence the next working day after the conference. It is the responsibility of the Social Work Unit Manager to discuss this with the Social Worker, trigger the assessment on CareFirst and initiate Steps of Support.

4.4 Steps of Support

See Section 3.4. Please note that additional steps of support sessions should be held where required.

4.5 Process of the Child Protection Enquiry Assessment

The Child Protection Enquiry Assessment will be completed by the Social Worker; enquiries may be carried out either as a single agency or jointly with a police officer. The process of gathering information is as set out in **Paragraph 2.4** for the Social Work Assessment see **Wolverhampton Safeguarding Children's Board, Section 47 Enquiries/Core Assessments Procedure**.

Detail of the procedures for Child Protection Enquiries, including the arrangements for ABE or other interviews and medical assessments are contained in the [Wolverhampton LSCB's Procedures](#). If the child appears to have any disabilities, the 0-25 Disabled Children and Young People's Team must be consulted.

Where the child has previously lived overseas (outside the UK) or members of the family have been in the armed forces information should be obtained in relation to that period. See keywords Forces Children or Overseas Children for guidance on obtaining this information.

Note re timescales: it is possible that the obtaining of such information may take more than timescales set, but the timescales should not be compromised unless the manager approves it. Under normal circumstances, the assessment should be completed within the required timescale and, if information of concern comes to light later, the manager must consider what actions to take.

Where attempts to engage the child and parent in the Assessment are unsuccessful, the social worker and manager must consider what action or approach is required to safeguard the child and take legal advice as necessary.

4.6 Outcome of the Child Protection Enquiry Assessment

All reasonable efforts should be made to obtain sufficient information to conclude the Assessment in time for the Initial Child Protection Conference, which is normally convened within 15 days of the Strategy Discussion (see **Wolverhampton Safeguarding Children's Board, Section 47 Enquiries Procedure**)[Link](#). However, the ability to achieve this will depend on the complexity and the urgency of the case. It may be necessary for the Assessment to continue beyond the Initial Child Protection Conference. Where this is the case it is expected a new full 45 day Assessment will be triggered immediately afterward the Initial Child Protection Conference to gather more in depth assessment information.

See the following procedures:

- [Wolverhampton Safeguarding Children Board Section 47 Enquiries](#)
- [Wolverhampton Safeguarding Children Board Strategy Discussion Procedures](#)
- [Wolverhampton Safeguarding Children Board Initial Child Protection Conferences](#)

Following a Child Protection Enquiry Assessment a number of outcomes may take place or be authorised by the manager; they are:

1. That an Initial Child Protection Conference is convened and a decision reached to make the child subject to a Child Protection Plan, in which case, a Core Group will be established (10 days from the point of conference) to formulate the Plan. In these circumstances the manager must consider whether or not sufficient information has been obtained. If not, it can continue up to a maximum of 45 days, at which point the Child Protection Plan may be amended in the light of its findings.
2. That an Initial Child Protection Conference is convened but the child is not made subject to a Child Protection Plan.
3. That there are strong indicators that Significant Harm has not taken place and is not likely to; in which case, the manager may authorise that an Initial Child Protection Conference is not convened. In these circumstances the manager must consider whether or not to further the Assessment (please note the assessment must be concluded within 45 days).

During the course and upon completion of the Child Protection Enquiry Assessment, it will be necessary to decide the services should be provided. Even where an assessment concludes that there is no need for social work involvement, the manager must consider whether the provision of other services is necessary and agree with the social worker what steps need to be taken to arrange for these to be delivered. If the child appears to have disabilities, the Disabled Children & Young People's Team must be consulted with a view to deciding whether it is necessary to transfer the case.

4.7 Recording of the Child Protection Enquiry Assessment

During the course of the Assessment, a Child Protection Enquiry Assessment on CareFirst must be completed.

Where the Social Work Assessment concludes that it may be appropriate for the child to be Looked After, a Care Plan and Placement Information Record will be required.

See Care Plans Guidance and see Placement Information Records Guidance.

Otherwise, another Relevant Children's Plan should be drawn up if services are provided.

4.8 Reviewing/updating the Child Protection Enquiry Assessment

A new or further child protection enquiry should be completed if there is another instance/even when it is deemed that the child or young person is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.

The return home of a child or young person who is accommodated under Section 20 should be on the basis of an up-to-date assessment and the establishment of a Child in Need Plan. Where a parent withdraws agreement to Section 20 Accommodation without notice but no emergency action is considered necessary, then a new Social Work Assessment should be undertaken as soon as possible and a new Child in Need Plan established.

5.0 SOCIAL WORK ASSESSMENT FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

Initially an Assessment should be concluded within a maximum of 45 working days of the child becoming looked after (where one has not already been completed prior to the child or young person becoming looked after). Dependent on the nature of the case the assessment might need to be concluded sooner.

Any further assessments undertaken must be completed within 45 working days.

Where a child is looked after and has a plan of long term fostering, permanence or is subject to placement with parents a comprehensive full assessment must be conducted annually.

In addition the assessment should be reviewed and updated in line with the LAC review schedule.

5.1 When should an assessment be completed for Looked After Children

An Assessment for looked after children and young people should take place in the following circumstances:

- Prior to placement with Parents
- Prior to placement with Family & Friends (Connected Person)
- When an external therapeutic placement is considered
- A change in the Care Plan
- At 16 years in order to inform a Pathway Plan (see Pathway Plan Policy & Procedure)

All Looked After Children should have an assessment reviewed and updated annually.

5.2 Process of the Assessment

At the beginning of the Assessment the parameters of the assessment work will be clarified and, if possible, agreed with the child, family and carers and put into writing.

See **section 5.4: Recording**, for details of the records that should be completed.

If the child appears to be disabled, the Disabled Children & Young People's Team must be consulted to consider any specific needs arising from this.

The assessment method will vary dependent on the child and family's situation but opportunities to work directly with the child and the child's family must be incorporated at every stage.

Any existing assessments or the views of other service providers/agencies known to the child/family should be integrated into the Assessment.

Where information has already been gathered by other agencies as part of their assessments, there is no need to duplicate the information gathering although the social worker should check with the child and family that the information gained from other agencies is correct. The social worker will still need to complete the Assessment having regard to its specific purpose.

Where the child has previously lived overseas, outside the UK or members of the family have been in the armed forces information should be obtained in relation to that period.

During the course of Assessment it may be necessary to provide or refer the child for services or to commission additional specialist assessments.

5.3 Steps of Support Sessions

Steps of support sessions provide continuing support to the allocated social worker whilst they are undertaking/updating the Social Work Assessment. The steps of support sessions are in three stages as outlined below:

- **Step one**

To be undertaken within 2 working days of the referral being allocated.

Discuss the referral, action taken so far and the process for the on-going assessment. This will include:

- agreeing key issues
- sources of information and seeking the child's wishes and feelings

Discussion to be written up as a Management discussion on CareFirst.

Date for stage two discussion (12 -14 days from referral) set.

Social Care Agreement (Appendix B) to be completed and signed to agree the plan for assessing the case.

- **Step 2**

To be undertaken within 12 -14 days of the referral being received.

For assessment to be concluded within 15 days or a Child Protection Enquiry Assessment the following applies:

Discuss progress and outcomes of the Social Work Assessment. This will include:

- Is the genogram, ecomap and chronology completed?
- Analysis of the information
- Conclusions and agreed outcomes

Discussion to be written up as a Management decision on CareFirst.

For assessments to be concluded within 40 days the following applies:

Discuss how the Social Work Assessment is going. This will include:

- How far is the Social Worker with completing the genogram, ecomap and chronology?
- Agree specific scales and questionnaires and research/theory to be drawn upon
- Any unexpected findings
- Whether any CP issues have been uncovered during the assessment

Discussion to be written up as Management decision on CareFirst.

Date set for stage three discussion (35- 38 working days from referral)

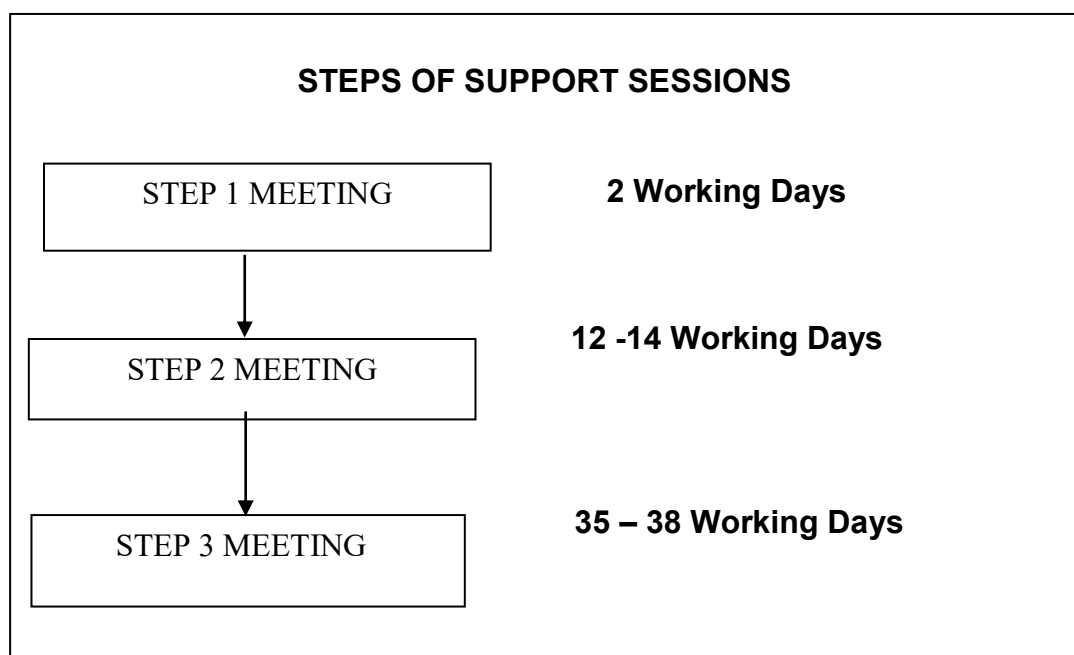
- **Step 3**

To be undertaken between 35 – 38 days from referral being received.

Discuss progress and outcomes of the Social Work Assessment. This will include:

- Is the genogram, ecomap and chronology completed?
- Analysis of the information
- Conclusions and agreed outcomes

Discussion to be written up as a Management decision on CareFirst.



5.3 OUTCOME OF THE ASSESSMENT

During the course and upon completion of the Assessment it will be necessary to decide the services should be provided.

The services that will be appropriate will be different for each child or young person, depending on his/her needs.

5.4 RECORDING

The Assessment must be recorded on CareFirst using the appropriate assessment form (depending on the nature of the reason for completing the assessment (e.g. where it's in relation to a CP concern it should be the Child Protection Enquiry Assessment etc).

5.5 REVIEWS

The Assessment should be reviewed at a minimum, annually in order to ensure the Care Plan is continuing to meet the child's needs. This review does not require the completion of a new assessment unless any changes/significant events/concerns become evident then the assessment (outlined in Section 5.1) should be reviewed immediately. The social worker should check that the most recent assessment remains relevant and should record on CareFirst that this has been done.

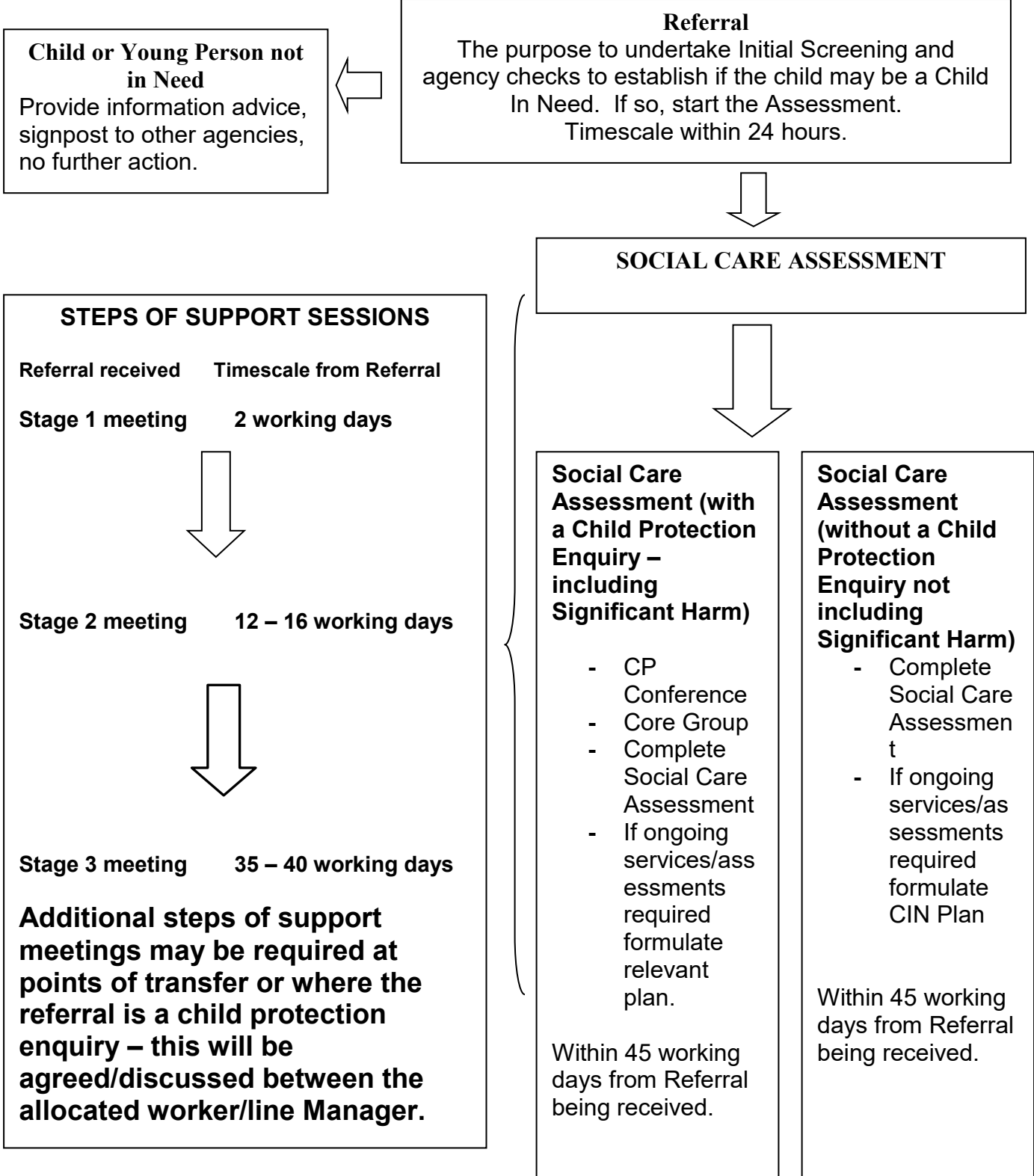
6.0 SHARING ASSESSMENTS/OUTCOMES WITH THE FAMILY

All assessments and outcomes should always be shared with the family. This is to ensure the family is clear on the outcome of the assessment and any actions/inaccuracies are identified.

This can be done either by existing planned meetings, visiting the family or inviting them into the office.

Appendix A

ASSESSMENT FLOWCHART FOR SOCIAL CARE ASSESSMENT WITH AND WITHOUT CHILD PROTECTION ENQUIRIES (THIS DOES NOT APPLY TO LAC)



Social Work Assessment Agreement/Plan in Respect of:

Name of child:

Allocated Social Worker:

Reason for Assessment/Concerns:

Start Date:

Completion Date:

Genogram Y N _____ / _____ /20 _____

Ecomap Y N _____ / _____ /20 _____

Chronology Y N _____ / _____ /20 _____

Family Composition:

| Name | Address | DOB | Relationship |
|------|---------|-----|--------------|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

Legal Status i.e.: CIN CP LAC ICO

Assessment Plan i.e. Assessment Framework tools to be used:

Agreed Dates of Social Work Assessment & Venue:

| Agreed dates | Venue | People to Attend | Purpose of Meeting | Topic of Discussion |
|--------------|-------|------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |

Expected date of Completion of Social Work Assessment:

Expectations of Local Authority:

Expectations of Parents/foster carer:

Wishes and Views of the Children:

Signatures

Mother

Father

Social Worker

Manager

Complaints and disagreements

If Parents have a complaint then this will be looked at first by [name & title]

If it cannot be resolved by the manager then a Formal complaint maybe made through the formal complaint's procedure, which will be supplied upon request.

Contingency Arrangements

If the assessment is not completed, or is stopped by either the family or the workers, then a meeting will be called immediately to decide what will happen.

At all times [child's name] must be protected from risk of significant harm, and action will be taken to ensure this.

What will happen to the Social Work Assessment?

The Completed Social Work Assessment will be discussed with the parents after the contents have been discussed they will be given a copy within _____ days. Any disagreements they have will be recorded at the end of the assessment.