

Cambridgeshire County Council

Child and Family Single Assessment Framework

The purpose of this updated version of this guidance is to enable the single assessment to fully incorporate both the section 47 outcome and the Initial/Review Child Protection Conference Report. The purpose of this amalgamation of reporting is to enable families to have all their information in one place and prevent duplication of work for practitioners.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The guidance aims to assist social workers and their managers to undertake a Child and Family Assessment under Cambridgeshire County Council's single assessment framework.
- 1.2 The Cambridgeshire County Council's Child and Family Single Assessment timeline sets out what is expected of Social Workers, Consultant Social Workers and Team Managers when undertaking a statutory assessment of a child and their family's needs.
- 1.3 The timeline for undertaking an assessment incorporates the recommendations of Working Together 2015 which states:

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“51. Decision points and review points involving the child and family and relevant professionals should be used to keep the assessment on track. This is to ensure that help is given in a timely and appropriate way and that the impact of this help is analysed and evaluated in terms of the improved outcomes and welfare of the child” Pg 24.

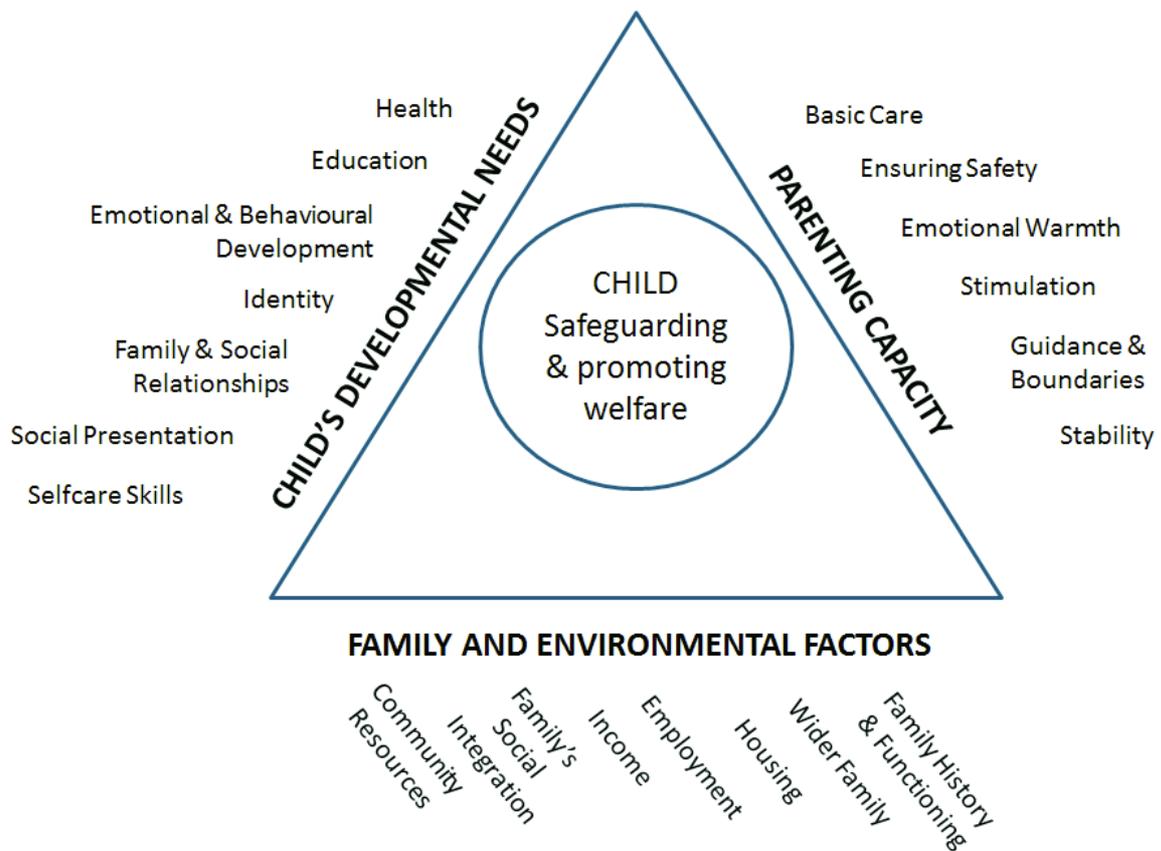
- 1.4 A key aim of the single assessment framework is to set out clearly the assessment timescales and process agreed within Cambridgeshire County Council and with partners.
- 1.5 This single assessment framework will:
 - a) Support our systemic methodology
 - b) Aid relationship building with children and their families
 - c) Strengthen reflective social work and supervision
 - d) Foster increased use of research in our assessments
 - e) Identify how we will strike the balance between managing and ameliorating risks and promoting resilience
 - f) Assist us to explain why we are involved in a child's life to them, their families and partner agencies.

- 1.6 The assessment will also incorporate any S47 enquires and will form the report for both Initial and Review Child Protection Conferences.
- 1.7 The intention of the framework is to allow Social Workers (SW) to use their professional judgement during the assessment process. The framework is intended to be used across all of Cambridgeshire County Council's statutory children's social care assessments and it supports the Signs of Safety principles adopted by Cambridgeshire County Council and partner agencies in Child Protection.
- 1.8 We will support our staff to complete robust single assessments by providing continued professional development opportunities, quality supervision, a robust quality assurance framework, and continued access to national research through membership such as Research into Practice and CC Inform.
- 1.9 This single assessment (SA) framework promotes high quality effective assessments, leading to purposeful plans and interventions, which are developed through meaningful relationships with children, their families and those involved with them. The single assessment will be used for initial care planning, child in need planning, child protection (s47) outcomes and child protection concerns to an Initial Child Protection Conference and will updated to review the risks to a child through the Review Child Protection Case Conference pathway as well as, reassessing the needs of children in need or children in care at points of change in their lives, such as preparing for re-unification.
- 1.10 Assessments of children's needs should be a continuous process with at least an annual updated single assessment undertaken. A new single assessment should also be undertaken when there is a critical incident or significant change to the child and family's circumstances.
- 1.11 The role of supervision is critical in successfully embedding the single assessment framework. Supervision will continue to be at least 4 weekly for frontline social workers. Supervision will be based around a systemic supervision framework which enables practitioners and managers to critically reflect and plan their intervention with a child and their family.

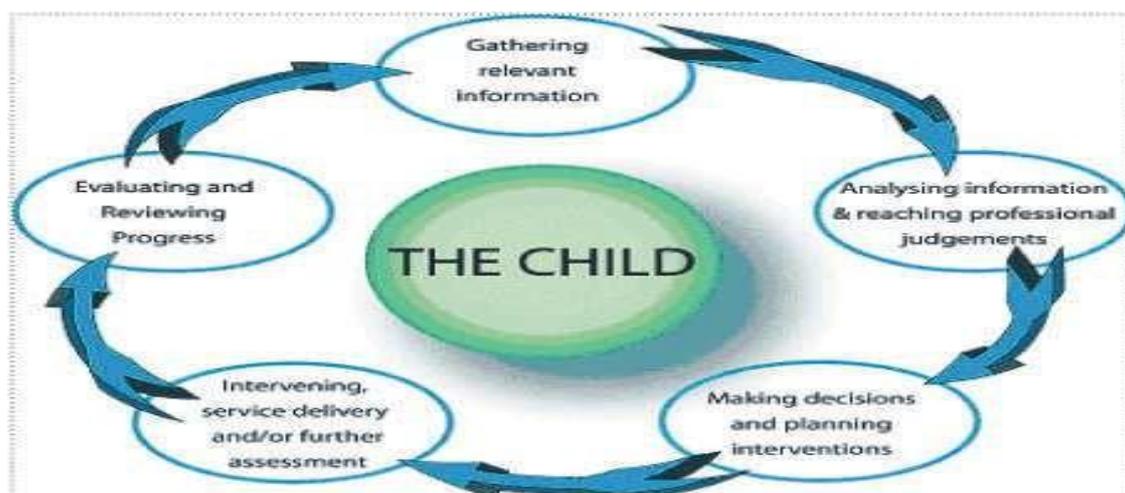
2. Principles

- 2.1 Social workers (SW) should work to Cambridgeshire County Council's Social Work Principles and Values when undertaking an assessment, particularly:
 - a) The welfare and safety of the child is paramount
 - b) Families are unique and know their own story
 - c) Children are best maintained within their own family unit wherever this is safe to do so.
 - d) We have a duty to assist families to identify support either within their own family or the community in order to meet their child's needs and keep them safe.
 - e) When working with families we will do our best to explain what we are doing and why, and the legislative framework within which we practise.
 - f) We will always seek consent to undertake an assessment, even where there are concerns about significant harm, unless to do so will put any person at immediate risk of harm.
 - g) We will always treat children and family members with respect, openness, and honesty when undertaking the assessment, talk to them, listen carefully and record and take into account their views.
 - h) We will undertake assessments in a timely manner.
 - i) The assessment will balance risk and resilience factors.
 - j) The child will remain central to the focus of the assessment, whilst involving immediate family members and any other significant people in the family or community.
 - k) The assessment will lead to an agreed plan of intervention incorporating the wishes and feelings of the child, their family and professional agencies involved.
 - l) Each plan will be outcome focused and lead to action, where needed.
- 2..2 In addition the assessment triangle in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015 provides a model which should be used to examine how the different aspects of the child's life and context interact and impact on the child. It notes that it is important that:
 - a) Information is gathered and recorded systematically.

- b) Information is checked and discussed with the child and their parents/carers where appropriate.
 - c) Differences in views about information are recorded; and
 - d) The impact of what is happening to the child is clearly identified.
- 2.3 A good assessment is one which investigates the three domains; set out in the **Assessment Framework Triangle**. The interaction of these domains requires careful investigation during the assessment. The aim is to reach a judgement about the nature and level of needs and/or risks that the child may be facing within their family.
- 2.4 **Assessment Framework Triangle:**



2.5 Assessment Cycle:



3. Single Assessment Timelines:

- 3.1 These are the agreed timelines in Cambridgeshire County Council for carrying out a child and family Single Assessment. All assessments must be completed, recorded and shared with the family and agreed within a maximum of 45 days, however the timelines below expect assessments to be completed much sooner in the case of most of the families we work with.
- 3.2 It is the responsibility of Social Worker to follow the assessment timelines as set out below. It is the responsibility of Consultant Social Worker (CSW) or Team Manager (TM) as the supervisor to ensure that assessments are reviewed at the intervals set, management actions are recorded and that assessments are completed in the time frame set.
- 3.3 In Cambridgeshire, the expectation is that all SA will be completed within 35 working days and the majority where possible will be completed within 20 working days.
- 3.4 An assessment can be concluded at any point within the 1 to 35 day timeframe as long as this is agreed by the social workers, CSW/TM and managerial oversight is captured within case records on the child's electronic records. I don't think this continues to be the case, and was very access orientated. It is important to bear in mind what Working Together 2015 says:

"Whatever the timescale for assessment, where particular needs are identified at any stage of the assessment, social workers should not wait until the assessment reaches a conclusion before commissioning services to support the child and their family. In some cases the needs of the child will mean that a quick assessment will be required."

- 3.5 When a Section 47 (S47) Child Protection Enquiry has been undertaken, the Single Assessment will be commenced and the outcome of this recorded within the S47 panel of the exemplar. The analysis of this enquiry will be recorded in the assessment and the Group Manager will place a case note on the child's file evidencing oversight, the analysis and the case note should be completed within 10 days of a S47 commencing or 5 days where there are ongoing safeguarding concerns.
- 3.6 When the Single Assessment is being completed and used for the purpose of a child protection conference (initial or review) the assessment will be completed 3 days prior to meeting and shared with both family and the chair of the conference.
- 3.7 **Timelines for Single Assessments:**

Day 1 a case note will be added by CSW/TM flagging this as a significant event/change of circumstance which has triggered a Single Assessment or in the case of a review Single Assessment. This case note will clarify the reason that the assessment is being undertaken, guidance to the Social Worker as to the focus of the assessment and actions to be undertaken and will set a provisional timescale for completion. On new cases this will be known as the **Allocation Case Note**.

Day 20 it is expected that some Single Assessments will be completed, recorded, shared with the family and authorised by the manager. This will be reviewed within the Unit meeting/supervision and any decisions made regarding the Single Assessment will be noted.

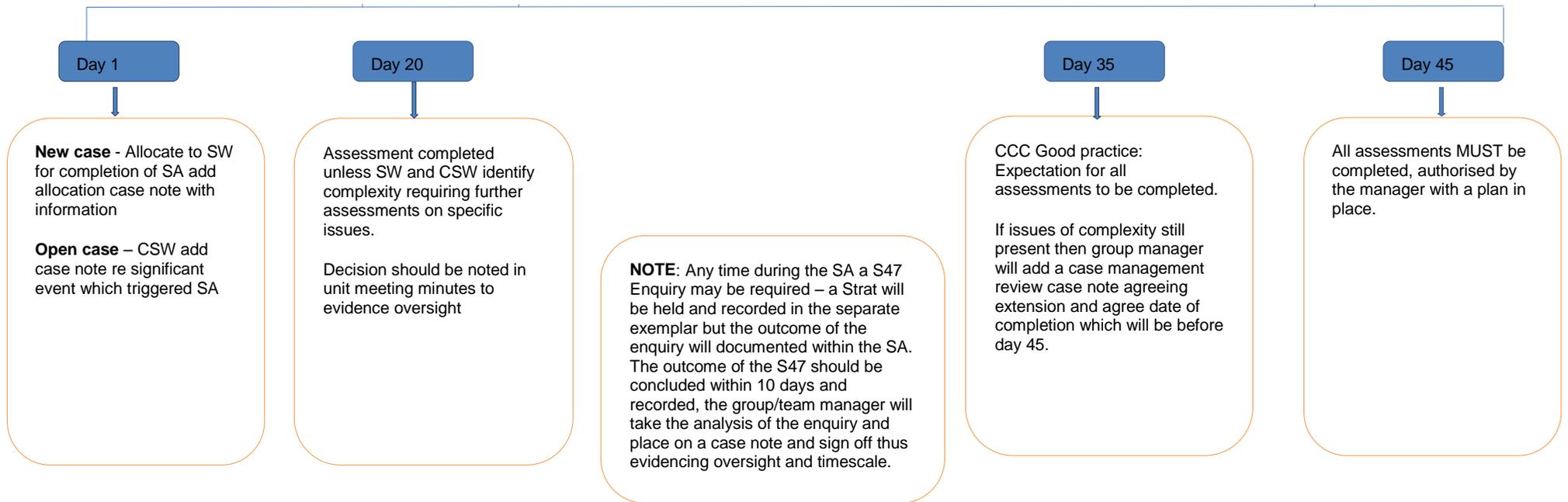
Day 35 all assessments are expected to be completed. Only in exceptionally complex cases should the manager agree a further extension and on agreement a set timescale for completion MUST be agreed and adhered to and within the 45 days. A GM must agree and have oversight on every assessment post 35 days. Only in exceptional circumstances should a Single Assessment not be completed within 35 days and these circumstances would relate to the most complex family situations. An extension beyond 35 days must be agreed by the CSW/TM and their agreement recorded on the child or young person's electronic record.

Day 45 all assessments must be completed, signed off by the manager and with a plan in place where needed.

S47 Enquiry – Analysis of this enquiry will be recorded in the Single Assessment A and Group Manager or Team Manager will copy this analysis on to a case note and sign off to evidence their oversight.

3.8 Assessment Timeline

Assessment can be concluded by the Social Worker and Signed off by the Manager at any time



4. Completing and recording the Single Assessment:

The Single Assessment Combined is template in a form available on ICS. This section looks at the headings of the template and the information required for completing of each section – referring to the recording guidance linked to the Single Assessment

Some aspects of the single assessment template will be pre-populated from existing records held in respect of the child and their family within ICS. However the main information within the assessment template will require the SW to demonstrate their understanding of the child and their family.

4.1 Single Assessment Combined Recording Guidance: Single Assessment Combined Recording Guidance -

4.2 http://camweb/intranet/info/18/childrens_social_care/25/childrens_social_care_guidance_processes_and_procedures/4

Additional links to inform an assessment:

4.3 Assessments http://cambridgeshirecin.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_assessments.html

4.4 Planning and review:

4.5 Intervention:

http://cambridgeshirecin.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_intervention.html

4.6 The Youth Offending Service and Children in Need:

The Youth Offending Service will make a referral to Social Care using the agreed process, including completed Asset assessment, via the Contact centre, approximately two months prior to the young person's early release date. If a young person is assessed by the secure provider and YOS as eligible for early release accommodation must be identified to avoid any delay in release and infringement of human rights.

4.7 Transitions – Disability:

[http://cambridgeshirescb.proceduresonline.com/pdfs/safeguarding_disable_children_practice_guidance_july_2009.pdf?zoom_highlight=TRANSITION+DISABILITY#search="TRANSITION DISABILITY"](http://cambridgeshirescb.proceduresonline.com/pdfs/safeguarding_disable_children_practice_guidance_july_2009.pdf?zoom_highlight=TRANSITION+DISABILITY#search=)

4.8 Safeguarding Disabled Children:

http://cambridgeshirecin.proceduresonline.com/pdfs/safeguarding_disab_child_practice_guide.pdf

4.9 Framework for case Management:

http://cambridgeshirecin.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_framework_for_case_manage.html assessments in relation to step down process and the

4.10 Common Assessment Framework:

http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/info/20076/children_and_families_practitioners_and_providers_information/298/children_and_families_procedures_and_resources/3

Guidance for assessing prison contact:

http://cambridgeshirecin.proceduresonline.com/chapters/g_ass_prison.html

4.11 Kinship care:

Permanence Planning Guidance - http://cambridgeshirecin.proceduresonline.com/chapters/g_perm_plan.html

4.12 No Recourse to Public Funds:

Assessments [NRP Guidance](#) to all local authorities. In order to access further guidance on assessment and intervention with children and families with no recourse to public funds, go to Islington Council web pages and 6

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download guidance for children and families; the [Human Rights Assessment](#) format and the guidance where there is Domestic Violence in Families who have NRP.

4.13 Threshold Document:

4.14 Domestic Violence Barnardo's Matrix:

http://cambridgeshirecin.proceduresonline.com/pdfs/barnardo_dom_abuse_assessment_tool.pdf

4.15 Young Carers Assessment:

http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/578/young_carers_assessment_caf

4.16 Assessment of Homeless Teens Protocol:

http://cambridgeshirecin.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_homeless.html

4.17 Private Fostering Assessment:

http://cambridgeshirecin.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_place_fam_friend.html

This is not an exhaustive list and Cambridgeshire policies and procedures should all be accessed as needed.

Acronyms:

SW	Social Worker	CSW	Consultant Social Worker	SA	Single Assessment
GM	Group Manager	TM	Team Manager	S47	Section 47 Enquiry
ICPC	Initial Child Protection Conference	RCPC	Review Child Protection Conference		