

# Aid to Decision Making for Child Protection Plans

## Information for Professionals

*“Protecting vulnerable people and promoting  
Independence by providing quality services”*

**Requirements for a child being the subject of a Child Protection Plan**

**Requirements for discontinuation of a Child Protection Plan**

Is the child at **Continuing risk of significant harm?**

Under Section 31 of the Children Act 1989 as amended by the Adoption and Children Act 2002.

“Harm” means ill treatment or the impairment of health and development, including for example, impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another.

“Development” means physical intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development.

The child can be shown to have suffered ill treatment or impairment of health or development as a result of physical, emotional, sexual abuse or neglect and professional judgement in that further ill treatment or impairment is likely.

**or**

Professional Judgement sustained by the findings of enquiries in this individual case or by research evidence is the child likely to suffer ill treatment or the impairment of health and development as a result of physical, emotional, sexual abuse or neglect.

Every Initial Child Protection Conference or Child Protection Review Conference should consider whether or not the child is still thought to be at continuing risk of significant harm. Factors to be considered are:

- Has the Child Protection Plan achieved the outcomes established at the Initial Conference or subsequent reviews?
- Has the risk of harm been reduced, either due to the Child Protection Plan or to other factors? E.g. Local Authority having Care Order or Interim Care Order on the child
- Has reassessment led to the view that a Child Protection Plan is no longer necessary?
- Have the family’s circumstances changed so that a Child Protection Plan is no longer necessary?
- Would a multi agency Child in Need Plan achieve the same outcome as a Protection Plan?

### **Abuse and Neglect**

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

### **Physical Abuse**

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

### **Neglect**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers)
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

### **Emotional Abuse**

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying, causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

### **Sexual Abuse**

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

The following schedule is intended to assist agencies to consider whether referral should be made. It is not an exhaustive list of criteria, but is rather a tool to assist in determining the significance of a range of issues potentially impacting upon the child. In some cases, a single, serious issue may be sufficient to warrant referral, in others, recognition of a range of lesser, but different concerns may be identified as a cumulative pattern.

	Environment	Health	Education	Identity	Family/School	Emotional/Behaviour
	<p>Insufficient heating, facilities and furniture</p> <p>Overcrowded living and sleeping arrangements</p>	<p>Child has serious illness, medical condition or disability</p> <p>Feeding problems, Diet poor</p> <p>Preventative health measures not taken (e.g. immunisation, dental checks, vision and hearing)</p> <p>Not registered with GP</p>	<p>Challenging behaviour at school</p> <p>Poor concentration</p> <p>Poor school attendance at Stage 1 of the non-attendance procedure</p> <p>Frequently late for school</p> <p>Parental support/interest lacking</p> <p>Numerous changes of school</p>	<p>Confused about self and situation</p> <p>Lack of age appropriate skills</p> <p>Experiences bullying</p> <p>Not appropriately dressed for weather or social situations</p>	<p>Poor relationship with parents/carers</p> <p>Poor peer relationship</p> <p>Inexperienced parents</p> <p>Lack of family support networks</p> <p>Unkempt/uncared for</p>	<p>Insecure</p> <p>Aggressive</p> <p>Inconsistent parenting/behaviour management</p>
M O D E R A T E	<p>Subject to infestation</p> <p>Home in poor repair</p> <p>Hazards for young child</p> <p>Lack of basic amenities</p> <p>Frequent changes of address</p> <p>Experimental substances misuse (parents)</p>	<p>Frequently attends GP/Hospital/frequent periods of illness/accidents</p> <p>Missed appointments/not receiving treatments</p> <p>Services refused</p> <p>Experimental substance misuse (young person)</p> <p>Hidden pregnancy</p> <p>Profound physical or learning disability</p>	<p>Lack of stimulation/learning materials in home</p> <p>At risk of exclusion from school</p> <p>Non attendance at Stage 3 of the non-attendance procedures</p> <p>Parents have no contact with child's school and condone absence</p> <p>Learning difficulties not addressed</p>	<p>Low self esteem</p> <p>Parents are highly critical and show little affection</p>	<p>Inappropriate peer relationships</p> <p>Inappropriate social behaviour</p> <p>Infrequent contact or acrimonious relationship with non-custodial parent. Socially isolated</p> <p>Lack of family support networks for profoundly disabled child.</p>	<p>Child involved in or at risk of involvement in criminal activities</p> <p>Self harming mental health difficulties challenging /inappropriate behaviour (e.g. sexual)</p>
S E R I O U S	<p>Serious neglect of primary needs (food, safety, basic care)</p> <p>Homeless</p> <p>Drug paraphernalia</p>	<p>Corporal punishment</p> <p>Illness which is fabricated, induced or factitious which was previously known as Munchausen Syndrome</p>	<p>Permanently excluded from school</p> <p>Parents hostile to education</p> <p>Parents encourage</p>	<p>Rejected by peers</p> <p>Damaged identity</p> <p>Child embarrassed or ashamed to form relationships</p>	<p>Child shows no sign of attachment to primary carer. No long term stable relationship with at least one adult</p> <p>Child has no peer</p>	<p>Child's behaviour beyond parents / carers control</p> <p>Abusive/violent behaviour (verbal or physical)</p>

<p>accessible to child.</p> <p>Faeces and food left on surfaces and floors</p> <p>Essential supplies disconnected</p> <p>Problematic substance misuse (parent) in home whilst caring for child</p> <p>Cumulative concerns arising from ongoing involvement of previous Child Protection concerns and Child Protection Plan Enquiries</p> <p>Suspicious or allegations about abuse perpetrated by any adult engaged in the provision of services to children</p>	<p>by Proxy</p> <p>Sexual Exploitation through Prostitution</p> <p>Female genital mutilation</p> <p>Failure to thrive. Global developmental delay</p> <p>Special needs not met</p> <p>Severe Learning disability</p> <p>Autism with severely challenging behaviour.</p> <p>Unexplained injury</p> <p>Malnourishment</p> <p>No ante-natal care</p> <p>Pregnant Intravenous drug user</p> <p>Premeditated abuse</p> <p>Unexplained or contradictory explanations for significant physical injury</p> <p>Sexual abuse by parent/carer or other person known or unknown to the child</p>	<p>absence</p> <p>Significant underachievement in all areas at school</p> <p>Serious non attendance at the later stages of the non-attendance procedures</p> <p>Suspicious or allegations about abuse perpetrated by professionals</p> <p>Deprived of stimulation/learning opportunities</p> <p>Global Developmental delay</p>	<p>Persistent or chronic failure to meet a child's emotional needs</p> <p>Scapegoat/rejected by parents Constantly undermined/ denigrated.</p>	<p>relationships</p> <p>Previous Child protection concerns or Child Protection Plan Enquiries</p> <p>Not responding or resistance to intervention or offers of support</p> <p>Repeated patterns of concerns/deterioration in situation. Person assessed as posing a risk to children</p> <p>Lack of remorse or acknowledgement of concerns Highly mobile/isolated families History of concerns about violence/alcohol/drugs/mental health issues</p> <p>Lack of evidence of action to protect</p> <p>Domestic Violence in home</p> <p>Domestic violence posing a risk to the physical safety and emotional well being of the child</p> <p>Serious concerns about the level of supervision.</p> <p>Frequent changes of primary carers.</p> <p>Dangerous/abusive</p> <p>Young child left alone</p>	<p>Severe physical punishment</p> <p>Child has inappropriate responsibilities</p> <p>Low warmth/high criticism impacting upon the child's well being</p> <p>Traumatized</p> <p>Mental illness/suicidal/eating disorder</p> <p>Running away</p>
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