

A Guide to Our Thresholds of Need

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Introduction

This is a guide for practitioners and managers in every agency which works with, or is involved with, children, young people and their families in Sunderland. Its aim is to assist practitioners in identifying a child's level of need and indicate what the most appropriate referral pathway is to assess and meet those needs.

It describes identified needs in terms of 'levels'. The guide provides clarification, not a rigid or concrete set of procedures. It is important that all agencies understand the needs of each individual child within their own context and recognise that each child's situation is unique and specific to them.

Multiagency practitioners must use their professional judgement in assessing the needs of children and, where necessary, seek support and advice from their line manager or designated safeguarding lead. The guide does not provide an exhaustive list of all the possible situations for children and their families and should be read in conjunction with the Sunderland Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB) Safeguarding Children Procedures which are available at www.sunderlandscb.com

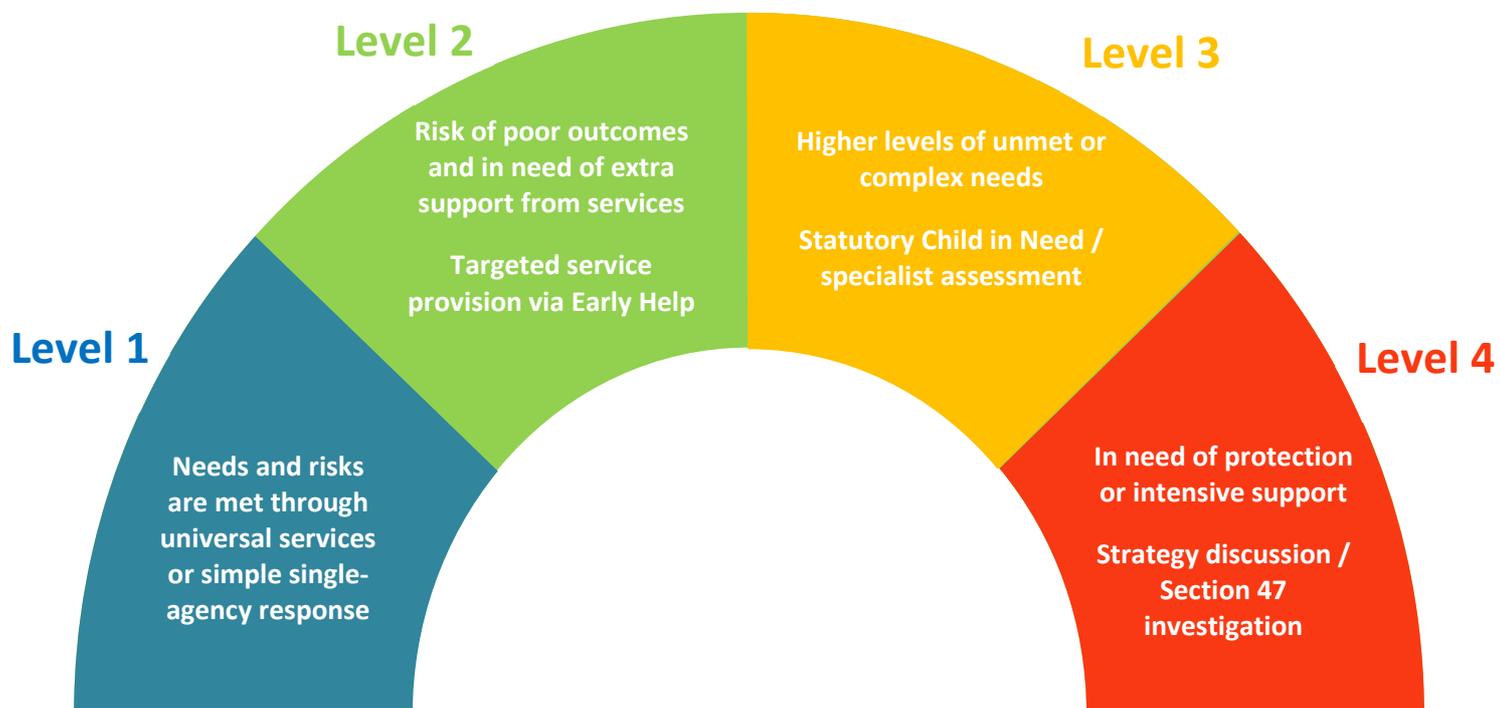
Principles

The following principles should be considered in using the Threshold Guide:

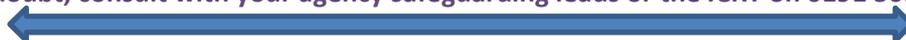
- Intervention should be at the lowest level appropriate to meet the needs of the family and prevent the need for specialist services
- Consideration should always be given to undertaking an assessment within the early help framework to resolve a family's difficulties and prevent the need for a specialist service. Repeated assessments should not be necessary for a family to move from one level to another.
- If there are immediate safeguarding concerns about a child's health, development or welfare professionals must follow the SSCB Safeguarding Children Procedures.
- Needs should be considered in line with what would be expected or acceptable for children of a similar age or development stage.
- Unless it is a safeguarding concern, a **cluster of indicators**, rather than one or two alone, would suggest a family requires some level of service or intervention.

Children's Needs and Levels of Intervention

Services for children, young people, and families in Sunderland are based on the recognition of a continuum of need (the "windscreen" model) where needs may move between levels:



If in doubt, consult with your agency safeguarding leads or the ICRT on 0191 561 7007



Information Sharing

Example Indicators of Need: Level 1 – Universal

Children and young people whose needs are met by universal services or a simple single-agency response

Child's Developmental Needs				Family and Environmental Factors	Parenting Capacity
Health	Education	Emotional and Behavioural	Identity		
Meeting developmental milestones	Achieving expected levels appropriate to key stage	Good quality attachments / relationships	Demonstrates feelings of belonging and acceptance by family / peer group	Adequate income with resources used appropriately to meet child's needs	Protection from danger / significant harm in the home and community
Physically healthy	Satisfactory nursery / school / college attendance (90% or above)	Demonstrates appropriate responses in feelings and actions	Positive sense of self and abilities	Accessing universal services in community	Shows warmth, praise and encouragement
Medical checks and immunisations are up to date	Good links between home and nursery / school / college	Able to adapt to change	No experience of bullying or discrimination	Accommodation has all basic amenities and appropriate facilities	Facilitates cognitive development through interaction and / or play
Adequate and nutritious diet	Access to books, toys and educational materials	Able to demonstrate empathy	Good development of self-care skills	Good family networks and friendships	No alcohol / substance misuse issues
Regular dental and optical care	SEND appropriately managed by Additional Needs Plan	Appropriately comfortable in social situations		Good relationships between siblings	
Good mental health	No barriers to learning evident				
No misuse of substances					



Routine assessments as required
Signposting to appropriate universal services, or offer of information and advice

Example Indicators of Need: Level 2 – Additional Support

Children and young people who are at risk of poor outcomes and in need of extra support from services

Child's Developmental Needs				Family and Environmental Factors	Parenting Capacity
Health	Education	Emotional and Behavioural	Identity		
Slow to reach developmental milestones	More than one fixed term exclusion or at risk of permanent exclusion	At risk of, or involved in, low-level offending or anti-social behaviour	Experience of bullying or discrimination	Some level of poverty or debt impacting on household and child	Inconsistent parenting / no effective boundaries
Not registered with a GP or dentist	Often late for school; tired during lessons impacting on ability to learn	Self-harming behaviours	Low self-esteem, doesn't feel valued	Home in poor repair and / or lack of some basic amenities	Lack of positive routines within the home
Disability or chronic health needs requiring additional support	Poor attendance (below 90%) or frequent absences	Unable to regulate emotions	At risk of sexual exploitation (MSET tool rating of low-medium)	Threat of eviction	Inexperienced parent in need of support
Medical checks, advice or treatment not consistently adhered to	Poor links between home and nursery / school / college	Challenging behaviour in home or community	Poor hygiene and / or poor development of self-care skills	Child's clothing regularly unwashed and frequently ill-fitting	Parents demonstrate lack of warmth, praise and affection
Inadequately nutritious diet	Often appears hungry at nursery or school	Withdrawn	Difficulties in relating to peers	Family seeking asylum or refuge	Domestic disputes
Unexplained wetting and soiling	Lack of parental encouragement to learn	Struggling with bereavement issues		Child is a secondary young carer	Concerns about alcohol or substance misuse
Early / unsafe sexual activity	SEND appropriately managed by Education, Health & Care Plan			Lack of family support or at risk of family breakdown	Significant or enduring physical or mental health issues
Experimental alcohol or substance misuse	At risk of not achieving learning potential			Returning home from a period in care	Concerns regarding attachment to child

Early Help

Initiate and follow TAF process – identify Team Around the Family and Lead Professional

Example Indicators of Need: Level 3 – Complex Needs
Children and young people who meet the threshold for statutory assessment

Child's Developmental Needs				Family and Environmental Factors	Parenting Capacity
Health	Education	Emotional and Behavioural	Identity		
Unexplained or suspicious injury	Significant under-achievement of learning potential	Passive suicidal ideation	At risk of rejection by parents / family	Serious poverty or debt impacting on household and child	Condone or encourages offending or antisocial behaviour
Failure to seek antenatal or medical care for significant ailments or injuries	Persistently late for school; always tired during lessons impacting on ability to learn	Extreme anxiety or depression	Lack of positive familial relationships ; no sense of belonging	Home environment highly unsuitable, exposing child to risk of injury	Own emotional or mental health needs compromise those of the child
Multiple A&E attendances	School non- attendance or children missing education	Behaviour beyond parental control	No sense of individuality	Homeless 16 or 17 year old	Succession of carers or frequently leaves child in care of others
Disability or chronic health needs requiring specialist support	Parent encourages or colludes in absence from school	Frequent offending or anti-social behaviour	At significant risk of sexual exploitation (MSET tool rating of medium-high)	Frequent changes of living arrangements (accommodation and household members)	Alcohol or substance misuse which has a direct impact on the child or unborn child
Problematic substance and alcohol misuse	Persistently appears hungry at nursery or school	Often missing from home	Concerns re: honour-based violence / forced marriage	Failed asylum-seeking family with children	Domestic abuse which has a direct impact on child or unborn child
Persistent unsafe sexual activity	SEND not managed or addressed		Concerns around radicalisation	Private fostering arrangement	No longer wants to care for the child
Concerns re: female genital mutilation			Feelings of self-loathing	Child is a primary young carer	Learning disabilities impacting on ability to care for child or unborn



Child in Need Assessment (ICRT referral: 0191 561 7007)
Consider need for specialist assessment

Example Indicators of Need: Level 4 – Protection

Children and young people who are in need of protection and require intensive support

Child's Developmental Needs				Family and Environmental Factors	Parenting Capacity
Health	Education	Emotional and Behavioural	Identity		
Non-accidental injury		Active suicidal ideation or suicide attempts	Rejected by parents / family	Homeless and not eligible for temporary housing	Own emotional or mental health needs significantly compromise those of the child
Endangers own life through self-harm, substance misuse or eating disorder		Behaviour poses a serious risk to self and others	Victim of sexual exploitation	Home environment highly unsuitable, exposing child to risk of significant harm	Inability /unwillingness to protect from sexual, physical or emotional harm
Sexual activity under the age of 13		Exhibits sexually harmful behaviour	No self-esteem or sense of self-worth	Unaccompanied asylum-seeker / victim of trafficking or slavery	Physical domestic assault witnessed by child on a regular basis
Fabricated or induced illness		Abuses other children	Significant concerns re: radicalisation	Person who is a risk to children living in home, or visiting regularly	Misuses alcohol or substances when in sole care of child
Has suffered female genital mutilation or has a Protection Order granted		Constantly missing from home	At high risk of honour-based violence or forced marriage (or has a Protection Order granted)		Leaves child home alone (relevant to age or circumstances)
Refusing medical care resulting in risk to life					Serious neglect of primary needs
Unborn baby at risk of significant harm					Offending causing significant risk to child



Strategy Discussion / Section 47 Investigation
(ICRT referral: 0191 561 7007 or contact the police in an emergency on: 999)