

# Assessing the Needs of Children and their Families

Information for parents and carers



## What is an assessment?

Before we can help you, we need to know about you and your family. This will involve collecting information, talking this through with you, and agreeing with you what may be done to help solve your difficulties. This is called an assessment.

Assessments help to:-

- Gain an idea of the strengths you and your family have
- Find out if you or your child are having any problems or difficulties
- Work out the kind of help and support you may need and who would best provide that help



An assessment will take place when either you or someone on your behalf has asked Children's Social Care for help with some difficulty you are having which affects your child.

You will get the chance to have your say and take full part in the assessment.

When the assessment is complete we will work with you to decide what, if anything, you or your child need and how best we and other services can work together to help.

You will be given a copy of the assessment.

## How long will it take?

There are very clear timescales for children's social care assessments to be completed. Some assessments will be completed within 7 working days but others may be longer. Your social worker should talk to you about this in more detail.



## What will happen?

A social worker will meet with you and members of your family. If your child is of an age where they can take part in the assessment, the social worker will also give them a chance to have their say.

The assessment will look at 3 areas:-

- Your child's development
- Your ability to respond to your child's needs
- Your wider family and environmental support


The assessment will also look at factors such as your ethnic and cultural background and any difficulties or disabilities you may have.

All the information gathered during the assessment will be brought together and help to identify and respond to the strengths, needs and any risks within your family.

## What can you expect from us?

Children's Social Care will:-

- Listen carefully to what you have to say
- Offer you advice and support to help you overcome any difficulties you may have
- Be honest with you about what is happening and always keep you informed of what we are doing.
- Keep a confidential record of any information you give us and will only share it with other people who are working with you from our department or if you agree with people from other agencies who are helping your family



We only share information without your permission if we believe that there may be a risk of harm or threat to the welfare of your child. If this happens, we will tell you and explain what your rights are.

It is important to remember that even if the reason for a referral was a concern about abuse or neglect that was not true, a family may still benefit from an assessment and support to promote a child's health and development

### **What will be expected of you?**

To work well together parents and carers need to:-

- Tell us how things are for them and their child
- Be honest
- Talk to us
- Ask us to explain anything that is not clear to you - you have a right to know

### **If you don't agree?**

That's O.K. In the majority of cases, if you are unhappy with how we are completing the assessment or the assessment outcome, we will try and sort out the problem.

If you are still unhappy you should speak to the social worker's manager. If you wish to make a formal complaint you should contact the Customer Relations Team on (01204) 337288 or email [customerrelationsteam.socialservices@bolton.gov.uk](mailto:customerrelationsteam.socialservices@bolton.gov.uk)

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