



# Dorset Safeguarding Children Board



Dorset Children's Trust Board

Keeping children safe is everyone's responsibility

# Threshold Tool

August 2015

Practice guidance for improving outcomes for children and young people through the early identification of need and vulnerability

[www.dorsetlscb.co.uk](http://www.dorsetlscb.co.uk)

# Forward

## Dorset Local Safeguarding Children Board Multi-Agency Threshold Guidance

This document and guidance is aimed at every agency, statutory, voluntary, private and independent which works directly or indirectly with children, young people and families. The purpose of this guidance is to help agencies identify a child's degree of need and respond appropriately. The guidance does not remove the need for workers to make a professional judgement when considering the identified needs of children.

This is a guidance document for the Multi-Agency Early Support and Safeguarding Thresholds in regard to needs and services in Dorset. The core function of Dorset Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) is to publish a threshold document that includes:

- the process for the early help assessment and the type and level of early help services to be provided;
  - the criteria, including the level of need, for when a case should be referred to local authority children's social care for assessment and for statutory services under:
    - section 17 of the Children Act 1989 (children in need);
    - section 47 of the Children Act 1989 (reasonable cause to suspect children suffering or likely to suffer significant harm);
    - section 31 (care orders); and
    - section 20 (duty to accommodate a child) of the Children Act 1989.
  - clear procedures and processes for cases relating to the sexual exploitation of children and young people.
- (Working Together 2015)

Multi-Agency communication is the key to developing a full picture of the child and their family circumstances, using independent interpreters if necessary. It is important that all involvement with a child and their family is recorded on your agency's files. If there are any queries, practitioners should seek advice and support from the Safeguarding Leads within their own organisation.

Sarah Tough – Director of Children's Services  
Cliff Turner – Chair of Dorset Safeguarding Children Board

# Continuum of Need Model

**This is a tool for everyone to use to support inter-agency working, information sharing and common assessment. This tool will support improved understanding of Family Support Services provided by Dorset County Council. It also allows for the signposting of referrers to additional specialist services not provided by Family Support but by partners.**

The Dorset Safeguarding Children Board (DSCB) has adopted this continuum of need model to provide a multi-agency, whole system approach to assessment, prevention and intervention for children, young people and their families. It also directly supports the full implementation of Dorset's Assessment Framework.

The adoption of the model provides consistency for professionals working across geographical areas. This dynamic model provides a needs led, outcome focussed matrix of need and vulnerability which, when used effectively can match the child/young person's needs with the appropriate assessment and provision.

At no time must disagreement prevent a child from being safeguarded. If you are not getting the response you feel is appropriate, please refer to the [Escalation Policy](#). This provides the procedures to be followed when disputes cannot be resolved through discussion and negotiation between practitioners at front line level.

## 1. Levels of Vulnerability

The Threshold Tool identifies **four levels of vulnerability** and need to assist practitioners to identify the most appropriate service response for children, young people and their families. These are:

Level 1 Universal – mainstream community services provided to all – e.g. education, GPs, the Healthy Child Programme

Level 2 Universal Plus – Additional support which may or may not require multi-agency work with other professionals

Level 3 Universal Partnership Plus – Help and support from a range of professionals for families with complex needs

Level 4 Specialist – High priority needs including other specialist services

## 2. Continuum of Need

The Continuum of Need/Windscreen diagram in this document sets out the levels and indicates the expected response in most cases.

## 3. Descriptors

A set of descriptors and indicators have been laid out in the document to enable partner agencies to use shared terminology and develop a shared understanding of levels of need and vulnerability.

They provide a detailed breakdown of the three domains and dimensions of the Framework for Assessment of Children in Need and their Families:

- The child's developmental needs
- Parenting capacity
- Family and environmental factors

The descriptors and indicators are indicative rather than definitive, but will help to provide an evidence base for professional judgement and decision making.

The descriptors and indicators cannot reflect or predict sudden changes in the child's world and any sudden change in a child's presentation should be explored to establish if there is a cause for concern.

In addition, the age of the child and any protective factors that may enhance resilience need to be taken into account.

The lack of impact of previous or on-going service involvement should also be noted as a concern.

## 4. Matrix

The Threshold Matrix can be used to create a picture of individual needs and vulnerability. It is not a formal assessment and you are not required to send this or share this with anyone.

It is a means of enabling you to set out your thoughts to help you make a decision about what to do next. It is not necessary to complete all areas of the matrix if you do not have the evidence to do so. The needs of children and young people rarely fit into neat categories and often change over time. It has been designed to inform the early identification of vulnerability and need and can be used to start the process to clarify concerns and/or monitor progress.

**Intervention is most likely to be successful if:**

- **It is child centred and non-stigmatising**
- **It involves and empowers the family**
- **It is provided within the community, with a good understanding of what support and facilities are available e.g. certain school based staff**
- **It can be provided straightaway and not after a long wait for an appointment.**

## **Vulnerable And Complex Children (Green / Amber section)**

A child or young person identified as vulnerable can be defined as needing some additional support without which they would be at risk of not reaching their full potential. The additional support may relate to health, social or educational issues. They may have difficulty making a transition from primary to secondary school, their development may be delayed, they may break the law or have emotional difficulties. Others are always vulnerable because of their own development, family circumstances or environmental factors. Vulnerable children may have or develop additional needs that are defined as “Complex”.

## **Children with Complex and Acute needs (Amber/Red Section)**

Within our communities a smaller number of children have complex or acute needs for various reasons. These include children who are disabled, or who have serious difficulties in school or severe mental health disorders, children suffering abuse or rejection by their families, children whose parents are disabled.

Although these numbers are small, it is important these children are also identified early so that appropriate specialist services, including immediate protection if necessary, can be provided quickly.

Children and young people with acute needs who are subject to specialist assessment include those who are:

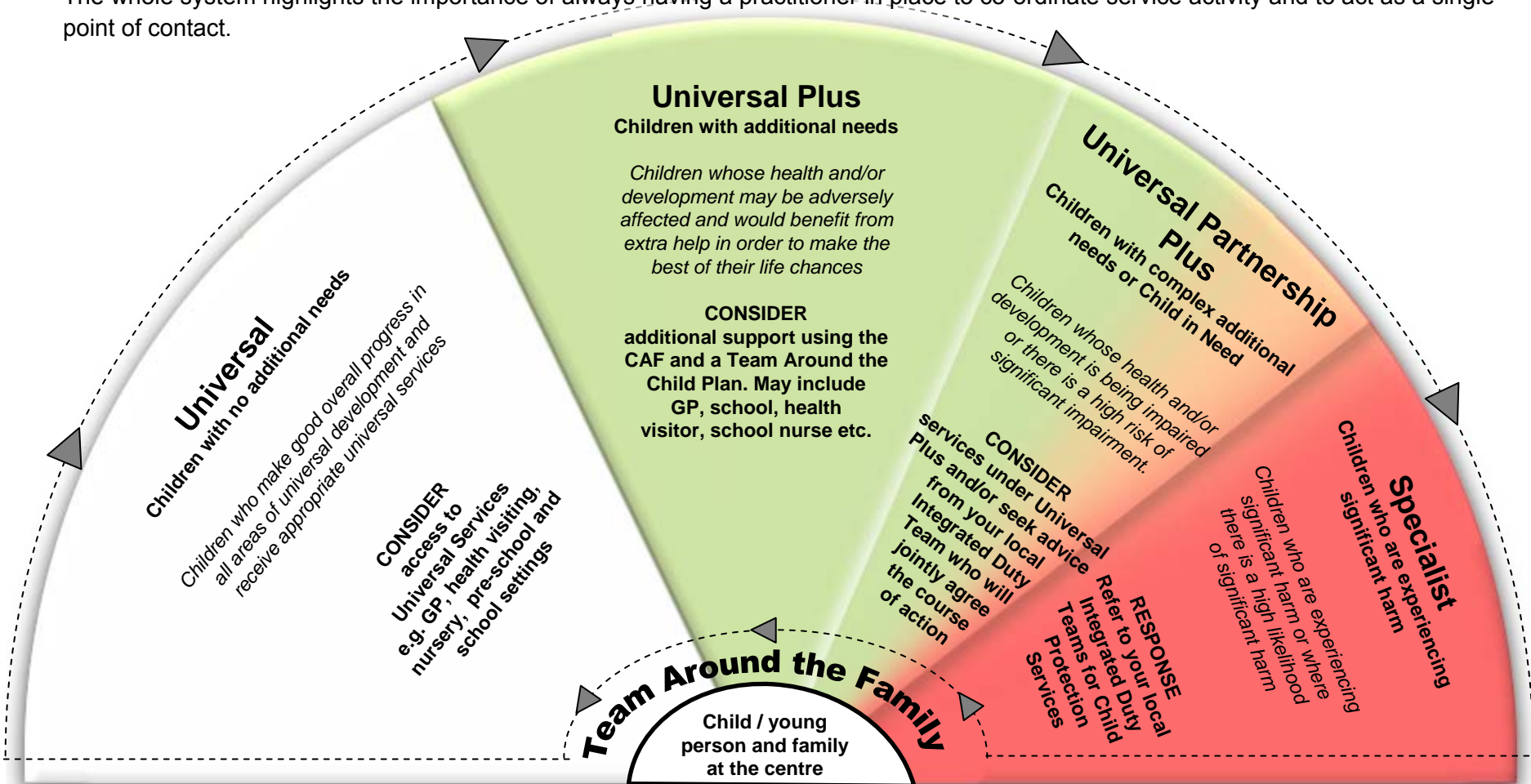
- At risk of significant harm and all children on the Child Protection Register
- Looked After by the local authority, including children accommodated under S.20 of the Children Act 1989 (voluntary accommodation)
- Not in education, employment or training
- Experiencing some mental health disorders
- Persistent offenders

# Levels of Vulnerability and Need

## Continuum of need (commonly known as The Windscreen)

This diagram describes the spectrum of support and the relationship between the different levels of need:

- A child's level of need can move forward and backwards across the continuum, highlighting the importance of integrated service delivery, providing a seamless process to ensure continuity of care when a child moves between different levels of support.
- The whole system highlights the importance of always having a practitioner in place to co-ordinate service activity and to act as a single point of contact.



# Dorset Threshold Matrix

**THIS IS A TOOL TO HELP YOU. IT IS NOT AN ASSESSMENT. YOU ARE NOT REQUIRED TO COMPLETE IT IN FULL OR SHARE THIS WITH ANYONE.** Plot relevant descriptors on this matrix to give a visual representation of the child or young person's level of need. The matrix reflects your professional judgement and informs decision making. This is a TOOL to help you make your decision as to roughly where your concerns sit. It will enable you to focus on the complex needs of the child and will give you an idea of how Family Support, Social Care will respond and in what way. If a threshold for intervention is met – at any level – you should then follow your agency's procedures for escalating your concerns e.g. directly or via a manager.

Name of child:											Date:		
		Universal No additional needs	Universal Plus Children with additional needs			Universal Partnership Plus Children with complex additional needs			Specialist Children in need of protection				
Development (1:Health)	General Health												
	Physical & Sensory Development												
	Speech, Language and Communication												
Development (2:Wellbeing)	Emotional and Social												
	Behaviour												
	Identity ,Self-esteem, Image												
	Family and Social Relationships												
Development (3: Learning)	Self Care Skills and Independence												
	Understanding, Reasoning & Problem Solving												
	Participation in Education or Work												
	Progress and Achievement in Learning												
Parents and Carers	Aspirations												
	Basic Care / Ensuring Safety and Protection												
	Emotional Warmth and Stability												
Family & Environmental Factors	Guidance, Boundaries and Stimulation												
	Family History, Functioning and Well-being												
	Wider family												
	Housing, Employment and Finances												
Vulnerability Assessment	Social and Community Elements												
		Universal	Low	Med	High	Low	Med	High	Low	Med	High		
<b>RESPONSE</b>		Universal Services	Additional support in setting. Consider agency led TAC/TAS or CAF. Involve partners as appropriate			Consider enhanced support under Universal Plus Services or discuss with and/or make a referral to your local IDT			Seek advice from Integrated Duty Team for Child Protection Services				

# Threshold of Need and Intervention Criteria

## Development of Child or Young Person 1 – Health

Note: this is an illustrative rather than comprehensive list of indicators

	Universal	Universal Plus	Universal Partnership Plus	Specialist
Action	No additional action required	Additional support in setting. Consider agency led TAC/TAS or CAF. Involve partners as appropriate	Consider enhanced support under Universal Plus Services or discuss with and/or make a referral to your local IDT	Seek advice from local Family Support Integrated Duty Teams for Child Protection Services
General Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Physically well</li> <li>Adequate diet /hygiene/ clothing</li> <li>Developmental checks/ immunisations up-to-date</li> <li>Health appointments are kept</li> <li>Regular dental/optical care</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overweight/underweight</li> <li>Concerns re diet/hygiene/clothing</li> <li>Starting to miss on health appointments</li> <li>Defaulting on immunisation/checks</li> <li>Susceptible to minor health problems</li> <li>Not registered with GP/dentist</li> <li>Soiling / wetting self</li> <li>Low level substance misuse</li> <li>A&amp;E attendance giving cause for concern</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chronic health problems with a severe impact on everyday functioning</li> <li>Failure to access appropriate health care</li> <li>Persistent excessive alcohol consumption, smoking or other substance misuse</li> <li>Serious mental health issues</li> <li>Pregnancy and Sexually Transmitted Infection in young person under 16</li> <li>Multiple A&amp;E attendances causing concern</li> <li>Frequent unexplained minor injuries and/or delay in seeking medical attention</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Failure to thrive</li> <li>Suspected non-accidental injury/abuse/neglect</li> <li>Class A / serious drug misuse</li> <li>Acute and serious mental or physical health needs or behavioural difficulties, including life-threatening self harm, suicide</li> <li>Children who are accessing acute health services including sexual health clinics which indicates significant harm</li> </ul>
Physical and Sensory Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Physical and sensory development milestones are met</li> <li>Age appropriate involvement in physical activity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Slow in reaching developmental milestones</li> <li>Sensory developmental delay</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Significant physical disability</li> <li>Serious developmental delay</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Profound/ severe and / or multiple disabilities with significant unmet need</li> <li>Suspicious or evidence of female genital mutilation</li> </ul>
Speech, Language and Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Age appropriate development re:</li> <li>Fluency of speech and confidence</li> <li>Willingness to communicate</li> <li>Verbal and non-verbal comprehension</li> <li>Language structure and vocabulary and articulation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reluctant communicator</li> <li>Not understanding age- appropriate instructions</li> <li>Confused by non-verbal communication</li> <li>Difficulty listening for an appropriate length of time</li> <li>Immature structure of expressive language</li> <li>Speech sounds immature</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Severe disorder and impairment in understanding spoken language</li> <li>Communication difficulties have a severe impact on everyday life</li> <li>Requires alternative or augmented means of communication</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sexually inappropriate language/behaviour for age</li> <li>'Frozen watchfulness' (see glossary for explanation)</li> </ul>

Where there is an immediate need to protect a child because they are being harmed or at risk of significant harm, the relevant Local Authority Integrated Duty Team should be contacted promptly:-

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# Threshold of Need and Intervention Criteria

## Development of Child or Young Person 2 – Wellbeing

Note: this is an illustrative rather than comprehensive list of indicators

	Universal	Universal Plus	Universal Partnership Plus	Specialist
Action	No additional action required	<b>Additional support in setting. Consider agency led TAC/TAS or CAF. Involve partners as appropriate</b>	<b>Consider enhanced support under Universal Plus Services or discuss with and/or make a referral to your local IDT</b>	<b>Seek advice from local Family Support Integrated Duty Teams for Child Protection Services</b>
Emotional and social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good quality early attachments</li> <li>• Feelings and actions demonstrate appropriate responses</li> <li>• Able to adapt to change</li> <li>• Able to demonstrate empathy</li> <li>• Involved in leisure and other social activity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficulties in relationships with peer group and / or with adults</li> <li>• Over-friendly or withdrawn with strangers</li> <li>• Finds coping with change difficult even with support</li> <li>• Difficulties expressing empathy</li> <li>• Impulsive/ lacks self-control</li> <li>• Child causing concerns over use of internet and/or social media</li> <li>• Concerns about possible bullying/ cyber bullying</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disordered attachments that have a negative impact</li> <li>• Relates to strangers indiscriminately without regard for safety or social norms, parents' awareness of risk appears limited</li> <li>• Reaction to change triggers prolonged inability to cope</li> <li>• Phobias that affect function</li> <li>• Association with delinquent/ substance misusing/ serious risk taking peers</li> <li>• Suffers from periods of depression or anxiety which could include negative patterns of behaviour, lower level self harm or disordered eating patterns</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disordered attachments that have a severe impact on the child and the family</li> <li>• Endangers own life through self harm/ substance misuse/ eating disorder</li> <li>• Child has suffered or may have suffered physical, sexual or emotional abuse or neglect/has been subject to Looked After Children (LAC) proceedings</li> <li>• Involved in or suspected to be involved in child sexual exploitation or trafficking</li> </ul>
Behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate self-control</li> <li>• Appropriate social behaviour</li> <li>• Appropriate sexual development and activity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disruptive/challenging behaviour, including in school or early years setting</li> <li>• Concerns about sexual development and behaviour</li> <li>• Child suspected of having in appropriate relationship with adult or peers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disruptive/challenging behaviour at school and in neighbourhood and at home</li> <li>• At risk of permanent exclusion</li> <li>• Regularly missing from education, employment or training (NEET)</li> <li>• Young person regularly involved in anti-social criminal activities/violent/ risk taking behaviour</li> <li>• Young person subject to antisocial behaviour order (ASBO) or acceptable behaviour contract (ABC)</li> <li>• Children withdrawn and isolated</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant evidence child is involved in child sexual exploitation</li> <li>• Puts self or others in danger through reckless activity</li> <li>• Disappears or is missing from home for long periods</li> <li>• Multiple criminal incidents/ involvement in activities that would constitute arrestable offences/ behaviour that would constitute criminal activity</li> <li>• Sexual development and behaviour which may be indicative of abuse</li> <li>• Child suspected to be involved in child sexual exploitation</li> </ul>

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# Threshold of Need and Intervention Criteria

## Development of Child or Young Person 2 – Wellbeing

Note: this is an illustrative rather than comprehensive list of indicators

	Universal	Universal Plus	Universal Partnership Plus	Specialist
Action	<b>No additional action required</b>	<b>Additional support in setting. Consider agency led TAC/TAS or CAF. Involve partners as appropriate</b>	<b>Consider enhanced support under Universal Plus Services or discuss with and/or make a referral to your local IDT</b>	<b>Seek advice from local Family Support Integrated Duty Teams for Child Protection Services</b>
Identify, self-esteem, image	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive sense of self and abilities</li> <li>• Demonstrates feelings of belonging and acceptance</li> <li>• An ability to express needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shows lack of self-esteem</li> <li>• Vulnerable to bullying, discrimination or harassment</li> <li>• Limited insight into how appearance and behaviour are perceived</li> <li>• Inclined to bully</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seriously affected by persistent discrimination, e.g. on the basis of ethnicity, sexual orientation or disability</li> <li>• Subject to severe bullying</li> <li>• Severe bullying of others</li> <li>• Family environment (substance misuse/poverty impacting on identity / worklessness / crime)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High level of drug, substance and alcohol abuse</li> <li>• Self harming and eating disorders</li> </ul>
Family and social relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aware of personal and family history</li> <li>• Stable and affectionate relationships with care givers</li> <li>• Good relationships with siblings</li> <li>• Positive relationships with peers</li> <li>• Age-appropriate friendships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited support from family and friends</li> <li>• Lacks positive role models</li> <li>• Serious conflicts with peers/siblings</li> <li>• Difficulties sustaining relationships</li> <li>• Children returning home following looked after episode</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Siblings of looked after children and young people with mental health, well-being issues or severe disabilities</li> <li>• Children and young people who have a high level of responsibility for others (young carers)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child has suffered or may have suffered serious physical, sexual or emotional abuse or neglect including possible child sexual exploitation</li> <li>• Child presents as severely neglected</li> <li>• Crime or incident which has or may have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family or community (honour based violence)</li> <li>• Suspicions that the child may have been or potentially made to marry against her will (forced marriage)</li> </ul>
Self-care skills and independence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growing level of competencies in practical and emotional skills</li> <li>• Good level of personal hygiene</li> <li>• Gaining confidence and skills to undertake activities away from the family</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not always adequate self-care, e.g. poor hygiene</li> <li>• Slow to develop age-appropriate self-care skills</li> <li>• Failing to develop confidence and skills for independence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor self-care for age, including hygiene</li> <li>• Friendships and relationships inappropriate for age</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neglect of self-care because of alternative priorities, e.g. substance misuse</li> <li>• Neglect of young person's own child</li> <li>• Acute and serious mental or physical health needs or behavioural difficulties impacting significantly on ability to care for self</li> <li>• Profound/severe and/or multiple disabilities impacting on ability to care for self</li> </ul>

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# Threshold of Need and Intervention Criteria

## Development of Child or Young Person 3 – Learning

Note: this is an illustrative rather than comprehensive list of indicators

	Universal	Universal Plus	Universal Partnership Plus	Specialist
Action	No additional action required	<b>Additional support in setting. Consider agency led TAC/TAS or CAF. Involve partners as appropriate</b>	<b>Consider enhanced support under Universal Plus Services or discuss with and/or make a referral to your local IDT</b>	<b>Seek advice from local Family Support Integrated Duty Teams for Child Protection Services</b>
Understanding, reasoning and problem solving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Milestones for cognitive development are met</li> <li>Demonstrates a range of skills and interests</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Milestones for cognitive development are not met</li> <li>Mild to moderate learning difficulties</li> <li>Identified learning needs from School Support SEN Code of Practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complex learning and/or disability needs</li> <li>Serious developmental delay</li> <li>Additional special educational needs support including Education, Health and Care Plan.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complex learning difficulties and communication needs leading to safeguarding vulnerabilities.</li> </ul>
Participation in education or work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access to educational provision appropriate to age and ability</li> <li>Access to employment (including work based learning) appropriate to age and ability</li> <li>Regularly attends education or training, or in full-timework</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Poor school/early years attendance/punctuality</li> <li>Gaps in school/learning</li> <li>Behaviour likely to lead to risk of exclusion</li> <li>Multiple changes of school/early years setting</li> <li>No access to early developmental experiences</li> <li>Often appears tired in school which appears to impact on participation and achievement</li> <li>Not accessing work-appropriate skills</li> <li>Children missing from education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parent/child subject of statutory intervention for poor attendance; persistent poor attendance with parental acceptance</li> <li>Multiple fixed-term exclusions</li> <li>At risk of or permanently excluded</li> <li>Multiple changes of school without notification</li> <li>Has no school place and meets hard to place criteria</li> <li>Emotionally-based school refuser</li> <li>Not in education, employment or training and experiencing barriers to progress</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NEET and additional significant risk factors</li> </ul>
Progress and achievement in learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acquiring a range of skills and interests</li> <li>No concerns about achievement or cognitive development</li> <li>Access to books/toys, play</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requires a modified curriculum and timetable</li> <li>Learning expectations are not met</li> <li>Not making progress in line with national expectations or children with similar needs across the ability range</li> <li>Cannot access age appropriate resources for learning and play</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requires alternative curriculum/ timetable</li> <li>Unable to access mainstream curriculum</li> <li>Not making progress in spite of intervention</li> <li>Educational (or social or mental health needs) may result in educational placement out of school or away from home</li> </ul>	
Aspirations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Well motivated and self- confident</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seeing little or no value in education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Total disengagement from learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High level concern of radicalisation or extremism</li> <li>Click <a href="#">here</a> for the Government Prevent strategy</li> </ul>

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# Threshold of Need and Intervention Criteria

## Parents and Carers

Note: this is an illustrative rather than comprehensive list of indicators

	Universal	Universal Plus	Universal Partnership Plus	Specialist
Action	<b>No additional action required</b>	<b>Additional support in setting. Consider agency led TAC/TAS or CAF. Involve partners as appropriate</b>	<b>Consider enhanced support under Universal Plus Services or discuss with and/or make a referral to your local IDT</b>	<b>Seek advice from local Family Support Integrated Duty Teams for Child Protection Services</b>
Basic care and ensuring safety and protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides for child's physical needs, e.g. appropriate nutrition, clothing and medical care</li> <li>Protects from danger and harm in home and elsewhere</li> <li>Parents able to meet child's needs and know how and where to access support</li> <li>Works effectively with services in best interests of the child or young person</li> <li>Unborn:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ante-natal appointments kept</li> <li>Medical advice followed</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parent unable or unwilling to provide appropriate supervision</li> <li>Parents struggling to meet child or young person's needs without support</li> <li>Child's disability makes parenting challenging</li> <li>Poor social skills of parents and/ or child</li> <li>Child or young person exposed to hazards/risks</li> <li>Parent struggling to prioritise child's needs over their own</li> <li>Parents over-controlling</li> <li>Medical attendance issues</li> <li>Elective home education</li> <li>Unborn:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some ante-natal appointments missed</li> <li>Some concerns that medical advice not followed</li> <li>Relationship difficulties identified</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Food, warmth and basic care erratic and inconsistent</li> <li>Parent struggling to provide 'good enough' care with significant impact on child</li> <li>Parents involved in criminal activity potential impact on child welfare</li> <li>Parents' mental health or substance misuse potentially affecting care of children</li> <li>Inability to recognise child's needs such that child's development may be significantly impaired</li> <li>Parents not offering adequate supervision to child based on age, maturity and development</li> <li>Previous history of parents unable to care for children</li> <li>Parent overly controlling or inappropriate use of sanctions/ punishment</li> <li>Unexplained absences from school or home leading to possible sexual exploitation concerns</li> <li>Unborn:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Majority of ante-natal appointments missed</li> <li>Medical concerns remain – e.g. smoking and use of alcohol</li> <li>Issues of domestic abuse identified</li> <li>Lack of preparation for the birth</li> <li>Housing issues</li> <li>Previous history regarding mental health, substance misuse</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents unable to provide 'good enough' care that is adequate and safe which places the child at risk of significant harm</li> <li>Persistent instability and violence in the home</li> <li>Parents do not take appropriate action if child goes missing</li> <li>Child not protected from sexual exploitation</li> <li>Suspicious or evidence of female genital mutilation</li> <li>Crime or incident which has or may have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family or community (honour based violence)</li> <li>Suspicious that child may have been or potentially made to marry against her will (forced marriage)</li> <li>Child left alone or unsupervised based on age, development and /or maturity</li> <li>Allegation of serious injury/ abuse</li> <li>Pre-birth assessment identifies unborn child at risk of significant harm</li> <li>Mental or physical health problem, learning disability or chaotic substance / alcohol misuse that severely impacts on ability to provide basic care for child</li> <li>Unable to protect from significant harm including contact with unsafe adults</li> <li>Allegation or reasonable suspicion of serious injury or abuse</li> <li>Extreme /continuous domestic abuse</li> <li>Unborn:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Significant drug or alcohol use</li> <li>Serious domestic violence/relationship issues</li> <li>Signs of serious neglect of self and living conditions</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

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# Threshold of Need and Intervention Criteria

## Parents and Carers

Note: this is an illustrative rather than comprehensive list of indicators

	Universal	Universal Plus	Universal Partnership Plus	Specialist
Action	No additional action required	<b>Additional support in setting. Consider agency led TAC/TAS or CAF. Involve partners as appropriate</b>	<b>Consider enhanced support under Universal Plus Services or discuss with and/or make a referral to your local IDT</b>	<b>Seek advice from local Family Support Integrated Duty Teams for Child Protection Services</b>
Emotional warmth and stability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents provide secure and consistent care</li> <li>Parents show appropriate warmth, praise and encouragement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inconsistent responses to child/young person</li> <li>Erratic or inconsistent care from multiple carers</li> <li>Family disputes impacting on child/young person</li> <li>Poor home routines</li> <li>Over-protective care which inhibits child's social and emotional development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Child has experienced multiple main carers</li> <li>Parents highly critical of child and provide little warmth, praise or encouragement</li> <li>Chaotic parenting of child/young person</li> <li>Parents unable to exercise control of child/young person</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Child beyond parental control</li> <li>Child rejected by parent</li> <li>Abandoned child or unaccompanied minor seeking asylum</li> <li>Child/parent relationship at risk of imminent breakdown</li> <li>Parents not confident in assessing the risks posed by potential carers</li> </ul>
Guidance, Boundaries and Stimulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sets consistent and appropriate boundaries taking account of age/development of child/young person</li> <li>Enables child to access appropriate activities and to experience success</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parent provides inconsistent boundaries</li> <li>Parent provides limited interaction/ stimulation for child</li> <li>Child or young person spends considerable time alone</li> <li>Lack of response to concerns raised about child or young person</li> <li>Parent does not support access to positive new experiences or social interaction</li> <li>Child accessing social media sites without age appropriate parental supervision</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No effective boundaries set</li> <li>Parents unable to provide appropriate role model</li> <li>Child/parent relationship at risk of imminent breakdown</li> <li>Development of child impaired through lack of appropriate stimulation and play</li> <li>Persistent condoned absence from school</li> <li>Exposure to inappropriate or harmful material and people (e.g. via internet)</li> <li>Parents in conflict with statutory services</li> <li>Not engaging in constructive leisure activities</li> <li>No access to support for education / social interaction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No effective boundaries set- child out of control / offending and developmental delay</li> <li>Parents do not know child's whereabouts and there are concerns child may be associating with inappropriate adults</li> </ul>

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# Threshold of Need and Intervention Criteria

## Family and Environmental Factors

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	Universal	Universal Plus	Universal Partnership Plus	Specialist
Action	No additional action required	Additional support in setting. Consider agency led TAC/TAS or CAF. Involve partners as appropriate	Consider enhanced support under Universal Plus Services or discuss with and/or make a referral to your local IDT	Seek advice from local Family Support Integrated Duty Teams for Child Protection Services
Family history, functioning and well-being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good family relationships, including where parents are separated or bereavement or parental disputes not impacting on the child and is well managed, and child is supported</li> <li>• Physical or mental health difficulties in immediate family, but not impacting on child/well managed and supported</li> <li>• No concerns regarding parental engagement</li> <li>• Family stresses but coping well</li> <li>• Few significant changes in family composition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family conflicts or parental disputes that may involve children</li> <li>• History of involvement with statutory services</li> <li>• Physical or mental health difficulties in immediate family</li> <li>• Difficulty with parental engagement</li> <li>• Loss of significant adult through bereavement or separation impacting significantly</li> <li>• Suspected/occasional domestic abuse</li> <li>• Multiple births /high number of young children</li> <li>• Sibling/parent involved in criminal activity</li> <li>• Family not coping</li> <li>• Young carer (parent/siblings)</li> <li>• Privately fostered–unapproved or not notified (immediate referral to social care)</li> <li>• Living with other family members</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concerns of domestic abuse and / or substance misuse</li> <li>• Moderate mental or physical health difficulties within the immediate family</li> <li>• Family with history of CP registration</li> <li>• Family involved in criminal activity/ received custodial sentence</li> <li>• Family at risk of breakdown related to child's behavioural difficulties</li> <li>• Suspicions of potential female genital mutilation within the family, or significant others</li> <li>• Family seeking asylum or refuge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Past or current incidence of abuse, neglect, serious domestic abuse or substance misuse</li> <li>• Significant mental or physical health difficulties within the immediate family</li> <li>• A person who has a conviction for offences against children (sexual, physical or neglect) and poses actual or potential risk</li> <li>• Suspicion of child being taken/ prepared for female genital mutilation</li> <li>• Serious incidents of domestic abuse and / or evidence of substance misuse</li> <li>• Family with history of CP registration / previous removal of child</li> <li>• Evidence of female genital mutilation within the family, or significant others</li> </ul>
Wider family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sense of larger familial network and / or good friendships outside of the family unit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family is socially isolated</li> <li>• Family has poor relationships or no contact with extended family</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Destructive relationships with wider family including historical and inter- generational issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Household members /Adult in contact with children who is subject to multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA) or multi-agency risk assessment conference (MARAC) meetings</li> </ul>

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# Threshold of Need and Intervention Criteria

## Family and Environmental Factors

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Housing, employment and finances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accommodation has basic amenities and appropriate facilities</li> <li>Parents able to manage working or unemployment arrangements adequately and do not perceive them as unduly stressful</li> <li>Reasonable income over time with resources used appropriately to meet individual needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Barely adequate/poor /temporary accommodation</li> <li>Housing causing family stress</li> <li>Difficult to obtain employment due to poor basic skills</li> <li>Parents experience continuing stress due to unemployment or 'overworking'</li> <li>Difficulties managing household finances</li> <li>Low level debt/ in need of financial advice</li> <li>Low income/ financial hardship</li> <li>Lack of affordability for basic amenities including household fuel and food</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chronic and long-term unemployment due to significant lack of basic skills</li> <li>Or longstanding issues such as substance misuse/ offending, etc.</li> <li>Debt / poverty issues impacting on family</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accommodation places child at serious risk of harm</li> <li>Extreme debts/poverty impacting on ability to meet family's basic needs</li> </ul>
Social and community elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Generally good universal services in the neighbourhood</li> <li>Family feels integrated into the community</li> <li>Adequate social and friendship networks</li> <li>Community are generally supportive of family and/or child</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unemployment affecting parents/ family significantly</li> <li>Family is socially excluded</li> <li>Frequent housing moves</li> <li>Learning difficulties of parents or child leading to marginalisation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social exclusion</li> <li>Victimisation of family in their local area</li> </ul>	

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# Glossary of Terms

CAF	Common Assessment Framework
IDT	Integrated Duty Team
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
TAC	Team Around the Child
TAS	Team Around the School



- ◆ Police ◆ Health ◆ Dorset County Council ◆ SWASFT
- ◆ Youth Offending Team ◆ Purbeck Council ◆ North Dorset Council ◆ Probation
- ◆ CAF/CASS ◆ West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland Councils
- ◆ Community and Voluntary Sector ◆ East Dorset and Christchurch Councils ◆ Education

## Key Guidance

All children have the right to grow up safe from harm and the Children Act 1989 and 2004 place duties on all agencies to promote and safeguard the welfare of children in need and at risk in their local area. A child is defined within the Children Act 1989 as anyone who has not yet reached their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Practitioners should hold in mind that disabled children are three to four times more vulnerable to abuse (Ofsted 2012). The “Parent” should be taken to refer to anyone who has parental responsibility for the child, or any birth/natural father or any other adult within the family who can reasonably be regarded as having a parenting role. When there are issues of consent, it will be important to distinguish who has parental responsibility.

The Children Act encourages all agencies to work in partnership wherever possible with families and make onward referrals with their consent. This should be possible in Levels 2 and 3, but it is acknowledged that gaining consent for Level 4 could at times place a child at further risk and the practitioner should gain advice if time allows from their Safeguarding Lead. Further guidance on Information Sharing can be found [here](#).

Sometimes “Significant Harm” will be a single traumatic event, but more often it is an accumulation of significant events, both acute and longstanding over time, such as in situations of persistent neglect. There are no absolute criteria in making judgements regarding children's wellbeing. Practitioners are encouraged to professionally raise concerns and escalate those concerns with other agencies, if they feel in their judgement that a child's needs or safety are being overlooked. Refer as appropriate to the Escalations Policy [here](#).

The Local Authority Designated Officer (Tel: 01305 221191) should be alerted, within one working day, to all cases in which an allegation has come to an employer's attention, that a person who works or volunteers with children has: behaved in a way that has, or may have harmed a child; possibly committed a criminal offence against children or related to a child; behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates that s/he is unsuitable to work with children (Working Together 2015)