



Levels of Need and Intervention

WSCB Mandated Guidance

Version 2.1

Version	Date of amendments	Amendments
1.0 DRAFT January 2014		
2.0 DRAFT July 2015	Revised to ensure compliance with Signs of Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Referral and Assessment Team changed to Duty, Triage and Assessment Team• Replacement of CAF references to e-CAF or use or MARF or single agency assessment form• Level 2 and Level 3 (pages 7&8) definitions changed to include information regarding the Early Help Hub• Updated throughout to include Signs of Safety references
2.1 July 2015	Revised to include comments from WSCB members at July 2015 Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Change to include Probation Service to National Probation Service or Thames Valley Community Rehabilitation and references to ex-offenders

Updated: July 2015

Purpose of document

This Mandated Guidance for Levels of Need and Intervention is a vital tool underpinning the aspiration to provide support and early interventions in the lives of potentially vulnerable children and young people in Wokingham. Many agencies, organisations, parents, carers and other family members are involved with supporting children and it is important that they receive the right services at the appropriate time. The intention, by clarifying the levels of need and intervention definitions, is that anyone involved in working with a child feels enabled to use their professional judgment to identify what the child and parent's level of need is and helps to create a common language for that practitioner to discuss their views with the family and other practitioners in thinking how best to meet the identified additional needs. If the practitioner has concerns about a child they should continue to work within the Child Protection procedures and make a referral to the Duty, Triage and Assessment Team by telephoning: 0118 908 8002 or email: randateam@wokingham.gov.uk . Every practitioner involved in supporting a child has a responsibility to make sure they are equipped with the appropriate level of knowledge and support to be able to identify when they need to seek further information about a child's circumstances or need to seek advice from a manager or other agency. Equally, as far as is possible and reasonable, ensuring that children and families' needs are not escalated unnecessarily into the higher more resource intensive service areas is the responsibility of all referring agencies. This is to prevent systems being overloaded and children's needs not being met appropriately.

A theme that runs throughout this document and associated policies is a strategic intention to meet the needs of children, young people and their families at the earliest opportunity. This can only be achieved by agencies across all sectors working together effectively engaging with families, including those hardest to engage, in order to meet need which has been appropriately identified and properly assessed. Agencies include those in the statutory, private, voluntary and independent sector and those that represent children's services and adult's services.

Legislation and good practice documents

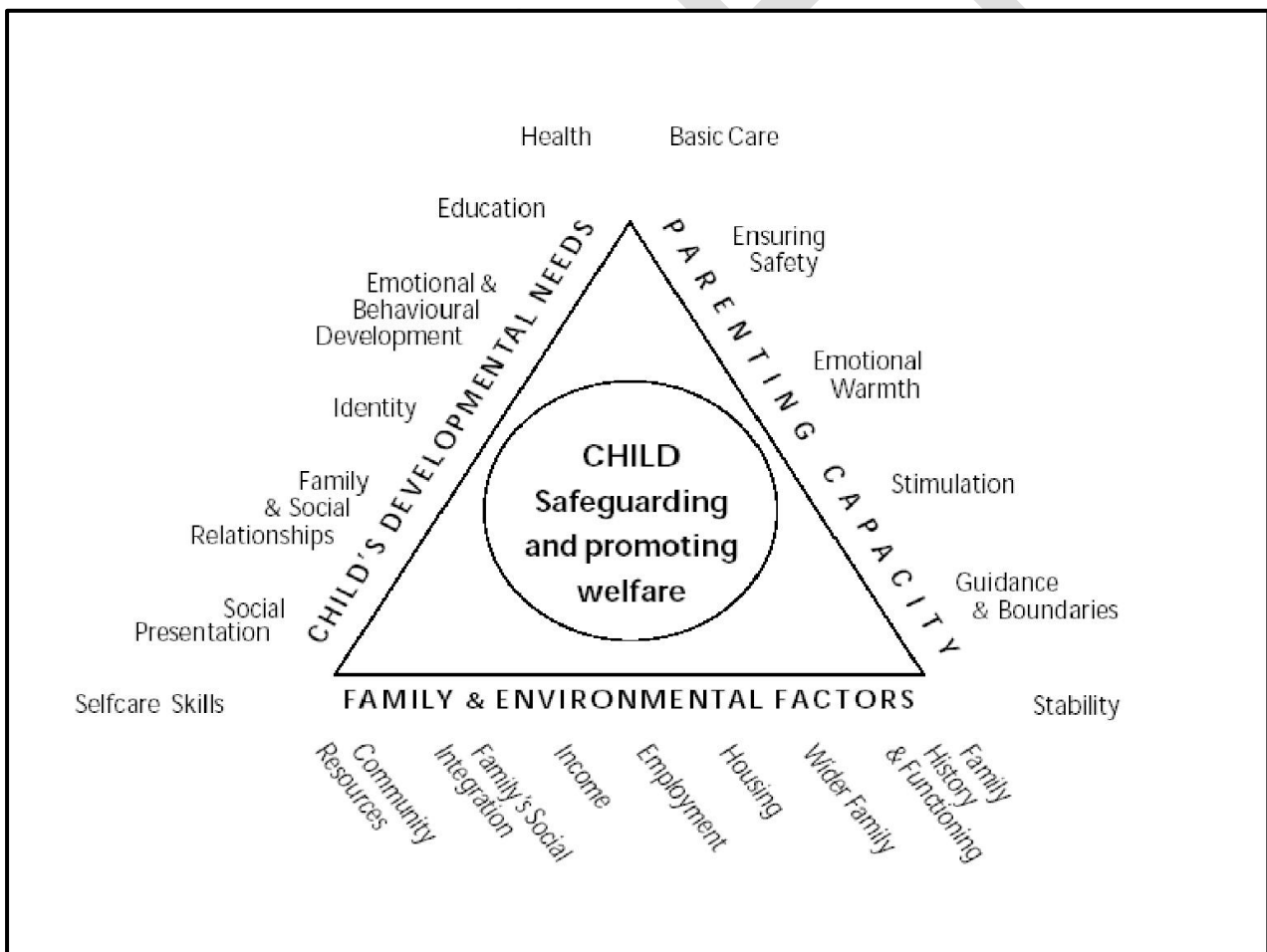
For the purposes of this document, the term 'children' refers to children and young people under the age of 18 years and care leavers under the age of 25. This document is based on recognised good practice and influenced by current research and local experience. This procedure is underpinned by:

- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- The Children Act 1989
- The Children Act 2004
- Messages from Research 1995
- Equalities Act 2010

- The Adoption and Children Act 2004
- The Children Act 2004
- Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015
- Wokingham Child Protection Procedures
- What to do if you're worried that your child is being abused 2006
- Education Act 2002
- Education Act 2011
- Children and Families Act 2014
- The Care Act 2015

This Mandated Guidance for Levels of Need and Intervention is based on and complements the Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need as set out in Department of Health guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015' to provide a consistent approach for those working with children.

Assessment Framework Triangle



Our vision

The Wokingham Safeguarding Children Board's vision is:

'To enable children and young people in Wokingham to be valued, inspired, loved, nurtured and encouraged, with opportunities to achieve their immediate and long term ambitions. Our role is to improve the life chances of all and to provide extra support for those who need it.'

Development of procedure

A multi-agency group of practitioners was set up to explore the descriptors and indicators of need and vulnerability and their feedback formed the basis for this procedure. It has since been reviewed by partners that form the Children's Wokingham Safeguarding Children Board and other key professionals across Wokingham utilising existing multi-agency work undertaken across the county and incorporates examples of good practice from other local authorities.

The development of this procedure is intended to provide clarity in relation to service provision at this time and will be amended and enhanced in line with the planned developments within Wokingham Borough Council and beyond, including developments within Wokingham Safeguarding Children Board.

Integrated working

Wokingham Safeguarding Children Board is committed to ensuring that frontline services are integrated and focused on the needs of children. However, we can only achieve this vision by working closely with everyone who supports children across the Borough.

Integrated working will:-

- **Support earlier intervention** – by providing methods to help practitioners, who come into day to day contact with children and families, such as those providing ante-natal and post natal services, or those in early year's settings and schools to identify and meet unmet need at an earlier stage.
- **Improve multi-agency working** – by Lead Professionals maintaining a single record of the needs and progress of a child in contact with several agencies. The framework will facilitate the embedding of a common language of assessment of need and response, improving communication and information sharing between practitioners, thus enabling different agencies to work together to provide appropriate, coordinated services.
- **Reduce bureaucracy for families** – using the Signs of Safety approach the intention is to provide with a complete overview of a child's needs; clearly mapped out using a strength based model ensuring next steps and a safety plan are included; thereby reducing the number of inappropriate inter-agency referrals, separate assessments and different agencies working with a child, preventing children and families having to repeat their story. The Signs of Safety

Model looks at what is working well to build on existing strengths and safety, what we are worried about to clearly articulate risk and danger, and next steps to ensure that we are working towards a trajectory that build on strengths and safety and understand and mitigate the risk and danger.

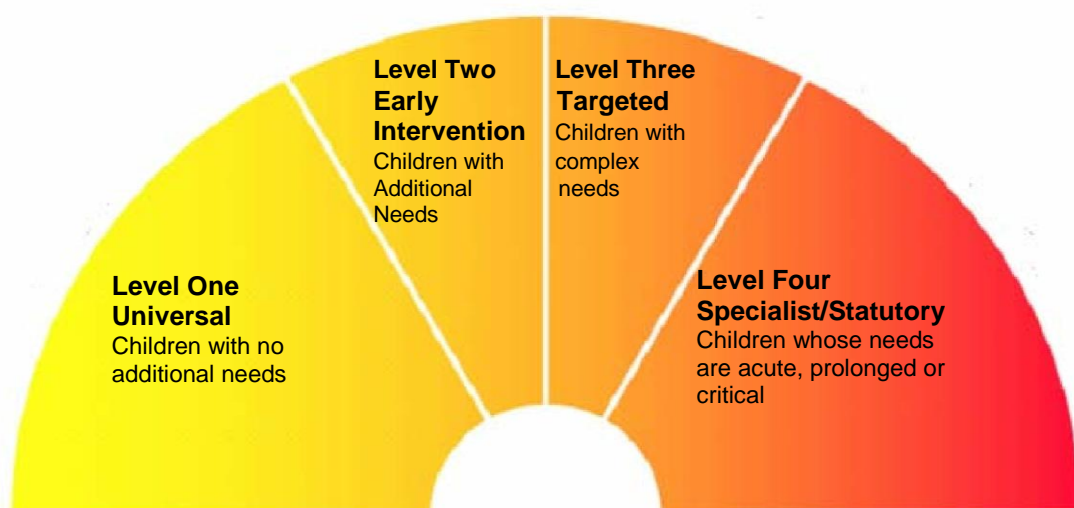
e-CAF (Common Assessment Framework)

Undertaking an assessment using the e-caf, as soon as there is an indication of additional needs, contributes to the early intervention and prevention agenda in terms of effective 'triage' through the Early Help Hub.

'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015' makes clear the expectation that all local authorities should have arrangements in place for making sure that a CAF is completed by all agencies that come into contact with vulnerable children.

The Early Help Hub will accept referrals such as e-CAF, police notifications, self-referrals and MARF (Multi-Agency Referral Form). This is to ensure that the Early Help Hub are working with all families who are in need of targeted intervention without meeting the need for Children's Social Care and with consent of the family involved. A further assessment is completed by the Lead Professional once signposted through the Early Help Hub to ensure that all agencies are working together with the family to a clear plan.

This dashboard model is based on the level of need criteria and national guidance and legislation as shown below.



Wokingham's Levels of Need and Intervention Matrix

The Tiered Model of Children's Needs (Appendix A) provides a framework to develop a common understanding amongst professionals of children's needs and vulnerabilities, shared assessment processes and a platform for inter-agency and multi-agency working. It augments and updates the previous guidance and procedures relating to multi-agency working and incorporates Signs of Safety as solution focused model.

The model is underpinned by:

- Child-centred approaches
- A focus on improving outcomes for children
- An holistic view of understanding and delivery
- Involving children and their families
- An acknowledgement that the child's welfare and safety is everyone's responsibility
- Agencies working together to reduce duplication and unnecessary intrusion into family life
- Building on strengths as well as identifying difficulties
- An intention to see assessment as a continuing process, not an event
- Practitioners acting in a non-discriminatory and value difference manner
- A commitment to build communities where all Wokingham children and young people can thrive

This is a procedure for practitioners and managers from across all agencies that work with, or are involved with, children, young people and their families. It is intended to assist practitioners and managers across all agencies in assessing and identifying a child's level of need. It also describes what type of services / resources may meet those needs and what processes to follow in moving from an assessment to a provision of services. It describes needs in terms of 'levels' which is essentially a schematic way of helping to understand children's needs and how they could be met. It is important to note the need for an assessment should not prevent children from receiving services at the earliest opportunity.

Whilst the procedures need to be adhered to they do not prevent an individual practitioner understanding the needs of each individual child. Practitioners will know that the needs of children and young people will vary and change over time. They also may have different levels of need related to different issues at the same time. This procedure does, however, provide the foundation and starting point in working with a child or young person and allows professionals to use their judgement to make accountable and reasoned decisions within a national and local framework.

Wokingham Safeguarding Children's Board

Levels of Need Triangle

Level 4

Acute needs requiring urgent, intensive Children's Social Care statutory support. Level of need for child protection reached

Specialist

Examples of Level 4 Services and Support

Children's Services – Social care, Fostering, Adoption Teams
Family Group Conferencing Service, Police, National Probation Service, Thames Valley Community Rehabilitation, other statutory service e.g. SEN services; Education & Child Psychology
Specialist health or disability services, Youth Offending Team
Targeted drug and alcohol CAMHS, Family support services
Voluntary & community Services
Heightened priority for services at universal level

Level 3

High level complex needs requiring a **targeted integrated** response usually from Children's Social Care. This is the Level of need to become a "Child in Need". The level of need for child protection may be reached.

Targeted

Examples of Level 3 Services and Support

Children's Services, Other statutory service e.g. SEN services, Specialist health or disability services, Police, National Probation Service, Thames Valley Community Rehabilitation, Youth Offending Team / Service
Targeted drug and alcohol, CAMHS, Family support services, Voluntary & community services, Early Support Programme,
Heightened priority for services at universal level,

Level 2

Targeted early intervention. Needs not clear, not known or not being met. Use referral /assessment form such as e-CAF or MARF to work with targeted preventative services. Response is universal support services and/or targeted preventative services which can include a TAF support.

Early Intervention

Examples of Level 2 Services and Support

Early Help Hub, Youth Offending, Targeted drug and alcohol services, Tier 2 CAMHS, Educational psychology
Education Welfare, Specialist play services, Integrated Youth Support & Extended Services, Voluntary & community services, Early Intervention for Family Services, Early Support Programme, **Heightened priority for support at universal level.**

Level 1

No identified additional needs
No identified risks
CAF not required

Universal

Examples of Level 1 Services and Support

Children's Centres, Education, Family Centres & Early Years, Health Visiting Service, Midwifery

The Matrix gives practical examples to help people supporting a child decide into which level the child's needs fall. Below is a brief description of each of those levels and the type of assessment and/or service a person should utilise to help a child with needs which fall into that level.

Level 1: Universal – Children with no additional needs

Children's needs are generally best met within their family networks. The universal service offer – the National Health Service, Early Years services and schools - all help to promote the overall welfare of children and are free services for all citizens. These services are designed to meet the needs of the average child with no significant additional needs. Children with needs which fall into this category tend to make overall good progress in all areas of their development with no additional support. From time to time, these children may have some additional needs, which may require additional professional time (and expertise), but generally this time will be limited and lead to continued positive outcomes.

Assessment

Children's needs are understood through single agency 'business as usual' activity and processes and whilst they might refer to other forms of universal services they will be held within the universal provision.

Services

Services to meet these types of needs are usually provided to all families and children and range from health and education to community services such as leisure and play. Apart from the universal services themselves, there may be other support services made available to children to ensure their needs are met. For example, accessing a learning mentor or teaching assistant may be all that is required for some individual children in this level.

Level 2: Early Intervention – Children with emerging additional needs

Level 2 needs are those where there are indications that without the provision of services circumstances are likely to deteriorate to the detriment of the children or families concerned. This additional support often relates to health, social or educational issues.

Assessment

Children with needs in level 2 are likely to be best served by a multi-agency response and a Lead Professional identified to co-ordinate the support. This group of more vulnerable children require additional support either at school, home or in the local community. This additional support can be provided by one or several statutory or voluntary agencies by referring to the Early Help Hub. This group of children may require additional support because they may have personal or physical or health difficulties or they may

be affected by family crisis. The child may be affected by the impact of poor parenting or needs of the parent.

Services

Services provided within level 2 will be designed so that they can be activated as early as possible, sometimes even where need is predicted rather than presenting. For example, there may be services and interventions that could assist antenatal parents where there are known to be specific vulnerabilities or risk factors. Within level 2, participation is most likely to be on a voluntary basis where parents and children or young people, alongside supportive professionals, have identified a need and are willing and able to access appropriate services.

Level 3: Targeted – Children with complex needs

Level 3 needs are those that require more targeted and enhanced support that will on occasions include specialist provision. This may include a single social work assessment where a child is assessed as a 'Child in Need'. As far as possible all engagement with services will be sought on a voluntary basis. However, it is likely that some children and families within the upper end of this level of need will be assessed as at risk of significant harm and the local authority may need to use its statutory powers to ensure participation. Children requiring targeted and enhanced support will have additional needs, some of which may be complex.

Assessment

All children with needs which fall into this level are likely to benefit from a multi-agency response, with a Lead Professional to co-ordinate. The assessment should involve and have the consent of the parents, carers, child and/or young person in its completion. A specialist assessment will be carried out at this point, such as the children's social services child and family assessment.

Children's social care may step the family down and universal services or targeted services should be offered which may result in a Team Around the Family (TAF) being facilitated. Practitioner's Guide can be downloaded from [here](#) as well as the [ecaf online information](#).

Services

Key agencies that may provide support at this level include WBC Social Care, Fostering and Adoption Team, Family Group Conferencing Service, Police, National Probation Service, Thames Valley Community Rehabilitation, SEN services, Education and Child Psychologists, specialist health or disability services, Youth Offending Team, targeted drug and alcohol support such as DAT (Drug and Alcohol Team), CAMHS (Community and Adult Mental Health Service), Family support service, services provided by voluntary and community centre, Early Support Programme and universal services.

Level 4 – Specialist – Children whose needs are prolonged, specialist and critical

Level 4 needs are those that can be described as 'acute' either in terms of urgency, complexity or in terms of the degree of risk to which a child or young person is exposed. Although relatively speaking very few children and young people fall into this category of need, services provided tend to be resource intensive and children with these needs are often at risk of having the poorest outcomes. Children subject to care proceedings or a child protection plan and children with complex needs requiring residential or nursing care or in-patient psychiatric treatment have Level 4 needs. There will be areas of commissioning that relate to the securing of individual packages of care outside the family on a child-by-child basis within this level of need.

Assessment

This smaller group of children and young people require intensive help and support to meet their needs. The circumstances of children who clearly fall into levels 3 and 4 tend to be so complex that it is hard to distinguish the level of need without formal assessment. These children should be referred to Children's Social Care via a Multi-Agency Referral form so that both the required level of assessment can be determined as well as the most appropriate intervention. Where there are clear child protection issues or a Section 47 investigation is instigated there is no requirement for an e-CAF to be completed. This is because all Section 47 investigations are undertaken by completion of a Single Assessment. However if an e-CAF has been completed previously it should be forwarded to WBC so the information in it can contribute to the completion of the Single assessment.

Children who are defined as being 'in need', under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989, are those whose vulnerability is such that they are unlikely to reach or maintain a satisfactory level of health or development, or their health and development will be significantly impaired, without the provision of services (s.17 (10) of the Children Act 1989).

The critical factors to be taken into account in deciding whether a child is in need under the Children Act 1989 are:

- What will happen to a child's health or development without services being provided;
- and
- The likely effect the services will have on the child's standard of health and development.

Local Authorities have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children identified as in need. However, parents/carers need to be willing to undertake

assessments and accept offers of services. They should be encouraged to do so as a means of avoiding needs escalating to a higher level which will likely lead to compulsory intervention.

Some children are in need because they are suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. The Children Act 1989 introduced the concept of significant harm as the level of need that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interest of children, giving Local Authorities a duty to make enquiries to decide whether they should take action to safeguard or promote the welfare of a child who is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm.

It is only when the Local Authority has reasonable cause to suspect a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm that compulsory intervention is justified. That intervention may take the form of s.47 enquiries, a child protection conference followed by a child protection plan or in more extreme cases, legal intervention.

It would be expected that in most cases where children fall into Level 4 there will be a combination of a number of vulnerabilities and rarely just one presenting feature. Children's Social Care is the lead agency for undertaking s.17 and s.47 Enquiries. If professionals are in any doubt or would like to discuss particular concerns they are encouraged to do so by contacting WBC.

Out of office hours, the Emergency Duty Team (EDT) should be contacted. Information on how to contact them can be found at <http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/family/socialservices/>

In particularly complex cases, or where there is a dispute between agencies about whether levels of need are met, responses should always be escalated to more senior managers to resolve. This should be the case in all agencies so that children are not potentially left at risk because of differences of professional opinion. The WSCB procedure for resolving professional disputes can be found [here](#).

Services

Key agencies that may provide support at this level include WBC Social Care, Fostering and Adoption Team, Family Group Conferencing Service, Police, SEN services, Education and Child Psychologists, specialist health or disability services, Youth Offending Team, targeted drug and alcohol support such as DAT (Drug and Alcohol Team), CAMHS (Community and Adult Mental Health Service), Family support service, services provided by voluntary and community centre and universal services.

Conclusion

In any tiered approach it is essential to ensure a range of service provision is available to meet the continuum of needs of children in the community and to ensure that the services are appropriately accessed in a timeframe commensurate with the needs of individual children. This includes ensuring commissioners, as well as practitioners, bear in mind the following:

It must be recognised and understood:

- that children can and do move from one level to another;
- that children in levels 2-4 also need and use universal services;
- that repeated assessments should not be necessary to move children from one level to another and that children's stories can follow them as they progress through service provision;
- that there will be some children - for example, those with complex needs or who are deemed to be at risk of significant harm and services should be engaged at the earliest opportunity
- that for most children the service aspiration is to secure services as low down the levels of need as possible, this is so that scarce and resource intensive provision can be reserved for those children that need it most.
- The examples of indicators can only offer a sense of the level of need. Degrees of severity and combinations of indicators for individual children need to be understood and assessed. The examples cannot be a substitute for professional judgement so please contact Duty, Triage and Assessment, Team: Telephone 0118 908 8002 or Email: randateam@wokingham.gov.uk if you require advice or clarification on implementing the levels of need.

If you have any feedback regarding this document please contact Wokingham Safeguarding Children Board at <http://wokinghamlscb.org.uk>