

Thresholds of need and response in Salford



2020



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Please Note: This document should be read in conjunction with the [online Greater Manchester Safeguarding Procedures Manual](#) that sets out guidance relating to referral, assessment, planning and decision making

Introduction

“All partners are committed to working together so that every child in Salford is safe, well and able to reach their full potential”

This document is the criteria for taking action and providing help across this full continuum to ensure that services are commissioned effectively and that the right help is given to the child at the right time. It should be transparent, accessible and understood by all practitioners and applied consistently.

Children need to feel loved and valued and supported. If they are denied the opportunity and support they need to achieve these outcomes, children are at increased risk not only of an impoverished childhood, but of disadvantage and social exclusion in adulthood.

All agencies and individuals should proactively safeguard and promote the welfare of children so that the need for action to protect children from harm is reduced ([Working Together, 2018](#)) This document has been developed to help all practitioners who work with individual children and their families to identify unmet needs and raise, respond to concerns about children and identifying the best type of support. Any agencies and professionals, parents/ carers, volunteers, children and young people and other family members are involved with providing support.

A child is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. A 16 year old living independently or is in further education, or in the armed forces, is in hospital, prison or a young offender’s institution does not change their status or entitlement to services and protection under the Children Act (1989). This includes unborn children and disabled young people until aged 24 years.

It includes:

- **The thresholds for access to services which support the actions needed to improve outcomes for children.**
- **The interface between early intervention, child protection and safeguarding.**
- **An emphasis on early help for children, consistent with the [Early Help Strategy](#)**

Early Help Strategy 2018-2021

Patterns of family life are diverse and there is no perfect way to raise children. Good parenting involves a combination of knowledge and skills which at times this is challenging. Everyone needs help at different times in their lives and asking for extra help is a positive step in taking responsibility. And often after a bit of help from others we are able to help ourselves.

Early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child’s life. Early help can also prevent further problems arising. Effective early help relies upon local agencies working together.

For more information please visit www.partnersinsalford.org/

The Continuum of Needs

The continuum of needs and services is a guide for practitioners and managers.

Thresholds of need have been developed to promote early identification of concerns by all practitioners who work with individual children and their families. Practitioners should always use their professional judgment and take into account; the age of the child, context of the situation and any protective and resilience factors.

There are four levels that take into account the different stages of need and types of intervention which are available to all children and their families. Children can move across the levels at different times in their lives, or at different times during agencies' contact with them. Support and/or intervention may be provided on either a single or multi-agency basis to address the identified needs of the child.

To assist managers and practitioners/workers, there is a table of possible indicators which contains some examples of the type of situation that would be found within each of the levels of need.

Response should aim to reduce risk and vulnerability by meeting the needs of the child or young person. Identifying and providing the right level of support/intervention at the earliest opportunity is essential to achieving this.

Safeguarding Children Procedures

SSCP has adopted the [Greater Manchester Procedures Manual](#). Practitioners can [register for alerts](#) when the manual is updated and subscribe to receive free monthly policy briefings. Supporting local pathway guidance is provided to enable practitioners to interpret some Greater Manchester procedures for implementation in Salford.

For more information please visit:

- <http://greatermanchesterscb.proceduresonline.com/>
- <https://safeguardingchildren.salford.gov.uk/professionals/policies-and-procedures/>

Download our [NEW 7 Minute Briefings](#) and embed the learning into your practice!

Thresholds of Need in Salford

Level 1 - Universal Services and Self-Help

The child is supported by their parents/carers in the community with access to mainstream ([universal](#)) services but with no identified additional needs.

Diverse community self-help arrangements may also support parents and carers in providing good care for their children.

Level 2 - Targeted and Co-ordinated Early Help

The child's needs are not clear, not known or not being met. This is the threshold to initiate an [early help assessment](#). Response services are universal support services and/or targeted services.

An [Early Help Assessment and Team Around the Family \(TAF\)](#) would be recommended to co-ordinate the delivery of services, promote integrated working and family participation.

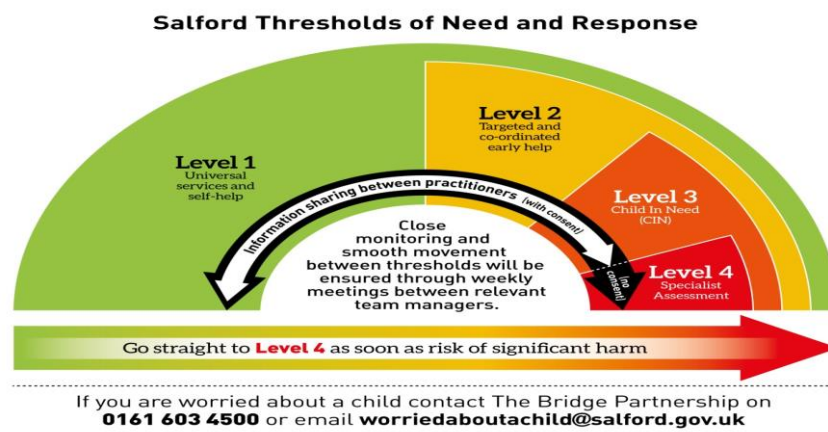
Level 3 - Child In Need (CIN)

The child's needs require longer term intervention from statutory and/ or specialist services. High level additional unmet needs will usually require a targeted integrated response.

This is also the threshold for a [Child In Need](#) which will require a Children's Social Care assessment and intervention.

Level 4 - Specialist Assessment

The child has acute needs requiring statutory intensive support. This in particular includes the threshold for [child protection](#) and the [Young Person's Plan \(YPP\)](#) which will require Children's Social Care assessment intervention.



Lead Professional Handbook

SSCP has developed a Lead Professional Handbook to help lead practitioners to co-ordinate the delivery of support services across the thresholds of need. For more information please visit:

<https://safeguardingchildren.salford.gov.uk/professionals/policies-and-procedures/>

What is the Early Help Assessment and Team Around the Family?

The [Early Help Assessment and Team Around the Family \(TAF\)](#) is Salford's Early Help (Level 2) tool, designed to promote integrated working and family participation within Salford, using an asset based solution focused model. A single Early Help Assessment can include individual assessments of any family member, including significant others, who give consent to be included.

The Early Help Assessment is a holistic assessment tool used to identify needs at an early stage and develop a family's action plan. Practitioners using the Early Help Assessment and TAF process are encouraged to empower families to take ownership of their action plan by encouraging them to highlight their own strengths, needs and actions. The TAF process can also be used for the ongoing review of cases, transferred down from Child in Need and Child Protection level by a Children's Social Worker to an identified lead professional at Level 2.

There are a number of [supporting tools](#) that professionals can download.

For more information Tel: 0161 603 4239 or visit: www.salford.gov.uk/earlyhelpassessment

Who is a Child In Need (CIN)?

Local authorities have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in need. They should do this in partnership with other agencies. Under Section 17 (10) of the Children Act 1989, a child is a 'Child in Need' if:

- **He/she is unlikely to achieve or maintain, or have the opportunity of achieving or maintaining, a reasonable standard of health or development without the provision for him/her of services by a local authority;**
- **His/her health or development is likely to be significantly impaired, or further impaired, without the provision for him/her of such services; or**
- **He/she is disabled.**

NB - Children can have both complex health needs and a disability e.g. the requirement for daily Parenteral Nutrition is one of the markers that defines someone with short gut syndrome as disabled.

Critical factors on deciding whether a child is in need are:

- **What will happen to a child's health and development without services being provided? If the answer is that it is likely to suffer then ask:**
- **What will be the likely effect that services will have on the child's standard of health and development? If the answer is it will help it improve, then this will justify the escalation to level 3.**

Thriving Families and Neglect

Thriving families and Neglect: NEW tools, supporting guidance and training

The tools should aid practitioners in assessing needs early and start a multi-agency discussion. NB Completed tools should accompany the referral and request for services to the Bridge.

For more information please visit: <https://safeguardingchildren.salford.gov.uk/professionals/neglect/>

What is Child Protection?

Some children are in need because they are suffering, or likely to suffer, [significant harm](#). The Children Act 1989 introduced 'significant harm' as the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention. It gives local authorities a duty to make enquiries and to decide whether or not to intervene and safeguard the welfare of the child.

It is necessary to consider; any maltreatment, the child's assessment of his or her own safety and welfare, the family's strengths and parental competence and their ability to change.

Where there are concerns at Level 4 regarding 15, 16 and 17 year olds within Salford, professionals should consider the use of the Young Person's Plan (YPP) to reduce the risk of harm and safeguard vulnerable young people. The threshold status of the YPP is equivalent to the Child Protection Plan and has a specific criteria to identify those young people that would best be supported within a YPP, rather than a CP plan.

For more information please see the [YPP in Salford Guidance](#)

The Bridge Partnership

[Worried about a child?](#) Salford City Council and our partners have a multi-agency hub called the Bridge Partnership that screen all enquiries concerning the welfare or safety of a child.

To make a referral to the Bridge Partnership please use the [online referral form](#). Be clear about the purpose and intended outcome of the referral. It is always helpful to consider the main categories of referral and to consider where your concerns about a child or young person may fit. **NB – please populate your *email address* to receive a copy of the referral.**

Where an [early help assessment](#) has already been undertaken it should be used to support a referral to The Bridge Partnership, however, this is not a prerequisite for making a referral. Early Help Service requests that do not meet the threshold for either Sec. 17 services or Sec. 47 investigations will be dealt with by the Early Help Team Manager, who sits within The Bridge Partnership.

If in doubt always consult with The Bridge Partnership team to determine if a referral is appropriate or to check if Children's Services are already involved with the family.

Worried About a Child?

If you are worried that a child may have been harmed or may be at risk of harm, make an online referral form to The Bridge Partnership.

If in doubt always consult with the other professionals in the child's network, your Single Agency Safeguarding Lead or the Bridge Partnership.

If you have any safeguarding queries, please call The Bridge Partnership Tel: 0161 603 4500 (8.30am to 4.30pm) or Email: worriedaboutachild@salford.gov.uk. To speak to somebody outside office hours, please call the Emergency Duty Team Tel: 0161 794 8888 (4:30pm-8:30am). If a child is in immediate danger call 999.

For more information visit: www.salford.gov.uk/children-and-families/safeguarding-children/

Pathways to Assessment and Services in Salford

Referrals to The Bridge Partnership for assessment and considering statutory services fall under the following categories:

- **Early Help**
- **Child In Need (CIN) - Section 17**
- **Child Protection (CP) - Section 47**
- **Care Orders- Section 31**
- **Duty to Accommodate a Child - Section 20**

Consent to Referral, Assessment and Intervention

Safeguarding and child protection work should always be underpinned by principles of working together in partnership with families. In all cases where possible, consent must be sought from parents/carers to initiate assessments, intervention/support and share information as appropriate.

There are certain circumstances in which this consent or informing parents/carers of a referral is not required/not in the child's best interests. These include situations where there is:

- **Suspicion that a child will be forced into marriage or removed from the country against their will**
- **Suspicion that a child is at risk of female genital mutilation**
- **There is a disclosure of child sexual abuse**
- **Fabricated illness is suspected**
- **If the child is at immediate risk of harm**

Professionals cannot mandate parents to undertake assessments or accept services but a refusal to cooperate may raise further concerns and escalate the level of risk of significant harm to the child.

Recording and Information Sharing

Appropriate, accurate and timely records must be kept of all contact with children and their families.

Professionals should use their professional judgment when making decisions on what information to share and when and consideration should be given as to whether or not sharing information is likely to safeguard and protect a child. Professionals should follow their organisations procedures or consult with their manager/ Single Agency Safeguarding Lead if in doubt. It is also vital to work in partnership with parents/carers.

If the consultation is external (between practitioners from different organisations), the guidance [Government advice on information sharing](#) should be used to decide whether information should be shared

For more information please visit:

- http://greatermanchesterscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_info_sharing.html
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Non-Engagement & Resistant Families

The quality of the relationship between the worker and the family has a significant impact on the effectiveness of the engagement. Salford professionals aim to work effectively with families, hearing their voice and the voice of the child.

Safeguarding and child protection work should always be done in partnership with families when a child's welfare is concerned. It needs to be recognised that not all parents/carers will agree with concerns identified by practitioners and they may refuse a Family Assessment, Child in Need support or to participate in a Team around the Family. If this refusal is likely to lead to the child being at risk of significant harm then the matter may be dealt with under child protection procedures.

Persistent non-engagement with services by uncooperative families leads to an incomplete picture of the child's welfare. Under these circumstances the practitioners involved can hold a **professionals meeting** to decide the level of concern and plan a response to promote the child's welfare. The purpose of the meeting is to share concerns and consider what information is or is not available. It is also important to consider whether a particular agency has a better relationship with the parents/carers and could take the lead in engaging with them.

The meeting should develop a work plan to ensure the safety of the child and professionals involved. It will also identify who is going to visit the family, what information needs to be obtained and how that information will be shared and when. A subsequent meeting will need to review the effectiveness of the work plan.

For more information view the Greater Manchester [Dealing with Persistent Non-Engagement with Services by Uncooperative Families](#) Policy.

Professional Challenge & Escalation

Where there are complicating factors that are perplexing or professional disagreements around the level of need, both agencies need to communicate effectively to resolve matters. It is important to have a healthy debate and dialogue, especially about differences of opinion, but they must not overshadow the needs of the child, which must always remain paramount.

Where differences of opinion cannot be resolved, professionals must follow the

[SSCP Escalation Policy](#). Constructive challenge amongst colleagues within agencies and between agencies provides a healthy approach to keep children safe.

For more information please visit:

- <https://safeguardingchildren.salford.gov.uk/professionals/policies-and-procedures/>

All agencies are responsible for ensuring that their staff are supported and know how to appropriately escalate and resolve inter-agency concerns and disagreements about a child or young person's wellbeing.
