



BFSWS

BRITISH FORCES SOCIAL WORK SERVICE OVERSEAS

Framework for Decision-Making

Guidance for making the right
choice about the safety and
wellbeing of young people



Introduction

This document has been created to support professionals in the overseas commands working with children, young people and families, when faced with a decision about the safety and wellbeing of a child or young person.

In our overseas military locations, children, young people, and their families should be safe, happy, healthy and able to achieve.

The threshold criteria provides guidance and levels of intervention that may be required to support families. This document focuses on families strengths, and its aim is to promote resilience and positive outcomes for children, young people and their families; ensuring children and young people are protected from significant harm.

This document should be used by professionals to support decision making (practitioners to aid decision making) and be used in conjunction with discussions with the Central referral Team / Managers to agree appropriate next steps. This is not to replace the conversations / consultations we have when faced with concerns about a child or young person to determine the best next steps. All professionals should use their designated safeguarding leads for support, guidance and reflection.

Protecting children and young people can be challenging and complex. This document is to support practitioners with thresholds, and supports BFSWS use of the Signs of Safety risk assessment approach, to help understand levels of risk and to analyse past and current concerns in relation to potential harm, whilst promoting safety and strengths to develop next steps.

This document sits alongside the BFSWS QAF, and compliments all BFSWS / military policies and procedures such as JSP834.



Working with Families using Signs of Safety:

BFSWS follow the Signs of Safety approach, reflected in our multi agency working, and when supporting children, young people and families .

Signs of Safety assesses risk and identifies solutions in the following steps:

- What are we worried about?
- What's working well?
- What needs to happen?
- Scaling Question

0 means things are so bad for the child(ren) that they cannot live at home

10 means the child(rens) needs are met / have no identified additional needs

When thinking about a child or family who might need help and support, professionals should use Signs of Safety to inform and analyse their worries.

Below are some additional questions professionals might want to consider

- What worries you most about what have you seen or heard ?
- What do you think will happen if nothing changes?
- Are things getting worse?
- What are the child / young persons worries?
- What impact is all of this having on the child or young person?
- If there is support currently being offered to the child, young person or family is this helping?
- What does the child, young person or family do now that is helping to make things better?
- What do you think needs to happen to make things better for this family?
- On a scale of 0 to 10, how worried are you about this child or family?

The Signs of Safety approach helps professionals to have the conversations about a family's needs. It can help to:

- Understand present and past concerns.
- Recognise existing strengths and safety.
- Be clear about what needs to happen next.
- Have a clear view of the scale of the concern or worry.

Using a strengths-based approach can lead to families overcoming difficulties and challenges, by using universal or targeted services as a preventative measure, without the need for escalation to statutory type services.

If you are worried about a child, young person or adult at risk, please share your worries with your line manager or designated safeguarding lead in the first instance, then contact BFSWS for consultation / referral on;

crt.bfsws@coreassets.com

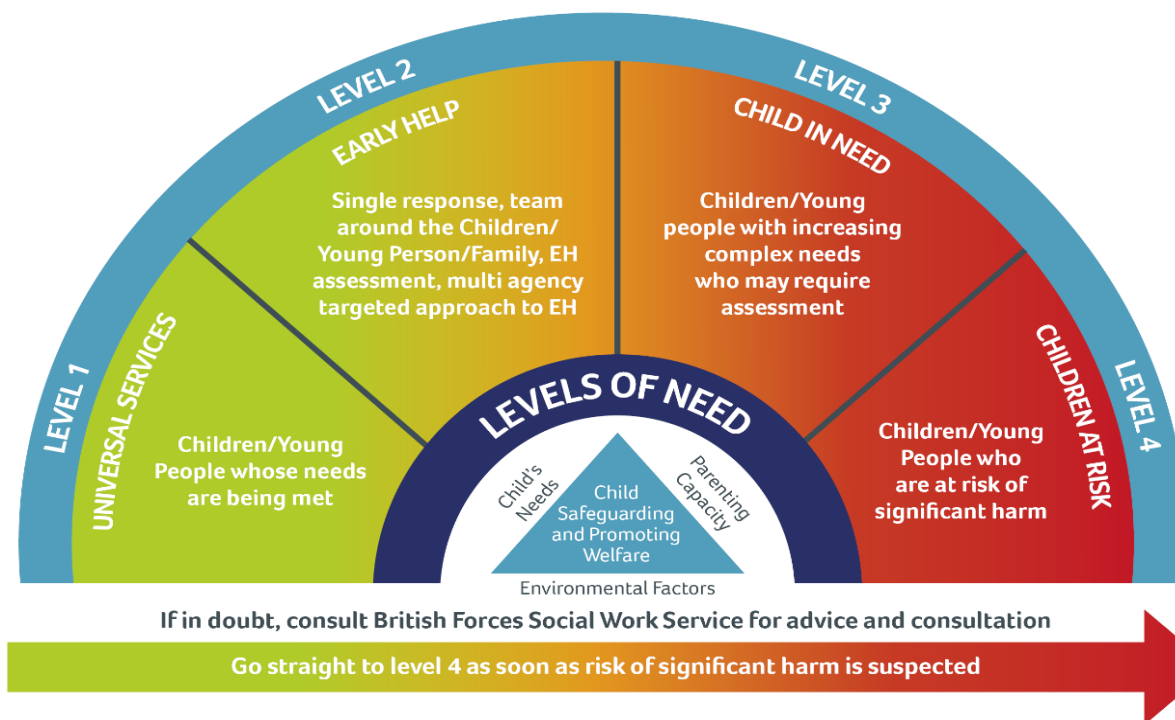
0044 (0) 808 1683111

Or visit www.forcessocialwork.com

BFSWS RoW CYP Threshold Eligibility Criteria

The four levels of need reflect a whole family approach to providing support for Children, Young people and Families which is flexible and responsive.

The needs of Children, Young People and families do not move through the levels in a structured way, but rather along a continuum of need. Children, Young People and Families may experience a range of different needs at different times and as such will move backwards and forwards through the continuum as needs are met.



Universal Services – Level 1

Children, Young People and Families who have the capacity to support themselves, or whose needs are being met, or can be met by engagement with Universal Services which are available as required, therefore no additional support is required.

Some examples may include supporting a child / young person / parent to have or achieve:

- Access to antenatal care.
- Good physical health.
- Good school attendance.
- Ability to meet developmental milestones.
- Good attachments and relationships.
- Appropriate guidance and boundaries.
- Carers who meet their physical and emotional needs and protect.



Early Help – Level 2

Early Help may be:

Children, Young People and Families with an additional need which may require additional support that cannot be provided purely by universal provision and that may be met by a single agency providing additional advice, guidance or support, or signposting to an additional service.

Children, Young People and Families with an additional need that would benefit from a co-ordinated package of support from more than one agency. The Early Help process should be used to agree an outcome-focussed plan and to identify a Key Worker.

Providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life

Effective early help relies upon working together to:

- Identify children and families who would benefit from early help
- Undertake an assessment of the need for early help
- Provide targeted early help services to address the assessed needs of a child and their family

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Early Help – Level 2

Child's Developmental Needs

- Worries about diet / hygiene / clothing.
- Lack of attendance at health appointments.
- Not reaching developmental milestones.
- Few opportunities for play or socialization.
- Substance use or concerns.
- Emerging mental health concerns.
- Poor school attendance or exclusion.
- Experience bullying.

Parenting Capacity

- Impact of parental conflict or lack of parental support or boundaries.
- Parents / Carers not responding to support provided to help them.
- Parent is struggling to provide adequate care.
- Unrealistic parental expectations.
- Child previously subject of a Child Protection Plan.
- Post natal depression.
- Concealed pregnancy.

Family/Environmental Factors

- Displays disruptive or anti-social behaviour or low level criminal activity.
- Has experienced loss of significant adult e.g. bereavement or separation.
- Family is socially isolated.
- Poor housing.
- Poverty.
- Poor access to universal services.



Early Help – Level 2

Child's Developmental Needs

- Special educational needs.
- Disengagement from education / training or employment post-16.
- Difficulties with peer group / adult relationships.
- Difficulty in managing emotional responses, coping with anger, frustration, upset.
- Disruptive or anti-social behaviour.
- Disabilities / Complex health needs.
- Young Carers.
- Vulnerabilities to exploitation.

Parenting Capacity

- Perceived to be a problem by parents.
- Parental drug and alcohol use.
- History of co-sleeping with previous children.
- Parental mental ill health impacting on child's emotional wellbeing.
- Inappropriate home schooling.
- Parents / Carers need support to engage in child(ren) learning.
- Family history of domestic abuse.

Family/Environmental Factors

- Family experiencing escalating victimisation / harassment.
- Heightened concerns re radicalisation.
- Exposure to adult anti- social behaviour and criminal activity.
- Family chronically socially excluded.
- Chaotic and inconsistent family support networks impacting on parenting.
- Family is isolated and has poor / no relationships with neighbours.

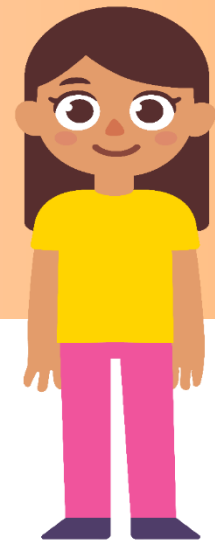


Children in Need – Level 3

Children, Young People and Families that would benefit from intensive and coordinated support, based on an agreed solution - focused action plan for complex issues. Delivery via targeted services and/or where support at Level 2 has not resulted in positive or sustained outcomes. These needs now require an intense and co-ordinated package of intervention.

A child whose vulnerability is such they are unlikely to reach or maintain a satisfactory level of health and development, or their health and development will be significantly impaired without the provision of services

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Children in Need – Level 3

Child's Developmental Needs

- Has injuries for example bruising, scalds, burns and scratches, which are accounted for but are more frequent than would be expected for a child of a similar age.
- Frequent accidental injuries as a result of inadequate supervision.
- Continually missing from home, or child(ren) at risk of sexual exploitation.
- Has emotional / mental health issues needing significant support.

Parenting Capacity

- **Parents / Carers highly** critical of child(ren) and provides little warmth, encouragement or praise.
- Dysfunctional/chaotic family life.
- Persistently neglected, which is impacting on a child(ren) emotional / development.
- Parents / Carers persistently does not recognise impact of their own issues on child(ren) needs.
- Young carers with inappropriate caring responsibilities that significantly impair their development / outcomes.

Family/Environmental Factors

- Poor state of repair, temporary or overcrowded housing causing concern for child(ren) safety.
- Imminent homelessness / risk of eviction.
- Inaccessible housing or need for aids and adaptations.
- Serious debts / poverty impacting on ability to meet basic needs.
- No expectation that young person will work.

Children in Need – Level 3

Child's Developmental Needs

- There is an allegation of emotional, sexual or physical abuse and or abuse is suspected and requires investigation.
- Basic physical and emotional needs of the child are frequently not being met.
- Consistently shows physical symptoms which indicate neglect.
- Underachieving significantly at school because of an underlying special educational need.
- Poor concentration at school, low motivation, not achieving key stage benchmarks / milestones.
- In danger of permanent exclusion / or has been permanently excluded.

Parenting Capacity

- Parental / Carer health / mental health/learning disability / substance misuse issue escalated to the point where it severely impacts on ability to provide consistent level of care and protection.
- Very young/inexperienced parents with concerns regarding lifestyle and ability to provide suitable care.
- There is a victim of domestic abuse in the household assessed as moderate risk of serious harm using DASH risk assessment.

Family/Environmental Factors

- Poor life experience of parents impacting on ability to provide appropriate care e.g. have themselves been in care.
- Are privately fostered.
- 16 or 17 year old asked to leave the family home.
- Pregnant teenager / teenage parent at risk of homelessness and estrangement from their family network.





Children in Need – Level 3

Child's Developmental Needs

- Displays disruptive or anti-social behaviour or low level criminal activity.
- Substantial and life- long disability needing enhanced or specialist support.
- Chronic or recurring health problems.
- Has not accessed health and advice services and suffers chronic and recurrent health problems as a result.



Parenting Capacity

- Living in a household where there may be a risk of harm from a person identified as presenting risk and concerns about future high / medium risk.
- Indicators and concerns of forced marriage / honour based violence / female genital mutilation (FGM) that requires further assessment and / or parental / sibling disclosure of FGM within the family.
- Consistently come to school in dirty clothing which is inappropriate for the weather and / or they are unkempt or soiled. The parents / carers are reluctant or unable to address these concerns.

Family/Environmental Factors

- Someone else appears to control family finances indicating possible trafficking / modern day slavery.
- Family experiencing violence / intimidation due to racial abuse.
- Post 16 year old with significant barriers to accessing education / employment / training.
- Parents / Carers who have multiple health / social / environmental needs that significantly impact on their child(ren) overall health and development.

Children at Risk – Level 4

Protection and Support

Children and Young People who are at risk of, or are suffering significant harm due to neglect, or whose needs require immediate consideration of a statutory response to ensure their safety.

Children with this level of need will also require multi-Agency intervention/ services. This may be a Social Work intervention, or a specialist service from another agency.

Significant Harm would include:

- Children / young people at immediate risk of significant harm through sexual, physical, emotional harm and neglect.
- Children / young people with unexplained injuries, suspicious injuries or inconsistent parent / child exploitation
- Risk of significant harm to the unborn baby.
- Children who disclose abuse.

Where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer from significant harm, enquiries should be made to decide whether any action is required to promote or safeguard the child's welfare...

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Children at Risk – Level 4

Child's Developmental needs

- Substantial, life-long disability or complex health needs with safeguarding concerns.
- Acute mental health problems, e.g. psychotic episode, threat of suicide, severe depression.
- Refusing medical care endangering life or development.
- Low weight / obesity putting child at risk of significant harm.
- Disclosure of sexual, emotional or physical abuse, or suffering persistent, chronic neglect.
- Unexplained inconsistent injuries.

Parenting Capacity

- Severe and significant development delay due to neglect / poor parenting.
- Evidence of child at risk of / experiencing fabricated and/or induced illness.
- Has been permanently excluded from school, parents not engaged with support services.

Family/Environmental Factors

- Children who are subject to a Child Protection Plan.
- Children who are privately fostered.
- Children receiving in-patient mental health treatment.
- Problematic drug or alcohol misuse by parent or within household.



Children at Risk – Level 4

Child's Developmental Needs

- Persistent and chronic misuse of drugs / alcohol.
- Actual / suspected FGM of a child under 18.
- Frequently exhibits negative behaviour or activities that place self or others at imminent risk including chronic non-school attendance. Child(ren) may be permanently excluded or not in education which puts them at high risk of child exploitation.
- Sexual activity under 13.
- At risk of child exploitation including sexual/criminal activities.

Parenting Capacity

- Serious / repeated domestic abuse.
- Parenting is not safe.
- Lack of parental cooperation is having detrimental impact on the child's welfare and safety.
- Physical or learning disability / mental ill health / are seriously ill / use substances.
- Continued exposure by parents or carers to dangerous situations in the home / community.

Family/Environmental Factors

- Complex health problems which are attributable to the lack of access to health services.
- Young people who are homeless.



Children at Risk – Level 4

Child's Developmental Needs

- Victim of trafficking.
- Causes significant harm to other children through violent or sexual offending.
- Endangers own life through self-harm / substance misuse (including eating disorder).
- Regular and persistent going missing episodes.
- Involved in anti-social or criminal activities resulting in court orders / custodial sentence.
- All concerns relating to extremism / radicalisation.
- Displaying sexually harmful behaviour (see Brook Traffic Light Tool).

Parenting Capacity

- Irrevocable child and parent relationship breakdown.
- The child is undertaking the majority of parenting responsibilities which are significantly impairing the child's health and development.
- Moderate, severe or complex mental or physical health needs or learning disability, which places the child at risk of harm.
- Fabricated or induced illness.

Contextual Worries

- Young people who regularly go missing from home.
- Children and young people who are the subject of exploitation including sexual, criminal and county lines.

