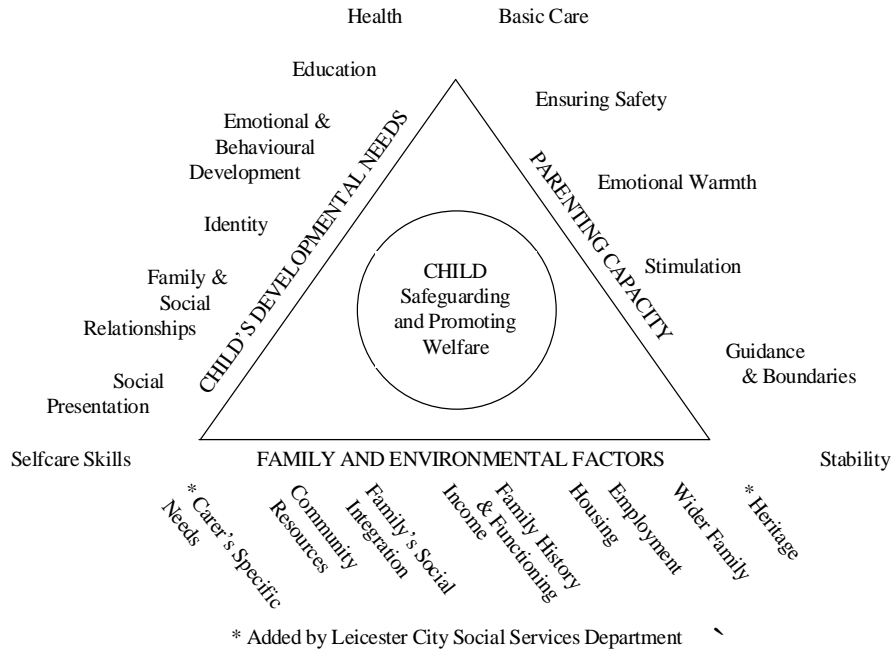


THE ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

The Context in which Services to Foster Children and Foster Carers are Offered



1. The Assessment Framework

The guidance provides a framework for referral, assessment, care planning, monitoring and review. It sets out timescales for decisions about responding to referrals and for the completion of assessments. It introduces initial and core assessments. Initial assessments have to be completed within 7 days and core assessments within 35 days.

Overall, the purpose of the assessment is to gather information about the child and its circumstances and to analyse this information, so that judgements can be made about ensuring that the child's needs are met appropriately. How we do this will be set out in the service plan or care plan.

All assessments have to cover three dimensions, but the depth in which these are covered will depend on the type of the assessment. The three dimensions of the 'Assessment Framework' are:-

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

An initial assessment is a brief assessment undertaken when a child is referred to children's social care services with a request for services. It will cover each of the three dimensions of framework, but in less detail than a core assessment. A core assessment is an in-depth assessment that addresses the most important needs of a child and the capacity of their parents to respond appropriately to their needs within their family and community context.

All children and young people who are looked after will be assessed using this framework.

If they have been accommodated on a voluntary basis an **initial assessment** may have been completed to inform the decision to accommodate the child/young person. You will usually receive a copy of this assessment when a child is placed with you.

A **core assessment** may be carried out depending on how long the child/young person is expected to remain accommodated. It will always be carried out for child/young people who are looked after on a statutory basis. Your views on the child/young person will be important to the child's social worker when undertaking that assessment.

2. Quality Protects

Quality protects was launched by the government in September 1998. Its aim was to *'ensure that the most vulnerable children in our country get the best that society can offer: the care, safety and security that all children deserve'*. (John Hutton Minister of State for Social Services)

The Quality Protects objectives were:-

1. Better education, care and health provision for children and young people in the council's care – looked after children. The objectives include improvements in the support offered to young people who leave care at 16 or over.
2. Better education, care and health provision for children and young people in the community who are 'in need' or at risk of harm through abuse or neglect.
3. Better education, care and health provision for disabled children.
4. Involvement of children and young people and families in planning and monitoring services.
5. The training of staff, the allocation of services and the resource management to support improved services.

3. Choice Protects

As the Quality Protects programme came to an end this Choice Protects was introduced. Choice Protects is about improving placement quality and choice for looked after children. The recruitment of foster carers, their support and training are all vital parts of the Choice Protects programme.

4. ECM

The Every Child Matters green paper (ECM) was presented to Parliament in September 2003. This work arose from the death of Victoria Climbié.

The aim was to ensure that every child has the chance to fulfil their potential by reducing levels of educational failure, ill health, substance misuse, teenage pregnancy abuse and

neglect, crime and anti social behaviour. Children identified the five most important outcomes:-

- Being Healthy
- Staying Safe
- Enjoying and Achieving
- Making a Positive Contribution
- Economic Well Being

Everything we do is judged in the context of how well we help children to achieve against there five outcomes.

5. Care Matters – Time for Change

In June 2007 Care Matters – A Time for change was published a white paper by the government. This paper sets out how the government aims to improve outcomes for Children and Young People who are in care or who are on the edge of care. In September 2007 it is not known which of the recommendations will become law:-

- A greater emphasises on the role of the Corporate Parent
- More Family Support
- Delivering a First Class Education
- Promoting Health and Well Being
- Improved Transition to Adulthood