

Service responses to levels of vulnerability and risk of harm

Children Leeds

Children with additional needs

These are children who have been assessed as 'in need' and where short term assistance is likely to improve the presenting need. Some children have additional needs due to family circumstances such as parents having mild learning difficulties and/or relationship problems; or the child having a physical

or learning impairment for which they need targeted help. Other examples would include children who are starting to have absences from school, or those whose family are starting to identify problems with behavioural difficulties. Children who themselves have some carer's responsibilities would come into this level of need.

For children with additional needs all professionals have a responsibility to work with them and their carers/parents to assess how these needs can be met using the

Common Assessment Framework (CAF). A lead professional, usually known to, and trusted by, the child and family will coordinate this process and the delivery of service. To find out when or how to conduct a common assessment or to get advice about the CAF, phone **0113 247 6830**. After completion of the CAF process, if practitioners need more advice on how agencies can work together to support a child with additional needs this can be discussed at a local intervention panel. To access your local intervention panel please phone **0113 247 6830**.

Children with multiple needs

Children with multiple needs. These are also 'children in need' but their level of need is greater than those with additional needs. Children with complex and/or multiple needs will need assessment under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 to make sure that the range of professional support required to meet their needs is well defined, formally co-ordinated and reviewed. This includes:

- families with disabled children who have exceptional care needs which place considerable stress on the family;
- children whose anti-social behaviour or offending is of

serious concern; children who are regularly absent from school;

- children in families where there is a history of neglect, domestic violence, drugs or alcohol misuse; or
- children whose parents struggle to meet their basic needs.

Children who have significant carer's responsibilities should be regarded as having multiple needs. Where a team of professionals need additional advice and support in working with children with multiple needs they can access one of three Children Leeds Panels.

To find your nearest Children Leeds Panel phone: **0113 2476830**.

Children at risk of or experiencing significant harm

This is the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests of the child. It gives local authorities a duty to make enquiries, (Section 47 enquiries) to decide whether action should be taken to safeguard or promote the welfare of a child who is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm. Harm means ill-treatment or the impairment of health or development; this includes physical and emotional health, sexual abuse or neglect. This category includes any case where a crime may have been committed, for example this would include any allegation of physical or sexual abuse. Examples of neglect would include families with a background of:

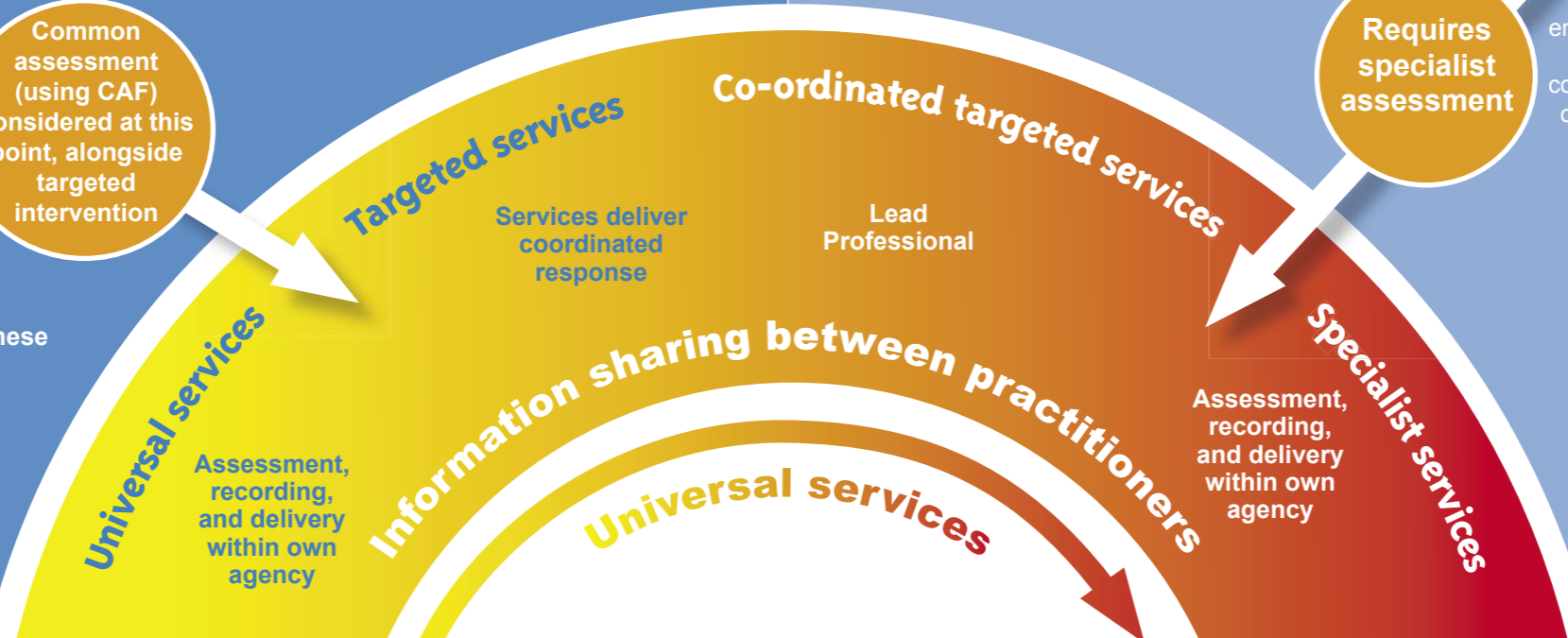
- chronic deprivation;
- ill health or impairment;
- substance misuse;
- disadvantage where standards of parenting are assessed as requiring significant help, or
- families whose children's welfare, health and development are the subject of frequent and consistent reports of concern from agencies and/or relatives and neighbours.

The referral pathways flowchart will guide you through what to do if you are concerned that a child is suffering or is at risk of significant harm. If you think that there is a risk of significant harm you must follow these procedures.

Universal support for all children

All children have the right to a range of routinely available services to meet their needs. Some services are universal so they are provided to all children throughout their childhood or at particular ages. Universal services are nurseries schools, colleges, GPs, midwifery services and health visitors. Within these services professionals will assess children and young people to make sure that their general needs are met and that they are achieving good outcomes. For information about services available to all children and families in Leeds, visit the Family Hub website: www.thefamilyhubleeds.org

Common assessment (using CAF) considered at this point, alongside targeted intervention



Requires specialist assessment

A definition of a child or young person in need?

- Section 17 of the Children Act (1989) states that a child in need is:
- a child who is unlikely to achieve or maintain, or to have the opportunity of achieving or maintaining, a reasonable standard of health or development without the provision of services by a Local Authority (not just social care);
 - a child whose health or development is likely to be significantly impaired, or further impaired, without the provision of such services; or
 - or a child who is disabled.

If you have a concern about a child or young person there is guidance on the Children Leeds website which will help you decide what to do. This includes: The referral pathways flowchart and procedures for safeguarding and protection of children. www.childrenleeds.org.uk

If you believe a child is at risk of, or is suffering, significant harm you must immediately:

1. talk to the lead child protection officer in your setting;
2. complete a common referral form;
3. call the contact centre on **0113 222 4403** (or call 0113 240 9536 out of hours) to make the referral;
4. keep a copy of the common referral form for your records; and
5. post a copy of the form to the duty office within 48 hours.

A child or young person suffering or at risk of significant harm

- Section 47 places a duty on children and young people's social care to make enquiries to decide whether action should be taken to safeguard or promote the welfare of a child or young person who is thought to be at risk of, or suffering, significant harm.
- Significant harm is the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests of the child or young person.
- Where any professional has a concern that a child or young person may be suffering or at risk of significant harm and may require immediate protection a referral to children and young people's social care must be made.
- For more information please go to www.childrenleeds.org.uk