

# Understanding the Level of Need and the Practice Response

## Additional Information

The list of indicators is not exhaustive but provides examples of children's needs and circumstances that correspond to that level of need. **This is not a checklist to meet any level of need, professional judgement must be used.** Practitioners must discuss with their Designated Safeguarding Lead any worries they have about children before beginning any intervention or referral.

In making a professional judgment about level of need there are a number of key questions that need to be asked. These questions are relevant, regardless of the level you are working at:

- What are the individual needs and views of each child in the family?
- What is the evidence of impact on the child, in relation to their health and development or harm/likely harm?
- What are the risks to the child if things don't change?
- What is the likelihood of this happening and what would be the level of severity?
- What have you and/or others done to try to help?

Practitioners along with their Designated Safeguarding Lead should consider whether the family should be referred to Children's Social Services.

Where a family is to be stepped down to Early Help/Universal Services the Cumbria Step Down Procedure must be followed which can be found here <https://cumbriasafeguardingchildren.co.uk/professionals/early-help/assessment>

Professionals should gain a record of parental consent to a referral being made for Universal, Early Help and Targeted Early Help (Levels 1, 2 and 3). At Level 4, parental consent should be sought for a Child and Family Assessment if this does not put the child at further risk. Where a child is at risk of significant harm a referral should be made to Cumbria Safeguarding Hub with or without consent.

	Level of Need	Indicators	Route to Support
<b>U N I V E R S A L</b>	<p><b>Level 1</b> At this level, services are ‘universal’ meaning that they are available to all children and young people.</p> <p>These are children who make good overall progress through appropriate universal service. The child has no additional unmet needs or there is a single need identified which has been or can be met by a universal service.</p>	<p><b>Universal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children in good physical health whose general development is age appropriate and who are making good progress academically.</li> <li>• Children are living in stable families where parents are able to meet all the child’s needs.</li> <li>• Children who need some support and who would benefit from additional universal services to improve outcomes.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Level 1 - Universal Needs</b> There is no concern for the children and family. Universal services are accessed. A single agency response or family may need support such as access to breast feeding support/referral to Speech and Language Therapy (SALT). Support must be sought from line manager/Designated Safeguarding Lead before intervention or referral for support is made. Further advice and support can be sought from Team Around the School/Team Around the Setting/Early Help Officer.</p>
<b>E A R L Y H E L P</b>	<p><b>Level 2</b> This is where children’s needs cannot be met through universal services and children require additional support. This includes children whose needs are unclear. At this level an Early Help Assessment – Signs of Wellbeing and Success will be initiated, registered, a Team Around the Family developed and Team Around the Family meetings put in place.</p>	<p><b>Early Help</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children with mild disabilities or health issues.</li> <li>• Children with special educational needs.</li> <li>• Children who are out of school or have regular unauthorised absences.</li> <li>• Young carers.</li> <li>• Children showing signs of engaging in anti-social or criminal behaviour or who are vulnerable to extrafamilial harm.</li> <li>• Children growing up in difficult family circumstances where there are low levels of substance misuse, adult mental health difficulties or domestic violence.</li> <li>• Families affected by parental ill-health, parental custody, homelessness, poverty, immigration or other problems.</li> <li>• Children showing early signs of developmental delay.</li> <li>• Families affected by social isolation, discrimination or harassment.</li> <li>• Children who show early signs of being radicalised by people outside of their immediate family.</li> <li>• Neglect - concerns that child/young person’s physical and material needs may not always be being met, increasing their vulnerability within the home, community.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Level 2 - Early Help</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support from agency’s Designated Safeguarding Lead must be sought to ensure this is an appropriate level for Early Help.</li> <li>• Check if there is already an established Early Help Assessment - Sign of Well-being and Success on the family which you might be able to contribute in. Contact the Early Help line for Cumberland <b>0300 303 3896</b> or Westmorland and Furness <b>0300 373 27234</b> between 09:00am - 5:00pm Monday to Thursday and Friday 9:00am and 4:30pm.</li> <li>• If there is an Early Help Assessment - Sign of Well-being and Success already initiated contact the coordinator to discuss your worries and about you contributing to the Early Help Assessment.</li> <li>• Initiate an Early Help Assessment - Sign of Well-being and Success. Parental consent is required. Ensure that you register the Early Help Assessment - Sign of Well-being and Success using the online forms. <a href="https://cumbriasafeguardingchildren.co.uk/professionals/early-help/assessment">https://cumbriasafeguardingchildren.co.uk/professionals/early-help/assessment</a></li> </ul>

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	<p>The coordinator will coordinate the assessment and plan. The family should be involved in the decision making as to who the coordinator is, and they should be known to the family. The coordinator details should be communicated to the child, family and agencies involved in the Early Help Assessment - Signs of Wellbeing and Success.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you have access to the case management system, please initiate an Early Help and complete your assessment and ensure you register the assessment using the online forms. <a href="https://cumbriasafeguardingchildren.co.uk/professionals/early-help/assessment">https://cumbriasafeguardingchildren.co.uk/professionals/early-help/assessment</a></li> <li>• Agree a coordinator with the family if this has not been agreed already; develop and record the Early Help Plan with actions and timescales to meet the identified needs. The plan needs to be reviewed every 4-6 weeks.</li> <li>• Please ensure that all reviews are recorded; the plan updated and shared with professionals involved in the Team Around the Family (TAF). It is the coordinators responsibility to ensure that the case is closed using the online closure form at the end of the intervention.</li> <li>• Continue to seek line management/Designated Safeguarding Lead oversight to ensure this continues to be an appropriate level of Early Help.</li> <li>• Where Private Fostering is identified a referral must be made to either Cumberland Safeguarding Hub or Westmorland and Furness Safeguarding Hub using a single contact referral form. You can access the link <a href="https://cumbriasafeguardingchildren.co.uk/private-fostering">https://cumbriasafeguardingchildren.co.uk/private-fostering</a></li> <li>• Where children are identified as at risk of Child Exploitation the <b>Child Exploitation Risk Assessment and Review (CERAR)</b> process must be followed for children not open to social care. <a href="https://cumbriascp.trixonline.co.uk/chapter/child-exploitation-including-child-sexual-exploitation-and-child-criminal-exploitation">https://cumbriascp.trixonline.co.uk/chapter/child-exploitation-including-child-sexual-exploitation-and-child-criminal-exploitation</a> When a young person is homeless or threatened with being homeless the <b>the 16/17 year old protocol for Cumberland Council and Westmorland and Furness Council.</b></li> </ul>

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<b>T A R G E T E D  E A R L Y  H E L P</b>	<p><b>Level 3</b> <b>Targeted Early Help</b> There is an increasing level of complex and/or multiple unmet needs where coordinated support is required to prevent worries escalating. A multi-agency Early Help Assessment - Signs of Well-being and Success will be initiated or already in place, a Team Around the Family developed, coordinated with an evidenced clear plan about actions to be taken. Support can be sought from the Early Help and Family Support Panels or Team Around the School.</p> <p>It must be noted that at Level 2 and beyond agencies may use their own assessments that are used to identify single agency support for children. These assessments should form part of the information sharing discussion with the family and agencies to develop and continually inform the Early Help Assessment - Sign of Well-being and Success.</p>	<p><b>Early Help</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children with mild disabilities or health issues.</li> <li>• Children with special educational needs.</li> <li>• Children who are out of school or have regular unauthorised absences.</li> <li>• Young carers.</li> <li>• Children showing signs of engaging in anti-social or criminal behaviour or who are vulnerable to extrafamilial harm.</li> <li>• Children growing up in difficult family circumstances where there are low levels of substance misuse, adult mental health difficulties or domestic violence.</li> <li>• Families affected by parental ill-health, parental custody, homelessness, poverty, immigration or other problems.</li> <li>• Children showing early signs of developmental delay.</li> <li>• Families affected by social isolation, discrimination or harassment.</li> <li>• Children who show early signs of being radicalised by people outside of their immediate family.</li> <li>• Neglect - Evidence that the child/young person's physical and material needs are not always being met and this is starting to impact on the child's wellbeing.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Level 3 - Targeted Early Help</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek line management/ Designated Safeguarding Lead oversight to ensure this is an appropriate level for Early Help.</li> <li>• Check if there is already an established Early Help Assessment on the family which you might be able to contribute. Contact the Early Help line for Cumberland <b>0300 303 3896</b> or Westmorland and Furness <b>0300 373 2723</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• between 09:00am - 5:00pm Monday to Thursday and Friday 9:00am and 4:30pm.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• If there is an Early Help Assessment - Sign of Well-being and Success already initiated contact the coordinator to discuss your worries and about you contributing to the Early Help Assessment - Sign of Well-being and Success.</li> <li>• Initiate an Early Help Assessment - Sign of Well-being and Success. Parental consent is required. Ensure that you register the Early Help Assessment - Sign of Well-being and Success using the online forms. <a href="https://cumbriasafeguardingchildren.co.uk/professionals/early-help/assessment">https://cumbriasafeguardingchildren.co.uk/professionals/early-help/assessment</a></li> <li>• If you have access to the case management system, please initiate an Early Help Assessment - Signs of Well-being and Success, complete your assessment and ensure you register the assessment using the online forms. <a href="https://cumbriasafeguardingchildren.co.uk/professionals/early-help/assessment">https://cumbriasafeguardingchildren.co.uk/professionals/early-help/assessment</a></li> <li>• Please ensure that all reviews are recorded, the plan updated and shared with professionals involved in the Team Around the Family. It is the coordinators responsibility to ensure that the case is closed using the online closure form at the end of the intervention.</li> <li>• This level will need a multi-agency response.</li> </ul>

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where there are growing concerns, either the coordinator or a practitioner from the Team Around the Family should seek a consultation from an Early Help Officer. <a href="https://cumbriasafeguardingchildren.co.uk/early-help-teams">https://cumbriasafeguardingchildren.co.uk/early-help-teams</a></li> <li>• Support can be sought from the Early Help and Family Support Panels where the worries about the family can be discussed with a multi-agency support panel which includes a social care manager. <a href="https://cumbriasafeguardingchildren.co.uk/make-referral-early-help-and-family-support-panel">https://cumbriasafeguardingchildren.co.uk/make-referral-early-help-and-family-support-panel</a> – contact an Early Help Officer for support.</li> <li>• Regular discussion should take place with your line management/Designated Safeguarding Lead.</li> <li>• Where Private Fostering is identified a referral must be made either Cumberland Safeguarding Hub or Westmorland and Furness Safeguarding Hub using a single contact referral form. You can access the link here. <a href="https://cumbriasafeguardingchildren.co.uk/report-concern-about-child">https://cumbriasafeguardingchildren.co.uk/report-concern-about-child</a></li> <li>• Where children are identified as at risk of Child Exploitation and do not have an Early Help Assessment Sign of Well-being and Success the <b>CERAR</b> process must be followed for children not open to social care. <a href="https://cumbriascp.trixonline.co.uk/chapter/child-exploitation-including-child-sexual-exploitation-and-child-criminal-exploitation">https://cumbriascp.trixonline.co.uk/chapter/child-exploitation-including-child-sexual-exploitation-and-child-criminal-exploitation</a></li> <li>• If the CERAR process has been followed and already captured on the Child Exploitation Vulnerability Tracker (CEVT), 12 week reviews must be undertaken.</li> <li>• If the TAF have increased concerns an earlier review can be undertaken. The CERAR coordinator can be notified by emailing <a href="mailto:cerar@cumbria.gov.uk">cerar@cumbria.gov.uk</a></li> <li>• When a young person is homeless or threatened with being homeless the <b>16/17 year old protocol</b> must be followed for either Cumberland Council or Westmorland and Furness Council</li> </ul>

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<b>S T A T U T O R Y  S E R V I C E</b>	<p><b>Level 4</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Without intervention the child would become at risk of significant harm or the needs are such that without intervention the child's health or development would be seriously impaired. Help is provided as a "child in need" under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 via a specialist in-depth assessment and following this at least initial co-ordination of services via a social worker.</li> <li>Where there is reasonable cause to suspect a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm because of abuse or neglect. Under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 local authority children's social care must make enquiries and decide if any action must be taken to protect the child.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Statutory Service</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children with lifelong disabilities.</li> <li>Children whose growth and development is being impaired by the quality of care received.</li> <li>Children exhibiting high levels of behavioural difficulties and risk-taking behaviour or who are out of parental control.</li> <li>Children at risk of extra-familial harm, e.g. sexual and/or criminal exploitation.</li> <li>Pregnant women whose lifestyle may be affecting the development of the unborn child.</li> <li>Parents experiencing difficulties in parenting capacity due to substance misuse, physical disability, learning difficulties, domestic or family violence or mental ill-health.</li> <li>Children with high levels of emotional difficulties who may need a service from CAMHS.</li> <li>Children who show more advanced signs of being radicalised and where parents or siblings may be involved in radicalisation.</li> <li>Children requiring accommodation because there is no-one who is able to care for them.</li> <li>Neglect - The child/young person's physical and material needs are not adequately met and impacts on the child's wellbeing and safety, increasing their vulnerability within the home community on a persistent basis.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Level 4 - Statutory Services Child in Need (CiN) Child Protection (CP)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Need(s) require specialist services to protect from significant harm</li> <li>Advice and guidance must be sought from the agency's own Designated Safeguarding Lead/ line management <b>before</b> making a referral to the Cumberland Safeguarding Hub or Westmorland and Furness Safeguarding Hub</li> <li>To make a referral follow procedure on CSCP website <a href="https://cumbriasafeguardingchildren.co.uk/report-concern-about-child">https://cumbriasafeguardingchildren.co.uk/report-concern-about-child</a></li> <li>Safeguarding Hub office hours Monday - Thursday 8:00am – 5:00pm and Friday 8:00am – 4:30pm.</li> <li>Emergency duty team (outside office hours): weekends, Bank Holidays, and between 5:00pm (Fridays from 4:30pm) and 8:00am - <b>0300 373 2724</b></li> <li>If making a referral to Cumberland Safeguarding Hub or Westmorland and Furness Safeguarding Hub the Single Contact Referral Form is to be used <a href="https://cumbriasafeguardingchildren.co.uk/report-concern-about-child">https://cumbriasafeguardingchildren.co.uk/report-concern-about-child</a></li> </ul>