WORKING WELL WITH CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN LANCASHIRE

Including, Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool and Lancashire Local Authorities

This document contains Part One and Two of Three parts of the guidance.

NHS

Lancashire Constabulary
police and communities together

Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council

Blackpool Council

Lancashire County Council

comms: 7351

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BLACKBURN WITH DARWEN, BLACKPOOL AND LANCASHIRE CHILDREN'S SAFEGUARDING ASSURANCE PARTNERSHIP

In 2019, the three previous Local Safeguarding Children Boards of Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool and Lancashire were replaced by the Children's Safeguarding Assurance Partnership (CSAP), under which the safeguarding partners work together to identify and respond to the needs of children.

The three local safeguarding partners jointly leading the CSAP are:

- The three local authorities of Blackburn with Darwen Council, Blackpool Council and Lancashire County Council, represented by their respective Directors of Children's Services
- Lancashire Constabulary, represented by Assistant Chief Constable for Crime and Special Capabilities
- The eight Clinical Commissioning Groups of Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool, Chorley and South Ribble, East Lancashire, Fylde and Wyre, Greater Preston, Morecambe Bay, and West Lancashire represented by the Health Executive Group.

The CSAP operates in line with the requirements of the statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018, which states that safeguarding partners should publish a threshold document, which sets out the local criteria for action in a way that is transparent, accessible and easily understood. The Working Well with Children and Families in Lancashire guidance fulfils this requirement.

Purpose

This multi-agency guide is for everyone who works with children, young people and their families in Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool and Lancashire local authority areas. It is publicly available for anyone to access, and is particularly key for organisations including:

- Health
- The Police
- Local Authorities
- Schools
- Colleges
- Nurseries
- Voluntary and peer group organisations working with children, young people and families
- Providers of support for children, young people and families

The guide is about children, young people and families, but it is relevant to staff working in a wide range of service areas such as adult mental health, community health, adult social care, housing, and leisure.

The guide is made up of three parts:

Part One The summary document gives an overview of the levels of need that children, young people and families might experience through their lives in Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool and Lancashire, and broadly who should respond to these needs and how.

Part Two Provides some more detailed information about levels of need and some examples to provide context.

Part Three

- This is different for each local authority area (Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool and Lancashire) and talks about how services are organised and delivered in each area including contact details.

The guide talks about how we can work with families to build on their strengths and come together across agencies to put the child at the centre of our work. It is designed to ensure that we give families who are experiencing challenges the advice, information and support they need that helps them make a positive difference to their lives.

The guide does not sit in isolation. Each area has strategies which support areas of work that are relevant to all professionals and that are locally developed with partners, including Early Help, Exploitation and Neglect strategies. Within organisations, and across the Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool and Lancashire Children's Safeguarding Assurance Partnership, there will be guides and training about how to identify, assess and support children, young people and families who are experiencing challenge and contact details for safeguarding leads or champions.

Working Together (2018) is the statutory guidance published by the Department of Education that describes how partners need to work together to support children, young people and families. Working Well with Children and Families in Lancashire has been developed in line with the Working Together principles.

The core principles of the Children Act 1989 which were reviewed within the Public Law Working Group equally remain relevant and fit for purpose. These principles underpin the Working Together (2018) document and are summarised as follows:

- The child's welfare is paramount and should be applied consciously and intuitively by practitioners working in the safeguarding arena.

- The child's views should hold high importance and be captured and documented no matter how young.

Working in Partnership with children and families, including other significant adults, should support in identifying issues and bringing about change.

- A multi-disciplinary approach with key partners such as health and education should be used to effect positive change.

Equally for those children with an allocated social worker the Children and Social Work Act 2017 expects all LA's to ensure that such children achieve early permanence at whatever stage they are on the journey. For those children who do become looked after PAN Lancs our offer is:

- To be the best corporate parents that we can be.

- To publish our support to care leavers

- To promote educational attainment for all children looked after from those who are adopted to those in long term placement and those leaving care.

Introduction

Across Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool and Lancashire, we all believe that every child should have the opportunity to reach their full potential and that children and young people are best supported to grow and achieve within their own families. The work of people who are alongside families when they are experiencing challenge should be geared toward building strong foundations and developing assets and resilience so that children and young people thrive. Equally, there will be times when, despite everyone's best efforts to support families, children and young people need our protection to stop them from being harmed. When this is the case, local authority children's services will work with partners to provide this protection. This guide should help practitioners working with families to make sure they are using their resources to best effect, as early as possible when problems emerge and to help them get access to more help for families if it is needed.

Different local authorities across the area might use different words to describe how they work with children, young people and families, but all of the ways of working have the common belief that for the majority of children, the best place for them to be is with their own families. With the right support at the right time, most families are able to stay together safely.

By working together in our communities, we will ensure that there is a range of flexible, localised services which are responsive to children, young people and families' needs and provide the right level of intervention, at the right time, by the right person. This approach will help to build purposeful relationships which help develop effective interventions and support for children, young people and their families at an earlier stage.

Professionals working across Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool and Lancashire are committed to the following values which inform the way we work with children, young people and families:

- Being respectful and building relationships by working alongside children, young people and families and seeking their informed consent and agreement.
- Being understanding, kind and empathic. Recognising and working to families' strengths – especially those of parents and carers and taking the time to understand their needs fully.
- Being purposeful. Focusing on preventing problems before they occur and offering flexible, responsive and constructive support when and where it is required.
- Being constructive. Helping to build the resilience of, children, young people, families and communities to support each other.
- Being open and transparent with each other as well as with families. Working together across the whole system engaging well with communities and aligning our resources to best support families and do what needs to be done, when it needs to be done.
- Being fair. Basing all that we do on evidence and analysis of both what is needed and of what works and being brave enough to stop things that are wrong.
- Being honest. Being clear and consistent about the outcomes we expect.

These values are underpinned by **the Children Act 1989 and more specifically,** Working Together 2018 which states that: *"Anyone working with children should see and speak to the child; listen to what they say; take their views seriously; and work with them and their families collaboratively when deciding how to support dialogue with children who have communication difficulties unaccompanied children, refugees and those children who are victims of modern slavery and/or trafficking"*. Working Together 2018 should be read alongside this guidance document.

How Families, Children and Young People are Supported in their Communities

Universal Services seek to work with families to meet all the needs of children and young people so that they are happy, healthy and able to learn and develop securely. Universal services are provided to all children and young people, including those with additional and intensive needs. However, some children and young people, either because of health needs, disabilities or because of less advantageous circumstances, will need extra help from universal services to be healthy, safe and to achieve their potential.

All families can access Universal Services such as:

- maternity services at birth
- GPs
- primary care
- health visiting
- funded childcare hours
- primary education
- school nursing
- family support
- secondary school
- further education and youth services for older children

Across Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool and Lancashire, we want to offer help and support to our families who experience challenge at the earliest opportunity in a voluntary way that does not leave them feeling singled out as different. This is because we want to prevent, wherever possible, situations escalating to the point that the family no longer feel, or indeed are, fully in control. When families do not feel in control, it is more likely that a child's health, wellbeing and development will be affected. We want to ensure that children, young people and families know about and are able to access their community assets and that they support them well. We call this "early help".

A large amount of public money is invested in a wide range of services for children, young people and families across the area in universal services and early help. It is important that when families experience challenges, practitioners work together to use public money and staff resources effectively to bring about positive changes which are led by families and their communities. Early help may occur at any point in a child or young person's life and includes interventions early in life as well as early in the development of a problem to prevent it getting worse. It includes help for adults in a family to help them support their children well and understand their needs.

Levels of Need

In this guide we have identified four broad levels of need:

Level 1 needs - Universal

- **Most** children, young people and families will experience challenges in their lives that impact on their wellbeing. **Most** families will be able to weather these challenges (are resilient to them) either without help from services, or with advice, guidance and support from universal services, including empathy and understanding.

Level 2 needs - Universal Plus

- **Some** children, young people and families will need support from people who know them well and have established relationships with them to meet some challenges where advice and guidance has not been enough to help the family achieve change or where a child or young person needs additional support to help them to thrive.

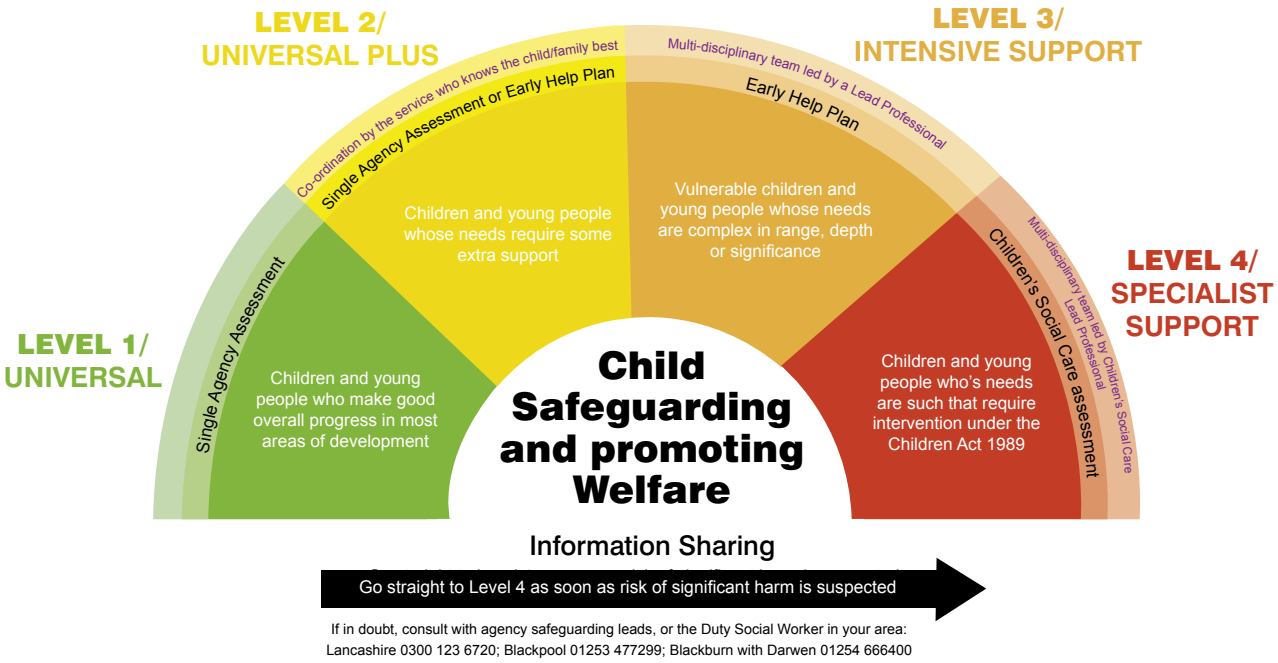
Level 3 needs - Intensive

- **A small number** of children, young people and families will experience significant difficulties and will need coordinated support from experts working with them to find sustainable solutions that reduce the impact of challenge on the wellbeing and development of children and young people.

Level 4 needs - Specialist

- In **exceptional** cases families need specialist, statutory support that is designed to maintain or repair relationships and keep families together wherever possible. In some very specific circumstances, the needs are so great that children need to be away from their family to ensure that they are protected from harm and in these circumstances the local authority becomes their “corporate parent”.

Levels of Need – At a Glance



See page 23 of Part 2 for a larger version

Services for children and young people **with universal plus** and **intensive** needs are sometimes known as **targeted services**. Targeted services bring expertise to universal services and include services such as behaviour and/or learning support in schools, extra support to parents and carers in early years or focussed help to involve young people experiencing particular challenges through youth services. They are delivered by a range of people in different organisations across health, schools, local authority, police, voluntary agencies, community groups and many others.

Across Lancashire, all partners share the belief that children, young people and families with **universal plus** needs are best helped to find the right solution by those who already work with them, such as their health visitor, nursery or school. They are able to support the family by coordinating additional support with local partners as needed.

When someone is supporting children, young people and their family in this way, an **Early Help Assessment/CAF** co-ordinated by a **named person** who knows the child and family best, will help to gather and analyse relevant information and co-ordinate work alongside the child and family.

Services working with adults in the family should be included in this plan as it helps coordinate how everyone is working to a common aim.

For children and young people whose needs are **Intensive**, a **coordinated multi-disciplinary approach** where people from different organisations with different skills, knowledge and experience work together with a family, will be best. These approaches need careful coordination to make sure the children, young people and the family are always at the centre of the work, and will need assessments and a plan which identifies a named **Lead Professional** to work closely with the child and family to ensure they receive all the support they require.

Specialist services are where the needs of the child or young person are so great that statutory and/or **specialist intervention** is required to keep them safe or to ensure their continued development.

By working together effectively with children, young people and families with emerging needs at the **earliest opportunity** we seek to prevent more children and young people requiring statutory interventions and reactive specialist services.

PART TWO – DETAILED GUIDE TO WORKING WELL WITH CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN LANCASHIRE

OUR PRINCIPLES FOR WORKING WITH FAMILIES, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE.

Across Lancashire, there are two unitary authorities who have social care responsibilities (Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool). All other areas of Lancashire are supported by the County Council. There is one Integrated Care System covering Lancashire and South Cumbria, and five Integrated Care Partnerships which support health delivery and commissioning. There is one Police force, with three local delivery areas across Lancashire.

In each local authority area, the way services are delivered and commissioned for children, young people and families are slightly different and sometimes use different language – this is because it is based on the differing needs and priorities in these communities. However, these ways of working are underpinned by a common set of principles which are embedded within all organisations working with children, young people and families. These principles are underpinned by the values set out in part one of Working Well with Children and Families in Lancashire.

These principles are:

- That children and young people are at the heart of what we do, and we should never lose sight of their lived experiences and their voice
- That children and young people feel safe in the knowledge that adults in their home, school and community are working together to keep them safe but will intervene if necessary, to protect them from harm
- That we should work **WITH** families, not do things to them. Working with families to build on their strengths and protective factors.
- That we consider the impact of trauma upon children and young people and how such experiences may alter their life course
- That we should seek to support children and young people within their family network wherever possible.
- That children and young people with additional or special educational needs and disabilities, and children and young people who are vulnerable because of their family circumstance, should be supported to have equity of aspiration and outcomes with their peers.
- That the networks in a family's life, the school their child attends, the community that they live in and the people around them can help to build assets, capacity and resilience for families when problems are identified early and addressed with honesty and collaborative working.
- That families should not have to tell their stories to a range of different professionals throughout their lives to get help. People involved in supporting families should share information and plans, with the knowledge, and when appropriate, consent of the family, to help them work effectively together.

Across the local authority areas, we have agreed the levels of need and the broad description of how services can and should respond. As far as we are able, we have common guidance, policies and procedures so that our partner agencies, particularly schools, health and the police who work across Lancashire do not need to access three different sources of information to help guide their work with families. Whilst there are variations in service delivery and ways of accessing services (outlined in part three) the overall principles and values outlined in parts one and two apply across the county.

The guidance illustrates how agencies should respond to children, young people and families across four levels of need (Universal, Universal Plus, Intensive and Specialist). In this model, all services seek to work openly with the family, or with children and young people on their own where it is appropriate, in order to support them to identify, talk honestly about and address their needs at the lowest possible level. We agree to actively work with children, young people and families to prevent their needs escalating to a higher level. We will only request services at a higher level after we have exhausted the resources and expertise at the earliest level of intervention (other than when there is immediate risk of significant harm).

The levels of need table on pages 3-5 and the more detailed indicators of need set out on pages 7-13, illustrate how services operate across Lancashire and clarify the threshold between each level. This guide seeks to give clear advice to all professionals and the public on the levels of need and thresholds for different responses in Lancashire.

We recognise that each child/young person and family member is an individual, and each family is unique in its make-up, so reaching decisions about levels of needs and the best intervention requires discussion, reflection and professional judgement applied in the context of the lived experience of the child, young person and family.

WORKING WELL WITH CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES

There are several factors that are essential to achieving good outcomes when working with children, young people and families.

An open, honest and transparent approach to supporting children, young people and their families

Parents/carers are usually the best people to understand their child's needs; however, parenting can be challenging. Families deserve support when they request it. Asking for help should be seen as a sign of responsibility rather than failure. Families tell us that support works well when they are respected and listened to by the people who work with them or they approach for help. In the majority of cases, it should be the decision of the parents/carers when to ask for help or advice but there are occasions when practitioners may need to engage parents/carers and families actively to help them to prevent problems from becoming more serious. This is more likely to be successful when practitioners show empathy and work with families to explore how problems have come about and how to make change. All practitioners need to work honestly and openly with families, acknowledge strengths, discuss any concerns with them and ensure that they are involved in decision making. It is important they acknowledge and respect the contribution of family members in the work that they do.

Early, solution-focused and evidence-based interventions

It is important that any needs are identified early, so that the child/young person and their family receive appropriate support in a timely way to prevent the problem from escalating.

Everyone who works with families will work with them as soon as any needs emerge, to help them to identify the things they want to change and the support they need. The most effective support is tailored to the family's needs and provided at the minimum level necessary to ensure the desirable outcomes are achieved, with as little intrusion into and disruption to family life as possible.

A joint working approach to assessment, support and intervention

Protecting and promoting the welfare of children and young people is the responsibility of everyone in Lancashire who works or has contact with children, young people and their families no matter what organisation they work for.

The joint working approach ensures that children, young people and families are understood and responded to, so that they receive the right support and practical help in a co-ordinated way, when they need it. Partners and professionals who work with children, young people and their families should, usually with informed parental consent, consult one another, share information and work together to ensure that the child/young person and their family get the most appropriate and effective support.

A confident workforce with a common core of knowledge and understanding about children and young people's needs and the skills to work with families

Appropriate, effective and timely support for children, young people and families cannot be achieved without the professional judgement and expertise that all practitioners working with children and young people bring to their role. Across Lancashire agencies will engage in training and development to support confident practitioners who can work in an open, non-judgemental way with families to enable them to make choices and changes.

Consent

Throughout this document, and in others that you will read, you will see reference to consent. Consent is needed from children, young people and families at key points in their journey – and can only be disposed of when there is an overriding concern for the welfare of children, young people or families and their safety. Even when this is the case, only in exceptional circumstances should family's details be discussed and shared with other agencies without their knowledge.

Meaningful consent is crucial in helping families feel empowered to make informed decisions and have autonomy, understanding the consequences of the decisions made. This is crucial in ensuring that services are working with families and not doing things to them. It supports them to know that they can and should be in the driving seat of the support available to them. It should be informed consent – if you are planning to or need to share their information with more than one organisation, you should be specific about this. **Tell them what information you are going to share, who with and why you think it is the right thing to do.**

You need consent to:

- Make a referral or request for a service to another agency or arrange a multi-agency meeting
- Consult with other agencies about a family to help you to determine what support they might need where you are sharing their personal details

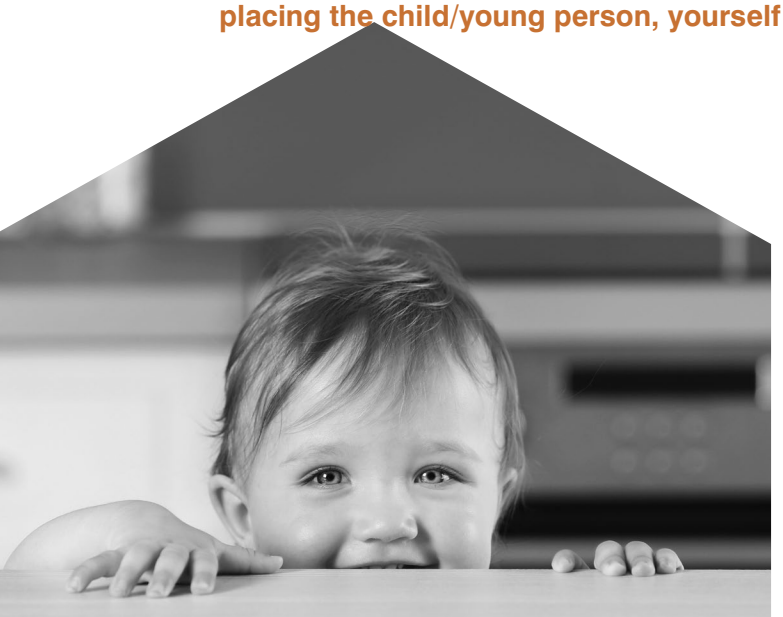
You **do not need** consent to:

- Have a conversation with the Children's Advice and Duty Service (CADS) / Child and Family Advice and Support Hub / Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) / Designated Safeguarding Lead within your organisation where you **do not** share identifiable details of the family.

You **do not need** consent, nor should you delay, but should, wherever possible, inform the family when:

- You are concerned that a child/young person, family member or other person has come to, or is likely to come to significant harm and you need to share this with other agencies so that they can take steps to ensure their safety.

If a family or individual refuses to give consent but you are sufficiently concerned about a child/young person or vulnerable person and feel you need to share information anyway, you should explain this to the family unless you are concerned that in doing so, you are placing the child/young person, yourself or anyone else at immediate risk.



Levels of Need

Level of identified Need and way of accessing the service	Who it is for	Examples of the services and support available	Why is support provided?
Level 1 - Universal			
Open access to Provision for all families.	All children and families who live in Lancashire.	Early years, education, primary health care, maternity services, housing, community health care, youth centres, leisure services. Children are supported by their family and in universal services to meet all of their needs.	To ensure that our Children and young people make good progress in most areas of development.
Level 2 - Universal Plus			
One or more services provide voluntary additional support to meet the child and family needs. This is informed by an Early Help Assessment/CAF and the plan is co-ordinated by a Lead Professional Service that knows the child/ family best. An Early Help Plan and coordination meeting is helpful to bring the family and involved services together to share information and agree what would be helpful. Individual agency internal routes to access additional supports or to request external services.	Children and families with additional needs who would benefit from or who require extra help to: • Improve education • Improve parenting and/or behaviour • Meet specific health or emotional needs of the child and/or parent • Improve their Material situation • Respond to a short-term crisis such as bereavement, parental separation	Parenting support; commissioned early help services. School holiday and short breaks provision for disabled children. Extra health support for family members; behavioural support. Housing support. Additional learning support; Special Education Needs (SEN). Support plan; help to find education and employment. Emotional Wellbeing. Mental Health Service support to schools. Speech and Language Therapy; family hubs. Targeted youth work. Drug and alcohol services. Services provided on a voluntary basis.	So that the life chances of children and families are improved by offering early life and early help additional support.

Level of identified Need and way of accessing the service	Who it is for	Examples of the services and support available	Why is support provided?
Level 3 - Intensive			
A multi-disciplinary team to support the family led by a Lead Professional, shares information and co-ordinates intensive services and support to meet the child and family needs. An Early Help Plan/ Family Assessment is necessary to set out how the family and involved services will work together to meet the child's needs. **Individual agency** internal routes to access intensive support and/or referral to targeted support services available in area.	Vulnerable children and their families with multiple needs or whose needs are more complex, such as children and families who: • Have a disability resulting in complex needs • Exhibit anti-social or challenging behaviour that increases risk for themselves and others • Experience neglect • Emotional/ behaviour difficulties experienced by the child/young person • Parental conflict or poor family relationships • Domestic abuse • Poor parental Mental Health • Have poor engagement with key services such as school and health • Are not in education or work long-term • Families involved in crime/misuse of drugs at a significant level	Youth Offending Service/Child Youth Justice Service. Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Service, In Patient and Continuing Health Care. Targeted Intervention Services including services to support families in their home and community to prevent escalation of concerns. Family group conferences. Health care for children with life limiting illness. Services for children with profound and enduring disability. Adult health services. Substance misuse services.	Vulnerable children and families likely to face impairment to their development and life chances will be supported by services to enable them to achieve good outcomes. Issues will be prevented from escalating into safeguarding concerns requiring statutory intervention.

Level of identified Need and way of accessing the service	Who it is for	Examples of the services and support available	Why is support provided?
Level 4 - Specialist			
Children`s Social Care. Child in need. Child Protection enquiries. Children subject to CP Plans. Public Outline Law. Care proceedings. Children who are looked after. Youth Treatment Orders/ Custody/ Hospital in-patient Access via each Local Authority's referral/ request for support form (see part 3). Statutory notifications to Youth Offending Service/Child Youth Justice Service.	S.17 Duties - Children who are unlikely to achieve a reasonable standard of health and development without the provision of services. Children and young people who have suffered or are likely to suffer significant harm as a result of abuse or neglect. Children with significant impairment of function/learning and/or life limiting illness. Children whose parents and wider family are unable to care for them. Families involved in crime/misuse of drugs at a significant level that is impacting on the child's welfare. Families with significant mental or physical health needs that impact in a way which may be significantly harmful to their children.	Children's Social Care, Youth Offending Service Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Service, In Patient and Continuing Health Care. Fostering and residential care Health care for children with life limiting illness Services for children with profound and enduring disability Adult health services Substance misuse services	Because without the intervention of specialist services, sometimes in a statutory role, Children and /or family members are likely to suffer significant harm/ removal from home/ serious and lasting impairment.

WHEN FAMILIES NEED ADDITIONAL HELP

Level 2 – Universal Plus

If a family has needs which are assessed as Level 2 **"Universal Plus"**, multi-agency practitioners are expected to work together to meet the family, child or young person's additional needs. Practitioners should work alongside the family and secure their informed consent to share information with other agencies. Work at Level 2 should seek to help families build on the assets they have, to do work with them so that they can help themselves to improve a situation or make change, rather than do things around or to them.

Practitioners can access services using their own agency internal guidelines or by using specific request for service forms/letters when requesting involvement of other additional need services. Parent/carers should always sign to give consent to the request for service and to information sharing. We should also ask young people who demonstrate Fraser competence, especially those aged over 15, to give their consent.

Where the problems or needs are more complex, practitioners should complete an **Early Help Assessment/CAF** with the family. This is a tool to use with the family to discuss and record the needs, strengths, goals and views that they identify, leading to an Early Help Plan to support them.

Level 3 – Intensive Support

Prior to requesting services at Level 3 **"Intensive Support"**, practitioners are expected to have worked together with the child/young person and family to meet their **Universal Plus** needs using an **Early Help Assessment/CAF** and **multi-agency meetings**.

Intensive support should again be focussed on working with families, children and young people. Support for families should not be designed to "rescue" them from situations, but to help them to restore family life with evidence-based interventions that help them to make long term, lasting change that they are in control of.

Sometimes, despite the best efforts of professionals to work purposefully with and alongside children, young people and families to support them to make change, concerns about outcomes for children and young people do not improve. If, after a period of working with the family, practitioners identify that a child/young person and their family would benefit from a more intensive multi-disciplinary response than they can provide or coordinate; they should discuss this with the child/young person and family, update the **Early Help Assessment/CAF** and complete a **referral/request for support form**.

Level 4 – Specialist Support

Children's Social Care has a responsibility to **children in need** under **Section 17** of the Children Act 1989. That is, children and young people whose development would be significantly impaired if services are not provided. This includes children and young people who have a long lasting and substantial disability, which limits their ability to carry out the tasks of daily living.

For a **child in need**, a referral/request for support to Children's Social Care is appropriate when more substantial interventions are needed: where a child or young person's development is being significantly impaired because of the impact of complex parental mental ill health, learning disability or substance misuse, or very challenging behaviour in the home.

A social care referral/request for support is also appropriate where parent/carers need practical support and respite at home because of a disabled child or young person's complex care needs. In these situations, Children's Social Care will work with families on a voluntary basis, often in partnership with other professionals, to improve the welfare of the children/young people and to prevent problems escalating to a point that statutory child protection intervention is needed.

The second area of Children's Social Care responsibility is **child protection**; that is where Children's Social Care must make enquiries under **Section 47** of the Children Act 1989, to determine whether a child or young person is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm. The Children Act 1989 introduced the concept of **significant harm** as the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests of children and young people.

There is no absolute criteria on which to rely upon when judging what constitutes significant harm. Consideration of the severity of ill-treatment may include the degree and the extent of physical harm, the duration and frequency of abuse and neglect, and the severity of the emotional and physical impact on the child/young person. It is important to consider age and context – babies and young children are particularly vulnerable – and parental factors such as history of significant domestic abuse, substance misuse or mental illness. Significant harm could occur where there is a single event, such as a violent assault or sexual abuse. More often, significant harm is identified when there have been a number of events which have compromised the child or young person's physical and psychological wellbeing; for example, when health and development is significantly impaired through neglect.

The difference between Child in Need and Child Protection

Professionals in all agencies have a responsibility to make a request to Children's Social Care when it is believed or suspected that the child or young person:

- 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 for him of services by a local authority Section 17 Child in Need
- Health or development is likely to be significantly impaired, or further impaired, without the provision of services Section 17 Child in Need
- Has significant developmental or disability needs, which are likely only to be met through provision of Children's Social Care family support services (with agreement of the parent or carer) – Section 17 child in need
- Is likely to suffer significant harm – Section 47 Child Protection
- Has suffered significant harm – Section 47 Child Protection

When Children's Social Care undertakes a Section 47 child protection enquiry, the Pan Lancashire Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures are followed.

Children's Social Care engagement with children in need Section 17 is on a voluntary basis. Parent/carers, or young people who are able to make decisions under Fraser Guidelines and Gillick Competence, can refuse some or all such offers of assistance. Often, families prefer a lower level of support such as that offered through their school or health centre because this is less stigmatising or intrusive.

Specific guidance regarding services and processes within each local authority area is detailed in part three.

With the needs of the child in mind, bespoke services are available for those young people supported through each local authority. Such services provide increased layers of targeted support in delivering greater outcomes for the children and young people who receive support through social care. This is with the aim of ensuring the right level of support and intervention is in place at the right juncture.

INDICATORS OF POSSIBLE NEED

The indicators of possible need listed under each heading are an indication of the likely level of need. Only by talking to children, young people and their families in more detail to explore the context, familial assets and the factors behind the need, will the practitioner be able to form a judgement as to the level of support needed. Holding a multi-agency meeting and completing an Early Help Assessment or CAF is a helpful way to share information and gain an understanding of the needs of the child, young person and family.

The indicators are a guide and not a pre-determined level of response. Practitioners should use evidence based professional judgement when carrying out assessments and should take account of age appropriate development needs of the unborn child, child or young person.

Level 1 - UNIVERSAL: Children and young people who make good overall progress in most areas of development and receive appropriate universal services, such as health care and education. They may also use leisure and play facilities, housing or voluntary sector services.

Health

- Physically well
- Nutritious diet
- Adequate hygiene & dress
- Developmental & health checks/ immunisations up to date
- Developmental milestones & motor skills appropriate
- Sexual activity age-appropriate
- Good emotional and mental health

Emotional Development

- Good quality early attachments
- Able to adapt to change
- Able to understand others' feelings

Behavioural Development

- Takes responsibility for behaviour
- Responds appropriately to boundaries and constructive guidance

Identity and Self-Esteem

- Can discriminate between safe and unsafe contacts

Family and Social Relationships

- Stable and affectionate relationships with family
- Is able to make and maintain friendships

Learning

- Access to books and toys
- Enjoys and participates in learning activities

Learning (cont)

- Has experiences of success and achievement
- Effective links between home and school
- Planning for career and adult life

Basic care, ensuring safety and protection

- Provide for child/young person's physical needs, e.g. food, drink, appropriate clothing, medical and dental care
- Protection from danger and significant harm.

Emotional warmth and stability

- Shows warm regard, praise and encouragement
- Ensures stable relationships

Guidance, boundaries and stimulation

- Ensure the child/young person can develop a sense of right and wrong
- Child/young person accesses leisure facilities as appropriate to age and interests

Family functioning and well-being

- Good relationships within family, including when parents are separated

Housing, work and income

- Accommodation has basic amenities and appropriate facilities, and can meet family needs
- Managing budget to meet individual needs
- Social and community including education
- They have friendships and are able to access local services and amenities
- Family feels part of the community

Level 2 – UNIVERSAL PLUS: Children and young people whose needs require some extra support. Support at this level could be through a single agency assessment or early help plan, coordinated by the service who knows the child/young person and family best. A multi-agency meeting to share information and agree a plan to support the child/young person and family is helpful.

Health

- Inadequate, limited or restricted diet; e.g. no breakfast, no lunch money; being under or overweight
- Missing immunisations/checks and is impacting on the child/young person's health and wellbeing
- Child/young person is continually slow in reaching developmental milestones
- Minor concerns re: diet, hygiene, clothing
- Dental problems untreated / decay
- Child/young person is not taken to routine and non-routine health appointments
- Concerns about developmental progress e.g. bed-wetting/soiling; speech and language
- Vulnerable to emotional problems, perhaps in response to life events such as parental separation e.g. child/young person seems unduly anxious, angry or defiant for their age
- Experimenting with tobacco, alcohol or illegal drugs
- Frequent accidents as a result of inadequate supervision

Emotional Development

- Some difficulties with family relationships
- Some difficulties with peer group relationships and with adults, e.g. anxious or withdrawn
- Some evidence of inappropriate responses and actions
- Limited engagement in play with others / Has few or no friends
- Support required from Emotional Well Being and Mental Health Services

Behavioural Development

- Not always able to understand how own actions impact on others
- Finds accepting responsibility for own actions difficult

Behavioural Development (cont)

- Responds inappropriately to boundaries / constructive guidance
- Finds positive interaction difficult with peers in unstructured contexts
- One-off / occasional short period missing from home

Basic care, ensuring safety and protection

- Basic care is not provided consistently
- Parent/carer requires advice on parenting issues
- Some concerns around child/young person's physical needs being met
- Teenage pregnancy
- Inappropriate childcare arrangements and/ or too many carers
- Some exposure to dangerous situations in the home or community
- Unnecessary or frequent visits to GP or unplanned care settings e.g. Accident & Emergency
- Parent/carer stresses starting to affect ability to ensure child/young person's safety

Emotional warmth and stability

- Inconsistent responses to child/young person by parent/carer
- Parent/carers struggling to have their own emotional needs met
- Child/young person not able to develop other positive relationships
- Starting to show difficulties with attachments

Level 2 – continued

Family functioning and well-being

- A child/young person is taking on a caring role in relation to their parent/carer, or is looking after younger siblings
- No effective support from extended family

Guidance, boundaries and stimulation

- Parent/carer offers inconsistent boundaries
- Lack of routine in the home
- Child/young person spends considerable time alone, e.g. watching television
- Child/young person is not often exposed to new experiences; has limited access to leisure activities
- Child/young person can behave in an anti-social way in the neighbourhood e.g. petty crime

Identity and Self Esteem

- Some insecurities around identity expressed e.g. low self-esteem, sexuality, gender identity
- A victim of bullying or crime
- May be perpetrating bullying behaviour
- Lack of confidence is incapacitating
- Child/young person provocative in behaviour/ appearance e.g. in appropriately dressed for school
- Child/young person subject to persistent discrimination, e.g. racial, sexual or due to disabilities

Family and Social Relationships

- Lack of positive role models
- Child/young person has some difficulties sustaining relationships
- Low levels of parental conflict / infrequent incidents of domestic dispute
- Unresolved issues arising from parents' separation, step-parenting or bereavement
- Children and young people affected by parental imprisonment

Self-care skills and independence

- Disability limits amount of self-care possible
- Periods of inadequate self-care, e.g. poor hygiene
- Child/young person is continually slow to develop age appropriate self-care skills

Learning

- Have some identified specific learning needs with targeted support and / or Special Education Needs and disabilities - Education, Health and Care Plan
- Language and communication difficulties
- Regular underachievement or not reaching education potential
- Poor punctuality / pattern of regular school absences
- Not always engaged in play / learning, e.g. poor concentration
- No access to books / toys
- Some fixed term exclusion

Housing, work and income

- Family seeking asylum or refugees
- Periods of unemployment of parent/carer
- Financial/debt problems
- Poor state of repair, temporary or overcrowded, or unsafe housing
- Intentionally homeless
- Serious debts/poverty impact on ability to have basic needs met
- Rent arrears put family at risk of eviction or proceedings initiated
- Not in Education, Employment or Training post-16

Social and community including education

- Some social exclusion or conflict experiences; low tolerance
- Community characterised by negativity towards children/young people
- Difficulty accessing community facilities

Level 3 - INTENSIVE: Children and young people whose needs are more complex, in range, depth or significance. A number of these indicators would need to be present to indicate need at Level 3. More than one service is involved in an early help plan, with a named lead professional co-ordinating multi-agency support.

Health

- Child/young person has severe/chronic health problems requiring a coordinated multi-agency approach
- Refusal/avoidance of registration with health care services (e.g. GP, Dentist, Midwife, Health Visitor, Opticians, Speech/ Language, inc late booking of pregnancy (24 weeks) and antenatal/post pregnancy appointments; or persistent non-attendance at medical appointments resulting in suffering or the child's needs escalating
- Developmental milestones are not being met due to parental care
- Regular substance misuse
- Lack of food
- 'Unsafe' sexual activity
- Self-harming behaviours
- Child/young person has significant disability
- Mental health issues emerging e.g. conduct disorder; ADHD; anxiety; depression; eating disorder; self-harming

Emotional Development

- Sexualised behaviour
- Child/young person appears regularly anxious, angry or phobic and demonstrates a mental health condition
- Caring responsibilities affecting development of self

Behavioural Development

- Persistent disruptive/challenging behaviour at school, home or in the neighbourhood
- Starting to commit offences/re-offend
- Additional needs met by Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Services
- Prosecution of offences resulting in court orders, custodial sentences or Anti-Social Behaviour Orders or Youth Offending early intervention

Identity and Self-Esteem

- Presentation (including hygiene) significantly impacts on all relationships
- Child/young person experiences persistent discrimination; internalised and reflected in poor self-image

Basic care, ensuring safety and protection

- Parent/carer is failing to provide adequate care
- Parents have found it difficult to care for previous child/young person
- Domestic abuse, coercion or control in the home
- Parent's mental health problems or substance misuse significantly affect care of child/young person
- Non-compliance of parents/carers with relevant children, young people and family services
- Child/young person may be subject to neglect
- Child/young person has no positive relationships
- Child/young person has multiple carers; may have no significant relationship to any of them
- Repeated short incidents of missing from home (fewer than 3 incidents in 90 days)

Level 3 - continued

Guidance, boundaries and stimulation

- Parent/carers struggle/refuse to set effective boundaries e.g. too loose/firm/ physical chastisement
- Child/young person behaves in anti-social way in the neighbourhood

Housing, work and income

- Chronic unemployment that has severely affected parents' own identities
- Family unable to gain employment due to significant lack of basic skills or long-term substance misuse

Family functioning and well-being

- Family have serious physical and mental health difficulties impacting on their child/ young person
- Community are hostile to family
- Emerging involvement in gang or other activities which risks being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour
- Young person displays regular physical violence towards parent/carers
- Parent/Carers are involved in frequent, intense and poorly resolved conflict leading them to be emotionally unavailable for their children

Learning

- Consistently poor nursery/school attendance and punctuality
- Child/young person with few, if any, achievements
- Not in education (under 16)
- Family and Social Relationships
- Relationships with carers characterised by unpredictability
- Misses school consistently
- Previously had periods of Local Authority accommodation
- Child/young person is main carer for family member

Self-care skills and independence

- Disability prevents self-care in a significant range of tasks
- Child/young person lacks a sense of safety often resulting in increased risk

Level 4 - SPECIALIST: Children and young people who are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm or whose needs are complex and enduring and cross many domains. More than one service is normally involved, with a co-ordinated multi-agency approach and a Lead Professional usually under the statutory framework of Child in Need (Children Act 17) or Child Protection (Children Act 47).

Health

- Child/young person has some/chronic/ recurring health problems; not treated, or badly managed
- Failure to thrive/faltering growth with no identified medical cause
- Child, young person or parent/carer refusing medical care endangering child/ young person's life or development
- Seriously obese / seriously underweight
- Serious dental decay requiring removal of multiple teeth through persistent lack of dental care
- Persistent and high-risk substance misuse
- Dangerous sexual activity and/or teenage pregnancy under 16 years
- Sexual abuse
- Evidence of significant harm or neglect
- Non-accidental injury
- Unexplained significant injuries
- Acute mental health problems e.g. severe depression; threat of suicide; psychotic episodes
- Physical / learning disability requiring constant supervision
- Disclosure of abuse from child / young person
- Disclosure of abuse / physical injury caused by a professional
- Risk of child sexual exploitation or actual abuse known to be happening
- Concealed or denied pregnancies, following the multi-agency guidance

Emotional Development

- Concerning behaviour that places themselves or others at risk of significant harm e.g. MFH, acts of violence and aggression, relationships that increase risk of exploitation.

Behavioural Development

- Persistent disruptive/challenging at school, home or in the neighbourhood resulting in repeated school placement breakdown and/ or family breakdown
- Regular and persistent offending and reoffending behaviour for serious offences resulting in custodial sentences or high-risk public protection concerns
- Mental health needs resulting in high risk self-harming behaviours, suicidal ideation and in-patient admissions
- Concerning behaviour that increases the risk of significant harm for themselves or others

Learning

- No school placement due to parental neglect
- Child/young person is out of school due to parental neglect

Family and Social Relationships

- Relationships with family experienced as negative ('low warmth, high criticism')
- Rejection by a parent/carer; family no longer want to care for – or have abandoned –child/young person
- Periods accommodated by local authority
- Family breakdown related to child/young person's behavioural difficulties
- Subject to physical, emotional or sexual abuse or neglect
- Child/young person main carer for family member
- Child/young person exposed to situational couple conflict, abuse, violence both ways, day to day unresolved and unsolvable conflict

Level 4 - continued

Other indicators

- Professional concerns – but difficulty accessing child / young person
- Unaccompanied refuge / asylum seeker
- Privately fostered
- A child or young person who has abused another child or young person/s
- Serious or persistent offending behaviour likely to lead to custody / remand in secure unit/ prison
- Victim of Modern-Day Slavery, Human Trafficking, child exploitation or forced labour

Emotional warmth and stability

- Parent's own emotional experiences significantly impacting on their ability to meet child/young person's needs
- Child/young person has no-one to care for him/her
- Parent/care requesting child/young person be accommodated by local authority Section 20

Guidance, boundaries, and stimulation

- No effective boundaries set by parents / carers
- Parents are unable to keep their child / young person safe without specialist support
- Persistent and regular incidents of missing from home (three or more incidents in 90 days)
- Missing from home for long periods of time
- Significant parental / carer discord and persistent domestic violence and discord between family members
- Child / young person in need where there are child protection concerns
- Individual posing a risk to children/young people in, or known to, household
- Family home used for drug taking, exploitation, illegal activities

Housing, work and income

- Homeless - or imminent if not accepted by housing department
- Housing dangerous or seriously threatening to health

Housing, work and income (cont)

- Physical accommodation places child/ young person in danger
- Extreme poverty / debt impacting on ability to care for child/young person

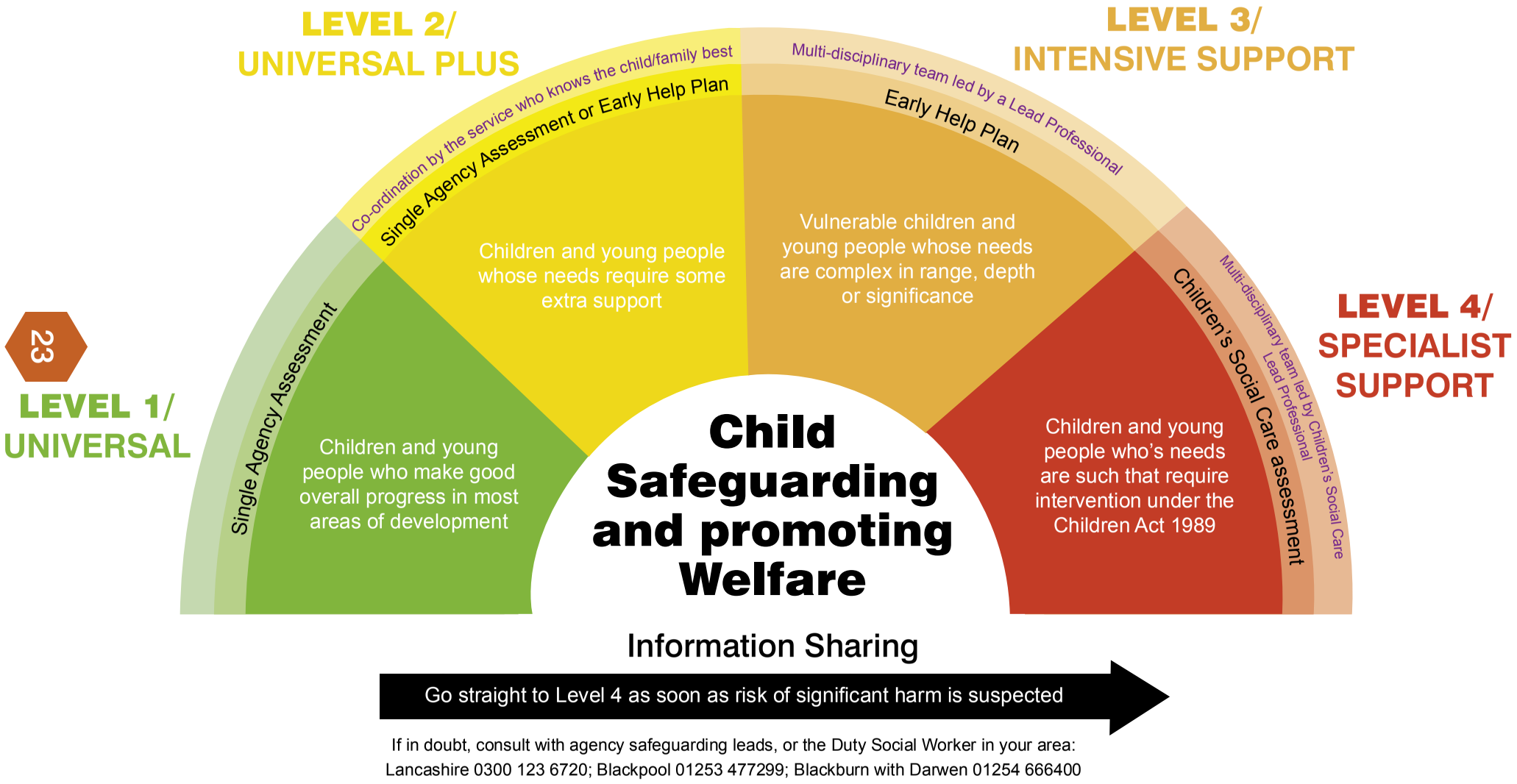
Identity and Self-Esteem

- Failed Education Supervision Order – three prosecutions for non-attendance: family refusing to engage
- Evident mental health needs
- Child/young person exhibiting extremist views, threats, suggestions or behaviour which meets Prevent criteria
- Child/young person involved / closely associating with gangs

Basic care, ensuring safety and protection

- Parent / carers mental health or substance misuse significantly affect care of child/ young person
- Parents / carers unable to care for previous children
- Instability and violence in the home continually
- Parents / carers involved in violent or serious crime, or crime against children
- Parents/carers own needs mean they are unable to keep child / young person safe
- Severe disability – child / young person relies totally on other people to meet care needs
- Chronic and serious domestic abuse involving child/young person
- Disclosure from parent/carer of abuse to child / young person
- Suspected/evidence of fabricated or induced illness
- Young person at risk of Female Genital Mutilation and other harmful traditional/ cultural practices
- Forced Marriage or Honour Based Abuse with family who lack willingness to protect
- Risk of exploitation and parents/carers lack willingness or ability to protect

Levels of Need – At a Glance



If in doubt, consult with agency safeguarding leads, or the Duty Social Worker in your area:
Lancashire 0300 123 6720; Blackpool 01253 477299; Blackburn with Darwen 01254 666400

WORKING WELL WITH CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN LANCASHIRE

Including, Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool and Lancashire Local Authorities

This document contains Part One and Two of Three parts of the guidance.