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Children's Social Care - Practice Directive No. ??

Subject:	Strengths & Difficulties Questionnaire: SDQ's	Issue Date:	January 2017
Author:	Michael Taylor	Review Date:	August 2021
Target Group:	Social workers and managers		

Background/Introduction:

Since April 2008 all local authorities in England have been required to provide information on the psychological and emotional health of children in care, and specifically emotional and behavioural difficulties. This information needs to be collected using a Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ).

This is a widely used tool for assessing a child's emotional wellbeing, looking at the likelihood of problems being already present or of developing in the future. It has five sections that cover details of emotional difficulties; conduct problems; hyperactivity or inattention; friendships and peer groups and positive behaviour. All children or young people aged between 4 and 16 years old inclusive must have a questionnaire completed by their main carer and should be aligned to the health assessment. Children who have turned 17 prior to the 31st march should also be included.

Action:

The request to complete the SDQ will be made directly to the parent/carers prior to the 3rd LAC review at 10 months and will be sent out with the review invites. The allocated social worker will be asked to complete the form in respect of young people aged below 17 years who are living independently.

The questionnaire asks the carer to read various statements and then judge how well it describes the young person living with them. The answers are given by ticking one of 3-4 boxes for each question. On average this should only take the carer around 10 minutes to complete. Where a carer has difficulties in understanding or completing the questionnaire the social worker should explain what is required.

The completed questionnaire will then be returned to the designated LBS Business Support Officer who will input the information from the SDQ onto FWi episode.

High or Very High Scores:

A score of 13 or below is normal and 17 and above is a cause of concern (between 14-16 is borderline)

If the score is identified as being of concern the CLA CAMHS therapy service will be notified by Business Support to provide an overview of the clinical and social work response to the child's needs. A triangulated approach will provide a more rounded picture of the young person and enable a decision to be made about what if any further services they may need to address the difficulties identified. They will also advise if further SDQ's should be completed by other involved agencies such as the school. The CLA CAMHS therapy service will lead on developing an intervention plan within two weeks which must be added to the SDQ episode before it is completed and closed.

The SDQ information will be considered within the health assessment by the LAC nurse. The health assessment, health plan with recommendations, the SDQ form and score will be sent to the social worker. The SDQ and the scoring sheet should be filed in the child/young person's Mosaic episodes

MOSAIC Guidance:

Trix (Children's online Procedures) Guidance:

Michael Taylor
August 2021