

Understanding assessments

Information for families

Children, Schools and Families

01438 737500

www.hertsdirect.org/csf



For more help and advice about the information in this booklet, contact Hertfordshire County Council customer service centre on 01438 737500. Callers from 01923 or 0208 dialling codes may wish to use 01923 471500 in order to be charged at local call rates.

Visit the Children, Schools and Families home page – www.hertsdirect.org/csf for lots more useful information about our services for children and families. You can also contact us by email at hertsdirect@hertscc.gov.uk

For further copies of this leaflet, please ring the customer service centre, or ask the person from CSF who is working with you for a copy.

If you would like help with translation or need this information in large print, braille or on audio tape, or if you need other help with this information please contact the customer service centre.

Bengali: বাংলা, ভাষায় তথ্যাবলীর জন্য অথবা আপনার একজন দোভাষী অর্থাৎ ইস্টারপ্রিটারের দরকার হলে, অনুগ্রহ করে উপরে যে সব টেলিফোন নম্বর দেওয়া হয়েছে সেগুলোতে ফোন করে যোগাযোগ করুন।

Chinese: 如果需要漢語、版本，或需要口譯人員，請用上述號碼聯繫。

Italian: Per informazioni in italiano, o se desidera l'aiuto di un'interprete, contatti i numeri elencati in precedenza.

Portuguese: Para informações em português ou se precisar de uma interprete é favor telefonar para um dos números acima.

Punjabi: ਪੰਜਾਬੀ, ਦੇ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਦੇ ਲਈ ਜਾਂ ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇੰਟਰਪ੍ਰੀਟਰ ਦੀ ਜ਼ਰੂਰਤ ਹੈ, ਤਾਂ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਉੱਪਰ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਨੰਬਰਾਂ 'ਤੇ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

Turkish: Sağlanan hizmetlerle ilgili bilgileri Türkçe, istiyorsanız ya da bu dillerden çevirmene gereksinim duyarsanız, lütfen yukarıdaki telefon numaralarını arayınız.

Urdu: اردو میں معلومات کے لئے، یا اگر آپ کو ایک انٹرپریٹر کی ضرورت ہے، تو براہ مہربانی اوپر دیئے ہوئے نمبروں پر رابطہ کریں۔

What is an assessment?

Either you, or someone else on your behalf, has asked Children, Schools and Families for a service to help with some difficulty which affects your child or children.

Before we can help you we need to know more about you and your family. This will involve collecting information, talking this through with you and agreeing what might be done. We call this an assessment.

Why is an assessment necessary?

By making an assessment we will try to find out what help and support you and your family may need and who could best give that help. What we find out will need to be written down and recorded electronically.

Although social workers and other professionals will normally take the lead completing the assessment, this should always be done in a way which helps you have your say, and encourages you to take part.

Anything you tell us will be held in confidence within Children, Schools and Families. If there is a need to discuss this information with anyone else, we will normally ask your permission. The only exception to this is if information comes to light which, in the social worker's view, may indicate a serious threat to the welfare of your child. If this is the case you will be told what your rights are in this new situation.

What will happen?

- The social worker will meet with you and members of your family a number of times to do an assessment.
- The social worker will see and talk to the children involved and help them to join in and make sure they have their say in the assessment wherever possible.
- The assessment will take into consideration your ethnic and cultural background and any special requirements you may have.
- If we need help to make sure we are clear about what you or your child wants to tell us we will find someone who can help us to talk to each other, for example, an interpreter or signer.
- When other people are already involved in helping you and your family, it is likely the social worker will talk to them too. We shall discuss this with you.
- If you do not agree with what the social worker says in the assessment, there will be an opportunity for you to record your point of view on the assessment record.

The aim of the assessment is to see where we can help and draw up a plan to help your child or children. You will be given a copy of the plan.

What will be expected of you?

We know that most parents want the best for their children, and completing the assessment will help the social workers recognise the strengths you and your family have, as well as your difficulties.

We can help you best if you tell us about what you do well in your family and your difficulties. Some people find it helpful to write down the help that they want and the reasons why. You can give this to the social worker and encourage him/her to use it as a basis for the assessment. We will keep you informed about what we are doing and thinking.

An assessment is an important part of our working with you. In a small number of cases, there are serious concerns about a child's safety. Making sure the child is safe will be our chief concern.

What can you expect of us?

We will listen carefully to what you have to say, offer advice and, if necessary, support you to bring up your children and resolve your difficulties.

We know that with a little help most families can sort out their own problems, and our aim is to assist you to do that.

We will try to offer you any services you need as soon as possible. At times there are more people needing services than there are services to give. This means that sometimes although everyone is agreed you need a service, it might not be available at the time. If this happens we will look to find an alternative, but we cannot guarantee to provide a particular service.

How long does an assessment take?

Our aim is to do an "initial assessment" within seven working days.

Sometimes we will need to spend more time doing an assessment if things are complicated or advice from people in other services is needed. For example, we may need to ask the pediatrician for their advice on health issues. This full assessment is called a "core assessment" and should be done within 35 working days. If help is needed we will try to provide it.

Tell us what you think

Your comments help us to improve the quality of our services, so please tell us what you think. It helps if you tell us when we do things well and also when we get it wrong.

If you are not happy with the service you receive, it is best to try to sort it out with the person you are dealing with first. If you are still unhappy Children, Schools and Families (CSF) has a formal complaints system. A leaflet giving further information is available from our local offices or from your social worker.

Sharing information

When carrying out an assessment there may be a need to ask other agencies, such as schools or health, for information they may have on your child. There may also be a need to share information we have with such agencies. CSF will ensure we comply with the Data Protection Act at all times. We will normally ask your consent but the welfare of children is our main priority and on occasion we may have to make inquiries without prior permission. CSF will only request and share information on a 'need to know' basis. We will also ensure all information we receive is treated as 'confidential'.

This leaflet is based on the text in the Department of Health's "Framework for the assessment of children in need and their families".

Hertfordshire County Council - making Hertfordshire a better place to live by providing:

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- Support for schools, pupils and parents
- Support for carers
- Fire and rescue
- Fostering and adoption
- Support for people with disabilities
- Libraries
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- Road maintenance and safety
- Protection for adults and children at risk
- Trading standards and consumer protection
- Household waste recycling centres

These are only some of our services.
Find out more at www.hertsdirect.org
or email us at hertsdirect@hertscc.gov.uk

Every Hertfordshire library has free
internet access for the public