

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council

Assessment of Risk to Children in respect of contact or cohabitation with a Person Posing Risk

1. Introduction and guidance notes

- 1 A Person Posing Risk (PPR) is somebody who has been defined as having previously harmed or may have harmed a child. Any person with a criminal conviction of offences against a child will be considered a person posing risk. If a person identified as a PPR is having significant contact or cohabitating with a child or children an assessment should then be completed in respect of that Child/ren in order to conclude the level of risk. If a person is considered a PPR, a warning indicator must appear on the PPRs case file as a 'Risk to Children'.

A person may also be considered as a requiring risk assessment under this guidance if they have a history of

- Other criminal behaviour, attitude or lifestyle of an individual indicates potential concern for a child's welfare and they are;
- A person identified as parent or carer or with significant child care responsibilities

If such an assessment concludes a significant level of risk, then a warning indicator should appear on the relevant adult's file as a 'Hazard'.

The assessment should include

- a) All relevant detail related to the child, including any factors which increase or decrease vulnerability
- b) The level of risk attributed to the individual, and
- c) The extent to which this risk can be managed in relation to any contact with the relevant children

The assessment should not make recommendations about risk to the public, however if factors are identified which highlight this as an area of concern they should be discussed with a Service Manager and escalated to the relevant process – MAPPA, LADO, MARAC etc.

2. This guidance is designed to provide a framework for assessing risk to the child in the given situation and is not a standalone risk assessment of the individual. For clarity the assessment undertaken is focused on the child concerned. The term 'PPR assessment' is therefore not helpful as it suggests assessment of the adult.
3. The assessment factors should be flexible and applied as relevant to the case situation. As with any assessment this should be discussed with the manager and any other professionals involved as they may be better placed to provide some of the assessment information, such as in the context of current or historical Probation intervention. It is intended for use as a framework for discussion with the PPR and their network and may then form the basis of the assessment.
4. The assessment information should be recorded on the child's case file in casenotes under the heading 'Assessment Session'. The worker should provide detailed headings on the focus of the session and the information shared, using the guidance to assist. This will

ensure that the 'journey' of the assessment is captured and can be revisited on the child's file. The information pertinent to the PPR (Section 3 and 4) should be added to the case file for the PPR under casenotes. When the assessment is complete a C and F assessment should be opened in order to summarise the findings and provide a detailed analysis and recommendations in respect of the risk to the child concerned. The assessment sessions held should be specifically referenced to demonstrate the rationale and evidence.

5. It is intended therefore that the assessment is completed in the context of the child, and level of risk to them as with any other C and F assessment.
6. The assessment should be complete using a series of planned interviews with the PPR, and partners and connected persons. It is also key that the children's views and circumstances are central to the assessment outcome.
7. Assessment should be a fluid process based on the static and dynamic risk factors which may change over time. This guidance is intended to support the worker to reach a conclusion about a given level of risk at a specific time, it may be that the assessment will need to be updated if the factors change examples of this may be – a change in the PPR's circumstances – for example if a trusting couple relationship which has been felt to be a protective factor comes to an end or if the PPR commits further offences.
8. The assessment should be completed alongside a robust and trusted safety plan. (see Safety Planning Roadmap – SoS in [Local Resources, Children in Particular Circumstances - Safeguarding and Child Protection](#)) It may be that the plan is unable to progress – for example with the PPR returning home – until the assessment is completed. Any safety plan will need to be proportionate to the assessed level of risk and should be overseen and recorded as such by the Team Manager.
9. When assessments are allocated or recommended (e.g. at a child protection conference) it should be borne in mind that they will take several weeks or even months to complete. It is important that this is discussed openly with the family and any network which has a role in protecting the children. An assessment and safety plan should be drawn up with the person concerned and their network.
10. Assessments should not be allocated to level 1 (NQSW) social workers. Allocations to workers at level 2 or above should be overseen by a team manager to ensure that the social worker is supported and considered sufficiently experienced.
11. The assessment should be informed by the use of the Rotherham Family Approach (see [Local Resources, Children in Particular Circumstances - Safeguarding and Child Protection](#)) and should make specific reference to how this has guided and informed any outcomes for example the use of Danger Statements and Safety Goals, Case Mapping, Safe/Unsafe/Certainty/Uncertainty and restorative principles.
12. The assessment should be rigorous in identifying strength and safety and assessing workers should be skilled in asking 'best questions' to support this.

Appendix - The PPR assessment Guidance

Section 1 Introduction

- Allocation details
- Basis for the assessment
- Time frame and proposed completion date
- Dates of assessment sessions
- Focus of the assessment – Current Danger Statement/s and Safety Goal/s
- Current legal or Child Protection Status of the child

Section 2 The Child and Family

Identify and strength and risk in relation to the child's:

- Age and developmental stage and any disability.
- The child's understanding of the concerns and potential risk and any factors preventing this
- The child's key relationships – family, friends and professional
- The child's identity and any relevant cultural or religious needs
- The child's lived experience, key events and any impact of trauma
- The child's physical, mental and emotional health
- The child's characteristics and behaviour including any factors related to risk of exploitation
- Any relevant social care or other agency history.
- The level of involvement by the PPR with the child – frequency, where taking place, who else present, purpose of contact, etc.
- The wishes and feelings of the child in relation to contact with this person (if the child is preverbal state what you think the child would want).

Identify and strength and risk in relation to the main carer's:

- Parenting capacity – the focus on the needs of the child
- Health – physical, mental, emotional
- Support networks
- Previous history of working with professionals, engagement and attitude
- Relationship to the PPR, length of relationship and current situation – attitude to this relationship now.
- Attitude to PPR's previous offences / history. What do they know? Is this sufficient to protect?
- If there is a level of denial, is there scope for sufficient safety to be developed? Consider the support of a fully informed network and the work of Susie Essex ([Hyperlink](#))
- Level of realistic practical arrangements for safeguarding the child

Section 3 The PPR history and current context

Identify and strength and risk in relation to the PPR:

Static Factors

- Details of offences, suspected offences against children, convictions, cautions, findings of fact, allegations, generalised concerns. Consider First, Worst, Last. Use the Signs of Safety Harm Matrix (see [Local Resources, Children in Particular Circumstances - Safeguarding and Child Protection](#)) to assist with this analysis.
- Details of any current orders in force, e.g. Probation Order, Registered Sex Offender, Notification Order, Sex Offenders Prevention Order, Risk of Sexual Harm Order, Licence.
- Number, ages, gender and characteristics of victims and their relationship to PPR.
- What does the offending history tell us about the level of manipulation, grooming and preparation of the offender and how is this relevant to the child?
- Personal History – experience of being parented, previous relationships
- If partner agencies hold a view on risk or a previous assessment has been completed, this should be utilised within this assessment.

Dynamic Factors

- What is the person's view regarding their offending/concerning history, do they accept why we are worried? If there is denial to what extent does this mean safety cannot be achieved. **At least one adult/carer must accept the concern and demonstrate protection.**
- What is the PPR's view of the victims?
- What is the PPR's opinion about what it was about that child / those children that led to the offences?
- Does the PPR engage and co-operate with the assessment and volunteer information? Does the information triangulate with what we know?
- What information have they provided to the child's main carer and is this accurate?
- What intervention and change has occurred for the PPR? What would the person say has had the biggest positive impact on them?
- Is the person willing to participate in further treatment or intervention if this is beneficial?
- Are there any factors that are felt to have contributed to the abusive behaviour that remain present or could develop again?
- What does the person consider you would need to see from them to think that the child is safe.

Section 4 Family and environmental factors of the PPR

Identify and strength and risk in relation to:

- Health – physical, mental, emotional
- Disability or learning need.
- Experience of being parented and any abuse suffered and the impact of any trauma.
- History of other offending behaviour such as violence, offences against the person.
- The relevance of any alcohol or drug use.
- PPR's description of his family history, past and current relationships with extended family.
- Current support network. Who is important now? Do they know about the person's offences/concerns? What is their view and can they be involved?

- Historical and current employment status.
- What positive attributes does the person consider they possess?
- What difficulties and challenges can they describe?

Section 5 Support and monitoring systems

Identify and strength and risk in relation to:

- Reference to the Safety Plan in place and the suggested trajectory. Does this assessment form part of the trajectory and if so how will safety be tested?
- What are the monitoring arrangements for the safety of the children? How will we know what safety is in place?
- What are the Local Authority Bottom Lines?
- What contingency plans are in place?
- Consider the use of Safety Circles (see [Local Resources, Children in Particular Circumstances - Safeguarding and Child Protection](#)) in order to develop the safety network
- Refer to any words and pictures explanations to be completed for the children.
- Refer to any Family Network Meetings, FGCs, CPCs or other mechanisms available to monitor the progress of this plan.
- On a scale of 0 – 10, where 0 is this network has not grasped the worries and has not demonstrated sufficient protection for these children despite lots of effort by the SW and 10 is this network knows what they need to and they have repeatedly shown they will protect the children above all else where are you?

Section 6 Analysis and Recommendations

- Consider and compose scaling questions relevant to each situation, these should be considered with all professionals involved and recorded.
- What are the current Danger Statements and Safety Goals – scale the current level of safety against these.
- What is the realistic worst case scenario based on this assessment?
- The analysis should conclude the extent to which the identified strengths and safety can mitigate against the assessed level of risk. The worker needs to be clear how these have

been tested over time and what the outcome of this has been? i.e. Has strength been sufficiently tested over time to be considered safety? Has a safety Journal been utilised? (see [Local Resources, Children in Particular Circumstances - Safeguarding and Child Protection](#))

- If not enough safety is yet seen, what needs to happen next?

Section 7

- Name and contact details of Social Worker completing the assessment.
- Signed and dated.
- Comments / endorsement by Social Work Manager.
- Signed and dated.

Section 8 Decision of Service Manager

- Decision.
- Comments.
- Any further information needed.
- Monitoring / reviewing arrangements.

Section 9

- Name and contact details of Service Manager.
- Signed and dated.