



www.musica-workshops.com
registered charity no.1150769

CHILDREN IN NEED (CIN)

Children in Need (CIN)

This procedure focuses on children “in need” as defined in Section 17 of the Children Act 1989. It is recognised that many children and families have needs that do not fall within this definition. The Common Assessment Framework provides the opportunity for individual agencies and professionals to identify such needs and provide services for children and families at the appropriate level.

Section 17 Children’s Act

This guidance applies to every child “in need” as defined in Section 17 of the Children Act 1989:

“A child shall be taken to be in need if:

- a) he is unlikely to achieve or maintain, or 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, **and**
- b) his health or development is likely to be significantly impaired, or further impaired, without the provision for him of such services, or
- c) he is disabled”.

This is a high threshold and requires that a child be considered to be a Child “in need” only if their health or development is likely to be significantly impaired.

Definition of Child In Need

The following guidance aims to assist professionals and parents to interpret the legal definition of a child “in need” and to help achieve consistent expectations about when an Initial Assessment will be done.

These descriptions identify the sort of situations which may indicate that a child is “in need”. They are simply for guidance, and are not intended for use as threshold criteria or as a means of establishing priority for attention. Threshold decisions are professional judgements to be made solely on the basis of the legal definition of a child “in need”. Ultimate responsibility for decision making lies with Social Care Manager in Children’s Social Care.

1. Abuse and neglect

Extra-familial abuse may, of course, mean that a child becomes “in need”. It should only be dealt with under “child protection” procedures when it gives rise to “reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm” in terms of abuse or neglect.

If there is “reasonable cause to suspect actual or likely significant harm” in terms of abuse or neglect as defined in Working Together, such concerns must be dealt with under Child Protection procedures. See section 4.1

2. Family Dysfunction

Where parenting capacity is chronically inadequate, and parents do not consistently provide basic care, emotional warmth, stimulation, guidance, boundaries, or stability in relationships.

These concerns will require a response under child protection procedures if they give rise to “reasonable cause to suspect actual or likely significant harm” in terms of abuse or neglect as defined in Working Together. If that threshold is not met, a child “in need” response will invariably be appropriate.

3. Children with Disability

Children with a disability are defined by Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 as being “in need”. They, and their families, may require services in respect of needs that are directly related to their disability. But they may also have needs that arise for other reasons.

If there is “reasonable cause to suspect “that they are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm in terms of abuse or neglect” these must be dealt with under child protection guidance. Otherwise child “in need” guidance applies to children with disability as for any other child in need.

The severity of a disabled child’s needs may impact significantly on the parent’s ability to care for other children in the family. It may therefore be appropriate to consider the siblings of disabled children as children in need under these procedures.

5. Absent Parent

Where a parent has died, or is in prison, or has effectively abandoned a child – or where the child is an unaccompanied asylum seeker. This group does not include children whose needs arise from other adverse family circumstances or poor parenting.

6. Socially Unacceptable Behaviour

Where a child’s behaviour is having a significant detrimental effect on the community or family life – including children who are offending or are at risk of offending. This group may include children who are at risk in terms of truancy, sexual activity, drug misuse, alcohol misuse, or fire-setting – though the possibility of these behaviours being associated with abuse or neglect should be considered.

7. Family in Acute Stress

Where a parent is normally able to provide adequate care and meet their child's needs, but has difficulty in doing so because of family circumstances and environmental factors. For example: loss of employment, homelessness, separation, or bereavement.

8. Low Income

Where income is so low as to have a significant impact on a child's health and development, for example, where a family's circumstances are such that their income is below standard state entitlement. This may include asylum seeking families or young people moving toward independence.

Children and young people who, for whatever reason, are living apart from their immediate families in the community and being supported under Suffolk's Family and Friend's policy are included in this.

Consent to referral

Consent of parents, and of children and young people (according to their age and understanding), and joint working are highly desirable because honesty and openness is likely to enable effective partnership working and better outcomes.

However, the absence of consent to referral and inability or unwillingness to work jointly must not be barriers to referral for Initial Assessment, nor to intervention for children "in need". It is important to keep a clear record of why consent is not sought, or withheld, or not available.

Consent to sharing information

Parental consent should always be sought to share information unless there is reason to believe that to do so would place a child at risk of further harm, or if their health or development are likely to be significantly impaired because consent is refused.

There is an underlying assumption that work with children "in need" and their families should be undertaken in a spirit of partnership with the objective of enabling parents to take responsibility in addressing concerns for their child.

If a Musica Staff member believes they have reason to report a Child in Need they should immediately consult with the Musica Representative/s prior to making a referral, unless they believe any delay in reporting that case will result in significant harm to a child or young person.

Reporting procedures for CIN

Practitioners who have a concern about a child's welfare have a professional responsibility to determine whether their concern seems likely to meet the threshold for action by Children's Social Care under either Child In Need or Child Protection guidance, or whether it can appropriately be referred to the CAF process.

All referrals to Children's Social Care should be made through Customer First, not via the CAF process.

Send CAF pages 1-9 to Customer First to request further assessment by CYP Social Care

Services (SCS)

Customer First, PO Box 771

Needham Market, Ipswich

IP6 8WB 08456 066167

Professionals should consult with colleagues in Children's Social Care to explore the issues about which they are concerned if they are in doubt about whether a referral is appropriate. Such consultation should not be regarded as constituting a referral. A Social Care Manager makes the decision whether to carry out an initial assessment.

Lead professional

Child In Need Meetings should always agree who is to be the Lead Professional. This may be the Social Worker, but it may be appropriate for some other professional to take this role. This applies to complex and non-complex circumstances.

The Lead Practitioner is responsible for ensuring that information is appropriately shared, and that everyone involved understands both the nature of the concerns, the outcomes required, and what is in the plan. They should also convene and run the Core Group and be responsible for convening future Child In Need Meetings to review progress.

Sources:

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-children-in-need/review-of-children-in-need>

<https://childlawadvice.org.uk/information-pages/child-in-need-services/>

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-protection-system/children-the-law>