



THE SINGLE ASSESSMENT

FAQs - updated February 2016

What is the Single Assessment?

The Single Assessment combines and replaces our previous Initial Assessment (IA), Core Assessment (CA) and Initial Child Protection Conference Report (ICPC Report).

This change provides a smoother process for children, young people and their families, who will have one assessment. The Single Assessment will also reduce duplication for practitioners.

One of the Local Authorities visited as part of the Single Assessment Project stated that their Social Workers felt that the reduction of duplication, enabled workers to spend more time with children and young people, which led to a greater use of tools to support the assessment.

What are the proposed benefits of the Single Assessment?

The new assessment will reduce the time spent on case recording and will free up more time for direct work with children and young people.

When a child or young person is allocated to a Social Worker, their Manager will complete a Management Oversight Form giving case direction and a brief plan of what the assessment should cover.

A checkpoint will be set for within 10 working days of allocation. By day 10 the Manager and the Social Worker will have a further discussion (which will again be recorded in the Management Oversight Form in CareFirst). If the decision is for

a further period of assessment another checkpoint date will be agreed. The additional checkpoints will be at days 25 and 40 (plus the option to review at any point). This will result in more timely decisions for children and families and reduce drift in assessments and decision making.

The process will ensure children, young people and their families are not over assessed, and will provide better evidence of management oversight and the recording of key decision making.

First Response Team (FRT) practitioners report that they are able to achieve better outcomes for children as a result of not being pressured to conclude their assessment within 10 days (as per the previous Initial Assessment). They have shared two examples of being able to engage positively with families enabling a homeless teenager to return home who they felt would previously have become Looked After Children.

When will the new form be available to use?

The new form was implemented on 11th January 2016 on all new referrals requiring an assessment.

What are the timescales for the single assessment?

The Single Assessment moves away from the 10 and 35 days of the IA and the CA. It will focus on the assessment as an ongoing process with children and young people. The assessment can be started and finished on more than one



occasion, by more than one worker, as children and young people's situations change.

The Single Assessment has the facility for Team Managers and Practice Managers to set up management oversights that will guide the practitioner to how long the assessment should take. This will ensure the assessment fully captures the child or young person's situation. No assessment will remain open for more than 40 working days.

Who will complete Section 47 Enquiries?

If MASH determine a referral meets the threshold for a S47 Child Protection Enquiry this will be assigned to the FRT.

All S47 Enquiries on existing children or young people open to the service will continue to be completed by the responsible team.

The strategy discussion form and the S47 outcome form will still be required.

The Single Assessment will now be used as the report for all Initial Child Protection Case Conferences.

The assessment process will become much more child focussed as opposed to process led. The Single Assessment template contains hyperlinks which will direct staff to the Research in Practice Website, the Strengthening Practice Handbook, tools for supporting practitioners in carrying out direct work with children and young people, the Practice Standards and Policies and Procedures.

What Training and Support will be available?

The Single Assessment is very similar to the previous Core Assessment.

A Single Assessment Champion has been identified in each team. The Champions have attended meetings during the developmental stages and have been involved in testing the new forms (Single Assessment and Management Oversight). Their role is crucial and they will address the individual training needs of their teams in conjunction with the Team Manager. They will continue to support the team and identify any further training needs.

The Practice Development Worker has attended all teams to give a brief overview of the Single Assessment and will continue to meet with workers and provide training as required.

The Champions will continue to update teams at team meetings and feedback any areas of support needed or concerns to the project team or their Service Managers.

The Champions will support the staff in the workplace when the new assessment goes live.

Your Champions are:

- Caroline Fanthorpe S&CP N1
- Katie Hancock S&CP N2
- Edirin Esevohare S&CP N4
- Jeanette McFadden S&CP N5
- Sara O'Leary S&CP N6
- Caroline McGonnell S&CP N7
- Helen Rennocks S&CP N8
- Mandy Kerry S&CP S1
- Sandeep Mohan S&CP S2
- Jo Annalise Sharman S&CP S3
- Deane Hill S&CP S4
- Judith McCarthy S&CP S5
- Ruth Needham S&CP S6
- John Marlow S&CP S7



- Rob Boylan S&CP S8
- Susie Charles-Hoon FRT1
- Peter Chitiyo FRT2
- Angie Marsh LAC North
- Sonia Firouzi LAC South
- Jodie Harrison DCT
- Elizabeth Williams Social Work Academy

What if I experience problems after implementation who can I go to for support?

The Single Assessment Champions will deliver Briefing Sessions and act as the point of contact for you once the Single Assessment is implemented.

In addition you can email questions, queries and comments to the Single Assessment Project Practice Development Worker, Kimberlea Simpson ksimpson@northamptonshire.gov.uk who will respond to your questions directly or signpost you to the relevant manager to answer your question.

Your questions will also form part of the ongoing FAQs document.

How will we balance the demands and deadlines and ensure timely Single Assessments?

Your Practice Manager and Team Manager will offer you guidance on managing your priorities and meeting deadlines.

The checkpoints in the Single Assessment will assist you in ensuring the assessment is carried out in a timely way to ensure you meet the needs of children and young people.

Previously CAs remained open for 35 days; it is likely that a number of Single Assessments will be completed much earlier; as soon as sufficient information has been gathered to make an informed decision and a SMART Plan agreed for the child or young person.

What will be the additional staffing resources?

There will be no additional staffing as a result of the implementation of the Single Assessment. The implementation of the First Response Service, bringing together the Initial Assessment and S47 Team will ensure we have the right resources to carry out timely assessments for all new referrals that meet the threshold for a Social Work Assessment.

What should a Single Assessment contain?

An assessment should be a holistic assessment of a child or young person's needs including:

- the child or young person's voice
- parenting capacity
- families' strengths and areas of difficulty including any complicating factors (e.g. domestic violence or substance misuse)
- evidence of the use of communication tools and research
- evidence of management oversight and reasoning behind decisions
- analysis based on fact and research
- a plan which is clear, concise and SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and has Timescales set)
- and most importantly informs the plan to ensure that a child or young person is safeguarded from harm.

Will MASH still make the threshold decisions and transfer work to the teams?

Yes, the process for MASH applying the thresholds will remain the same.



What if after a couple of tasks it appears that threshold is not met?

As always Social Workers use their professional judgement and if after talking to a parent or a colleague from another agency it is clear the threshold is not met or it is e.g. a malicious referral the assessment must reflect this and the Practice Manager or Team Manager will authorise that assessment.

How much detail will be required for a shorter period of assessment?

The Single Assessment will be the Social Work Assessment in Northamptonshire and any assessment will be timely with the needs of the child or young person primarily driving the assessment and an understanding that delay is not in the child or young person's interest.

The Single Assessments will be proportionate to the needs of individual children, young people and their families.

What will the case transfer points be?

The transfer points are as follows for children and young people transferring from FRT (these can be found in the Interim Transfer Document for FRT)

- Initial Child Protection Conference
- The 72 hours placement planning meeting for S20.
- Interim Care Order Hearing
- The initial Child In Need meeting.

What will the role of the First Response Service be?

The First Response Team will receive all new referrals from the MASH that meet the threshold

for a Social Work Assessment (S17 and S47 Children Act 1989).

What will happen after a Single Assessment is transferred from FRT to S&CP?

Following the start of a Single Assessment in the FRT, the information gathered and the analysis will lead to informed, child centred decisions. Potential outcomes could be no further action from Safeguarding and Children's Services, step down to Early Help Services, a Child in Need Plan, a Child Protection Plan, the child becoming Looked After, or commencement of a legal process to protect the child or young person. Part of the ongoing plan may be a continuation of the Single Assessment commenced by FRT.

FRT will take the assessment to a stage where there is a need for a particular action or plan. Following an ICPC, CiN Meeting or a Court Order the Single Assessment moves forward with the Social Worker from Safeguarding and Care Planning, ensuring the completion of an accurate, child focused assessment in a timely manner.

Will a child/young person need a further Single Assessment at a later date?

As with all assessments and plans the Single Assessment will need to be updated, this enables us to assess any additional needs or changed circumstances, review the effectiveness of services being provided and ensure that the plan is moving forward in a timely manner and with positive outcomes for the child (and if not, to consider what future actions may be required).

When FRT close a SA and a new one is opened in S&CP is this not the same as an IA and CA?

No, this is one assessment of the child's circumstances. Unfortunately due to the constraints of Care First, we cannot capture this in one form when there is a change of worker.



If a child transfers on day 15 to S&CP and a fresh SA template is opened for continued assessment, this counts as day 15 of the child's assessment, S&CP team therefore have 25 days remaining to complete the SA.

As a result of FRT transferring children to other teams at a CIN meeting or ICPC, there will be a SMART plan in place and it may not therefore be necessary to continue with the Single Assessment at this stage. It may be more beneficial to complete the tasks within the plan and refresh the SA in 3-6 months time to measure the effectiveness of the plan and inform future decisions.

When is a CIN meeting required?

When a Social Worker updates their manager at the day 10 checkpoint and if the decision is for ongoing involvement with the family then a CIN meeting is booked within 5 working days of that decision (by day 15 from the assessment start date).

Does CareFirst count in calendar days or working days?

CareFirst counts in calendar days, if you are converting into working days you can click on the date on the bottom right of your screen to view a calendar to assist you with this.

You asked for clarification on the completion of the Management Oversight Form, below is a 5 step guide to completing this.

Step 1

In the assessment screen in CareFirst, press "add" and add a "Cyp Sa Management Oversight" template. On the front page you are asked for the ID of worker, this is the TM/PM completing the form, not the allocated worker.

Step 2

Open the created form.

Select from the drop down menu if this is a first 10 day review, a subsequent review, or a case discussion to agree closure.

1. First (10 days)
2. Review
3. Closure

Step 3

TM/PM types in the first box the number of days until they next want to review the case with the worker (this first box sends a reminder to the **team desktop** when the review is due).

In the next box the TM/PM inserts the allocated Social Worker's ID (not their own) and the same number of days for the review as above (this second box sends a reminder to the **Social Worker's desktop** when the review is due).

Step 4

In the next box 1.1.2, TM/PM inputs the date which they expect the SA to be completed by the worker.

Step 5

TM/PM completes the free text box giving case direction and timescales for completion of tasks identified. (This text will write back into Observations on completion of the form).

FINISH AND SAVE THE FORM

A new document will need to be created for each review and the same process followed.