

# Opportunities for Support

A Guide to Thresholds in B&NES



**BOSSP**

Bath & North East Somerset  
Community Safety & Safeguarding Partnership

# What is this threshold document & why do we need it?

It gives me great pleasure to introduce you to Opportunities for Support.

We recognise that it is not always easy to tell when children, young people and families may need more support, or at what level this may need to be. This document is therefore intended to help you think about the children and young people you work with and which level of support may be right for them.

It recognises the contribution partners make to children, young people and families lives. Opportunities for Support is intended to provide clarity to practitioners of the levels of need below the threshold for safeguarding and specialist services. It does promote earlier support for families to address the issues before they escalate to crisis point and ensure that children and young people are kept safe from harm. An inter-agency group, comprising services that help children, young people and families across Bath and North East Somerset (B&NES) has developed this guide.

Meeting the needs of children and young people who require additional support can be complex. This guide outlines agreed thresholds for early help, targeted and specialist services across B&NES to ensure that children, young people and their families get the right help at the right time. There is a requirement within Working Together to Safeguard Children for each local Community Safety and Safeguarding Partnership to clearly explain the thresholds to their colleagues and partners to help them understand and apply each level. Simply put, the threshold is the point at which consideration is given, either by practitioners, children, young people and / or their families as to the type of support required. Please note, this is not a prescriptive or detailed guide, but is instead intended to be a tool to help you think about the strengths, needs and risks that exist with the family and their wider systems, and then, in turn consider where the right level of support should sit.

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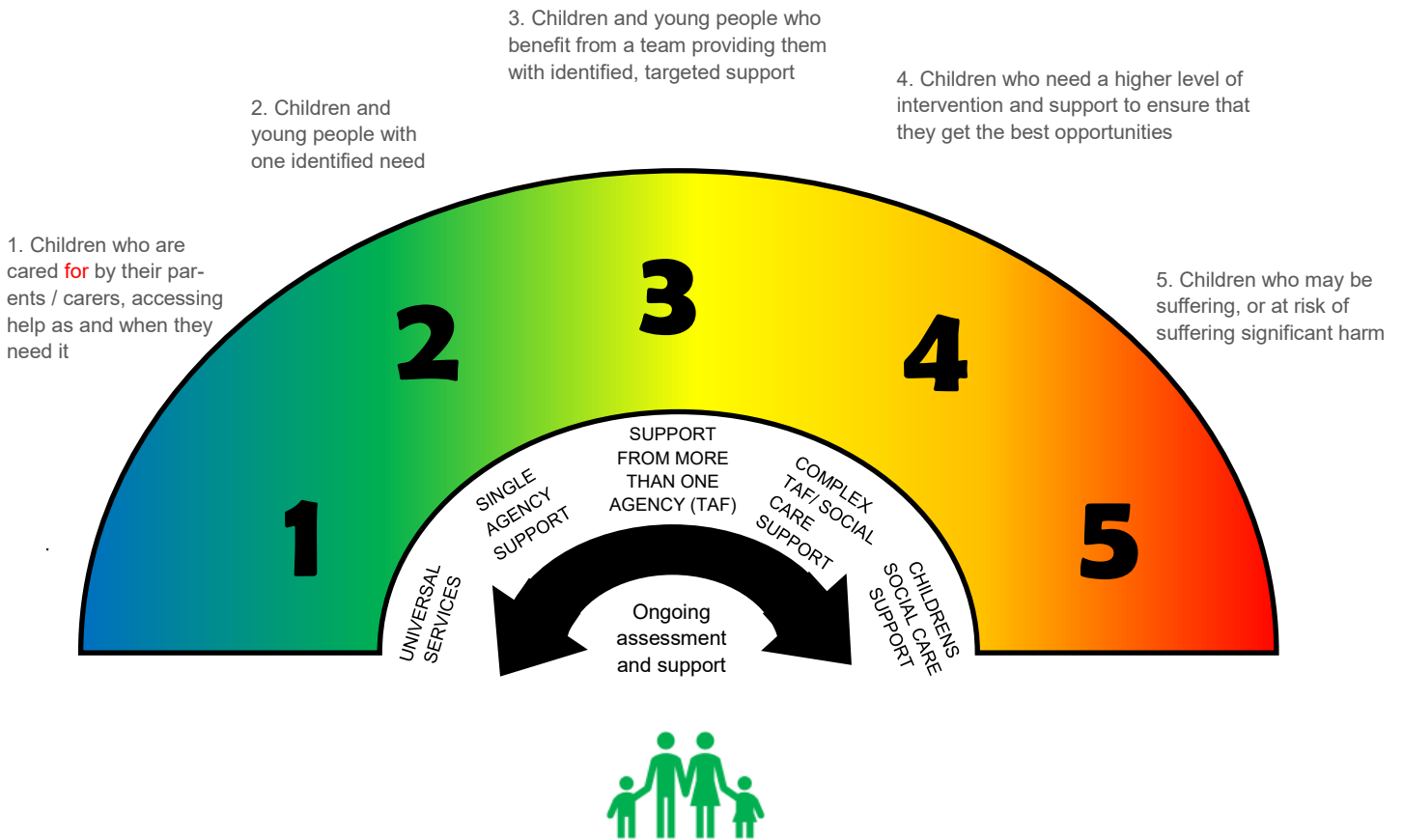
**Sian Walker - Independent Chair - BCSSP**

## Opportunities for Support—Changing Levels of Need

Local Authorities are asked in Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) to provide their professional partners with a document to help them understand the different opportunities for support, or thresholds, that are available in their area. We know that helping a family as soon as possible helps to create change, support parents and carers and keep children safe.

Each level in this document should help identify which children and young people fall into each group, the kind of supports which should be offered, the wide range of agencies in Bath and North East Somerset and considers how assessment also supports children and families to identify need and support them. We know that the level of support that children and their families need may change over time and therefore encourage professionals to think about how this can be increased or decreased along a continuum.

We recognise that this document does not provide an exhaustive list of every need or presenting issue for children, young people and families in our community but hope this assists in promoting conversations about the right support at the right time for those you're working with.



## Early Help and Intervention Strategy 2021 - 25

Our multi-agency Early Help and Intervention Strategy outlines collectively agreed principles, ambitions and priorities which can be found via the [B&NES Early Help App](#)

## [ Social Work Interface ]

Designated safeguarding leads are welcome to contact a social worker from the Triage Team directly to discuss concerns they may have for a child or young person anonymously or on an informal basis.

We can then provide guidance before any request for service is made regarding whether this would meet the threshold for further social work enquiries, or suggest other support, such as direct referrals, early help assessments or arrange for a social worker to attend a Team Around the family in an Interface role to consider the plan in place. They can provide guidance on what to try next if Requests for Service have been made and a social worker is not involved.

### Triage Team Information

Should you wish to make contact with Children's Social Care, please call 01225 396312 / 396313

To make a request for service:

<https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/report-concern-about-child>

Outside of working hours, please call 01454 615165 to speak with the Emergency Duty Team.

**If urgent, please contact 999 and speak to the Police**

# LEVEL 1

**Children and young people who are cared for by their parents, carers & their families, accessing help as and when they need it**

## What does this level mean?

The majority of children and young people in B&NES enjoy happy, healthy and secure childhoods. They and their families are able to access the opportunities, information, advice or help they need from community support and universal settings and services such as maternity services, health visitors, GPs and early years settings, including child minders, schools, colleges, youth services, uniformed organisations and others. Every child who lives in Bath and North East Somerset will be supported at this level.

At this level, children and young people will access support as and when they need it.

Any support they need should be offered in the form of services that every child and young person will receive, these are universal services.

## What help is available?

Community support includes informal support from family and friends, local places and environments, online support services, voluntary, faith and community services, local members of the community and local businesses.

Universal services includes GP surgeries, health visitors, school nurses, an optician, dentist, health centre/walk in/hospitals, leisure centres, social clubs/groups, Citizens Advice, DWP, maternity services, post-16 education services, schools, early childhood education and care settings, libraries, community nurses, community navigators, service directories e.g. the Live Well database

Please visit LiveWell—<https://livewell.bathnes.gov.uk/> - for further information regarding universal services.

## How can I tell children and young people might need support at this level?

- Adults can manage stresses in the family when they arise.
- Adults in the family access support for their emotional health needs when they need it.
- Animals in the home are well cared for and children are supervised when near them.
- A child's parents and carers can talk to them about bereavements and provide comfort.
- There is a stable family environment where parents/carers meet the child's needs; identifying consistent adults to support them.
- Adults ensure that their children are always supervised by a suitable adult.
- The child / young person has clothes that fit and are suitable for the weather / time of year.
- Child / young person has experienced good quality early attachments. They can turn to family, friends, or trusted adults for support.
- Parents/ carers are aware of exploitation and educate their children about the internet and mobile phone safety.
- The child or young person's health and disability needs are recognised and responded to with treatment and support. Immunisations are up to date.
- The child / young person has emotionally responsive parents who can support them to regulate their emotions.

- Parents and carers have an income which means they can meet the family's needs and provide housing.
- There is a variety of nutritious food available in the household for the family.
- Parents/ carers are attuned to their child's needs and respond to physical and verbal cues. Handling of baby is gentle and safe.
- The family have a home that has adequate space and is appropriate for their needs.
- Parents / carers can recognise and meet children's self-care needs. They support children to learn the skills needed at appropriate stages to meet these.
- The child / young person is in good health and meets their developmental milestones. Care is child focused.
- Parents / carers recognise when further support or guidance would be beneficial for their family and are able to seek this out.
- Parents/ carers speak positively and warmly about their child or young person. They are available to provide consistent care.
- Parents / carers can put in place consistent & appropriate boundaries. The child / young person is responsive to these.
- Parents and carers use methods of responding to their children that are not physically harmful to them.
- The child / young person is supported to develop positive views and values about society and their community, meaning they are integrated in their community and can access positive activities.
- Parents / carers allow children and young people to explore their cultural and religious beliefs freely. Children and young people are not involved in concerning behaviour linked to belief or values.
- Parents / carers can recognise and respond to their adolescent's needs, including helping them develop skills for independence.
- A child / young person has somewhere safe to sleep each night with appropriate bedding. An adult is available to respond to their needs.
- Parents / carers are aware of what is needed to keep their child safe both in the home and community.
- The child/ young person can grow up in a home where they are able to develop and share their sexual identity in a safe way.
- The child / young person enters sexual relationships consensually at an appropriate age for their development.
- Parents, carers, and young people are aware of the risks that substances can present. These are not used in a way that is harmful to anyone or has an impact on the children in the household.
- There is no evidence of domestic abuse, substance use or emotional health difficulties in the household.
- The family are supporting their child / young person to access education – either a pre-school setting, school, further education, or elective home education. Engagement with these services is at a high level.

### Applies to all levels

Any suspicion of intended or actual Female Genital Mutilation must be shared with Children's Social Care so that further enquires can be made. Multi-agency discussion and planning may then take place as needed.

Children who have been placed in a private fostering arrangement for 28 consecutive days or longer with someone who is not the child's parent or a 'connected person' should automatically be referred to the Local Authority for assessment under s.66 of the Children Act 1989.

# LEVEL 2

## Children and young people who have one identified need which requires support

### What does this level mean?

This is the first level of support for children and young people in B&NES.

Early Help isn't a 'service' to refer into, rather a principle to be applied by all those who work and volunteer with children and young people where it is identified that some additional support might be helpful for a child or a family.

This aims to:

- ensure that families have access to the information, advice, guidance or help they need that is easily available at the right time and in the right way
- Can be known as Universal Plus and refers to the additional support that may be provided to some children and young people in universal settings. Examples are additional help and support in an educational setting, parenting programs and advice and locally developed opportunities to meet identified needs.
- Children and young people are likely to require early help/intervention for a time limited period to support them
- Professionals should be providing additional support in the first instance and signposting or making direct referrals for help.
- BANES provide information or services relevant to adults, children, young people and families (including SEND).

### What help is available?

Public Health 0 to 19 community services, preventative health services e.g. diabetes prevention support, lifestyle and wellbeing services, dieticians

Please visit the **B&NES Early Help App** or Live Well / SEND local offer for more information.

Every child who lives in Bath and North East Somerset will be supported at this level from before they are born until they reach their 18th birthday or up to their 25th birthday if they have an Education & Health Care Plans due to special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

At this point, children and young people will access support as and when they need it.

### How can I tell if children and young people might need support at this level?

- Adults have an acrimonious relationship or separation, or there has a single incident of domestic abuse.
- An adult in the house has a mental health issue or low mood that requires some support.
- The family may choose to take on a pet without thinking about how to meet its needs or the impact on children.
- The family are affected by a bereavement and would benefit from support to address this.

- Parents / carers may need support to identify an appropriate childcare provider for their family.
- Support is needed to help manage supervision of the children in the home or community.
- Parents/carers may need support to access clothing (e.g school uniform) for their child or young person.
- Child / young person has experienced bullying, or an emotionally upsetting event which requires some support.
- There are indicators of unsafe phone or internet use, or unhealthy relationships. The child/young person would benefit from support around this.
- Parents and carers may need help or support to recognise a child or young person's health needs and attend appointments for this.
- The parent / carer requires support to consider how their emotional responses may impact on their child's behaviour and wellbeing.
- Parents and carers may require guidance to access appropriate benefits or funds to support their family.
- Parents / carers need support to consider how they can provide a healthy and nutritious diet to their family.
- Parents / carers need support to become attuned to their child's cues and respond to or handle their child safely.
- The family are living in accommodation which is not suitable or are struggling to finance this and need support around this.
- The parent / carer requires support / education to meet the child's hygiene needs in a specific area e.g. toothbrushing
- Parents/carers may not recognise or know how to meet a child's need and are beginning to neglect this as a result. There may be some focus on adult needs.
- There is a specific need where parents/ carers need support to identify the appropriate service and gain advice from them.
- A parent /carer may need support to provide emotional warmth or learn how to meet a specific care need for a child.
- The parent or carer may need support to identify when and how to put boundaries in place, and to maintain these for the young people the family.
- There is a concern about the way in which a parent / carer is handling or responding to their child. This could be physically harmful and they need further support or guidance around this.
- A parent / carer may hold a value or belief which could, in turn, impact on the child's behaviour and sense of belonging to their community.
- The child or young person is exploring their beliefs and culture. They may need support or guidance to understand what this means to them at an age appropriate level.
- A parent/ carer may recognise their adolescent has a specific need and seek support to address this. Without support the need may not be met.
- The parent / carer needs guidance or support to ensure their child has a safe place to sleep each night; or to ensure they are supervised appropriately overnight.
- The parent / carer needs guidance or support around one aspect of safety, for example stair gates or internet use.
- There are concerns that the child / young person may be vulnerable to sexual harm through their behaviour or presentation and guidance to parents / carers would be beneficial.
- A young person is considering entering sexual relationships or exploring their identity and would benefit from health or emotional support.
- A parent, child or young person has engaged in substance use and feels that this could become problematic – they wish to engage in support to address this issue.
- Professionals may be concerned about verbal arguments, low level substance use and parental emotional health need support to prevent them escalating.
- The family are supporting their child / young person to access education – either a pre-school setting, school, further education, or elective home education. Professionals are concerned that engagement with them is decreasing.

# LEVEL 3

## Children and young people who benefit from a team providing them with identified, targeted support

### What does this level mean?

Where a number of settings, services or agencies might be needed to help a family to meet more than one need for either the child, young person or adults in the family.

This means:

- An early help assessment could be used as a tool to aid a conversation with a child, young person and their family to record the concerns identified and the help they need and what actions would support this
- Identify a lead person, ideally who is known and trusted by the family
- Create the right team of professionals to be involved in the plan and actions
- The family actively consent and choose to work with professionals

### What help is available?

Targeted support services provide help and support for families with children from pre-birth to until they reach their 18th birthday or up to their 25th birthday if they have an Education & Health Care Plans due to special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

- At this level, the lead person should complete an early help assessment to ensure the needs of the children / young people in the family are identified and a plan of support begins
- The Council's Integrated Working Team provides advice and training for agencies completing an Early Help Assessment (EHA) and provide advice on which agencies may be best placed to support the needs identified
- Direct referrals to targeted support services can be made if it is known which service would be appropriate to meet the identified need

- If it is not easy to identify how the needs in the family can be met, (due to complexity) a Request for Early Help Services can be made to Children's Service Care for discussion at the Early Help Allocation Panel.
- Regular Team Around the Family Meetings should be held to review and adapt the plan as needed

### How can I tell children and young people might need support at this level?

- Adults continue to have an acrimonious or domestically abusive relationship which the children are witness / exposed to.
- The parent / carer has a mental health issue - this can impact on how they meet the physical / emotional needs of their children.
- Animals may appear to be uncared for and may be seen to be unsupervised. Their care may have a financial impact on family life.
- There is a significant family bereavement which impacts on day to day life; the family have other needs.
- There is concern about who parents / carers are leaving children with, parents need guidance to take protective steps.
- A report is received that the children are not appropriately supervised and there was risk of injury.
- There are some instances where children and young people's clothes are ill fitting or unsuitable for the situation.
- Child / young person is experiencing difficult family relationships, poor self-esteem, or bullying, and needs support at the time to address the emotional impact.
- There are concerns about criminal or sexual exploitation or repeat missing episodes. Their parent/carer is actively seeking support to address these issues.



- Parents have missed appointments for immunisations or health checks. They may require further family support due to their child's disability.
- The parent / carer is using behaviour or language which is beginning to have an impact on the child's behaviour or emotional presentation.
- The family are affected by low income or unemployment and experience challenges meeting family need.
- The child or young person has reported they are not always able to access food which meets their needs.
- A parent / carer needs specific support due to observed poor handling or concern about their responses to their child.
- The family home is not suitable, they are struggling to pay rent or are facing loss of accommodation; alongside other presenting needs.
- The parent, carer or young person needs support to holistically understand hygiene needs and how these can be met on a day to day basis.
- Early signs of neglect are identified in children / young people. Parents and carers would benefit from additional support to address this. There is adult focused caregiving.
- Parents / carers are not able to identify where to find support services or act upon guidance they have been given.
- A child / young person may be receiving inconsistent parenting, but their development is not significantly impaired
- Parents / carers are requesting support to manage their child / young person's behaviour as they may feel boundaries are not respected and there are needs in this area.
- There are ongoing concerns about the parents / carers understanding of their handling and responses to their child, including inappropriate physical chastisement.
- There are worries that a child or young person may become involved in anti-social or offending behaviour, leading to them becoming set apart from community life.
- There are indications that a child or young person is becoming involved in a new culture or belief system. They are expressing views that seem new and may be more extreme than previously.
- Parents / carers recognise their young person has more than one need which requires support due to their behaviour or life skills and seek this from involved agencies. They may be struggling to meet this need and it is being neglected.
- An involved professional has raised concern about unsafe sleeping arrangements for a child, alongside other identified needs, and a specific intervention is required.
- There is a need for a specific intervention to support and develop the parents / carers / young person's safety awareness due to their needs.
- The child / young person alleges they have been sexually abused by someone unknown to them (e.g through social media) and requires support to consider how they can keep themselves safe and prevent exploitation.
- A young person may be sexually active and would benefit from guidance around contraception and sexual health, or emotional support around their sexual identity.
- There is low level substance misuse by the child/young person or parents / carers. This is beginning to impact on day to day life and functioning.
- Professionals can see clear themes which present as domestic abuse, substance use and emotional health problems which impact on day to day life in the family
- The family are supporting their child / young person to access education – either a pre-school setting, school, further education, or elective home education. There is little to no engagement between professionals and home.

# LEVEL 4

## Children & Young People who need a higher level of intervention and support to ensure they get the best opportunities

### What does this level mean?

- Children, young people and their families have already been receiving support to address their needs from professionals in both universal and targeted services
- The plan of support which is in place to address the needs may feel like it is not working, is 'stuck', or that the level of risk appears to be increasing
- There has been an incident in family life which may require the involvement of a social worker to consider whether the children need a plan of specialist support or alternate support can be suggested for the children.

### What help is available?

- Children & young people at this level may have already been involved in assessment from an early help service which identifies their needs and an action plan to address these needs.
- As well as this assessment, early help practitioners may have provided interventions to meet the identified needs
- Involved professionals may consider making a Request for Service to Children's Social Care
- Children's Social Care may be helping to support this plan. If they are involved, a social worker will complete a single assessment and may suggest actions or interventions from Children's Social Care.
- In this case they will act as the Lead Professional and involve other support services in the plan, stepping out when there is no longer a social work role.

### How can I tell children and young people might need support at this level?

- There is domestic abuse in the household which is impacting on the child / young person's wellbeing
- A parent or carer has a recognised mental health issue. This regularly impacts on the child's needs being met.
- Professionals are concerned that animals' needs are not being met and the children and young people are at risk of injury from them at home.
- A bereavement in the family means that parents/ carers find it difficult to focus on and meet children's needs consistently.
- Children may be in contact with or cared for by an adult of evidenced concern; parents / carers need support to create change.
- Frequent reports made that the child is unsupervised and at risk of harm as a result.
- Parents/carers struggle to recognise and ensure their child or young person has appropriate clothing.
- Children and young people needing support to address specialist issues such as their disability, a mental health need, risk of family breakdown or achieve permanence in their family group which parents / carers are asking for support with.
- There are risks of criminal or sexual exploitation or repeat missing episodes. The parent/ carer is struggling to recognise risk and take protective steps.
- Parents and carers require additional support to meet their child's needs in the home environment from specialist services due to disability or illness.
- There is evidence the parent/carer has used language or behaviour which is emotionally abusive to the child's detriment.
- The family consistently experience financial hardship which means they are struggling to meet the needs of the children.
- There is evidence that a child / young person is routinely not able to access food in their home environment.

- There is evidence that parents / carers are handling baby unsafely or responding to baby in a way that will be emotionally harmful.
  - The pregnancy may have been concealed.
  - The family home is in poor condition or unsafe for children, the family may struggle to create change in the home environment.
  - A young person who is homeless and needs additional support.
  - There is evidence that parents/ carers are not responding to the child /young person's hygiene needs leading to concern about their health or social presentation
  - There is evidence that children/ young people being neglected is becoming a pattern in family life, despite support provided. The child's needs are secondary to the adults.
  - There is concern that services face challenges in working with parents/carers to provide appropriate advice to address children and young people's needs.
  - A child / young person may experience their parent/carer as negative. There is evidence the care they are receiving is inconsistent/ affecting development.
  - There is concern that parents / carers are struggling to maintain boundaries and that the child may be at risk either inside or outside of the home as a result. Parents/ carers are asking for support.
  - There is evidence that a child / young person has been physically harmed, leaving a mark or injury. The parent / carer can reflect on how their actions were harmful.
  - The child or young person may be engaged in anti-social behaviour, offending behaviour or services may find it hard to work with them. There are concerns about them not being part of their community.
  - There is some evidence that a child or young person is involved in a culture or belief system and this could pose a risk to them. They may express this verbally, on social media, or in writing.
  - An adolescent may not have the support of a parent /carer to develop key life skills or address life challenges. Without addressing this need, the young person may not achieve positive outcomes.
- This level includes young people who are incarcerated or unaccompanied asylum seekers.
  - There is some evidence to confirm that a child or young person does not have a safe place of their own in which to sleep and work is needed with parents / carers to address this.
  - There is some evidence to suggest that due to a lack of safety awareness, the child or young person may have been at risk. Parents / carers are willing to engage with further support.
  - The child / young person alleges they have been sexually abused by someone known to them outside of their household and they, or their parent /carer requires support to address the trauma caused and consider safety planning.
  - A young person may be in a sexual relationship and there are concerns they are being exploited, or they are particularly vulnerable.
  - There are concerns about harmful sexual behaviour which is frequent or escalating. This behaviour is towards other children.
  - There is evidence of substance use (drugs or alcohol) impacting on day to day life and the way in which parents / carers are meeting their child/ young person's needs.
  - There is some evidence that domestic abuse, substance use and mental health difficulties are all occurring in the same home and are acting as a barrier to meeting children's needs.
  - There is a worry that the child / young person is not accessing educational provision consistently – evidence shows that this is now impacting on their educational and social opportunities.

# LEVEL 5

## Children and young people who may be suffering, or at risk of suffering, significant harm

### What does this level mean?

This level relates to children and young people who are living in circumstances where there is a significant risk of abuse or neglect, or where you suspect they have experienced or are experiencing abuse or neglect and may require more specialist support.

This is the key factor to consider in deciding whether a child or young person requires social work support under the Children Act 1989.

Within this level of need there will be children with the following needs -

- Children in need of protection
- Children and young person who are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm
- Children in need of care or have been in the care of the Local Authority

### What help is available?

These services are usually accessed following specific assessments to establish need and criteria for the service.

Universal / targeted services should remain informed and involved, to ensure that children, young people and their families continue to receive on going support. Children's Social Care will lead the core groups and the child protection plan family and work alongside services such as:

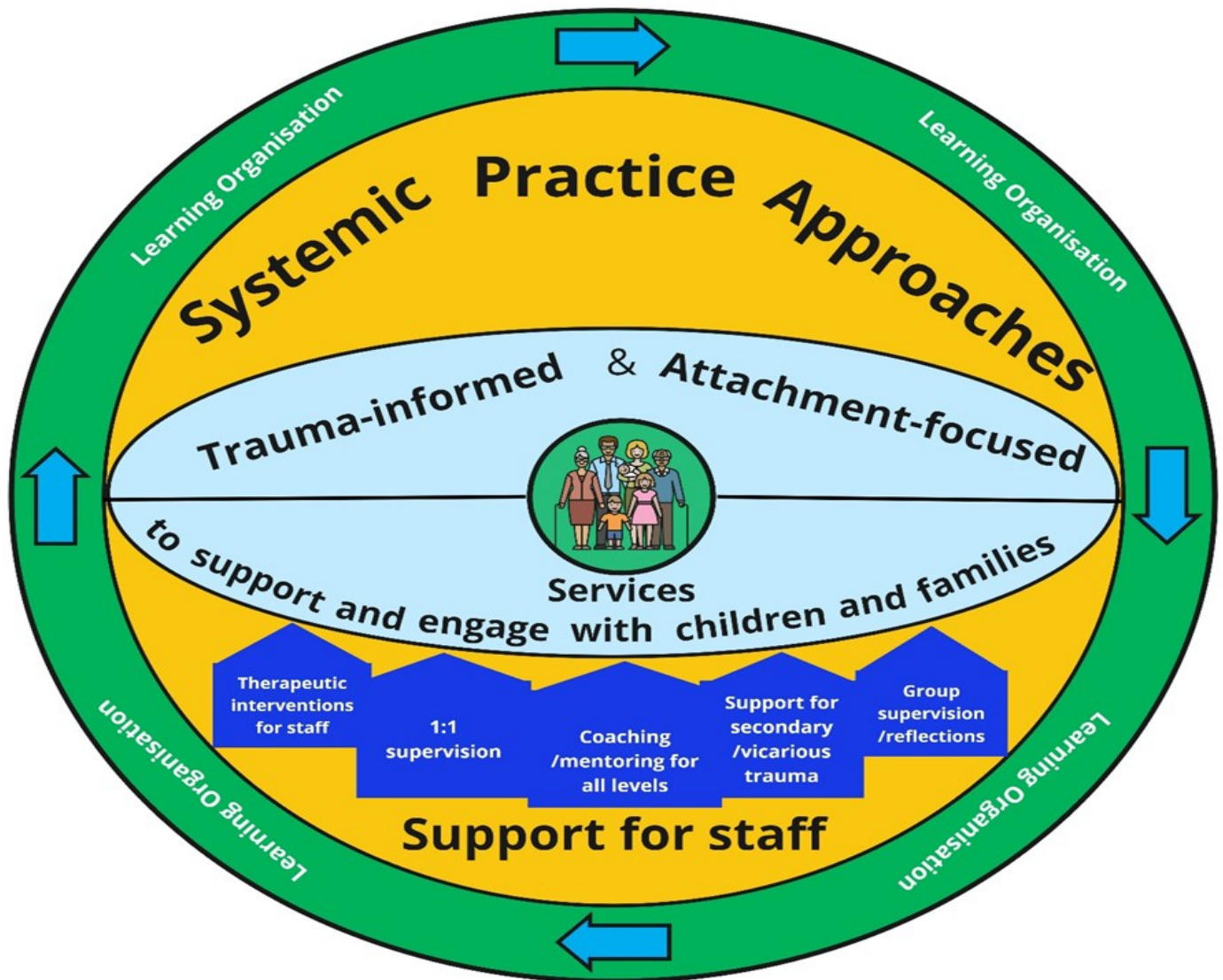
- Youth Offending Service
- Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)
- Disabled Children Team
- Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVA)
- Project 28 / Developing Health & Independence (DHI)
- Barnardo's Against Sexual Exploitation (BASE)
- Community paediatrician

### How can I tell children and young people might need support at this level?

- There is persistent or extreme domestic abuse in the family home which causes instability and risk of harm for children.
- One or both parent/carers have a mental health problem or learning need that means they are consistently unable to meet children's basic needs.
- There is evidence animals are not cared for and the home is in a poor condition. A child may experience a significant injury.
- A parent/carer dies meaning that children are left without adults who can meet their basic needs.
- Children are cared for by adults who are not known to them over a long period or who may pose a serious risk to them.
- A child or young person is unsupervised and is placed at risk of significant harm due to this.
- Clothing is unavailable, or children/young people are consistently in ill-fitting or unsuitable clothing, placing them at risk of harm.
- The child or young person may have complex mental health needs or the parent /child relationship has broken down and is having a significant emotional impact on the child / young person.
- The child/ young person is actively being criminally or sexually exploited; or has been trafficked. There is a need for a multi-agency plan to prevent significant harm.

- The child or young person's needs are not being met in relation to illness or disability and this is placing them at risk of suffering significant harm.
- The parent / carer is consistently using language and behaviour which is seen to be emotionally abusive; there is an evidenced impact on the child.
- Parents and carers may choose to re-direct their finances or do not have money to meet their children's needs, placing children at risk of harm.
- There are consistent concerns that children or young people are hungry or not accessing food. There may be evidence they are failing to thrive.
- There is concern about a significant injury caused by poor handling or a suspected / evidenced non-accidental injury.
- An assessment may identify significant concern about the way parents/ carers will respond to their child.
- The home is evidenced to be unsanitary or an unsafe environment for people to live in, placing children at risk of significant harm.
- The child/ young person's hygiene needs are not met by parent/carer or themselves. This is having an evidenced physical or emotional impact on them.
- Parents / carers consistently fail to meet children's basic needs, causing suspicion long-term neglect is present and having a physical and/or emotional impact. The child's needs are not considered.
- There is an evidenced pattern that services have not been able to work with the family to provide support and guidance to prevent harm to children/ young people.
- There is evidence of serious family dysfunction; or there are barriers to the parent responding to their child positively or in a consistent manner, causing a risk of harm.
- The child / young person is believed to be beyond the control of their parents/carers and thought to be at risk of harm as a result. This could be inside or outside of the home.
- There is an allegation of serious injury or physical abuse to a child, or a suspected / evidenced non-accidental injury. It may not be clear who has caused harm to the child/ young person.
- There is evidence that the child or young person is involved in anti-social or offending behaviour which poses a risk to themselves or others.
- The child / young person has been immersed in a culture or belief system that may cause them to pose a serious risk to themselves or others. They may express this verbally, on social media or in writing.
- Adolescents may have no adult support structure placing them at risk of harm due to their behaviour or lack of independent life skills. The young person's needs are at risk of being neglected without support.
- The lack of a safe sleeping place for a child poses a physical risk to them (e.g. SIDS) or there is a risk of unsafe adults in the home. Despite previous interventions, this continues to be an unaddressed and significant risk for the child / young person.
- The child / young person has been placed in an unsafe situation in the home environment or community. It is professional opinion they were at significant risk of harm and heightened awareness would have prevented this.
- The child / young person alleges that they have been sexually abused by an adult within their household; or who is in close/continued contact. This may be through physical actions, or involvement in the making, watching or distribution of pornographic materials.
- A young person is in a sexual relationship where they are domestically abusive or being abused.
- Significant harmful sexual behaviour is occurring in the same household between children.
- There is evidence of significant substance use by parents or carers which is impacting on their capacity to meet the emotional or physical needs of children, causing significant risk of harm.
- There is clear evidence that risks from domestic abuse, substance use and a mental health diagnosis have culminated in neglect of the child/young person.
- Children or young people are not accessing an educational provision. There is evidence to suggest that they are at risk of significant harm at home or in the community and the educational / social opportunities at school would support in decreasing identified risk.

## The B&NES Practice Framework

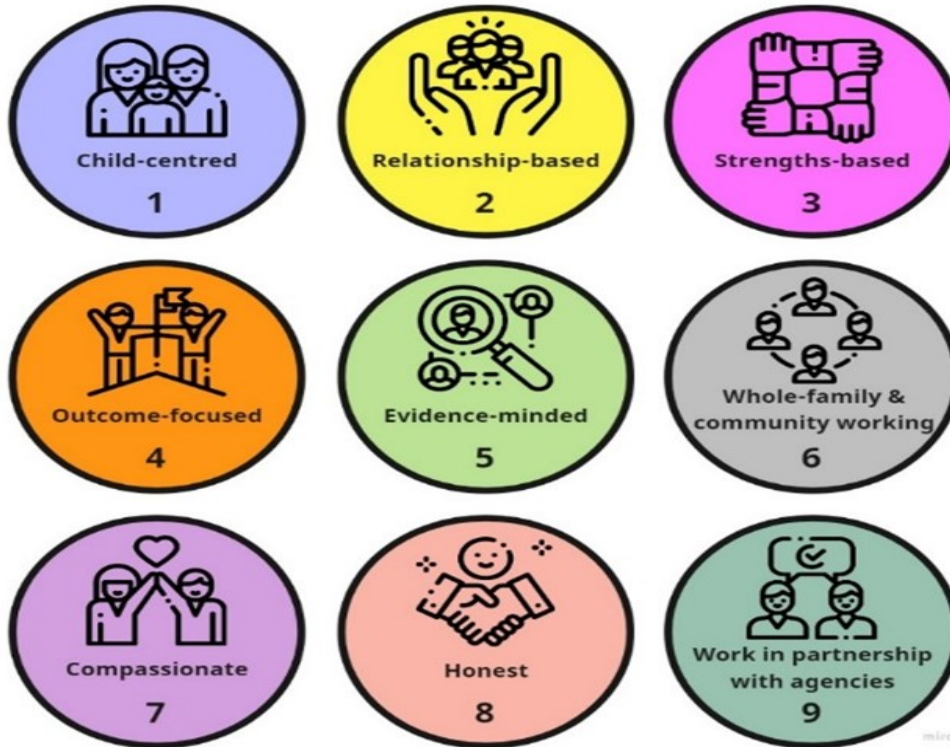


The Practice Framework in BANES is made up of three different, but complimentary theories/ models: we want to have an over-arching 'umbrella' of 'Systemic Social Work approaches', and more specifically a trauma-informed and attachment-focussed lens to view our practice through.

Systemic practice places relationships and human connections at the heart of the work with children, families and their wider networks. It encourages us to think about the 'problems' we are presented with as existing *within relationships*, both in the present and the past, and tries to move away from locating a problem 'within' one person who can be 'fixed'.

This model of working pushes us to adopt a process that also seeks to find *solutions* within relationships and networks, and asks workers to consider how power and human identities (class, culture, gender, sexuality, race etc) might influence all of our interactions with each other as human beings. It encourages us to be curious, tentative and move away from fixed positions, especially fixed positions of blame, and asks us to look at things in a collaborative and supportive way, to enable families to find and build meaningful, lasting and deeper-level changes that will improve their lives.

## Practice Principles



## I don't agree.... The escalation policy

Occasionally situations arise when practitioners/workers in one agency feel that the decision or quality of work undertaken by a worker from another agency to safeguard a child or adult does not meet the requirements of the B&NES Community Safety and Safeguarding Partnership.

Professional disagreements or differences of practitioner opinion can enable useful discussion and debate, and the value of exchanging ideas from different perspectives should not be under-estimated. However, any disagreements / differences of opinion need to be resolved in a timely and constructive manner.

The B&NES Community Safety and Safeguarding Partnership has a clear Escalation Policy for how matters should be resolved if there is disagreement within the safeguarding process. Discussion should take the following structure:

- Worker to worker
- Worker to manager
- Manager to manager
- Senior Manager to Senior Manager
- Raise with Director of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance
- BCSSP

The full escalation process can be found here: [https://bcssp.bathnes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2022-03/bcssp\\_esculation\\_policy.pdf](https://bcssp.bathnes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2022-03/bcssp_esculation_policy.pdf)

# What makes a good referral?

**I have made the family aware of this referral  
(does the parent or young person understand what they are agreeing to?)**

There are times when you should not seek consent, but these are rare. For example, if seeking consent would increase the risk to a child



I have explained what has happened to lead me to make the referral today

I have answered all the questions I can in full, giving as much information as possible

I have been clear about the potential risk to the child / young person



Contact details are completed in full for:

The child /young person

Parents (both mum and dad, including other significant adults – step- parents, current partners

Other important or relevant adults – grandparents, family friends

Myself – the referrer

Other professional I know are involved and their role

Address(es) of the family are included



I have written about what has already been done to address concerns

Assessments already undertaken are attached (for example [Early Help Assessment](#))



I have included information about what the child/young person says about their situation and what they want to happen

I have not used any jargon or acronyms that might not make sense to anyone else

I have thought about whether I should have a no names discussion about the situation if I am unsure about referring and have discussed with my line manager

I have given key information that will help, for example, there is an aggressive dog at home or the family will need an interpreter

I have recorded what the family wants to happen and what I want to happen as a result of the referral

I have included information about what is working well in the family as well as what I am worried about

I have given dates of birth for child/ young person, their siblings and both their parents and their partners

**REFERRAL / REQUEST FOR SERVICE**  
<https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/report-concern-about-child>

**If a child or young person is in immediate danger, ring the Police on 999. Otherwise refer urgently to the Duty Team on 01225 396312 or 01225 396313 or, outside office hours, the Emergency Duty Team on 01454 615165**



## Glossary of Terms

Family	A social unit, usually living within the same household, consisting of both adults and children. Can be an 'extended family' which includes those not living in the same household, but who have close social ties to the core family unit.
Family support	A means of providing advice and support to parents and carers, at the earliest opportunity, so they can access appropriate services for the family's needs. This support offers them help in raising their children and young people.
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation.
Impact	The measurable difference that an action has made
Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children	Defined for the purposes of this guidance as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>protecting children from maltreatment;</li> <li>preventing impairment of children's health or development;</li> <li>ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with safe and effective care; and</li> <li>taking action to enable all children to have the best life chances.</li> </ul>
Significant Harm	Significant harm is the threshold that is used to justify compulsory intervention in family life if it is in the best interests of the child. Where a local authority have reasonable cause to suspect that a child who lives, or is found in their area to be suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, the authority should make such enquiries as they consider necessary to enable them to decide whether they should take any action to safeguard or promote the child's welfare. There are no absolute criteria to make judgments on what constitutes significant harm, since this may depend on the severity, extent, duration and frequency of abuse or neglect, as well as an assessment of the impact of this on the individual child or young person.
Team Around the Family (TAF) Action Plan	TAF - Team Around the Family A plan which specifies action to be taken and the outcomes expected from the actions involving professionals and the family
Universal Services or level 1	A universal service is a service that is available to every one