



Learning Lessons from Safeguarding Audits Briefing Note for Team Meetings

***Request for Support –
Capturing Vital Information***

January 2022

Summary

The Birmingham Safeguarding Children's Partnership (BSCP) carries out a programme of audits to help reflect and improve safeguarding practice. The recent audit focused on the quality and timeliness of Request for Support forms submitted to Children's Advice and Support Service (CASS).

This briefing highlights the key learning, shares good practice and identifies areas for improvement in safeguarding practice, together with details on the steps you can take to find out more and access further training and resources.



BIRMINGHAM CHILDREN'S TRUST REQUEST FOR SUPPORT

If there is no immediate danger use this form to request support from partners regarding your work with a family or to tell us if a child is at risk of harm, mistreatment or abuse. If your referral is deemed urgent due to a child(ren) being at risk of immediate and significant harm please call 999

How to submit this form:

- Discuss your concerns with the child and family if appropriate and where you can, gain their consent
- Reflect on Right Help, Right Time with your agency's safeguarding lead to determine that a request for support is the appropriate response and what your ongoing involvement and contribution to outcomes will be
- Tell us if you have sought advice from CASS (0121 303 1888) or Family Support Duty colleagues in your locality
Please complete all sections and return this form to: CASS@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk
- Requests made over the phone must be followed by a request on this form as soon as possible.
- Please read the document 'Guidance Completing a Request for Support Form' [here](#)
- Birmingham Children's Trust is accredited to send and receive sensitive and confidential information from other secure organisations, without the need for using GCSM email addresses. This change is described further [here](#). Emails are no longer accepted in Egress format.

SECTION 1. About This Request

| | |
|--|--|
| Date of this request | Have you previously phoned us about this family? |
| What is the main reason for making this request? | |
| Describe when the child / children were last seen, by who and where. Please ensure voice of the child is in Section 7 | |
| Refer to the Right Help Right Time (RHRT) framework – What layer of need do you think your concerns meet | Choose an item. |
| List the prominent indicators from RHRT used to determine the above i.e. Additional Needs includes: | |
| What support is your agency providing the family and in addition to your continued support, who else is supporting the family? | |
| Have you undertaken an Early Help Assessment (EHA), considered completing an EHA or connecting the family to Early Help Locality Teams? (please attach the EHA) | |
| Has the child got an Education/Health/Care Plan (EHC plan) if so when is it due to expire and or be reviewed. (please attach the EHCP) | |

SECTION 2. Consent Guidance

To properly achieve partnership with parents it is essential to keep them involved and informed throughout our work with their family. Parents and individuals with Parental Responsibility for the child must be asked to give consent for all the work we undertake throughout the child's journey unless this would put the child at risk of significant harm and/or jeopardise child protection enquiries. In these circumstances the reason for not seeking consent must be given. Consent from absent/non-resident parents must be sought where safe to do so. Consent obtained from one parent only counts as partial consent. Partial consent is accepted by CASS as consent. Consent should not be assumed to have been given or understood.

The personal data collected on this form will be stored and used by us to provide support to the family. We will share relevant data with partner organisations where they can also provide support. We will collect and store and use your personal data in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018. For further information on how your information is used, how we maintain the security of your information and your rights in relation to the information we hold about you please see our [full privacy notice](#)

| | |
|---|-----------------|
| Has appropriate consent been obtained (yes/no)? If yes, to what extent (full/partial) | Choose an item. |
| Give Details (e.g. mother has given consent) | |

Request for Support Form – v5 SEPT 2021 Positive Audit <http://www.birmingham.org.uk/safeguarding-consent> 1 | Page

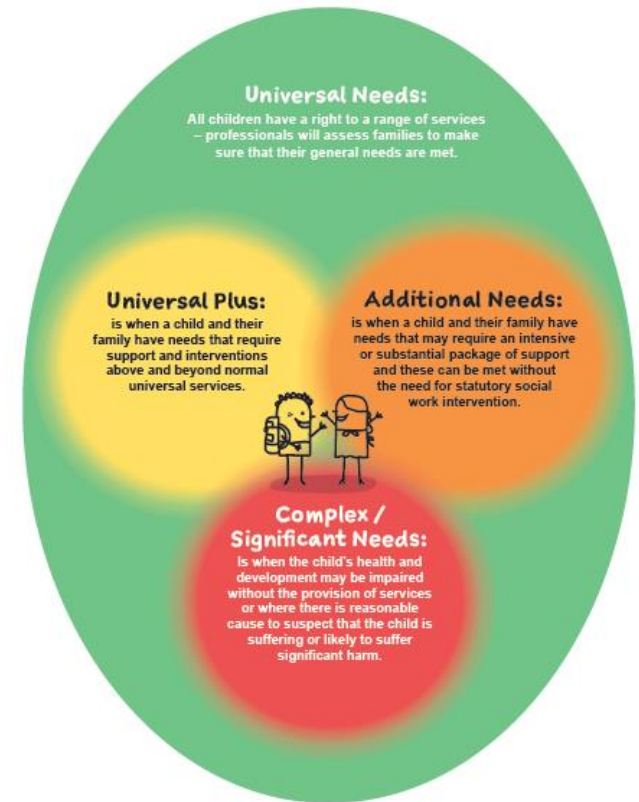
Key Learning



- **Capturing the Voice of the Child** - It was found that most cases were heavily adult focused, with little or no mention of the lived experience of the child. There was a need for greater professional curiosity to be exercised to make sure children are seen and spoken to and that their living conditions are considered and accurately recorded when completing a Request for Support form.
- **Parental Consent** - On too many occasions consent was not recorded on the Request for Support form, so it was unclear if consent had been gained from parents. Consent is required for agencies to work with the family at anything below Child Protection (Section 47) or a Care Order. Parental cooperation with agencies is essential as it contributes to the overall improvement to a child's life.
- **Lack of details on Professionals and Families** - Some Request for Support form did not contain sufficient information about other agencies who were known to be working with the child and family. This information is really useful when trying to determine what support is currently being provided to the child and family. For example; in one case the child's school records contained information in relation to who the child's GP was, this information was not included.
- **Completing a Request for Support Form** - It was identified that in some instances the Request for Support form was not used, and this led to important information being missed. The Request for Support form acts as an Aid Memoir to help capture vital information.

Good Practice

- **Right Help, Right Time - Guidance for Practitioners**
There was good evidence in the Request for Support forms that practitioners understood 'Right Help, Right Time' and were able to apply the guidance. A good quality Request for Support form enhances partnership decision making within CASS around appropriate support and intervention for children and families.
- **Timeliness**
CASS aims to manage and respond to a Request for Support form within 24 hours. The audit found that the timescales were consistently being achieved, providing assurance that CASS were efficiently processing Request for Support form, ensuring a quicker safeguarding response to children and their families.



Improving Practice



1. When considering the level of need of a child, look closely at their lived experience, talk to them about their home environment and wider context such as school, friends, health etc.
2. When a child or family requires help, practitioners have a responsibility to discuss their concerns with the family and where possible agree a way forward. This will ensure that parents are aware of the worries. We should also seek their consent about the information we need to share with other agencies in order to help.
3. As a practitioner if you are aware of other services supporting the child, for example, a child's school record has information on who the child's doctor is. This information should be included on a Request for Support form. This will help to identify agencies who may need to be invited to a strategy meeting.
4. Where a child and their family have needs that require a multi-disciplinary approach, speak to other agencies involved and if necessary, seek advice from your Designated Safeguarding Manager or call CASS for advice. By having these early conversations, a more holistic picture will be gained of the child's circumstances and this will help you complete the Request for Support form.
5. When you are ready to submit a Request for Support form make sure you use the official template, it will ensure you capture and record the key information needed by CASS to help enable them to identify the right level of support and help for the child and family.

Next Steps

You can access up-to-date multi-agency guidance, BSCP training and learning from Serious Cases on the BSCP website: www.lscpbirmingham.org.uk

- When making a referral to CASS complete the Request for Support form ensuring that all information about the child and family is provided. [Access the Request for Support form.](#)
- If you haven't completed a Request for Support form before or just need some help, [read further guidance.](#)
- Please complete the [Right Help, Right Time e-Learning](#) package. It will help you understand and apply the Right Help, Right Time guidance.
- Make sure you attend your own agency's safeguarding training and visit the [BSCP website](#) to access further multi-agency safeguarding training.



Right Help, Right Time
Delivering effective support
for children and families
in Birmingham

Guidance for Practitioners

Version 5 – December 2021

