

Introducing Halton's Multi-Agency Assessment Toolkit

A ONE MINUTE GUIDE

This multi-agency assessment toolkit has been developed to support those working with children and families to more easily and effectively identify specific needs/risks so that targeted interventions can follow.

Effective early help relies upon local organisations and agencies working together to identify children and families who would benefit from support, undertaking an assessment of the need and providing targeted services to address the needs of a child and their family. This puts the focus on activity to improve the outcomes for the child. If those needs turn to risks, then these assessment tools can also help to demonstrate the need for statutory intervention when early support has not improved outcomes for the child.

Who should use the toolkit?

These tools are available for any services, school or organisation that work with children and families in Halton. The toolkit provides guidance to professionals to help them know when and how to use each of the tools. Due to Covid-19 restrictions the partnership is not currently able to deliver any face to face awareness activity or support in using the tools however there will be virtual learning hubs where professionals can log in and learn more about the specific tools.

How should the toolkit be used?

This toolkit has been populated with National Evidence Based tools and locally developed multi and single-agency documents. It is not a definitive list and we recognise that some organisation have highly specialised assessments that they will need to continue to utilise. The tools here are intended to support professionals to work through concerns and to provide the rationale and evidence for subsequent decision making. The tools have been endorsed by the Halton Children and Young People Safeguarding Partnership (HCYPSP). The various ways in which the tools can be used are explained in the toolkit document. What all practitioners need to be immediately aware of is that **from 15 June 2020 in the absence of a referral supported by the use of an assessment tool, contacts will not be accepted into iCART** (with the exception of those that clearly meet threshold for statutory social work intervention). There are no other changes to the referral process.

Why is the toolkit being introduced now?

The toolkit will offer invaluable support to all practitioners in their assessments and can be used in supervision to help reflective discussion on a case and the timing has been carefully considered. Whilst we would usually wish to give more notice the expected surge in referrals coming into iCART will only be manageable if individual practitioners take responsibility for being explicit about what they are worried about and what the expected impact of this is on the child.

The Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services in March 2020 outlined areas requiring improvement for children, young people and their families in Halton. The criteria for making decisions about the thresholds at which children receive different levels of intervention and services were identified as not always consistently applied in iCART. To support this area of improvement we need to be assured consistency in the quality of information and referrals received from agencies into iCART in order to inform and enable effective and efficient decisions at the earliest opportunity.

The toolkit will support practitioners to be clear about what they are worried about, and enable them to form an assessment of the likely impact on the child; this will help the practitioner and their manager to identify if a referral to iCART is required or if support should be offered via a CAF or other targeted service. Some of the tools offer additional support around threshold for the different levels of intervention. This will help to ensure that children are supported at the right level.

Please see across for links to the Toolkit, Individual Screening Tools and Information about the Learning Hubs.

QUICK ACCESS LINKS TO ASSESSMENT-SCREENING TOOLS

From 15 June 2020 all referrals to iCART must be supported by an assessment/screening tool, contacts will not be accepted into iCART without these, (with the exception of those that clearly meet threshold for statutory social work intervention).

There are no other changes to the referral process.

Please select from the list below the screening tool that most describes your worry for the children

Voice of the child	Essential	Desirable
Voice of the Child It is good practice to gain the voice of the child – if this is not possible the reason for not obtaining the child's view must be recorded		X
Neglect	Essential	Desirable
Neglect Screening Tool To evidence worries about neglect	X	
Home Conditions Assessment If you are worried about the child's physical environment	X	
Unborn Baby	Essential	Desirable
Pre-birth Supporting Information To be completed when submitting a referral regarding concerns for an unborn baby	X	
Parental substance use	Essential	Desirable
Adult Substance Dependence Questionnaire If you are concerned about a parents substance use		X
Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT) As above		X
Assessing the Impact on Children of Parental Substance Misuse	X	
Domestic Abuse	Essential	Desirable
Assessing the Impact on the Child of Domestic Abuse and Threshold Guidance	X	
Parental mental health	Essential	Desirable
Mental Health Screening Tool		X
Assessing the Impact of Parental Mental Health on Children	X	

FULL ASSESSMENT TOOLKIT & LEARNING HUBS

- [Halton Multi-Agency Assessment Toolkit](#)
- [Learning Hubs Details, Dates/Topics and Log-in Instructions](#)