



Pre-Birth Child Protection Assessments

What is the background?

Research and experience indicate that very young babies are extremely vulnerable to abuse and that work carried out in the ante-natal period to assess risk and to plan intervention will help to minimise harm. A pre-birth assessment is a proactive means of analysing the potential risk to a new born baby when there are concerns about a pregnant woman and where appropriate, her partner and immediate family.

Where Can I Get Information?

- Re- familiarise yourself with the [Interagency Safeguarding Procedures](#)
- Read Warwickshire Safeguarding [briefings](#)
- Find out about NSPCC [serious case reviews](#)

When should a referral be made?

Where agencies or individuals anticipate that prospective parents may need support services to care for their baby or that the unborn child may have suffered, or be likely to suffer, significant harm, a referral to local authority children's social care must be made as soon as concerns are identified.

What Happens After Birth?

A pre-birth assessment is just the beginning of a process, and there will need to be continuing assessment of the child's needs and parental capacity once the child is born. For some parents' pregnancy and birth provide the "tipping point" for them to make the changes, others may not, but risks identified in a pre-birth assessment, will mean that any potential harm to the child is minimised.

When to assess?

An assessment should be undertaken on all pre-birth referrals, as early as possible, where;

- a parent or other adult in the household/visitor been identified as posing a risk to children
- a sibling in the household is subject of a child protection plan/previously been removed

What Should I Think About?

Factors that should be considered may include the following;

- Practical preparation for the child
- Preparedness for both birth and child
- Parental ambivalence
- Parental relationship
- Ability to protect

- the parent is a looked after child, and there are safeguarding concerns
- there is significant domestic violence/substance misuse
- there are significant concerns about parental ability to self-care and/or to care for the child
- any other concern exists that the baby may have suffered, or is likely to suffer
- a child aged under 16 is found to be pregnant