

**An initial assessment is a process that takes place when you, or someone else, asks the children and families service to see if your child needs help. This can be for a wide range of reasons. An initial assessment should be completed within 10 working days.**

### Will I be informed?

For an initial assessment to be carried out a parent normally needs to give their consent. If a child or another person is thought to be at risk of significant harm then it may be agreed with other agencies that parents are not informed until more information is gathered.

### Can information be shared without my permission?

Yes. Information may be shared without permission if:

- it is thought that someone is being hurt or might be hurt in the future
- it is thought the information may stop or solve a crime.

### What will happen during an initial assessment?

A children and families worker will arrange to visit and talk to you and your child.

If your child is old enough a worker will usually ask to speak to your child on their own. The worker may also speak to other agencies who work with your child, this may include schools and doctors. The worker will seek your permission for this to happen unless a child is thought to be at risk of significant harm.

### What if I disagree with things that are recorded during the initial assessment?

The worker will record your views and note any areas of agreement and disagreement within the assessment.

### What happens after the initial assessment?

Following an initial assessment the worker will inform you of the outcome. The worker will also share the information with other agencies who are working with your child. If you do not wish for the information to be shared then you should raise this with the worker.

An initial assessment is normally used to see whether a child or a family needs support and to identify that support. This support may be from the Early Response Service working alongside professionals such as health visitors and school nurses.

Sometimes after an initial assessment more information may be needed and a core assessment may be carried out. This is similar to an initial assessment but is in greater depth and detail. A core assessment should be completed within 35 working days.

If a child is thought to have suffered, or to be at risk of significant harm, then a strategy discussion will be held with other agencies to decide whether a child protection assessment is needed.

### How will my information be used?

Your information will only be used to decide whether:

- your or someone else is being hurt or may be hurt in the future
- you or your family would benefit from help and support
- a crime has been committed or could be committed in the future.

Your information will be held in a safe place and will not be shared with other people unless they have a legal power to see it.

### Can I see what is written about me?

Yes. The Data Protection Act 1998 lets you ask for a copy of the information held about you. If you would like to request this contact Devon County Council:

- **email** [dpoffice@devon.gov.uk](mailto:dpoffice@devon.gov.uk)
- **write** to Devon County Council, Data Protection Officer, Information Governance Team, County Hall, Topsham Road, Exeter EX2 4QD.

### Where can I get more information?

Initial assessments are normally carried out by a worker from an assessment team. The assessment teams can be contacted through the MyDevon customer service centre by calling **0845 155 1013**.

More information about child protection and fair processing of your personal data is available at **[www.devon.gov.uk/childprotection](http://www.devon.gov.uk/childprotection)**