

Illustrative example: Needs Assessment and Support Planning (London, United Kingdom)

The following categories should be covered through dialogue with a woman and her children, which can facilitate identification of risk factors and needs as a woman has built up trust, more than responses to a direct question or review of a checklist. Some issues are of greater immediate priority than others (for example, safety of survivors and her children, child contact issues, contact with perpetrator). Other issues may also be covered at the outset, or if more appropriate, left until subsequent meetings.

A. ADULT SERVICE USERS

1. Personal details

- Name
- Contact details
- Children's details
- Date of assessment and review

2. Safety

- Actual and potential contact with the abuser?
- Safety at home – do Sanctuary Scheme measures improve feeling of safety?
- Safety outside the home – safe to take children to school, go shopping, travel to work?
- Safety at work – change route to work? Inform employer?
- Telephone and internet safety – change telephone number(s) and email address?
- Safety plan in place?

3. Access to support and advice

- Friends/family – any contact? Safe/suitable to confide in?
- Professional support – details of professionals/agencies previously/currently working with woman
- Other contacts (e.g. neighbours, colleagues, community/religious groups) – safe to confide in?
- Concerns about loneliness/being home alone/lack of contact with others?
- Know where to go to get advice? Feel confident seeking advice/support?

4. Physical health

- Registered with GP?
- Contact with any other medical professionals; i.e. health visitor, midwife, district nurse?
- Injuries resulting from the abuse? In need of immediate medical attention?
- Ongoing health problems that require attention?
- Needs arising from impairment or disability?
- Other physical health issues

5. Mental health and emotional well-being

- Experiences of depression, anxiety, disturbed sleep, self-harming behaviour, suicidal thoughts?
- Diagnosed conditions, i.e. bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, eating disorders?
- Use of alcohol, illegal substances or prescribed medication?
- Contact with mental health workers, substance misuse workers, counsellor or other therapist?
- Other mental health/emotional well-being issues

6. Housing

- Current accommodation – rent/own, joint/sole?
- Immediate issues, i.e. safety measures, repairs
- Long-term problems, for example removing abuser from tenancy?
- Other housing issues

7. Legal options

- Have a solicitor at the moment?
- Criminal prosecution
- Non-molestation/occupation order
- Divorce
- Child contact
- Immigration
- Other legal matters

8. Financial situation

- Current income: salary from paid employment, welfare benefits, maintenance
- Financial difficulties (e.g. managing on a budget, debt, eligibility/applications for welfare benefits)
- Other financial problems

9. Children

- Contact arrangements
- Safety – during contact? Risk of abduction?
- Physical health and emotional well-being?
- Educational needs?
- Behavioural issues?
- Specialist support needs?
- Parenting support for mother?
- Other needs relating to children

10. Employment, education and training

- Currently in employment/education/training? Or future plans?
- Work or college informed of situation? Safety measures in place?
- Related problems (e.g. need time off because of abuse)?
- Other work/study needs

11. Interests

- Particular interests or hobbies? New interests to explore?
- Barriers to pursuing hobbies/interests (e.g. lack of money, fear of leaving home)?
- Other issues relating to interests/hobbies

12. Other

B. CHILD SERVICE USERS

1. Personal details

- Name
- Contact details
- Parent's details
- Date of assessment and review

2. Safety

- Contact with abusing parent – do they feel safe?
- Feel safe at home?
- Feel safe outside the home, i.e. going to school, shops, out with friends?
- Other safety issues

3. Physical health

- Registered with GP?
- Contact with any other medical professionals; i.e. health visitor, district nurse?
- Injuries resulting from the abuse? In need of immediate medical attention?
- Ongoing health problems that require attention?
- Needs arising from impairment or disability?
- General fitness, involvement in sports and games, etc?
- Diet - eating patterns, favourite foods, dislikes, allergies and intolerances?
- Other physical health issues

4. Mental health and emotional well-being

- Experiences of depression, anxiety, disturbed sleep, self-harming behaviour, suicidal thoughts?
- Diagnosed conditions (e.g. bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, eating disorders)?
- Use of alcohol, illegal substances or prescribed medication?
- Contact with mental health workers, substance abuse workers, counsellor, other therapist?
- Worries or concerns (mom, dad, missing/contact with dad, loneliness, self-confidence, bullying at school, living with the Sanctuary Scheme, involvement with police, courts, and social workers)?
- Behavioural issues?
- Other mental health/emotional well-being issues

5. Interests

- Hobbies and interests?
- Opportunities for structured and free play?
- Friends and playmates – safe to visit? Parents informed of situation?
- Visiting places - where, what, when?
- Other things do they/would they like to spend their time doing?
- Barriers to joining in play and pursuing interests?

6. Learning and education

- Performance at school?
- Issues with homework?
- Other issues (e.g. financial ones concerning equipment, uniforms, school trips; socializing with other children, and with teaching staff? Concerns over bullying? Concerns over other children knowing/asking what is going on at home)?
- Future plans for education, training or jobs?
- Other issues relating to learning and education

7. Other

(Excerpt from Jones, Bretherton, Bowles & Croucher. 2010. [Sanctuary Schemes for Households at Risk of Domestic Violence](#), Department for Communities and Local Government, London)