



Adoption Support Assessment Model

Centre of Excellence

2018



Adoption Support Assessment – Adoption Counts

Core principles

An Adoption Support Assessment undertaken by Adoption Counts will be a holistic SW assessment that is undertaken in a supportive and engaging way, so families feel listened to.

It will be;

- Child centred
- Family focussed
- Adoption Informed
- Focus on positives & strengths
- Sensitive to differences and
- Undertaken with consent

FACTUAL DETAILS	
Childs name	
DOB	
Gender	
Ethnicity	
Does the child have a disability ?	
Religion	
Family Composition	
Names / DOB	
Home Address	
Contact number	
Email address	
SW undertaking the assessment	
Name / contact details	
Start date of assessment	
End date of assessment	
Agencies involved (school, health , Camhs, welfare rights) Name Contact details	
Agencies Views	
Date of Adoption order/ placing Authority Date of placement (LAC)/ or age of child at placement Does the child have an EHCP plan	

Consent to share information With other professionals With Tavistock Institute (for ASF applications only)	
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REASON FOR REFERRAL

CHILDS HISTORY	Action needed	√
This includes the child's history from birth, the reason they were adopted and any previous Adoption Support or therapeutic input. Consider if the threshold for CAMHs has been met.		

IDENTITY	Action needed	
This includes details of how the family share details of the child's history, openness re adoption and use of life story book. Sense of identity & belonging, issues relating to race, religion, gender, sexuality or disability.		

HEALTH – child & adults	Action needed	
For the child this includes, health conditions, physical development, Speech, language & communication , emotional & behavioural development, social presentation and self –care skills		
For the adults this may include any health conditions, adult relationships and emotional well – being.		

LEARNING & EDUCATION	Action needed	
This includes what progress is being reported, if age appropriate - how is the pupil premium plus being used, do they have any additional needs and an Education Health Care Plan (EHPC)?		

FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS	Action needed	
This includes how relationships are described within the family and your observation of the family. Consider parenting styles and sibling relationships. Is there any experience of Child on Parent violence – verbal or physical.		

SUPPORT NETWORKS & COMMUNITY RESOURCES	Action needed	
Formal & informal support networks, social networks, outside interests.		

HOUSING , EMPLOYMENT & FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS	Action needed	
Working arrangements, income or benefits, access to work /life balance, criminal injuries compensation.		

CHILDS' VIEW

How does the child feel? Consider - 2 stars & a wish (naming 2 positives and one hope)

CURRENT RATING

How do you rate the stability of your family unit at the moment ?

Not at all stable 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very Stable

How do you rate the stability of your child's school placement at the moment ?

Not at all stable 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very Stable

PARENTS' VIEW

How do the parents feel, what goals do they want to achieve, what are the top 3 goals they feel are a priority for them, what would help?

Family Goals

In seeking support from our service what, do you want to achieve?

1.

Halfway to reaching this goal

Goal not at all met	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Goal reached		
2.														
Goal not at all met	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Goal reached		
3.														
Goal not at all met	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Goal reached		

SUMMARY & ANALYSIS – family strengths & vulnerabilities

Consider each aspect of your assessment and comment on the strengths within the family and areas that they may need further support with. Evidence your comments. If there is a difference in opinion these should be recorded.

Is there are any immediate Safeguarding concerns take immediate action.

Strengths

-

Vulnerabilities

-

ADOPTION SUPPORT ACTION PLAN - If you have identified an area of need and action is needed please list it below. Please include the family's goals and current score

What needs to be done	By whom	By when

SIGNATURES
Parents
Child (if appropriate)
Social Worker
Adoption Support Manager
Date

REVIEW
Date

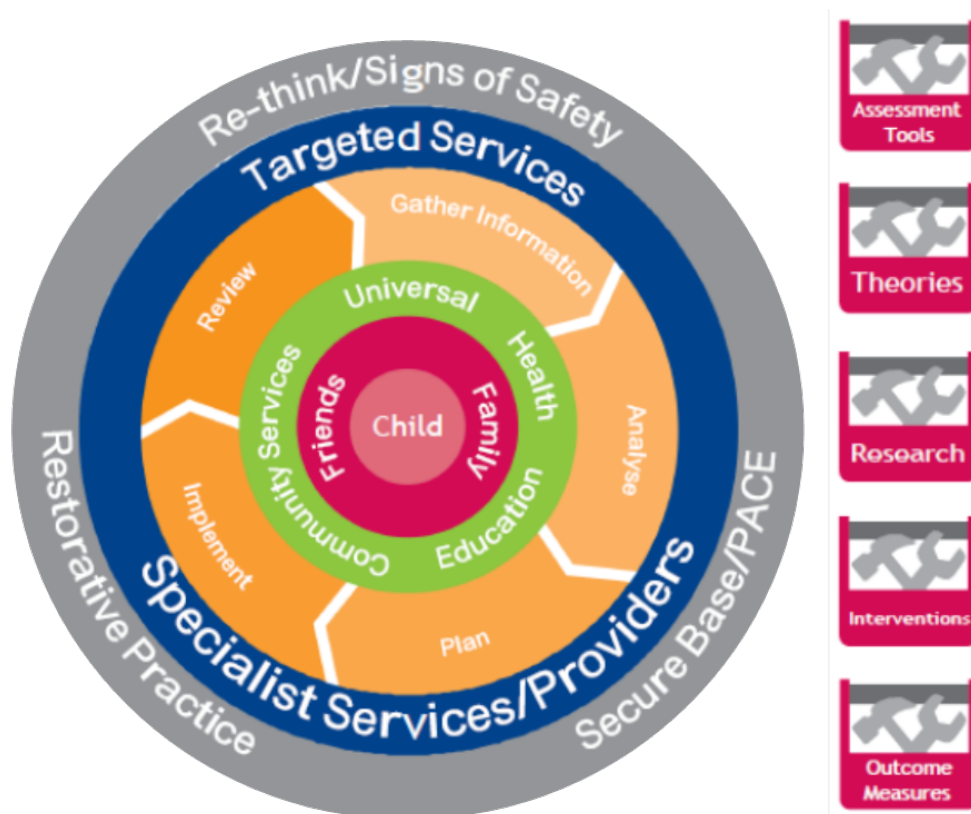
Centre of Excellence – Adoption Support Assessment Framework

This paper will outline the proposed adoption support assessment framework. The framework brings together key theories, tools and concepts that are central to social work in general, and particularly in adoption.

The framework emphasises the importance of all agencies, both universal and targeted, to work together with the child and the family to plan and provide the most appropriate support. The assessment steps - Gather Information, Analyse, Plan, Implement and Review - provide structure to the assessment process and ensure actions are based on clear analysis of known facts and that all parties understand what the expected outcomes are and how the distance travelled can be measured.

Restorative practice, Re-think formulation/Signs of Safety and Secure Base / PACE harness the assessment framework, and define the ways of being and ethos when working with children and families:

1. Building relationships, working and connecting with people
2. Helping to give children secure base from which they can safely explore the world around them.
3. Thinking, feeling, communicating and behaving in a way that makes the child feel safe
4. Using best evidence as basis of analysis and planning an outcome focused support
5. Building on the existing strengths within the family; stabilising and strengthening child's and family's situation



Across the Yorkshire and the Humber region local agencies have built their practices upon different theoretical approaches. Centre of Excellence believes that these different bases complement each other and will equally inform the assessment framework.

Restorative Practice

Restorative practice aims to create an environment where people are able to meet as equals. The approach avoids blame and seeks to increase mutual understanding. Focusing on conversation, balancing challenge and support to find meaningful solutions. The main principles being:

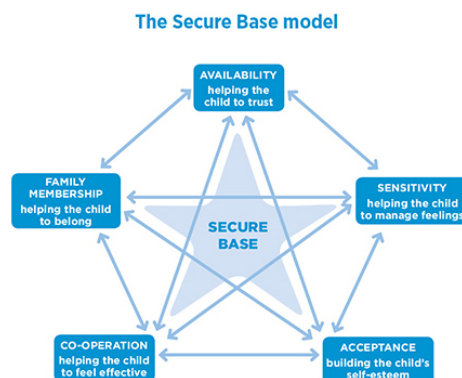
1. Always work with and alongside people
2. Build relationships – create change
3. Challenge and support
4. Removing barriers
5. Proactively promoting a sense of community
6. Understanding
7. Social responsibility
8. Shared accountability

More information: <https://www.leeds.gov.uk/docs/Restorative%20Practice.pdf>

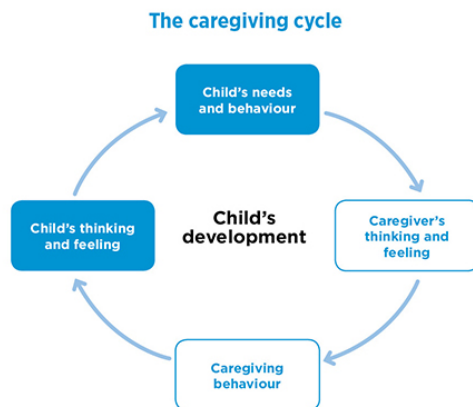
Secure Base Model

In the past 50 years the importance of attachment in the child-parent relationship has been extensively studied. The research has concluded that attachment plays a key role in both healthy psychological development and in developmental psychopathology. It is also widely acknowledged that neglect, abuse and frequent changes in placements will have a huge impact on the child's ability to form trusted relationships in later life. The adoptive parents play a pivotal role in helping to change their child's most fundamental sense of self and others (internal working model), and to form a secure base from which they can safely explore the world around them.

Secure Base model helps to understand the different, but overlapping dimensions of caregiving: Availability, Sensitivity, Acceptance, Co-Operation and Family Membership. The focus is in the interactions between children and caregivers and how those relationships can enable the development of the child.



The caregiving cycle demonstrates the importance of everyday interactions within the family. A child creates an internal working model to steer their functioning and development, based on their beliefs, which are influenced by the messages received from everyday interactions.



More information: <https://www.uea.ac.uk/providingasecurebase/the-secure-base-model>

PACE- Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy

PACE is a way of thinking, feeling, communicating and behaving that aims to make the child feel safe. The focus is on how parents connect with their child and not just the behaviour, giving the child a message that they are doing the best they can. By increasing the child's feeling of safety and trust, the child is able to discover that they are able to do more and better.

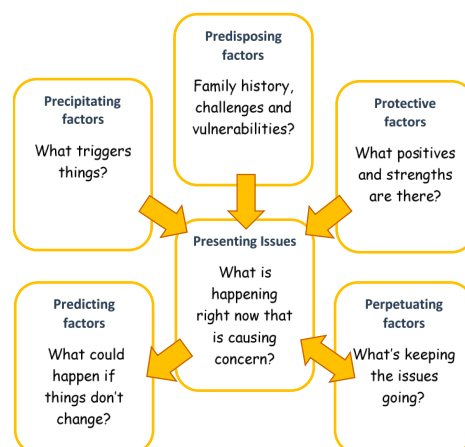
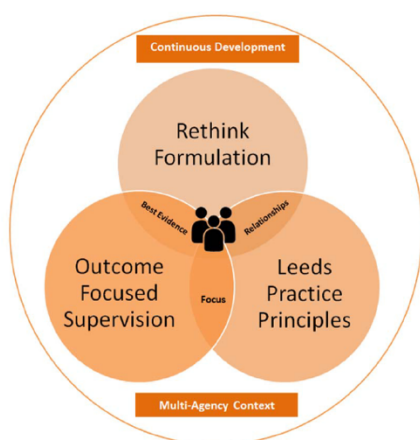
Using PACE can reduce the level of conflict, defensiveness and withdrawal in the everyday situations. PACE can enable the adult to see strengths and positive features that lie underneath more negative and challenging behaviour of their child.

More information: <https://ddpnetwork.org/about-ddp/meant-pace/>

Re-Think formulation in Adoption Support Assessment

Re-think formulation is part of the Leeds Practice Model, which brings together best practice of building restorative relationships with families, using best evidence as basis of analysis and planning an outcome focused supervision.

The Re-think formulation model is a consistent and clear methodology that can be used together with the family to analyse known information and to focus on addressing the presenting issues, and developing a shared understanding of what action should be taken.



- a) **Presenting** – What is happening right now that is causing concern?
- b) **Predisposing** – Family history, challenges and vulnerabilities?
- c) **Predicting** – What will happen if we do nothing?
- d) **Precipitating** – What triggers the presenting issues?

- e) **Perpetuating** – What keeps the presenting concerns going?
- f) **Protective** - What are the strengths and the positive things the family have in their life?

In the Assessment Framework Re-Think model can be used as part of the gather information, analysis and planning phases.

More information: <https://www.leeds.gov.uk/docs/Re-think%20Formulation%20-%20Briefing%20-%20June%202017.pdf> .

Signs of Safety

The strengths-based and safety-focused approach to child protection work grounds itself in partnership and collaboration. The approach explores risks and strengths – Signs of Safety, and aims to stabilise and strengthen a child's and family's situation. Signs of Safety assessment protocol is the formal protocol used in the model. The approach is designed to be used from commencement through to case closure in order to assist all professionals at all stages of the process.

Signs of Safety framework addresses four domains:

- Past harm, future danger and complicating factors
- Existing strengths and safety
- Future safety and next steps
- Judgement

In the Assessment Framework Signs of Safety supports the gathering information, analysis and planning phases.

More information: <https://www.signsofsafety.net/what-is-sofs/>

Gathering information

The starting point for any assessment is to gather necessary information, which is needed to be able to make judgement on what needs to change for things to improve. At the core of social work are relationships; the workers ability to relate with people and to build understanding of the people, the systems and the situation. Building relationships, meeting people – both adults and children – and gaining understanding is the starting point for good information gathering. Social workers will have access to various reports (CPR, PAR, ASP etc.), which should be used to gather information of what has happened in the past. Other professionals: early years, schools, health and specialists will also be able to provide valuable information about what has happened in the past, what is going on at the moment and what support the family is already receiving.

In addition other approaches can be used to gain better understanding of what is currently going on and the framework recommends a number of tools that can be used to assist during the information gathering phase:

- 1) Life Appreciation Day
- 2) Brief Assessment Checklist for Children and Adolescents (Tarren-Sweeney)
- 3) Parental Stress Scale
- 4) Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)
- 5) Thinking About Your Child Questionnaire (TAC)
- 6) Home Inventory
- 7) Mary Sheridan's Checklist
- 8) Figure Drawing Tests

- 9) 4 Children – What to expect, when? Questionnaire
- 10) ACE Questionnaire Child / Parent
- 11) Marschak Interaction Method Manual (MIM)
- 12) Sensory Processing Screening test

The recommended tools will assist the social workers to build an objective view of the present situation and identify the areas where support is required. The social work assessment should also identify when additional assessments are required.

Working in partnership with colleagues in the health and education services, the Centre of Excellence project will create pathways to ensure the appropriate assessments and support are available when required.

Analysis

Thorough, structured analysis of known facts is a basis of good planning. Together with the family and relevant other professionals the worker will start to formulate a hypothesis of the current situation. Re-think approach can be used to assist during the formulation:

1. Summarise the presenting issues; what is happening now.
2. Use theories to build a hypothesis, aim to explain the development and maintenance of the difficulties, at this time and in these situations.
3. Identify what factors are perpetuating the current issues and which of them will be addressed first and why:
 - Do any of the factors need to be changed first (prerequisites)
 - Are any of the factors strong drivers (powerful)
 - Which factors are closely connected (proximal)
 - What changes are most important for the family / young person (participant's goals).
4. Identify the strengths that could be used to make the change happen (protective factors).

Theoretical Base

Theories are general explanations that are supported by evidence obtained through the scientific method. They can help us to understand, for example, how humans develop, learn and interact with one another, and how families and other systems function. The framework highlights a number of theories which define the social work approaches that will support the “ways of being”. The framework also identifies theories that will assist in analysing the information gathered as part of the assessment work.

- 1) Child Development Theories
- 2) Brain Development & Impact of Trauma (Bruce Perry)
- 3) Systems Theory
- 4) Model of Change
- 5) Social Learning Theory
- 6) Humanistic Theories
- 7) Solution-focused Approaches

Plan & Implement

The formulation done as part of the analysis stage will be used as a basis of the support plan. This will help everyone involved to understand what support is being put in place and why, how will we know that the support is working, and when will the support end. A good plan will define the roles and responsibilities and agree timelines for actions and reviews.

There are several approaches to plan development, in this framework we have identified three: Signs of Safety, Re-Think Formulation and EBPU model.

1. Re-Think method can help to prioritise the perpetuation factors: what is a prerequisite to the change process, what are the most powerful drivers of the presenting issues, are any issues closely connected and what is the most important for the child and the family.

2. Signs of Safety approach to support planning draws attention to three questions:

1. What are we worried about?
2. What is working well?
3. What needs to happen?

The approach also guides to evaluate the severity of the identified issues on a scale from 0-10.

3. The EBPU Logic Model will help the worker and the family to formulate a clear and effective support plan by focusing on different elements of a well working plan;

1. Who is the support for?
2. What support should be put in place?
3. How and why does this support work?
4. What difference will it make?

More information: <https://www.corc.uk.net/information-hub/ebpu-logic-model/>

Review

Good plan will define what the goals of the support / intervention are, and how the success can be identified, how the distance of travel measured. The framework looks at 3 ways to measure outcomes:

Goal Based Outcomes defines what the child or the parent want to achieve with the support and demonstrate the distance travelled.

Standardised outcome measures can be used to track change, understand the impact of the work and to enhance effectiveness. Along with other information the outcome measures will help to understand if the chosen intervention is the working or if a change of therapy or change of techniques within that therapy is needed.

Tracking and measuring satisfaction will help to understand how the families experience the support.

1. Goal Based Outcomes

Goal setting is a collaborative process between worker and family / child. Goals define what people themselves want to achieve by seeking support from the adoption support, and when the support will no longer be needed. The goals must be relevant for the services.

The key rule is that 'the person setting the goal is the person doing the work' OR 'The person doing the work sets the goals'. This is important, because the person doing the work must be able to own the goal and take responsibility for working towards reaching it. So, if the child goes to therapy, the child should be the one who sets the goals for the therapy, not the parents. The parents may have their own goals, but it must then be clear what they are going to do to achieve their goals.

The adoption worker will set the goals with the family and / or young person at the beginning of the support "episode". The goal setting will also identify how often the progress towards goals is being reviewed, but the progress towards goals should be reviewed when the adoption support is reviewed, at least 6 monthly. The goals would also provide information that can be reviewed as part of supervision; is the current approach effective, is something else needed, can the case be closed etc.

2. Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire

Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) is universally used by local authorities to measure the emotional and behavioural health of children and young people in their care. Outcomes of these measurements are reported back to the central government annually.

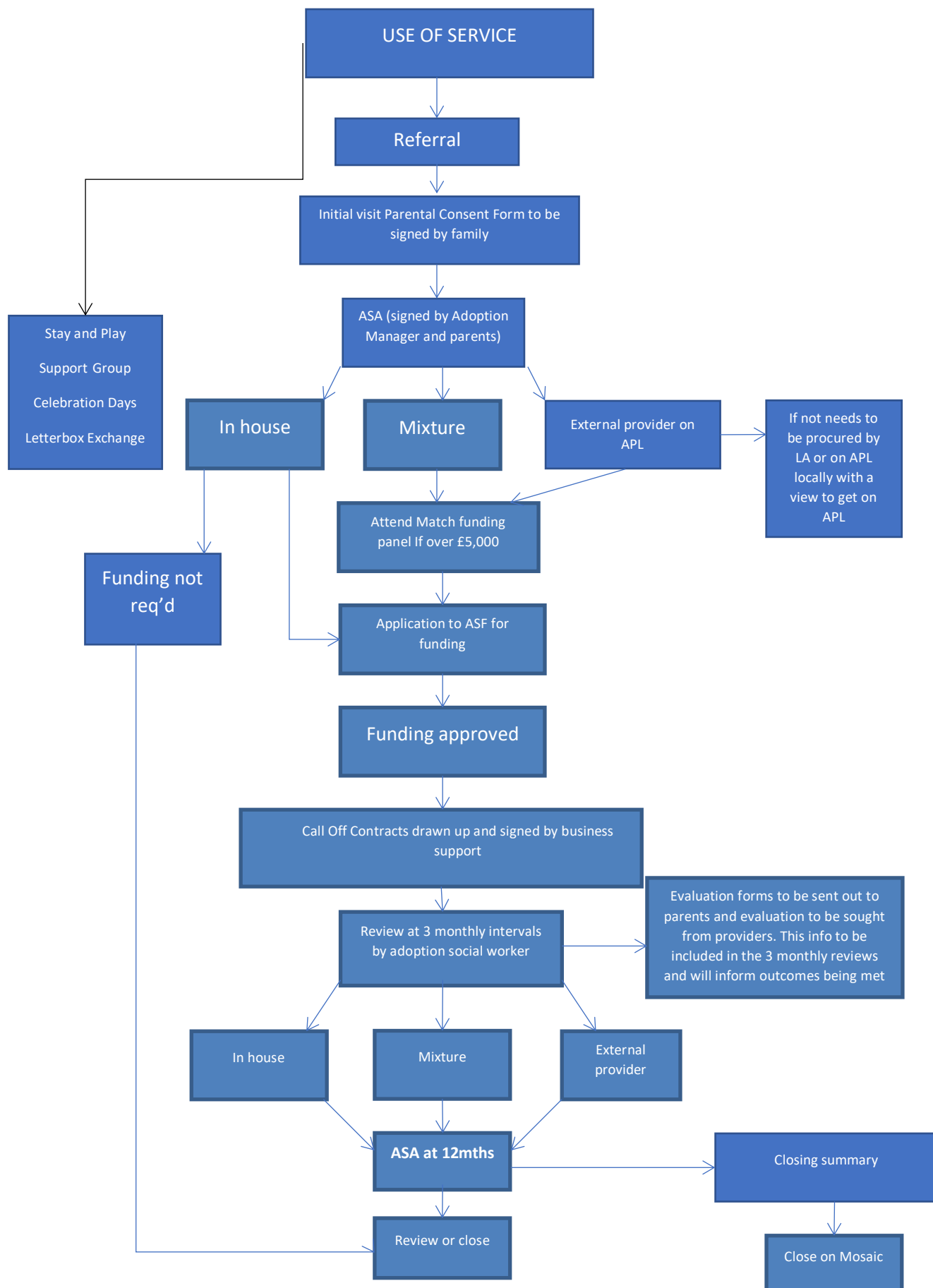
SDQ will be used as part of the adoption support to monitor the effectiveness of the support used.

The social worker assigned to support the family will be responsible for ensuring SDQ measurements are taken before the support is put in place (baseline), at the midpoint of the support or at six months point and at the end of support. A follow up questionnaire will be used 6 months after the end of support.

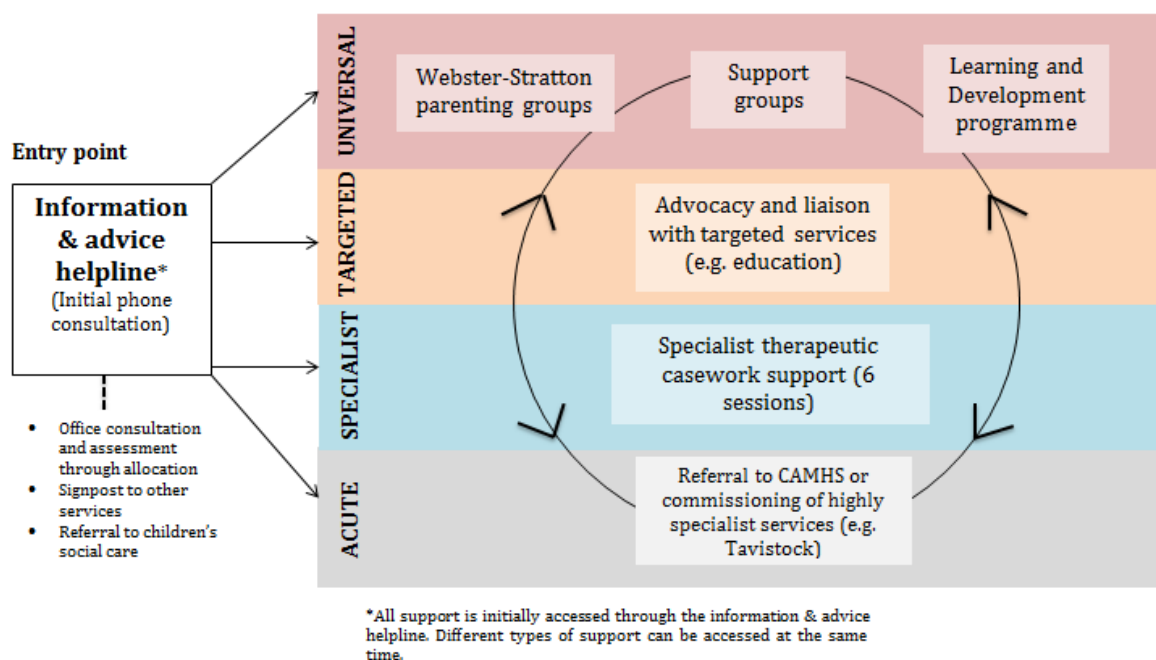
3. User Satisfaction

After completing an episode of support, we will give the child / young person / parents an opportunity to tell how satisfied they were with the support provided. The outcomes of the satisfaction surveys would help all service providers to develop the services further.

One Adoption West Yorkshire – Referral Pathway



Coram - Kent¹ Referral Pathway



¹ Coram (2016) Developing a Multi-disciplinary Post Adoption Support Service in Kent: Impact, Outcomes and Lessons Learnt

Adoption Psychology Service

