

01 Background



The 'Risk Sensible' model for assessment has been adopted by Children's Social Care (CSC) in Lancashire. It was introduced following the Ofsted inspection as a way of standardising and improving assessments by social workers across Lancashire. It goes hand in hand with the new Continuum of Need (CoN) and thresholds guidance and it is anticipated that it will inform the practice of all agencies involved in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. It is intended to make Lancashire a 'risk sensible' authority (in Munro terms) with the emphasis on risk management and reduction rather than risk removal.

Why it matters 02



Good outcomes come from good assessments and it is important that professionals have the necessary knowledge, skills and expertise to achieve such outcomes for children and young people in Lancashire. This is particularly the case when dealing with safeguarding concerns when the costs of getting things wrong can be so high for both children and practitioners. The model itself is simple to understand and easy to use and is based upon the identification of two types of risks factors: 'underlying risk factors' (URF)¹ and 'high risk indicators'¹¹ (HRI) then analysing these for meaning and using this information to develop risk management strategies.

07 Questions

- Are we clear about what risk is?
- Are we clear about assessing the two types of risk factor?
- Are we clear about what 'risk sensible' means?
- How do we analyse risk?
- Do we always assess the parent's capacity to change?
- Are our plans always SMART?
- Do we always listen to children?



03 Information



The model defines risk as: 'the likelihood of a future event, the outcome of which may lead to loss, harm or damage'. In safeguarding terms, this means the likelihood of future abuse/neglect resulting in a child

06 What to do

Familiarise yourself with the language of the 'Risk Sensible' model and ensure that you are clear about how it relates to the work that you do at the level of the CoN in which you practice. Consider how you might use the model to support an argument to 'step-up' or 'step-down' the level of intervention with a family.

facilitates the development of SMART, child centred, outcome focused plans with explicit statements of what needs to be achieved, what actions are to be taken and what success will look like.

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suffering significant harm. The 'risk sensible' model will underpin practice across the whole of CSC.

The risk sensible model has four key components:

1. Risk assessment (what risk factors are present? URF? HRI?)
2. Risk analysis (what is the impact on parenting capacity?)
3. Assessment of the parent's capacity to change (in child's timescale)
4. Risk management (how can the risks be mitigated or reduced?)
The use of the model



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¹URF: those factors that are often present in risk situations, but do not of themselves constitute a risk.... for example: poverty, poor housing, social isolation

¹¹HRI: those factors which, by their presence, do constitute a risk...for example: history of previous abuse of a child, chaotic drug/alcohol misuse, unmanaged serious mental health difficulties