

dialogue

Dynamic risk assessment

Chris Freestone. July 2024

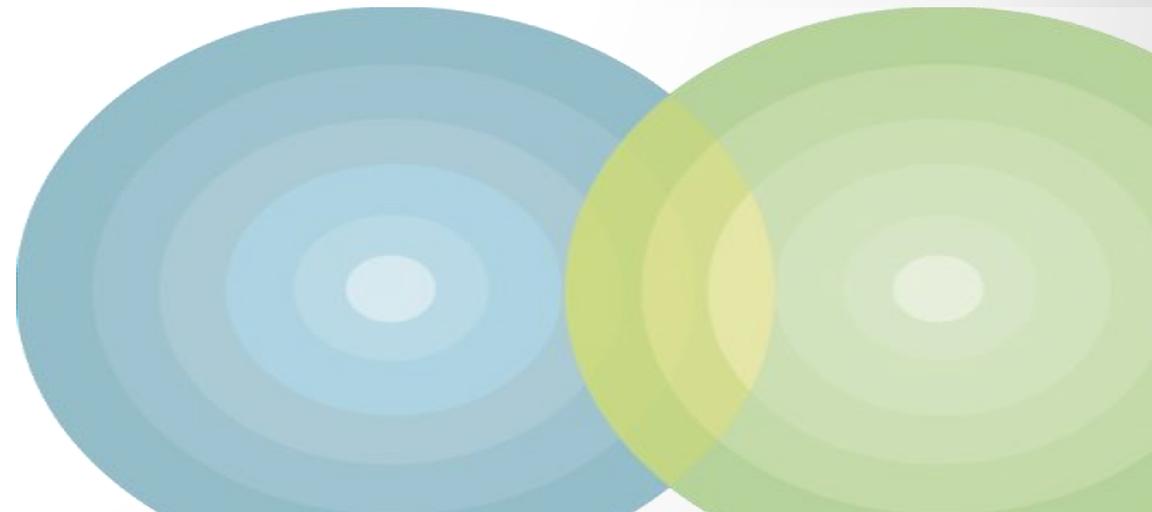
Learning Principles

- Confidentiality
- Positive challenge
- Open exploration of key issues



Areas of focus:

- the current context
- breaking down risk
- approaches to risk and dynamic risk assessment
- professional judgement within regulatory contexts
- legal framework and threshold tools
- roles & responsibilities



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Risk Management



Uncertainty and risk are features of child protection work...Risk management cannot eradicate risk: it can only try to reduce the probability of harm.... Those involved in child protection must be “risk sensible”. There is no option of being risk averse since there is no absolutely safe option

The Munro Review of Child Protection: A Child Centred System, May 2011



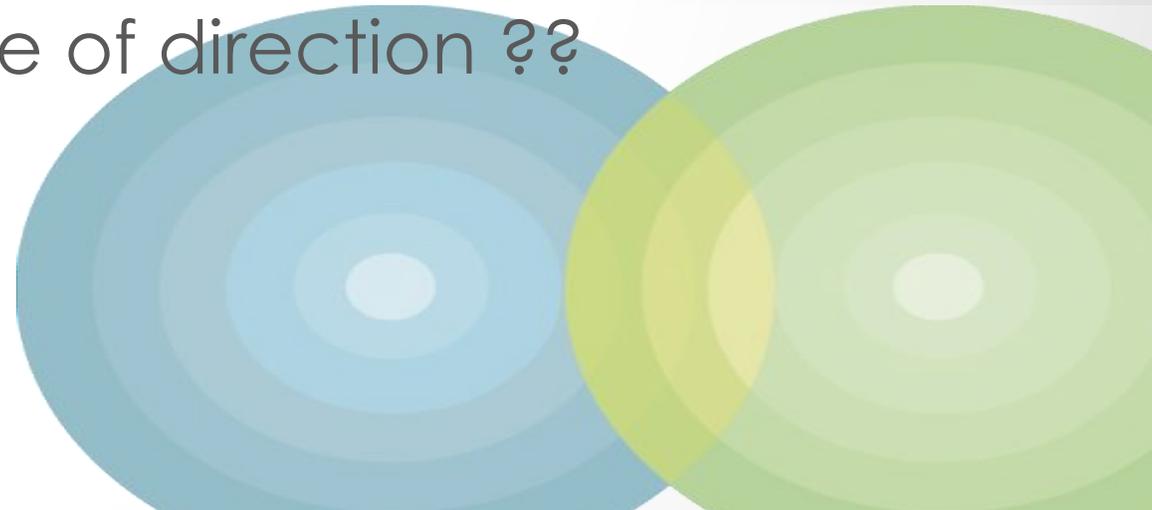
Current context and tensions

- Tensions in the market include the following:
 - The recent roll out of the regulation of 16-17 provision (supported accommodation) has led to a legal ban on the use of unregulated provision
 - Sufficiency .
 - Specificity
- **Raised levels of complexity – move towards a description of “co-occurring needs”**
- Staff recruitment



Current context and tensions

- Cost of placements
- Cost of setting up children's homes
- Local authority budgets
- Recruiting a manager
- Working with staffing agencies
- Ofsted? Use of expedited registration model
- Duty of care
- Change of government / change of direction ??
- **ANY OTHER THOUGHTS?**
-



Dynamic risk assessment...

- A key thread running throughout any placement for a young person
- Within the Children's Homes regulations and guidance – risk management as a factor throughout (<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/contents>)
- Within the Social Care Common Inspection Framework (SCCIF) <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/social-care-common-inspection-framework-sccif>
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/providing-supported-accommodation-for-children-and-young-people>
- other frameworks (CIW/CQC)



Looking to mirror a model

There is a clarity where a service is already ready registered with Ofsted / CIW/CQC

- The situation is more confused now when :
 - Supported accommodation becomes more explicitly consistent “care” within the definition and thus can unintentionally become an unregistered children’s home , sitting outside of the supported accommodation regs.
 - An unregulated placement is used, and an expedited children’s home application route is used- this with varying timescales and the placement to be managed
- In these latter cases wherever the child is placed mirroring of the CH standards and regulations is a useful tool

Setting a and sharing of risk

- You have an interim programme in place until Supported Accommodation providers are into the inspection regime – this called 'Transitional Monitoring Arrangements', this in place in terms of monitoring, multi-agency communication and support?
- Does this explicitly address risk, its' recognition, change and a shared approach to risk within this process?
- Are all agencies and professionals signed up to this ?
- How clear are you models of shared risk ?



The Protection of Children standard- Children's Homes standards and regulations

12.—(1) The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.

- (2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—
 - (a) that staff—
 - (i) assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child;
 - (ii) help each child to understand how to keep safe;
 - (iii) have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm;
 - (iv) manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other;
 - (v) understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person;
 - (vi) take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and
 - . . .

The Protection of Children standard- Children's Homes regulations and standards

- (vii) are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies;
- (b) that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm;
- (c) that the premises used for the purposes of the home are located so that children are effectively safeguarded;
- (d) that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health; and
- (e) that the effectiveness of the home's child protection policies is monitored regularly



Supported accommodation protection standard

(1) The protection standard is that children are enabled to feel safe and that:-

- their needs are met.

(2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—

- (a) ensure that children—
 - (i) are protected from harm;
 - (ii) are enabled to keep themselves safe;
 - (iii) have their individual needs met;
 - (iv) have 24-hour access to help in a crisis or emergency situation;
- (b) prepare and implement child protection policies;
- (c) ensure that the effectiveness of child protection policies is kept under review and ensure that, where appropriate, those policies are revised;
- (d) comply with requests from a local authority to provide it with information relating to a child for which it is the accommodating authority;
- (e) ensure that there is a suitable person representing the supported accommodation undertaking available to attend any meeting the accommodating authority may hold about a child;



Supported accommodation protection standard

- f) ensure that staff—
 - (i) are familiar and act in accordance with child protection policies;
 - (ii) have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of abuse, neglect, exploitation or any other harm, and act to reduce such risk;
 - (iii) work collaboratively with children to help them understand how to keep safe, by offering guidance and support on how to minimise any potential risk of harm;
 - (iv) work collaboratively with other professionals and agencies, and share information where relevant to keep children safe;
 - (v) support children to maintain appropriate and safe relationships with family, friends and other people who are important to them;
 - (vi) understand the relevant roles and responsibilities assigned to them by the registered person in relation to protecting children.



What could this look like – set within a dynamic risk assessment / management process?

Use the Children's Homes standards or supported accommodation as guidance .

- Daily telephone call / online Zoom or Teams contact
- MINIMUM weekly visits by the SW- likely to be more often at the start of the placement
- MINIMUM weekly internal planning meeting- needs – review-provider feedback / reports/Ofsted as necessary
- MINIMUM two weekly multi agency meeting with the Chair being a Social Work Team Manager/ senior leader
- Weekly IRO visit
- Offer of advocacy to the young person
- QA by the LA Quality Assurance team
- **Any other thoughts?**



Reporting to the Local Authority re. placement management of risk

- Setting out your requirements could include :
 - Model to be used in the assessment of risk(dynamically and otherwise)
 - Evidence of up-to-date staff training re. risk and intervention
 - Core paperwork for reporting- consistent baseline set out by the LA within the CH regs/standards or supported accommodation standards
 - Immediate contact arrangements with the LA, with examples.
 - Consistent evidence of “care not containment”- especially important where a DoL is in place
 - Daily reports/ records to SW
 - Utilisation of your own regional “high risk provision – guidance and template document” Note that there may be local equivalents



Defining what you mean.....

“The definition of a dynamic risk assessment is: “The continuous process of identifying hazards, assessing risk, taking action to eliminate or reduce risk, monitoring and reviewing, in the rapidly changing circumstances of an operational incident.”



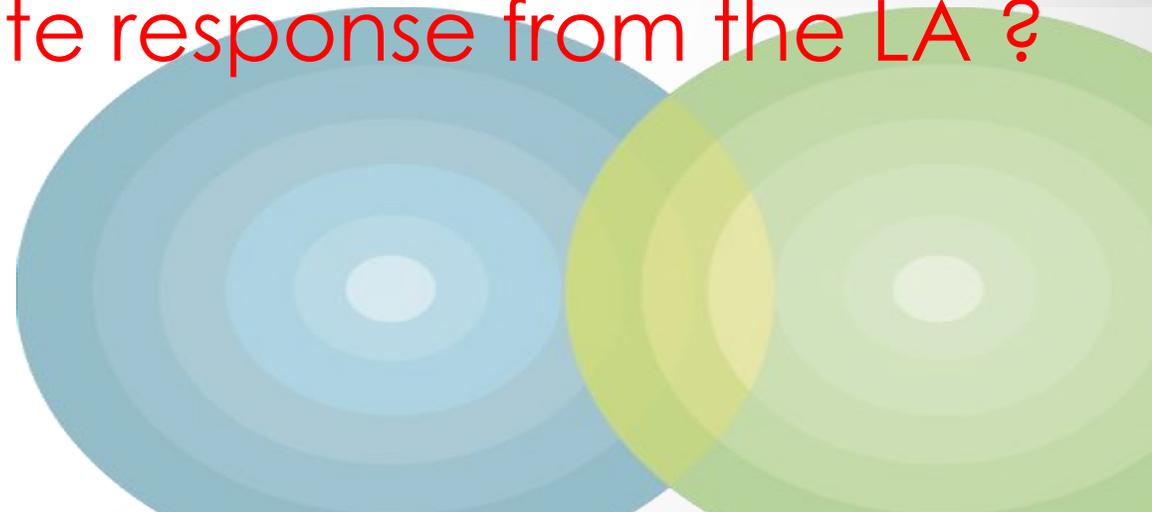
Defining what you mean

“A risk assessment is considered **“dynamic”** when it continuously ingests new data from multiple sources to quickly identify and reprioritise emerging and increasing threats



Can also be considered as below :

- A dynamic risk assessment is more spontaneous, especially in high-risk environments where it is conducted on the spot when there's a sudden change in the situation and risks need to be immediately identified and controlled.
- How do you want these events to be recorded , tracked , reported ?
- What would trigger an immediate response from the LA ?



Risk and Significant Harm – a clarification

- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 specifically adopts the legislative terminology of ‘significant harm’ in preference to the use of the word “risk” - to avoid confusion given the different contexts and methodologies associated with “risk”
- When assessing whether a child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm local authority children’s social care will of course draw on a wide variety of information including the outcomes of relevant risk assessments or judgments provided by other agencies and professionals to inform their own evidence based assessment.



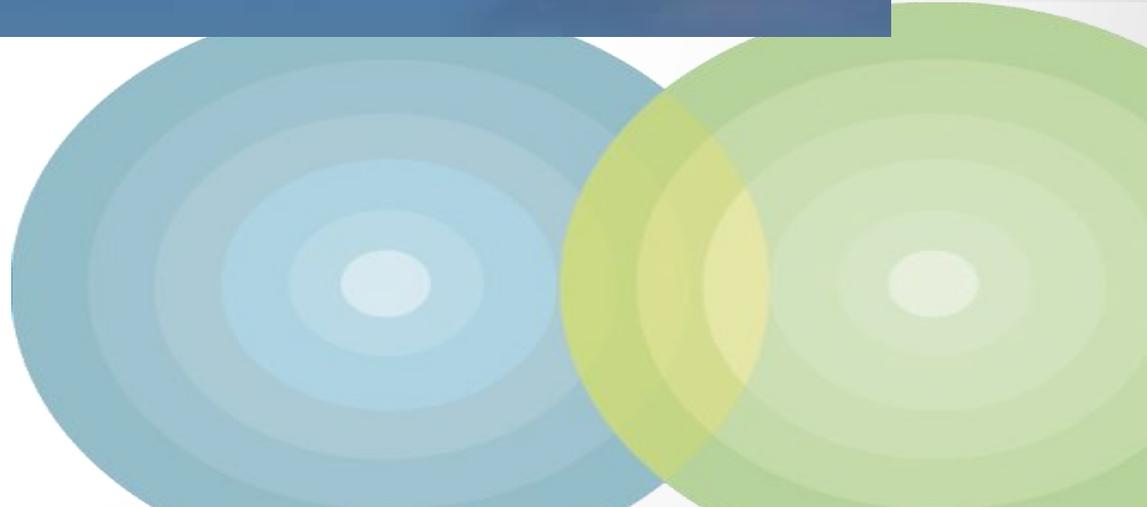
Risk and perception...

- We all differ in our perception, previously for reasons I am sure you have explored
- How do you baseline risk and perception across varying settings so that you can be consistent in recognition and response?
 - Using standards and regs
 - Using internal models ?

Open discussion.....

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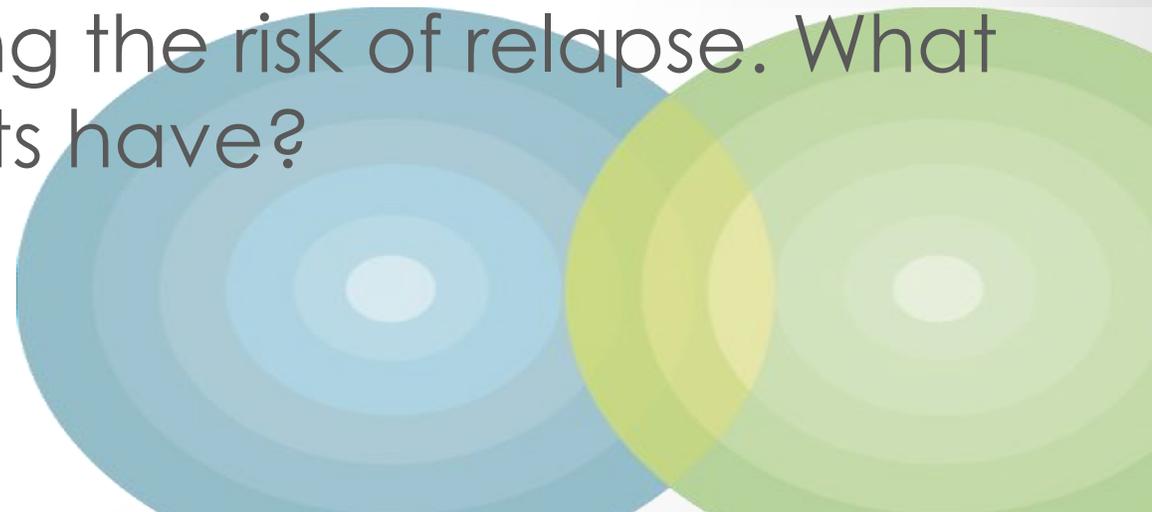
Illustration Collection

THE ILLUSTRATION COLLECTION



Reflecting on the images....thinking about a placement.

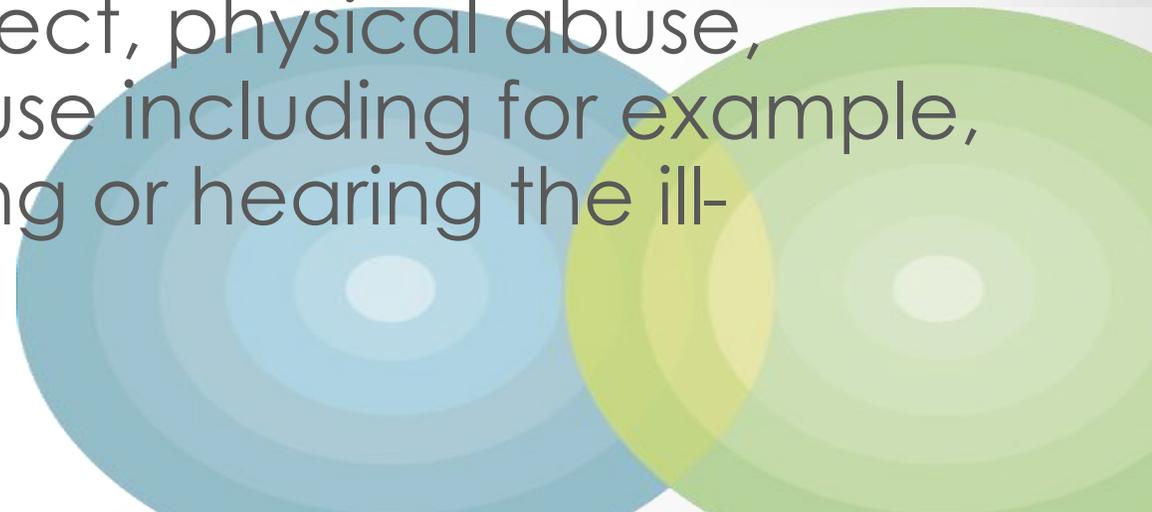
- What do you do to manage the risk?
- How do you accommodate human error?
- Fixed risks.
- Situational. Which is which? Link to likelihood/ impact.
- What's the motivation for fixed risks?
- Recognise the need for a change model- sustaining change and relapse. Managing the risk of relapse. What strengths does the child / adults have?
- Impact/likelihood
-



Impact

- **Low – LEVEL 1** - No injury or cause for concern
- **Concern – LEVEL 2** - A young person isn't doing as well as they should, although there is no evidence of harm.
- **Harmful LEVEL 3** - Harm means ill-treatment or the impairment of health or development, including for example, impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another.
- **Significant harm LEVEL 4** - Neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse or emotional abuse including for example, impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another.

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Likelihood

- **Very unlikely** - An event that could happen, but is almost certain not to happen
- **Possible** - An event that could happen
- **Suspected** - There is an indication that something has happened or may happen
- **Likely** - Something you believe is more likely to happen than not
- **Almost certain** - Something that will happen unless action is taken

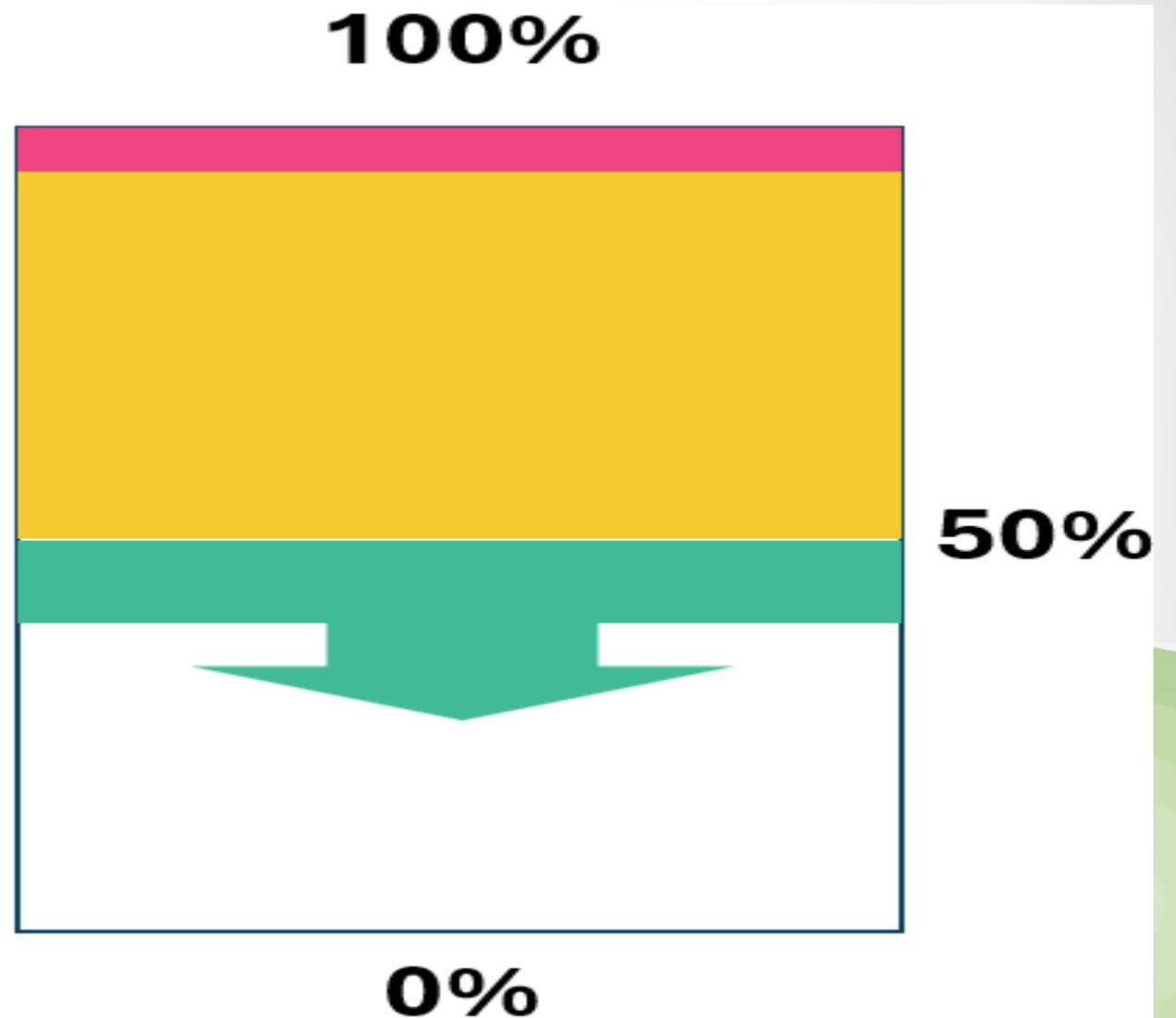


How **sure** should you be?

“Beyond all **reasonable** doubt...”

“balance of **probability**”

“reasonable cause to **suspect**”



risk management **planning/ feeding into a dynamic response**



placement

Staff should **continually and actively assess** the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. Where there are safeguarding concerns for a child, **their placement plan**, agreed between the home and their placing authority, **must include details of the steps the home will take to manage any assessed risks on a day to day basis**

para 9.5, Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations including the quality standards



Dynamic risk assessment -practice definition worth reinforcing

- **continuous assessment** of risk in the **rapidly changing circumstances** of an **operational incident**, in order to implement the **control measures necessary** to ensure an **acceptable level of safety**
 - Put simply, a dynamic risk assessment is needed in situations where:
 - Risks are **uncertain and keep changing**
 - Risks exist but are **difficult to measure precisely**
 - The risks are known and **preventive action is needed**
 -
- 

what it's **not**

the rapid making up of excuses on the hoof to excuse the failure to predict the predictable and justify your response



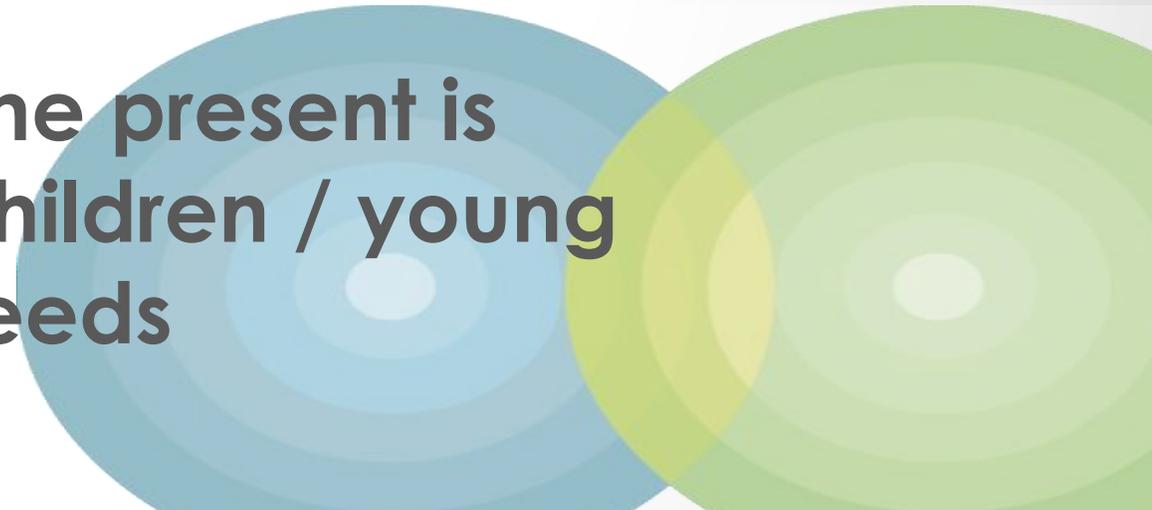
Principles underlying risk analysis and dynamic risk assessment

We need to distinguish

- What has brought things about in the past
- What keeps things going in the present
- What is likely to happen in the future

- **What keeps things going in the present is particularly key in terms of children / young people with co- occurring needs**

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Highlight... thread to a dynamic risk assessment and response

- What am I worried about?
 - Why?
 - How likely is each issue?
- What strengths are there that affect this?
 - How?
- What needs to change
 - How will you know if it has, or hasn't?



What is the purpose? Do other professionals and agencies work to this framework?

The purpose of a dynamic risk assessment is to enhance safety and mitigate risks in real-time or rapidly changing situations. Its primary objectives are to:

- **Identify and anticipate risks:**

A dynamic risk assessment aims to identify potential hazards and anticipate risks as they arise or evolve during an activity or in response to changing conditions.

- **Promote situational awareness:**

It emphasises the importance of being aware of an individual's surroundings and the evolving circumstances to identify potential risks promptly.

- **Enable quick decision-making:**

- By continuously assessing risks, individuals can make quick and informed decisions to adjust plans or procedures, ensuring the safety of themselves and others involved.

-



What is the purpose? Do other professionals and agencies work to this framework?

- **Adapt to changing conditions:**

Dynamic risk assessment enables the flexibility to adapt to changing conditions promptly. It allows for the modification of strategies, protocols, or safety measures based on the evolving situation.

- **Minimise and manage risks:**

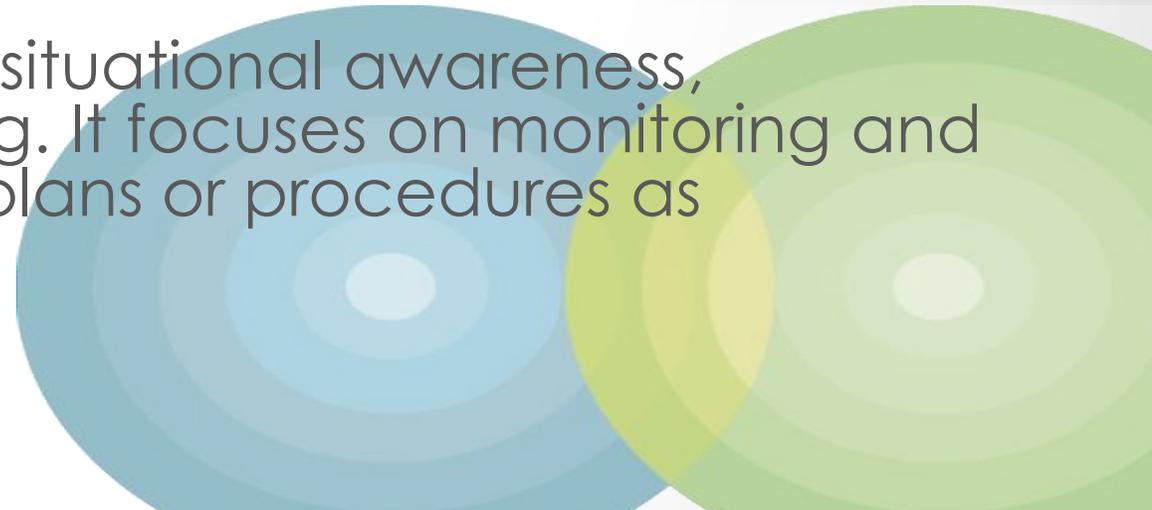
The primary purpose of a dynamic risk assessment is to minimise risks and manage them effectively in real-time. By identifying and addressing risks promptly, you can reduce the likelihood and impact of accidents, injuries, or adverse events.

- **Adaptable to evolving situations:**

A dynamic risk assessment emphasises situational awareness, adaptability and quick decision-making. It focuses on monitoring and reassessing risks in real-time, adapting plans or procedures as conditions change.

Is this the common model in place ?

-



Benefits of a dynamic risk assessment.

- **Enhanced safety**

By continuously monitoring and reassessing risks in real-time, a dynamic risk assessment promotes enhanced safety. It allows for **quick identification of emerging issues** and enables immediate actions to mitigate risks, reducing the likelihood of accidents, incidents, escalation.

- **Real-time adaptability**

Dynamic risk assessments enable individuals to adapt to changing conditions promptly. By continuously assessing risks, **plans and procedures can be adjusted on the spot** to maintain safety, ensuring that responses and actions remain aligned with the evolving circumstances.

- **Improved situational awareness**

The ongoing nature of dynamic risk assessments fosters a heightened sense of situational awareness. Individuals are encouraged to be more attentive to their surroundings, anticipate potential risks, and **make informed decisions** based on the current context.



Benefits of a dynamic risk assessment

- **Proactive risk management**

Rather than relying solely on pre-planned measures, dynamic risk assessments empower individuals to take a proactive approach to risk management. By actively identifying and addressing risks in real-time, **potential issues can be addressed** before they escalate into critical situations.

- **Continuous improvement**

Dynamic risk assessments facilitate a **culture of continuous improvement** in risk management. As risks are identified and managed in real-time, feedback and lessons learned can be incorporated into future activities/responses/care, resulting in refined procedures and increased overall safety.

- **Reduces fear**

When the right training is provided for dynamic risk assessments, they can help your team members feel less scared about rapidly changing environments or unknown hazards. They **prepare individuals for the unexpected**, helping them to deal with situations calmly and without fear.



Reflecting.....

- Remember that dynamic risk assessment is an ongoing process that requires regular attention and participation from all levels of the organisation.
- By implementing this systematic approach, you can continuously improve responses , mitigation , respond effectively to changing conditions, and reduce risk.



Outcomes

- How could you tell the child is safe?
- What does 'good' look like?
- How will you check?

What needs to be done to get from here to there?

Does this sit within a known baseline in terms of risk?

Open discussion



Dynamic Risk Assessment

- It's about keeping people safe in the moment
- Being aware of the potential risks but making a judgement at the time as to the level of risk
- Being confident in managing the risk
- Reflecting on the decisions made and learning for the next time
- Reporting those decisions with evidence to back it up
- Feeding into dynamic risk profile
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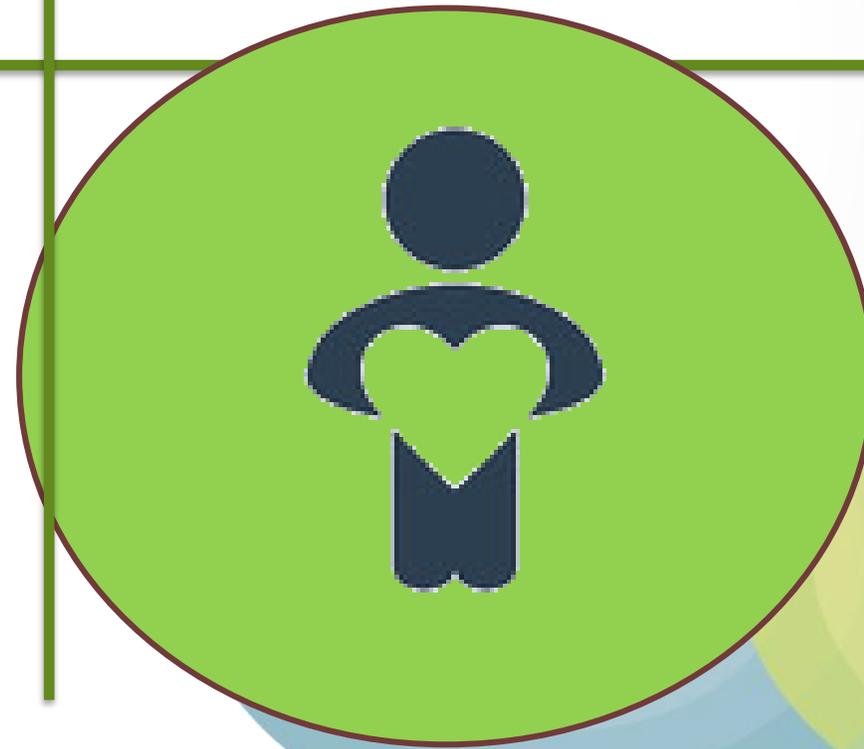
Safe Person concept

- The "safe person" concept is central to dynamic risk assessment. Safety management normally relies on the safe place, safe equipment, safe systems of work and safe person idea; ensuring that collective control measures are in place to make the workplace safe. While safe places rely on design and physical controls, the safe person relies on human factors such as motivation, experience, competence, attitude and perception of risk.

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Safety and the safe person concept





safe person

- motivation
- experience
- competence
- attitude
- perception of risk
- etc
-

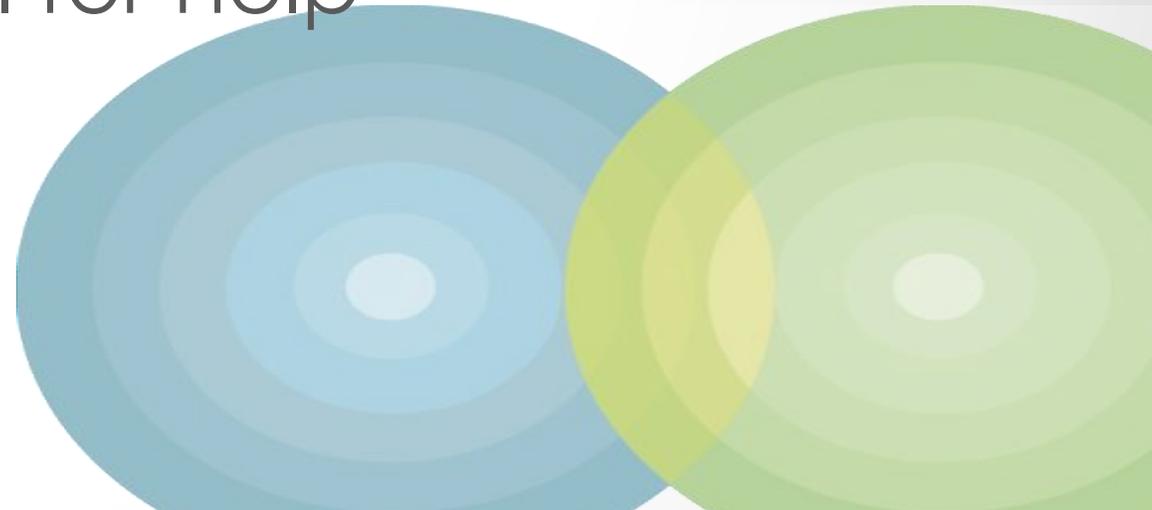
How do **you** know
what **they** will do?
Young people and
staff?



personal responsibilities

- identify the risk
- assess the risk and form a judgement
- have authority to stop or call for help
- take reasonable risks
- be part of the review

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organisational responsibilities

- predict the risk as far as possible beforehand
- develop shared competency standards
- train staff so they know the expectations
- seek feedback
- review the risks
-



Risk matrix model

CONSEQUENCES		Environment	Slight impact	Minor impact	Moderate impact	Major impact	Massive impact
		Asset	Slight damage	Minor damage	Local damage	Major damage	Extensive damage
		Reputation	Slight impact	Limited impact	Considerable impact	Major national impact	Major international impact
LIKELIHOOD	E ALMOST CERTAIN	Incident has occurred several times in the company	E1	E2	E3	E4	E5
	D LIKELY	Incident has occurred more than once per year in the company	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5
	C POSSIBLE	Incident has occurred in company or more than once in industry world wide	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5
	B UNLIKELY	Incident has occurred in industry world wide	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5
	A REMOTELY LIKELY TO HAPPEN	Never heard of in industry world wide but could occur	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5

reflection

- A complex model which should dynamically reflect a core practice of beyond, beneath and behind the behaviour
- Could lead with a baseline from you in terms of model and minimum LA standard
- Will contribute to a shared risk approach
- Lots to reflect upon and consider any thoughts ?



Thank you.

- Please let me know of any queries or questions.
- caf31.cf@outlook.com
- jen.bean@dialogueltd.co.uk

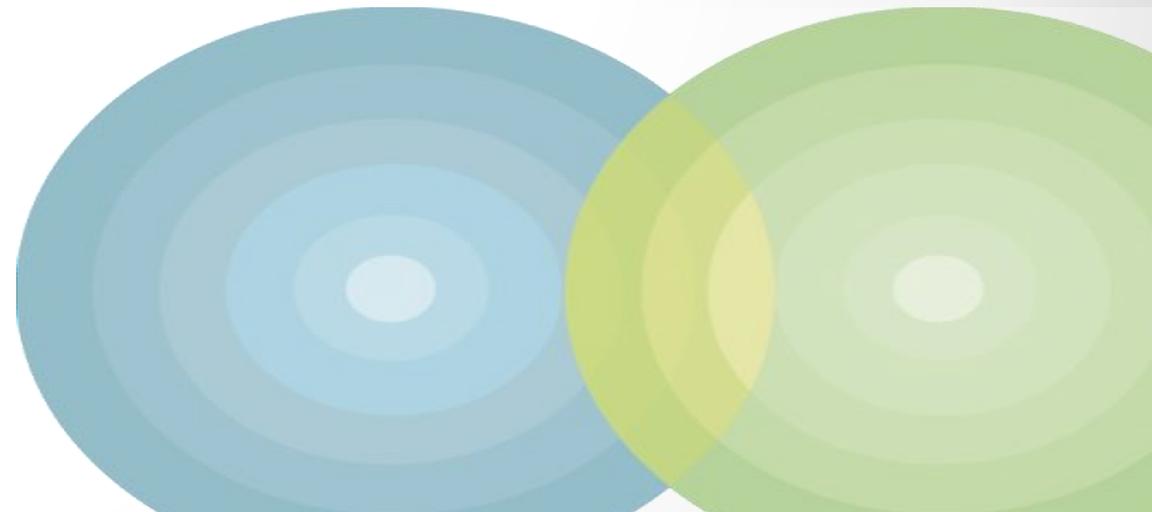


Extra resources – slides following.....



how risks **arise**

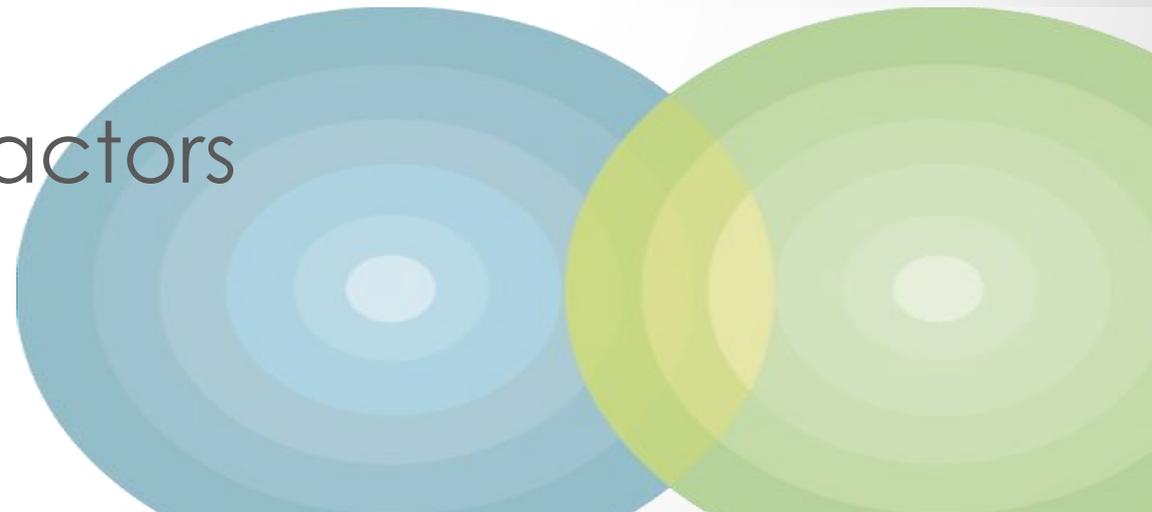
risk identification



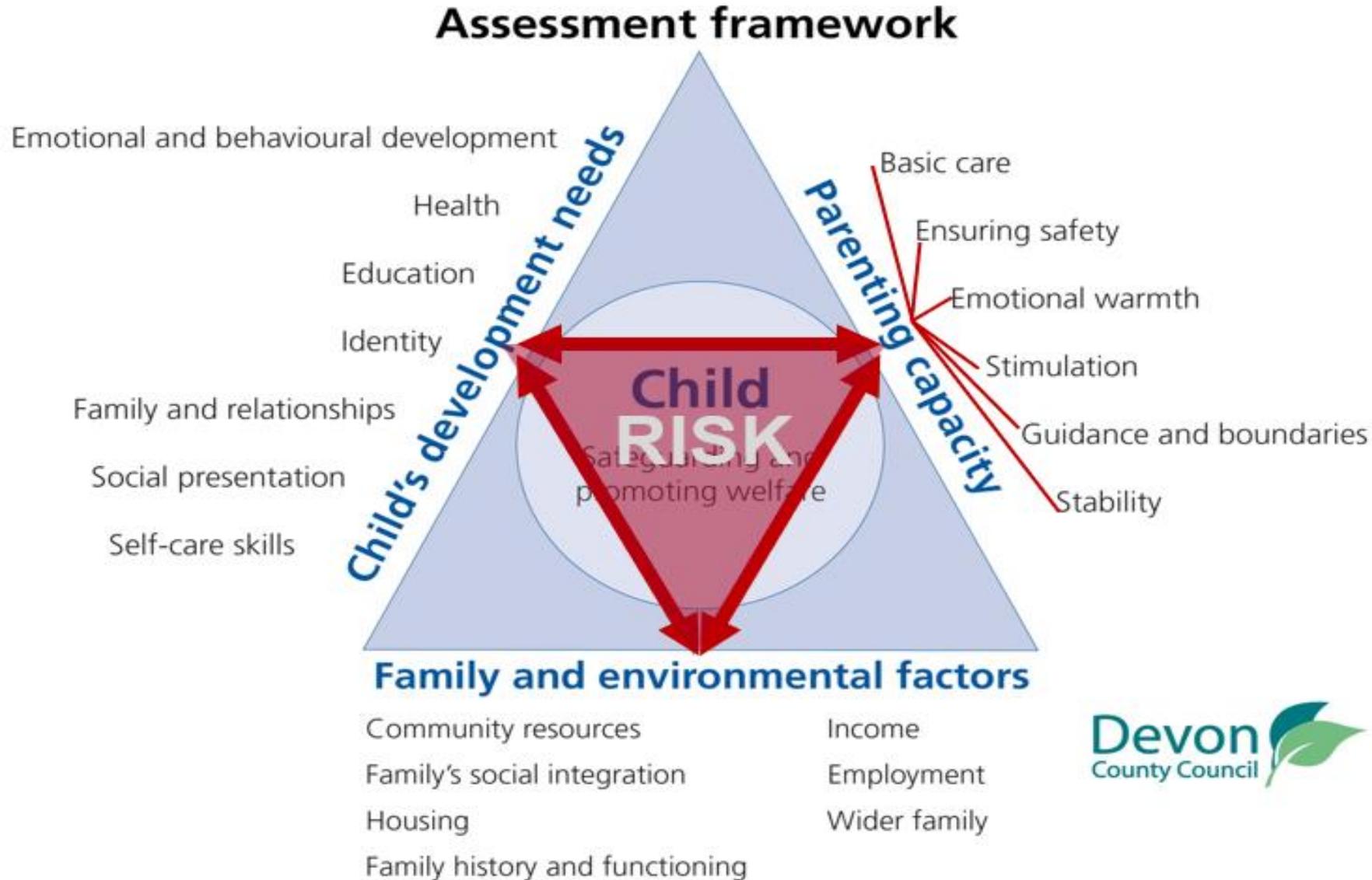
Threshold- assessment accuracy in the first place ?

Thresholds for assessment depend on:

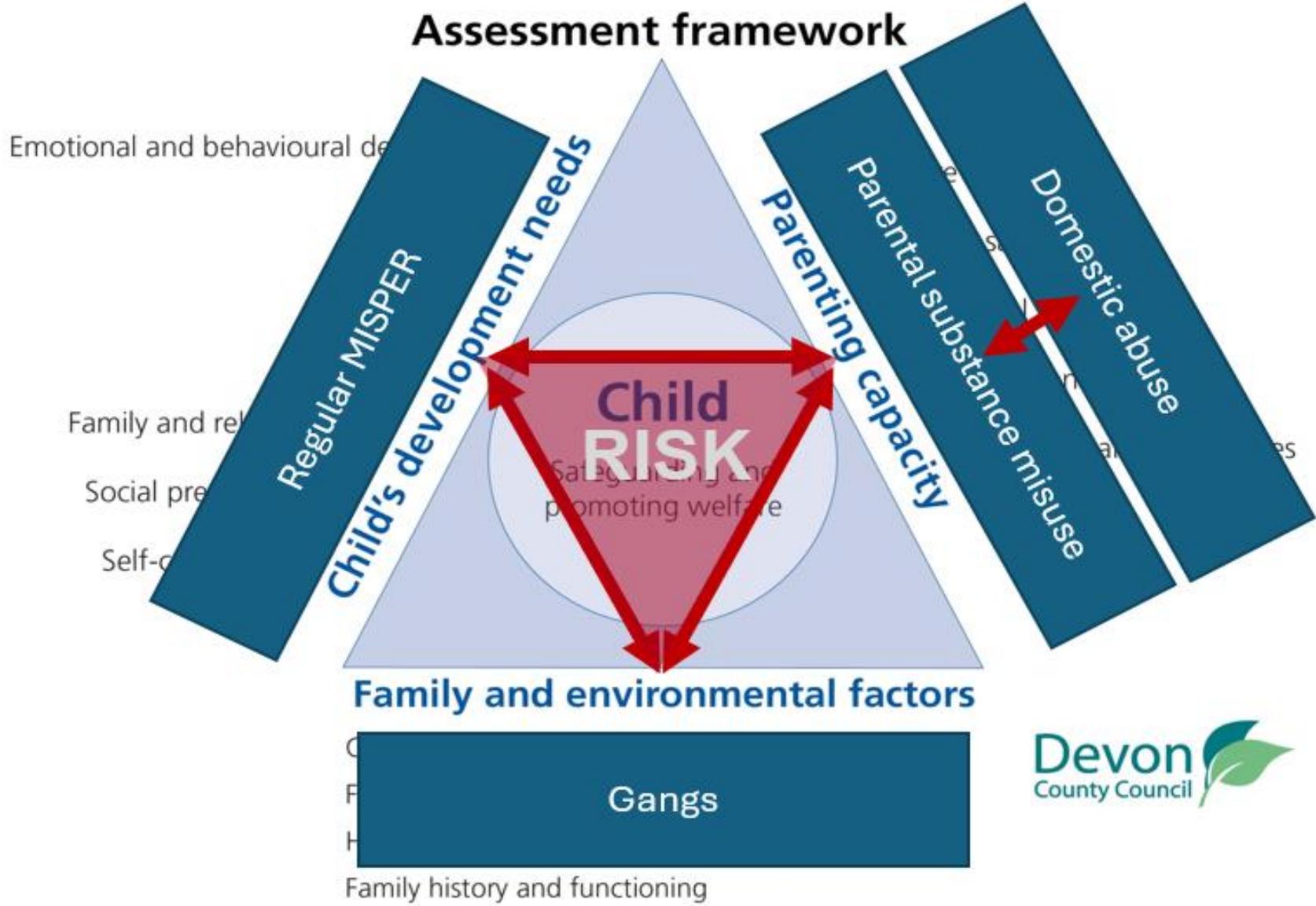
- the nature & quality of the information available about the individual child/ren and family who are the subject of a referral;
- the reasoning strategies employed by practitioners to analyse that information and manage referrals; and
- systems and organisational factors



Drawing risk from need



Specific risks



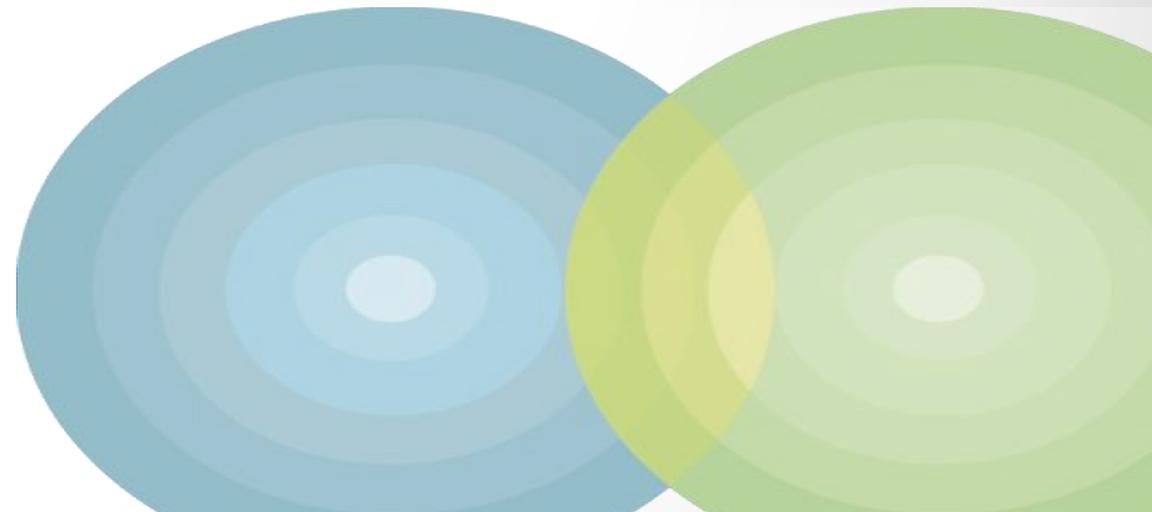
Immediate Protection

- Where there is a risk to the life of a child or a likelihood of serious immediate harm an agency with statutory child protection powers **should act quickly to secure the immediate safety of the child.**
- Planned emergency action will normally take place following an immediate strategy discussion between the police, local authority children's social care and other agencies as appropriate
- If it is necessary to remove a child from their home, a local authority must, wherever possible and unless a child's safety is otherwise at immediate risk, apply for an **Emergency Protection Order (EPO)**. Police powers to remove a child in an emergency should be used only in exceptional circumstances where there is insufficient time to seek an EPO or for reasons relating to the immediate safety of the child. (Working Together)

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resources

- <https://ncercc.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/NCERCC-evaluation-and-response-Ofsted-How-local-authorities-and-childrens-homes-can-achieve-stability-and-permanence-for-children-with-complex-need-17-02-2456.pdf>



Ofsted – some of the GOOD evidence indicators

- **How well children are helped and protected**

Areas of required evidence are:

- how well risks are identified, understood and managed, and whether the support and care provided help children to become increasingly safe, taking account of their individual circumstances and previous experiences
- the provider's actions in response to children who may go missing or may be at risk of harm, including from exploitation, neglect, abuse, self-harm, bullying and radicalisation
- how well staff and carers manage situations and behaviour and whether clear and consistent boundaries contribute to a feeling of well-being and security for children
- whether safeguarding arrangements to protect children meet all statutory and other government requirements, promote their welfare and prevent radicalisation and extremism
- restraint or restrictive practice are used only when necessary to protect the child and/or those around them and must be proportionate. All incidents are recorded, reviewed and monitored by leaders. The views of the child, dependent on their age and understanding, are sought and understood.
- conflict management is effective and includes the appropriate use of restorative practices that improve relationships, increase children's sense of personal responsibility and reduce the need for formal police intervention.

-



Ofsted – some of the GOOD evidence indicators

- Any risks associated with children offending, misusing drugs or alcohol, self-harming, going missing, being affiliated with gangs, or being sexually or criminally exploited are known and understood by the adults who look after them. Individual up-to-date risk assessments effectively address any known vulnerabilities for each child and set out what action staff should take to manage the risks. There are plans and help in place to reduce actual harm or the risk of harm and there is evidence that these risks are reducing or managed well, based on children's individual circumstances.
- Children who go missing experience well-coordinated responses that reduce actual harm or risk of harm to them. There is a clear plan of urgent action in place to protect children and to reduce further harm or the risk of harm. Staff understand the risks. They are proactive and effective in helping and protecting children. They revise their ways of working if their approach is not working
- Children receive help and support to manage their behaviour and feelings safely. Staff understand children's experiences, respond with appropriate boundaries about what is safe and acceptable for each child and seek to understand the triggers for behaviour.
- Positive behaviour is consistently promoted. Staff use effective de-escalation techniques and creative alternative strategies that are specific to the needs of each child and planned in consultation with them where possible.
- The physical environment for children is safe and secure and protects them from harm or the risk of harm. Risk assessments are regularly reviewed and staff understand and implement strategies to keep children safe.