

## CHILD SOCIAL WORK ASSESSMENT TO INITIAL CHILD PROTECTION CONFERENCE

### Assessment details

Start date	End date	Date of Initial Child Protection Conference
2 <sup>nd</sup> October 2017	18 <sup>th</sup> October 2017	23 <sup>rd</sup> October 2017

### Reason for Initial Child Protection Conference

- Laura Lowton is currently 30 weeks pregnant with her third child. Two of her children have previously been removed from her care due to neglect and are placed with maternal grandparents, subject to a Special Guardianship Order.
- Laura Lowton has been in a new relationship with Gary Prince since October 2016 and this is their first child. Gary Prince does not have any other children
- The couple are currently living in paternal grandmother's home which is in poor condition and they currently care for Gary Prince's 15 year old brother Martin Smith.
- Concerns in relation to neglect are evident in the current assessment of unborn Lowton which include: Laura's poor mental health and her unwillingness to attend antenatal appointments and parent's chaotic home conditions.
- Karen Perks of Breathing Space has been working with both parents to support their understanding of preparing and caring for a baby; however Laura Lowton's appears unmotivated to work with the service and there have been a number of missed sessions to date.

### Details of child(ren)/young person(s) subject to Assessment and Conference

Person	Client ID number	NHS number	Full name	DoB	EDD	Gender	Address	Ethnicity
Child 1	1111111	22222	Unborn Lowton		25 Dec 2017	Female	12 High Street Newcastle Under Lyme	White British



**Details of any other children**

Claire Lowton - DOB 1.12.2013  
 Scarlet Lowton - DOB 16.11.2015  
 Martin Smith – DOB 26.09.2002

**Child(ren)/young person(s) family composition/significant others**

Name	Relationship to Child/YP	DoB	Ethnicity	PR	Address
Laura Lowton	Mother	1 March 1995	White British	Automatically acquired at birth	12 High Street Newcastle Under Lyme
Gary Prince	Father	15 Aug 1988	White British	To be registered on the birth certificate which will provide PR	12 High Street Newcastle Under Lyme

**Key dates and actions**

Date of Strategy Discussion where decision was made to initiate Section 47 (where appropriate)	Date S47 enquiries completed (where appropriate)
02 Oct 2017	

**Details of child(ren)/young person(s) and family members seen as part of the assessment**

(please note if child(ren)/young person(s) has been seen alone)

Laura Lowton  
 Gary Prince  
 Joan Prince Paternal Grandmother  
 Martin Smith

**Agencies involved**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Agency (Children's Social Care)</b>	<b>Did they contribute to this assessment?</b>
Karen Perks	Breathing Space	Yes
Mandy Stenson	Midwife	Yes
Parent and baby mental health team	Mental Health	No
RBKC	Local Authority	Yes
Tara Davies	PEACH	No

This section should provide all salient information gathered as part of this assessment and any S47 enquiries or from previous involvement (including all previous plans).

It should include information on the child/young person's current and past state of health and development; the capacity of the parent(s) and other family members to ensure the child/young person's safety from harm, and to promote the child/young person's health and development (paragraph 5.61, Working Together).

**Relevant background information - include information on the family history and both current and past family functioning (provide information for the updated Child Social Work Assessment)**

Social work involvement commenced in October 2010 following a referral to the Police by maternal grandmother who had reported her daughter Laura Lowton as having gone to the pub without informing her, in addition to there being a marked change in Laura's behaviour. Maternal grandparents were concerned for her welfare. No further action was taken.

A further referral was received in late October 2013 from Sarah Smith, Midwife, who reported Laura was 8 months pregnant with her first child [Claire Lowton] and she was not engaging with antenatal services. Additional concerns included cannabis and tobacco misuse and Laura's chaotic lifestyle. A brief period of child in need planning followed; however some 4 weeks after the baby's birth on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2013 an Initial Child Protection Conference was held and Claire Lowton was made subject to a child protection plan in January 2014. Child protection planning failed to reduce the concerns for Claire; therefore in September

2014 Mr & Mrs Lowton, Maternal Grandparents, obtained a Child Arrangement Order in respect of Claire and the child protection plan ended. Laura Lowton was unwilling to confirm the details of Claire's birth father; therefore we have been unable to contact him as part of this assessment or the previous assessment.

In August 2015 Laura Lowton made a self-referral to Children's Social Care confirming she was 6 months pregnant. The pregnancy followed a brief relationship with a man Laura had met in town and unfortunately she was again, unwilling to provide any details about this man who remains unknown. Given the history in respect of Claire Lowton and the evidence of little change in Laura's circumstances following Claire's removal, a pre-birth ICPC was held in November 2015 and Scarlet Lowton (born 16.11.2015) was made subject to a child protection plan under the category of neglect.

Initially the care provided by Laura to Scarlet was positive; therefore Children's Social Care funded a parent and baby placement. Unfortunately child protection planning failed to reduce the concerns which now included: co sleeping, Scarlet not being consistently fed and cared for in addition to a deterioration in Laura's mental health. Therefore an Interim Care Order was obtained in January 2016. Despite extensive packages of support offered to Laura, for example, parenting classes, mental health services etc Laura's situation continued to deteriorate and in July 2016 Mr & Mrs Lowton, Maternal Grandparents obtained a Special Guardianship Order for Scarlet. Both Scarlet and Claire have remained in the care of Mr & Mrs Lowton and they are making excellent progress. There is no current social care involvement with Claire and Scarlet and Mrs Lowton supervises contact between Laura and the children once per month in the Northampton area.

**Previous Permanence Placement**

**LA who arranged Placement**

**Date of Placement**

D	D	M	M	Y	Y	Y	Y
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**Child/young person's developmental needs/unborn baby needs**

Please include health, education, emotional & behavioural development, family & social relationships, social presentation and self-care skills and identity (which should reflect the child/young person's lived experience and reflect their cultural norms. Consider reference to economic presentation, social class, ethnicity, religion, involvement in interest groups, customs and traditions that are important to the child(ren)/young person(s) and language)

Parenting capacity

Please include basic care, ensuring safety, emotional warmth, stimulation, guidance & boundaries and stability.

For unborn baby needs please include mother's health and possible health risks to the baby, attendance at antenatal, lifestyle, planned pregnancy, preparations for baby and family support.

Family and environmental factors which may impact on the child(ren)/young person(s) and parenting capacity.

Please include family history and functioning, wider family, housing, employment, income (including information regarding financial difficulties), family's social integration, community resources.

**Child/young person's developmental needs/unborn baby needs**

CHILDS DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS

- Although unborn Lowton is not due until 25/12/2017, she will require regular monitoring of her developmental & health needs pre and post birth.

HEALTH

- Routine midwifery checks at 12 and 16 weeks have confirmed that unborn Lowton is developing well and Laura Lowton has been engaging with Mandy Stenson Midwife ; however recently a number of antenatal appointments have been missed

## PARENTING CAPACITY

### BASIC CARE

- The concerns regarding Claire and Scarlet were in relation to chronic neglect. For example, bottles not being cleaned, bedding being rotten, children presenting as unclean, not receiving adequate feeds and being taken to unknown places and left to sleep overnight in a pushchair.
- The parent and baby placement undertook an assessment of Laura Lowton's parenting and found she lacked motivation and despite significant levels of support, her parenting skills were basic and very poor.
- Whilst both parents recognise they need to provide consistent and safe care to their child, their understanding on how to achieve this is limited. They are both willing to work with Breathing Space. Mellow Bumps and the practical parenting programme has also been offered to both parents.

### ENSURING SAFETY

- The concerns in relation to Claire and Scarlet are highlighted above.
- The initial home visit to parents for the purpose of this assessment identified a number of concerns in relation to the home condition because they were cluttered and unsafe. Advice was given to address the home condition which both parents initially followed; however concerns relate to their ability to maintain this.
- There is little information known about Gary Prince and he has given his consent for information from the Police regarding his background history.

### EMOTIONAL WARMTH/STIMULATION

- There are historical concerns about Laura's ability to bond and form an attachment to Claire and Scarlet.
- On occasions it was reported she was aggressive and hostile towards professionals
- Laura's has suffered with poor mental health since being a teenager. Psychiatric assessments suggested a diagnosis of simple schizophrenia, although not formally confirmed; therefore a referral to the peri-natal service has now been made in relation to her psychological wellbeing. Laura disputes this diagnosis on the basis she was, "tired and distracted" during the assessment.

- During the initial social work visit, it was noted Laura gave limited eye contact throughout and only provided one word answers. Gary was also observed to present as being quiet and through discussions it became evident that Laura and Gary had not in any depth, discussed the background history regarding Claire and Scarlet.
- During subsequent visits to Laura and Gary they have spoken more openly about their situation and say they are willing to work all services.

#### GUIDANCE AND BOUNDARIES

- Previously Laura has left Claire and Scarlet in unknown and unsafe situations which have also included being left to sleep in a pushchair overnight, which suggests a lack of routine and structure for the children.
- Breathing Space have planned one to one sessions with both parents regarding guidance and boundaries; however parents have already missed a number of sessions

#### STABILITY

- The court proceedings for Claire and Scarlet confirmed Laura was not able to offer stability, security and consistent care for her children.
- Whilst Laura and Gary both feel they are now in a settled and stable relationship, little is known about the couple's ability to meet the needs of their baby. Additionally Gary's background history is unknown and requires further assessment.

#### FAMILY AND ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

#### FAMILY HISTORY AND FUNCTIONING/WIDER FAMILY

Laura and Gary met earlier this year through Laura's father, who introduced them. Laura asked Gary out and their relationship progressed very quickly. Gary reports the couple talked about having a baby very early on in their relationship; however they were very surprised when Laura became pregnant despite the couple not using contraception.

Laura and Gary want their baby to remain in their care and state they have a good family support network around them which includes Gary's mother and her partner; however Laura said she only has a relationship with her mother at present. Maternal grandparents do not know about this pregnancy.

Joan Prince is aged 53 and has been in a relationship with her current partner John Rutter since 2014. There are initial concerns about Joan's own mental wellbeing given the current living arrangements and the fact she has now left her son in the care of Gary and Laura whilst she has moved in with her partner.

Laura has said eventually she would like Claire and Scarlet to return to her care although she becomes very distressed when asked about the circumstances regarding her children's removal.

#### HOUSING

- Laura and Gary do not have any permanent accommodation. They were evicted from their previous flat which they shared with Gary's birth father, due to rent arrears.
- Following this, Gary and Laura moved in with Gary's mother Joan Prince, in a three bedroom housing association property which she shared with her youngest son Martin aged 15 years.
- Joan Prince has insisted Gary and Laura leave her property due to overcrowding and wrote a letter to the council informing them of the situation. Gary and Laura failed to leave the property; therefore Joan Prince moved into her partner's property, leaving Martin in the full time care of Laura and Gary.
- Gary and Laura's current accommodation is cluttered in every room and is unsafe and unhygienic for a new-born. Additionally the family have a significant number of pets which defecate in the property.

#### EMPLOYMENT/INCOME

- Both parents are unemployed and are in receipt of state benefits. Gary was dismissed from previous employment due to his sickness record. Both Gary and Laura say they are actively seeking work.

#### SOCIAL INTERGRATION/COMMUNITY RESOURCES

- Gary and Laura don't appear to have any friendship groups and support networks in the local area. They spend the majority of their time in the house playing computer games.

**Parent(s)/carer(s) attributes**

Parent(s)/carer(s) attributes and the impact on their capacity to ensure the child(ren)/young person(s) safety from harm and to respond appropriately to his/her needs (note identity of parent(s)/carer(s) for whom the attribute is relevant - record strengths and difficulties)

Parent(s)/carer(s) issue	Yes/No/Not known	Name of parent(s)/carer(s)	Professional/agency involved
Illness - physical	Yes	Gary Prince	GP
Illness - mental health	Yes	Laura Lowton	PEACH and Parent and Baby Mental Health Team
Disability - physical	No		
Disability - learning	No		
Disability - sensory impairment	No		
Period in care during childhood	No		
Experience of being abused as a child	No		
Known history of abuse of children	No		
Known history of violence	No		
Problem drinking/drug misuse	Yes	Gary Prince / Laura Lowton	None
Other			
Are parent(s)/carer(s) able to read and write?	Yes		

**Please provide details if answered Yes to any of the above**

Gary has diabetes and suffers from abscesses (that sometimes requires surgery) due to this.

Laura has a diagnosis of simple schizophrenia which requires further assessment

Both Laura and Gary report they have used cannabis in the past; however Laura said she has smoked it whilst being pregnant on one occasion.

**Risk factors - child**

- Abuse linked to faith or belief
- Abuse or Neglect - EMOTIONAL ABUSE
- Abuse or Neglect - NEGLECT
- Abuse or Neglect - PHYSICAL ABUSE
- Abuse or Neglect - SEXUAL ABUSE
- Alcohol Misuse
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Domestic Violence
- Drug Misuse - Class A e.g. Heroin, Cocaine, Methadone, Ecstasy, LSD
- Drug Misuse - Class B e.g. Amphetamine, Barbiturates, Cannabis
- Drug Misuse - Class C e.g. Tranquilisers, Ketamine, Anabolic Steroids
- Drug Misuse - Legal highs

- Drug Misuse - Prescription drug
- Drug Misuse - Not yet identified
- Drug Misuse - Other
- Female Genital Mutilation
- Gangs
- Homelessness - Currently Homeless
- Homelessness - History of homelessness
- Learning Disability
- Mental Health
- Missing
- Offending - Currently known to Youth Offending
- Offending - Prior history of Youth Offending involvement
- X Physical Disability or Illness
- Privately Fostered - Overseas child intending to return home
- Privately Fostered - Overseas child intending to stay in the UK
- Privately Fostered - UK child in an educational placement
- Privately Fostered - UK child making alternative family arrangement

- Privately Fostered - Other
- Self-Harm
- Socially Unacceptable Behaviour
- Trafficking
- UASC
- Young Carer
- Other
- No factors identified - only use this if there is no evidence of any of the factors above and no further actions is being taken

**Risk factors - parent**

- Alcohol Misuse
- Drug Misuse - Class A e.g. Heroin, Cocaine, Methadone, Ecstasy, LSD
- Drug Misuse - Class B e.g. Amphetamine, Barbiturates, Cannabis
- Drug Misuse - Class C e.g. Tranquilisers, Ketamine, Anabolic Steroids
- Drug Misuse - Legal highs
- Drug Misuse - Prescription drug
- Drug Misuse - Not yet identified
- Drug Misuse - Other

- Domestic Violence
- Mental Health
- Learning Disability
- Physical Disability or Illness
- Parent is identified as PPRC
- Previous child has been removed from care of parent
- Looked After - Parent is currently LAC
- Looked After - Parent has previously been LAC
- Looked After - Parent is a Relevant, Former Relevant or Qualifying Care Leaver

**Risk factors - other**

- Alcohol Misuse
- Domestic Violence
- Drug Misuse - Class A e.g. Heroin, Cocaine, Methadone, Ecstasy, LSD
- Drug Misuse - Class B e.g. Amphetamine, Barbiturates, Cannabis
- Drug Misuse - Class C e.g. Tranquilisers, Ketamine, Anabolic Steroids
- Drug Misuse - Legal highs
- Drug Misuse - Prescription drug

- Drug Misuse - Not yet identified
- Drug Misuse - Other
- Has had previous child removed from care of parent
- Is identified as PPRC
- Learning Disability
- Mental Health
- Physical Disability or Illness

**Analysis and Risk Assessment including Protective Factors**

Analysis should consider the child(ren)/young person(s) developmental presentation and their presenting needs. Parenting capacity to respond to these needs should be identified. Note how the parenting that is provided for the child(ren)/young person(s) is affecting their health and development both in terms of resilience and protective factors. Consideration must be given to the impact that the family and environmental factors have on parenting capacity and the child(ren)/young person(s) development.

Specific risk assessment must be addressed. Include previous concerns, presenting concerns, behaviours to be predicted, areas of potential risk, risk heightening factors, risk reducing factors and protective factors, seriousness of consequences, prospect/capacity of families to change and sustain that change.

Where appropriate - have parent(s) made necessary changes and improvements to ensure the child/young person's safety when they return home?

### Analysis and Risk Assessment including Protective Factors

Based on the information you have please identify the **worries**, **positives**, and **changes required**. Please also confirm the category of abuse if child protection planning is required.

In the analysis section please also reflect on the daily lived experience of the child in this situation

**Worries** – to include previous concerns, presenting concerns, behaviours to be predicted, areas of potential risk, risk heightening factors & seriousness of consequences

- Previous drug/cannabis use for both parents. Laura admits to smoking cannabis once during pregnancy.
- Claire and Scarlet have been removed from Laura's care due to neglect.
- Laura's mental health. Laura has not consistently accessed any services since her diagnosis of simple schizophrenia.
- Parents don't have a permanent home
- Current living conditions are cluttered, overcrowded and there is animal excrement in most rooms.
- Laura and Gary are now responsible for caring for Gary's younger brother Martin
- Little is known about Gary's background history – Laura forms significant relationships over short periods
- Missed antenatal and breathing space appointments
- Can both parents maintain any progress they make
- Given the history and current concerns there is a likelihood unborn baby Lowton may also experience neglectful parenting

**Positives** – to include risk reducing factors, protective factors

- Both parents have been open about their drug misuse
- Possible support from paternal family – Joan Prince reported to be a positive support network
- Gary and Laura have been offered a home
- Gary and Laura have the correct benefits and want to find work
- Gary and Laura want the baby to remain in their care and say they want to work with agencies
- Laura has agreed to a further assessment with the Parent and Baby Mental Health team

**Changes required – “the outline plan” to include prospect/capacity of family to change and sustain that change**

- Laura and Gary not to use any more drugs - especially during the pregnancy and when the baby is born
- Laura and Gary to work with all services in order for a full assessment of their parenting abilities/background history can be completed which will inform future decision making for unborn Lowton
- For Laura to attend all antenatal appointments and the appointments offered by the mental health team
- For Laura, Gary and Joan Prince to tidy up the home conditions and make sure the house is not cluttered, is free from animal excrement and is free from any dangers i.e. loose wires
- Gary and Laura to visit the housing department and apply for housing
- For Joan Prince to have the full time caring responsibilities of Martin
- Social work visits 3 weekly as a minimum
- Discharge planning meeting to be held before unborn Lowton is discharged.
- Children’s Social Care to seek legal advice given the background history of neglect for Claire and Scarlet and current concerns.
- As Laura, Gary and Joan have shown a willingness to work with agencies, it demonstrates a prospect of this family’s ability to change

Daily lived experience

If unborn Lowton was to be born today she would be cared for in a house which is overcrowded and cluttered, is full of dangers including loose wiring, is unhygienic and given the past parenting history highlighted above, she is likely to receive care which consists of no routines, inconsistent feeding and sleeping in dirty bedding.

Analysis

Laura Lowton has had two previous children removed at separate times, from her care as a result of neglect. Both of these children now live permanently with their maternal grandparents. Details of their respective birth fathers are unknown. In early 2017 Laura Lowton quickly formed a significant relationship with Gary Prince, whom she had met through her father. Laura is now pregnant with the couple’s first child and the initial assessment of parent’s situation is that it mirrors the historical concerns of neglect. Positively despite missing a number of antenatal appointments and sessions with the Breathing Space Project Laura and Gary have said they would like to work with services to address the current worries.

**Social Worker recommendation**

A child protection plan under the category of neglect is required to enable a further period of assessment of both parents.

**Outcome of this Assessment**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Child in Need Plan (provision of services)      | <input type="checkbox"/> Specialist Assessment                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Child Protection Plan not recommended           | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Child Protection Plan recommended |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Immediate legal action to protect the child/ren | <input type="checkbox"/> No further action                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other   | <input type="checkbox"/> Private Fostering arrangement                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Provide Accommodation (Including Respite Care)  | <input type="checkbox"/> Refer elsewhere                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Strategy Discussion                             |   |

**Views and comments of child(ren)/young person(s) - (provide name of child/young person before comments if**

**applicable)**

Unborn Lowton is due on 25<sup>th</sup> December 2017; however if she were here and able to express her views, it is anticipated she would want a safe and secure home whereby all of her needs are met at all times.

**Views and comments of parent(s)/main carer(s)/significant adult(s) - (provide name of parent/main carer before comments if applicable)**

Laura has expressed the following views during this assessment:

- She feels she has changed her lifestyle e.g. trying to give up smoking
- She is in a more stable relationship and home life better
- She understands she “can’t just do what [she] wants when she wants” and feels her “priorities have changed”
- She is willing to access help including mental health services
- The couple have started to talk to each other more now
- The couple are financially supported now and both want to find work
- She is a lot more prepared for the birth
- They have a good support network
- She feels the timing of the psychological assessment was unfair because she had just had a baby

Gary has expressed the following views during this assessment:

- He agrees with all of the above
- He knows this is serious and his situation cannot be “taken lightly”
- He will support Laura and attend services and will work with them himself
- He feels he knows the background history and will care for the baby alone if he needs to

**Questionnaires, scales or other instruments used in the assessment (strengths and difficulties, parenting hassles,**

**recent life events, home conditions, family activity, alcohol, adult well-being, adolescent well-being, family assessment)**

Parents were offered the opportunity to complete a learning styles questionnaire, which identifies how best they receive and learn from information; however both declined.  
 A genogram and eco map has been completed during this assessment

**Signatures**

**Name and signature of Social Worker completing this report**

Name	Claire Cartwright
Signature	
Date	18.10.2017

**Comments of Team Manager**

Since this report has been written the case has been presented to LGM- PLO process has been agreed. Given the concerns there is a clear need for a child protection plan to run alongside this process. Social worker to share this report with the parents later today during their planned visit.

**Primary need**

**Team Manager**

Name	David Maher
Signature	
Date	19.10.2017

A typed name constitutes the signing of this document

**Appendix**

Please add Genogram and Ecomap as appendices

**Families provided with the following information**

Leaflets 1-9 can be accessed via this link to the Staffordshire Safeguarding Children’s Board Website  
<http://www.staffsscb.org.uk/Professionals/Publications/Publications.aspx>

<input type="checkbox"/> X 1. Child Protection Investigations – Information for Parents & Carers	<input type="checkbox"/> X 2. Child Protection Investigations – Information for Children & Young People
<input type="checkbox"/> X 3. Child Protection Leaflet – University Hospital of North Staffordshire	<input type="checkbox"/> 4. Child Protection Sexual Leaflet – University Hospital of North Staffordshire
<input type="checkbox"/> 5. Child Protection Medical Examination Leaflet for Parents & Carers (South Staffs & Shropshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust)	<input type="checkbox"/> 6. Child Protection Medical Examination Leaflet for Young People (South Staffs & Shropshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust)
<input type="checkbox"/> X 7. Child Protection Conferences – Information for Parents & Carers	<input type="checkbox"/> 8. Child Protection Conferences – Information for Children & Young People
<input type="checkbox"/> X 9. Core Group Information for Parents & Carers	<input type="checkbox"/> 10. Complaints procedure
<input type="checkbox"/> 11. Information on access to records	

**Please list any other leaflets provided**

Parents have been provided with the above leaflets.



**Distribution of the Report**

**Distribution of the report - child/young person**

	Child/young person 1	Child/young person 2	Child/young person 3
Name of child/young person			
Copy of report given (Yes/No/Declined)			
If No or Declined, why?			
Report discussed with them (Yes/No/Declined)			
If No or Declined, why?			

**Distribution of the report - parent(s)/main carer(s)**

	Parent/main carer 1	Parent/main carer 2
Name of parent(s)/main carer(s)	Laura Lowton	Gary Prince
Copy of report given (Yes/No/Declined)	Yes 19.10.2017	Yes 19.10.2017
If No or Declined, why?		
Report discussed with them (Yes/No/Declined)	Yes 19.10.2017	Yes 19.10.2017
If No or Declined, why?		

**Additional distribution list**

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**Child/young person 1**

**Name**

**Signature (physical)**

**Date**

**Child/young person 2**

**Name**

**Signature (physical)**

**Date**

**Child/young person 3**

**Name**

**Signature (physical)**

**Date**

**Parent/main carer 1**

**Name**

**Signature (physical)**

**Date**

**Parent/main carer 2**

**Name**

**Signature (physical)**

**Date**

This comments and signature page relates to Child Social Work Assessment to Initial Child Protection Conference

Dated