

Who should be the assessor?

Assessors need to be:

- sensitive to racial and cultural variations;
- aware of barriers to social integration of families with a disabled child or young person;
- aware of the implications of disabilities for child development and for families;
- capable of objectively recording evidence rather than their own assumptions about need;
- good listeners;
- innovative when trying to elicit the views of children and parents with communication difficulties;

and they need to show genuine interest.

Most importantly they must have a sound knowledge of safeguarding processes and the role and membership of local support agencies, voluntary or statutory. They must also have time to carry out the assessment and be involved, if necessary, in any subsequent reviews.

The assessor must be able to refer to the designated persons within your context (there should be a designated person for each agency) who can provide support and advice about the process of arranging a meeting. In the case of a child with complex needs, the number of people involved can be daunting: the parents, nurse, dietician, Educational Welfare Officer, representative from Council's Housing Services, teacher, consultant paediatrician, occupational therapist, physiotherapist, etc.

Who will this designated person be? Who will chair the meeting? Who will keep minutes? Who will monitor the implementation of the plan of action? Who will liaise with other agencies that need to be involved? How will the child and parents be empowered to be fully involved?

It is for individual schools to determine who should undertake common assessments and therefore who will need training. It is likely that there will be a focus of staff already involved in pastoral care; for example, education welfare officers, behaviour and education support teams, learning mentors and special educational needs coordinators (SENCOs). There is not a requirement for classroom teachers to undertake common assessments.