

UNBORN BABY ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS RE PARENTAL SUBSTANCE MISUSE ‘Standing Conference on Drug Abuse Guidelines’ (SCODA)

Substanceq refers to both legal and illicit substances, for example heroin, cocaine, crack, amphetamines, benzodiazepines, LSD, methadone, ecstasy, prescription drugs, solvents and problematic alcohol use.

Any assessment of risk and need must include all relevant factors e.g. domestic abuse, previous harm to a child, previous poor parenting etc. The following questions focus only on substance misuse. The answers will contribute to a wider assessment of risk and need.

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| Parental drug use | |
| 1. Is there a drug free parent, supportive partner or relative? | Yes No |
| 2. Is the drug use by the parent experimental, recreational, dependent, chaotic? | |
| 3. Does the user move between categories at different times? | Yes No |
| 4. Does the drug use also involve alcohol? | Yes No |
| 5. Are the levels of child-care different when a parent is using drugs and when not using? | Yes No |
| 6. Is there any evidence of mental health problems alongside the drug use? | Yes No |
| 7. If there is evidence of mental health problems? | Yes No |
| 8. Did the drug use cause these problems or have these problems led to the drug use? | |
| Accommodation and the home environment | |
| 9. Is the accommodation adequate for the children? | Yes No |
| 10. Are the parents ensuring that the rent and bills are paid? | Yes No |
| 11. Does the family remain in one area or move frequently? | Yes No |
| 12. If the family move frequently, why? | |
| 13. Are other drug users sharing the accommodation? | Yes No |
| 14. If other drug users are sharing the accommodation, are the relationships harmonious or is there conflict? | Yes No |
| 15. Is the family living in a drug using community? | Yes No |
| 16. If parents are using drugs, do the children witness the taking of drugs and other substances? | Yes No |
| 17. Could other aspects of the drug use constitute a risk to children (e.g. conflict with or between dealers, exposure to criminal activities related to drug use) | Yes No |

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| Provision of basic needs | | |
| 18. Is there adequate food, clothing and warmth for the children? | Yes | No |
| 19. Are the children attending school regularly? | Yes | No |
| 20. Are the children attending school regularly? | Yes | No |
| 21. Are the children engaged in age-appropriate activities? | Yes | No |
| 22. Are the children's emotional needs being adequately met? | Yes | No |
| 23. Are there any indications that any of the children are taking on a parenting role within the family (e.g. caring for other children, excessive household responsibilities)? | Yes | No |
| Procurement of drugs | | |
| 24. Are the children left alone while their parents are procuring drugs? | Yes | No |
| 25. Because of their parents drug use, are the children taken to places where they could be at risk? | Yes | No |
| 26. How much are the drugs costing? | | |
| 27. How is the money obtained? | | |
| 28. Is this causing financial problems? | Yes | No |
| 29. Are the premises being used to sell drugs? | Yes | No |
| 30. Are the parents allowing their premises to be used by other drug users? | Yes | No |
| Health risks | | |
| 31. If drugs and/or injecting equipment are kept on the premises, are they kept securely? | Yes | No |
| 32. Are the children aware of where the drugs are kept? | Yes | No |
| 33. If the parents are injecting drug users: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do they share injecting equipment? ▪ Do they use a needle exchange? ▪ How do they dispose of syringes? ▪ Are they aware of health risks? | Yes Yes Yes Yes | No No No No |
| 34. If parents are on a substitute prescribing programme such as methadone: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Are they aware of the dangers of children gaining access to the medication? ▪ Do they take adequate precautions to ensure that this does not happen? | Yes Yes | No No |

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| 35. Are the parents aware of and in touch with local specialist agencies who can advise on issues such as needle exchange, substitute prescribing, detoxification and rehabilitation facilities? | Yes | No |
| 36. If they are in touch, how regular is the contact? | | |
| 37. Family social networks and support systems | Yes | No |
| 38. Do parents and children associate primarily with other drug users, non-users or both? | Yes | No |
| 39. Are relatives aware of the drug use? | Yes | No |
| 40. Are they supportive? | Yes | No |
| 41. Will the parents accept help from the relatives and other professional or non- statutory services? | Yes | No |
| Parents' perception of the situation | | |
| 42. Do parents see their drug use as harmful to themselves or their children? | Yes | No |
| 43. Do parents place their own needs before the needs of their children? | Yes | No |
| 44. Are the parents aware of the legislative and procedural context applying to their circumstances (e.g. child protection procedures statutory powers)? | Yes | No |
| SUMMARY OF FINDINGS ABOUT PARENTAL SUBSTANCE MISUSE | | |
| Parental drug use | | |
| Accommodation and the home environment | | |
| Provision of basic needs | | |
| Provision of basic needs | | |
| Procurement of drugs | | |
| Health risks | | |
| Parents' perception of the situation | | |
| Analysis and Conclusions in relation to Parental Substance Misuse | | |
| Proposals to Meet Child's Needs | | |