

Feedback from Thresholds Consultation

July 2015

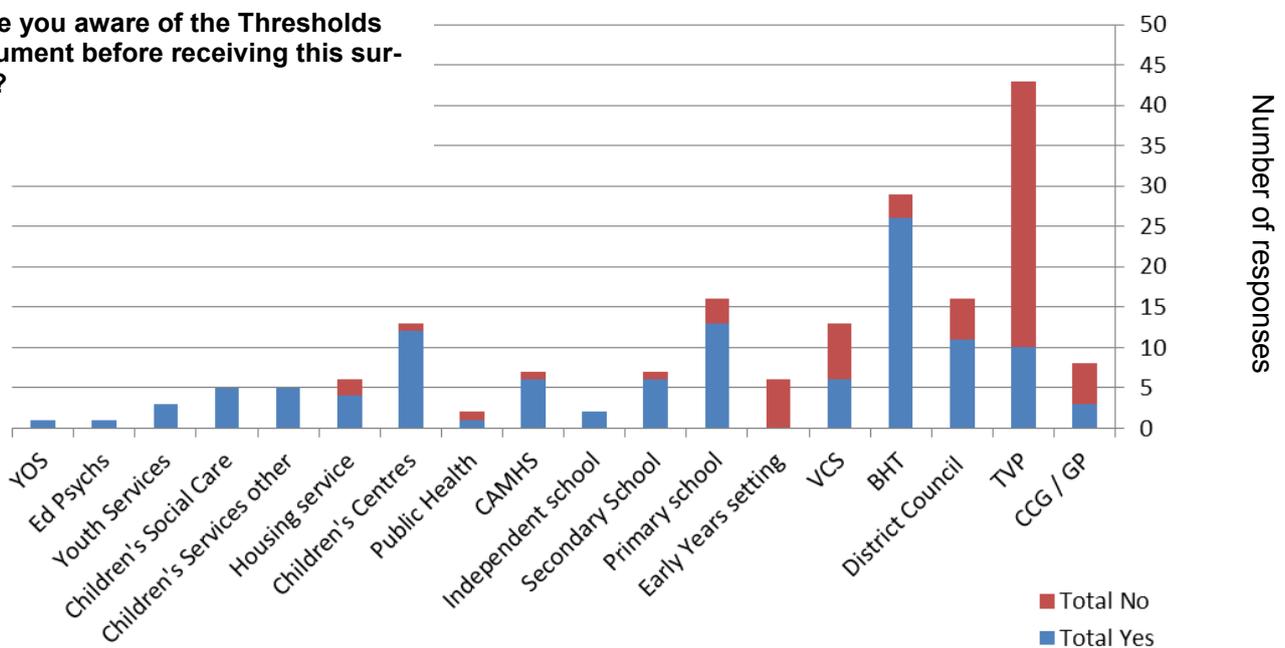
The Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Board (BSCB) ran a consultation on the Multi-Agency Thresholds document during March and April 2015.

We had 241 responses from across a wide range of agencies. The results have been looked at in detail and a number of changes have been made to the Thresholds document as a result. The revised version can be found at: www.bucks-lscb.org.uk/professionals/thresholds-document/

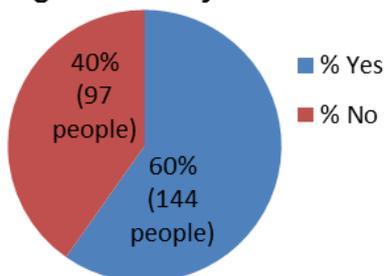
Many thanks to everyone who took time to answer the survey – we really value your input!

Key Findings

Were you aware of the Thresholds document before receiving this survey?



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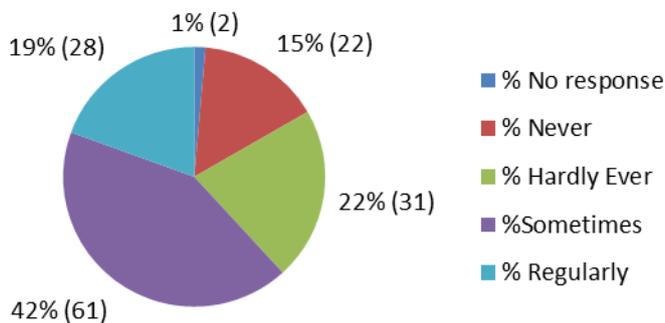
"I use it regularly in discussion with my team to identify whether a family they are working with is likely to meet threshold. I also use it when we are considering step downs to see if it meets level 3 criteria." (Family Resilience Service)

"Used when planning next stage of interventions for families to ascertain that they are receiving the correct level of support." (Children's Centre)

"Where I have received concerns about child welfare, I have looked at this to help me measure the risk and consider what course of action to take." (School Nursing)

Key Findings

Do you use the Thresholds document in your day to day work?



“The document is on my notice board in front of my desk and has been shared with Heads of year at the school and with my Deputy Safeguarding Leads. As Designated Safeguarding Lead in a large secondary school, I use the document to help inform my decisions as to when to seek external support and advice regarding a student. I also use it to reassure myself that decisions I have taken are in line with guidance.” (Secondary School)

Changes to Thresholds document

- Acronyms explained in full at first instance of use.
- Clearer information in the ‘what to do next’ row which describes the referral process attached to each level of need. This also better reflects the new Early Help offer and single front door.
- Clearer information around children in need (CIN). There were a number of comments about CIN. Some people felt CIN should fall into level 4, others felt there needs to be a distinction within level 3 between Family Resilience and CIN because of the statutory responsibilities relating to CIN and others suggested having 5 levels so that Family Resilience and CIN could be split into separate levels. The Thresholds guidance currently states that level 3 includes both specialist and statutory responses and clearly places CIN in this category. This is now better reflected in the Thresholds document, with CIN marked in the title row of level 3. CIN is not in level 4 because although it does require a statutory response, it does not *always* require a statutory intervention. We will look at the guidance to ensure the explanation around CIN is clear.
- Examples of services added in level 3.
- Small changes made to ensure accurate and consistent listing of services at levels 1, 2 and 4. A couple of additional services have also been added at these levels.
- Clearer information added around children with disabilities to reflect that they may be found across all 4 levels of need.
- Clearer reference to the way child sexual exploitation fits in to the different levels of need.
- Developmental needs sections under levels 3 and 4 now include reference to developmental milestones.
- Minor amendments to the Level of Assessment row to improve accuracy (in particular in relation to CAMHS).
- Clearer link to the Buckinghamshire Family Information Service (BFIS) website which can provide a full directory of services, including those linked to Early Help. This was felt to be preferable to having an appendix to the Thresholds document containing key contacts as this could quickly become out of date.
- Advice added that the document prints best on A3 paper.

“I think the one sheet summary works really well and the fact that it includes parenting capacity is useful for staff who work in adult services.” (Anonymous)

- Specific reference now made to the MARF (multi-agency referral form). There was some concern that staff are not using the language of the Thresholds document when making referrals, and that making specific reference to the MARF could help to improve this.

BSCB response to other comments

1 Some of the wording is vague / is difficult to apply to particular age ranges

The Thresholds document needs to apply across a range of ages and needs, whilst also remaining a reference document that can be effectively used by professionals across a range of agencies. We have tried to be as specific as possible in the language used, but also recognise that across different agencies professionals will be familiar with different language and terminology. In the revised version, we have made some minor amendments under levels 3 and 4 to include reference to developmental milestones to try and increase relevance to babies and younger children.

There may be some instances where professionals need to work on a 'best match' basis, but as stated in the Thresholds guidance, practitioners should use their professional judgement, experience and training and not restrict their considerations to the example indicators contained within the chart. The indicators are not exhaustive and children's needs do not always clearly fit into the specific levels.

If professionals need support or advice in making a judgement they should discuss this with their line manager or designated safeguarding advisor.

2 Some of the wording describes behaviour that is common in young people

Some of the factors are common in young people. As is stated in the Thresholds Guidance, practitioners will need to take into account the presence of single or multiple combinations of factors. The age and resilience of the child and protective factors will all need to be taken into account. In particular, practitioners will need to take into account the cumulative effect of factors on the child.

3 The Thresholds document should include contact details for the agencies that are mentioned / should give target response times for agencies

Contact details are provided for First Response and the Police due to their role in responding to situations needing urgent and immediate attention. However, there is not room to list contact details for all agencies or provide detailed information on response times. In addition, adding such details may encourage people to view the document as a directory of services when this is not its function. Whilst some examples of services are provided at each level, this list is not exhaustive.

The updated version has a clearer link to the Buckinghamshire Family Information Service (BFIS) website where a full list of services, including contact details, can be found.

4 More examples of services should be added / Needs to list more services linked to the Early Help Offer

We have added a few additional examples of services, in particular at level 3 where none were previously listed. However, the intent is only to provide examples of services not an exhaustive list. A clearer link has been made to the BFIS website which provides a full directory of services including those linked to our Early Help offer.

5 The document should include information about what agencies provide as there can be wrong assumptions made about the support that is offered

The Thresholds document is designed to be a reference document which will inform a decision about how to best respond to a child's needs. It is not a comprehensive list of services, neither is there room in the document to provide information about what agencies provide.

In the updated version of the document a clearer link has been provided to the Buckinghamshire Family Information Service where more detailed information on all agencies can be found. Agencies should ensure that any information relating to them on the BFIS website is up to date, and that they have appropriate communication channels in place to help professionals access information about the services they offer.

BSCB response to other comments

6 Some examples need to be included - particularly cases where a judgement call might be involved

There is not room in the Thresholds document to provide such examples. Multi-agency training delivered by the BSCB provides an opportunity to discuss the Thresholds document in more detail, including talking through some less clear cut cases.

The results of this consultation suggest there is more work needed to embedded the document across agencies and we will be looking at ways to support this through further training and learning opportunities. We will ensure that these include opportunities to discuss or think through more difficult examples. The BSCB Policies and Procedures Sub Group will also be making some revisions to the Thresholds Guidance and we will discuss how we can best incorporate some examples in to this.

7 Can we have a larger font version / smaller wallet sized version / interactive version

There were some requests for the document to be available in different formats. The Policies and Procedures Sub Group has agreed to look at some options to meet these requests. We will feedback once this has been considered in more detail.

8 Having it in colour is not helpful in organisations where colour printers are rare

The graded colouring has been included to represent a spectrum of need. This can be helpful especially as we know the document is often printed and displayed. When printed in black and white this 'spectrum' is still clear. However as part of their consideration of alternative formats the Policies and Procedures Sub Group will consider an alternative version with no background colour. In the near future we will also be making free A3, colour, laminated versions available for people to display in their workplace.

9 It would be helpful to have an accompanying decision flow diagram that can be followed for concerns

The Policies and Procedures Sub Group will consider this alongside their review of alternative formats.

10 The Thresholds document needs to be more widely disseminated / more training needs to be offered

The BSCB has now embedded the Thresholds document into all BSCB multi-agency training. However, the results of this consultation show there is more work to be done. The Policies and Procedures Sub Group will take the lead on developing a plan for further dissemination, training and learning in partnership with some of our other Sub Groups.

Further Information & Contacts

- **Thresholds document and guidance:**
www.bucks-lscb.org.uk/professionals/thresholds-document/
- **The Buckinghamshire Family Information Service (BFIS)** website provides a full directory of services and contact details including further details of our Early Help Offer:
www.bucksfamilyinfo.org/kb5/buckinghamshire/fsd/home.page

"Use it as guidance to identify level of need of a child and whether to refer or seek further help to meet those needs." (Voluntary & Community Sector)