

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.

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

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

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		
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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		