Thresholds for Assessment and the Continuum of Need.

In order to support decision making processes and in an attempt to provide some guidance to staff the LSCB has developed a ‘Thresholds Guidance’. Thresholds are the tipping points that define what assessments should be done with children, young people and their families. The use of threshold is the starting point for a dialogue between relevant agencies that focuses on the child’s and family’s needs in order to decide what the best action to be taken is.

The continuum of need in Oldham has four levels of descriptors agreed by the LSCB, these levels help professionals to decide what assessments / support the children, young people and their families require. The continuum of need model recognises that the needs of children and their families are dynamic and depend upon a range of circumstances, therefore response from the professionals will need to reflect where they are on the continuum at any given point. Children and families level of need and vulnerability across the continuum of need can increase or decrease at any given time.

**Level 4 – Child Protection:** When it is believed that a child, young person is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm the local authority must enquire and make an informed decision to ensure the safety and welfare of the child, young person is protected. This would result in a referral to social care.

**Adult Protection:** Serious / Critical - Where there are immediate risks to the safety and/or independence of a vulnerable adult

**Level 3 – Child in Need:** Children, Young People where there is a high risk of their health and development being impaired without assessment and intervention because there are more complex difficulties evident. Such children, young people may be likely to move into Level 4 without the provision of services based on assessed needs. These may also include children, young people who have been assessed at Level 4 in the recent past.

**Adult in Need:** Substantial where there are significant risks to safety and independence of a vulnerable adult

**Level 2 – Family CAF:** Children, Young People, their Parents/Carers and other adults in the family have emerging, or are presenting with, additional needs then a Family CAF should be undertaken this may possibly identify some short-term interventions from services. At this stage Children’s Social Care is not required, the identification of early stresses and provision of services should reduce the likelihood of escalating problems.

**Level 1 – Universal services:** Children, Young People and Adults where their needs are being met by universal services, such as Housing, Mainstream Education, Primary Health Care, Community Resources and Children’s Centres, with telephone advice and the ad hoc home visit.