**Practical Questions to help identify strengths and needs**

The questions presented are NOT intended to be seen as a ‘script’ for the assessment (and not all questions will be relevant or need to be asked). They are a bank of possible questions that should aid thinking in respect of the type of questions that a Lead Family worker might use for each point of the Family Outcomes Star. The questions could be of particular use to new or less experienced practitioners approaching assessment for the first time. Practitioners will need to use their experience and professional judgment, guided by training and these examples to determine how best to select questions in order to explore and evidence areas of strength and need.

Although certain questions have been allocated to a particular point on the star , they are flexible and depending on the answers may cover more than one point on the assessment.

Also it is key to remember that assessment is not just about questions, your observations of the home ,body language and the type and tone of responses are all relevant.

**General Questions and technique**

**Phrases to help open up a dialogue:**

* How are things are at the moment /since the referral was made?
* Can you tell me about who is in your family?

**Phrases to help gain a greater understanding:**

* Have there been any changes in your family recently
* It sounds like there’s a lot going on, what worries you the most/what you’d like to talk more about?
* Can I check that I’ve got this right….?

**Linking feelings with facts:**

* Let me check …. you feel angry/frustrated/sad because…….

**Affirming:**

* “I can see that things are difficult at the moment” this validates their story
* “however you managed to…..” acknowledges their strength and encourages and isn’t just focusing on negatives.

**Summarising**

* “You’ve shared/talked about a lot of things today. So let’s recap/see where we’ve got to……” this provides another opportunity to check for accuracy and understanding and also to clarify priorities.

**Phrases to help develop an action plan and find solutions:**

* “If things get better, how would that look?”
* “If you woke up tomorrow and knew it was better, what would have changed?”
* “When things where better than they are now, what was happening then to make it better?”
* “What kind of support would help you?”
* Are there any barriers to prevent you achieving your and the children’s goals?

**Physical Health**

* Are you registered with a doctor & dentist?
* Has anyone in the family had a recent illness?
* Do you have any worries or concerns about your own or any other family members health?
* Do the children sleep well?
* Has any health issues affected your child’s school attendance?
* Does your child have a lot of energy?
* Has your child had all their immunisations/development checks?
* Does your child have any allergies?
* Do you feel you all have a variety of foods and diet?
* Are any of the children fussy eaters?
* Is anyone taking prescribed medication? Are there any difficulties with this?
* Do you see any other health staff?

**Education and learning**

* How would you describe your child’s behaviour at school?
* Can you child follow instructions?
* What subjects/toys do they like best?
* What is your child attendance like at school? Are they in school on time?
* Do you have worries or concerns about their education?
* Do you attend parents evening or other school events?
* Do they do their homework? Who helps them with homework?
* Do they attend pre-school?
* What do you want for your child?
* What does your child wish for the future?

**Your well-being**

* Are you the main carer for the children?
* Do you feel stressed or anxious?
* Do you feel you are able to have a good sleep pattern?
* Do you feel you’re able to enjoy being with the children?
* Do you care for anyone outside the family home/or other adult family members?
* How would you describe your emotional well-being?

**Meeting emotional needs**

* Does your child/ren have a close relationship with family members?
* Does your child talk to you or another family member about their day or if something is bothering them?
* Does your child spend a lot of time on their own?
* Does your child make or have friends?
* Do you have concerns about your child/rens group of friends?
* Does your child have a best friend?
* How do they behave with their friends?
* What impact do friends have on your child?
* How does your child cope with stress or strong emotions such as anger and frustration?
* What makes your child happy/sad?
* Do you feel you get on as a family or is there lots of arguing?

**Keeping your children safe**

* Do you feel the children are safe at home/at school/in the community?
* When they go out do you know where they are and who they are with?
* Do you have access to any mobile phones/social networks your children have? And how regularly do you check this?
* Who would care for the children if you were unable to or ill?
* Have the police had to attend your home? And if so what was this for?
* Do you feel any current of past relationships pose a threat to you or the children?

**Physical Health**

**Boundaries and behaviour**

* How would you describe your child’s behaviour?
* Do you have any worries about your child’s behaviour?
* Do you find managing any aspects of your child’s behaviour difficult to manage?
* Tell be about how you manage difficult or challenging behaviour?
* Do you feel able to be consistent?
* Do you think the children understand the consequences for poor behaviour?
* Do you think your discipline is appropriate and effective?

**Home & money**

* How long have you lived in this home/area?
* What happened to make you leave your previous home?
* What type of tenancy do you have?
* Is there enough space for everybody?
* Do you have any outstanding repairs or alterations?
* Have you been or are you at risk of eviction?
* Do you have an income?
* How do you manage to budget for food/clothes and bills?
* Do you have any concerns about money?
* Are you sure you’re claiming all your entitled benefits?
* Have you received support with your finances before? if so who and when and was it helpful?

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**Social networks**

* Who do you turn to for help if there was a sudden problem?
  + What do they do?
  + How often?
* Do you attend any social activities in your area?
* Do you attend any groups with or without your children?
* How much time do you spend with other family or friends?
* Are there other people who are important to you who live nearby?
* Do you get help with shopping, childcare arrangements?
* Do you feel safe in your neighbourhood?
* Do the children go to any clubs or activities?

**Family routine**

* Do the children have a bedtime routine and regular bed time?
* Describe a typical day’s routine for the children?
* Do you or another family member have any health concerns that affect your daily routine?
* How do the children get to school/pre-school?

**Progress to work**

* Have you been able to find employment?
* Would you like to find or change your employment?
* Would you like to access additional support for qualifications or training?