



A TOOL FOR ASSESSING ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS

- **An Aide-Memoire for Professionals who need to identify the Physical Aspects of a Child's Environment**

Introduction:

This tool may be used in conjunction with the *Framework For Assessment of Children in Need and their Families* and the *Warwickshire Risk Assessment Model*. It may also be used by professionals where they simply wish to test the concerns they might have about a child's physical environment.

To these ends, it is intended as a medium for identifying and attempting to quantify actual and potential hazards in this environment, particularly where there are very young children.

These physical aspects are best re-visited as work with a family proceeds and wider assessments are updated. Changes or deterioration in the child's environment should prompt a review of the original assessment.

The professional's observations arising from the application of this tool may guide the action they believe should be taken to promote improvements in the child's physical environment e.g. an application for re-housing or prompting safety measures by those with responsibility for some aspect of the quality of the child's environment. There may be significant scope for the latter if concerns can be more accurately identified and articulated using this tool.

The tool is not intended to provide an exhaustive list of potential hazards – its purpose is to prompt an analysis by the professional of this aspect of the child and family's circumstances. As with all assessments, it will be necessary to take time to explain to the service-user the terminology used in the tool, a process that should help to engage the family in jointly identifying hazards in and around their home.

- 1. Describe the nature of the child's housing**
 - House
 - Bungalow
 - Ground Floor Flat
 - High Rise Flat
 - Maisonette
 - Caravan
 - Other...Please Specify

- 2. Is the accommodation in a good state of repair or is there evidence of dilapidation?**

- 3. Is access to the accommodation good or are there hazards to be negotiated that make access difficult or unsafe?**
 - Keep in mind: steps and stairs both inside and outside the home, stair-rails (safe, unsafe or missing), stairwells, lifts, location of front doors, side doors, back doors, alley-ways.
 - Hazards may not be apparent – stairs and rails may seem fine but doors at the bottom of stairs and glass panels may increase the risk of injury.
 - How easy is it to manage push-chairs, buggies, prams etc?
 - Would you be concerned about bushes, trees, rough paths, driveways, cluttered walkways, hedges?

- 4. Are there potential hazards related to the risk of falling from windows above ground floor level or falling from landings?**
 - where a child can climb onto ranch style banister rails for example.

- 5. What is the quality of lighting inside and outside the accommodation like?**
 - For example, is it so limited or unsafe that it poses a potential hazard?

- 6. Are there other potential off/on street hazards?**
 - For example, in relation to car parking, areas used by children for play.

- 7. Do you have concerns about the presence of any animals and whether these pose any threats to the child's health and safety?**
 - Would you have any concerns about the welfare of these animals which may need to be reported? (WSCB has links with the RSPCA in the region)

- 8. Are there any noxious fumes or smells in the environment that are likely to pose any threats to the health and safety of the child?**
 - For example, are there any signs of un-maintained and unsafe gas equipment?

- 9. Collision and Entrapment – Are there hazards in the home with which a child may come into contact?**
 - e.g. sash windows, the sashes broken and potential for closing on fingers

10. Can you identify any potential Electrical Hazards? –

- **Bearing in mind that children are the age group most likely to receive an electric shock.**
- **Are there indications that household wiring may be hazardous?**

11. Would you have concerns about any other aspect(s) of the child's physical environment?

- **For example, a lack of smoke alarms and other potential fire hazards.**
- **Poor or unsafe kitchen or bathroom facilities.**
- **The state of garden areas where children may play, including whether there are adequate safety measures in place in relation to any ponds or pools (e.g. secure gates, fencing etc).**

12. What is your overall assessment of the physical environment of the child and their family?

Name and Job Title of Person Undertaking the Assessment:

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Date of Assessment

Warwickshire Safeguarding Children Board –Revised October 2009.