**A 12-step process for assessing the risk of re-abuse to a child, parenting capacity and prospects of rehabilitation**

1. Examine the overall levels of harm, past and present and examine the impact on the child’s health and safety, educational issues, emotional life, behaviour and identity and how the children’s needs were met in the past and currently.
2. Assess the level of parenting, protection and therapeutic work the child requires, considering the levels and extensiveness of harm, and factors which would act as an additional factor requiring particular parenting skills, eg disability.
3. Establish the following: do parents acknowledge the level of harm? Can they take appropriate responsibility for harm? Do they acknowledge the need for protection and therapeutic work to ensure the child’s future safety and recovery?
4. Consider the level of parenting capacity in the areas of provision of basic care, ensuring safety and providing emotional warmth, stimulation, guidance, boundaries and stability.
5. Establish whether parents acknowledge the nature and level of current difficulties in parenting capacity and whether they have the motivation to achieve change.
6. Assess the parents’ potential to respond to the child’s needs and to develop their parenting capacity to help children recover from abusive effects and achieve their potential.
7. Identify the influence of individual and family factors on parenting capacity, considering factors from the parents’ childhood, health, relationships, family organisation and family relationships, including with the wider family.
8. Find out whether the parents acknowledge the role of individual and family factors and their effect on parenting and their level of motivation to change.
9. Assess the potential for change in individual and family factors and respond to intervention and improve parenting to meet the children’s needs.
10. Consider the role of environmental factors such as housing, employment, income and family integration and their impact on parenting, individual and family functioning and the parents’ capacity to meet the children’s needs.
11. Establish whether parents recognise the role of environmental factors and the potential for change.
12. Explore the nature of family-professional relationships, and establish whether there is a potential for working together and the availability of resources to achieve change within the child’s timeframe.

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