

## Q4 SCOPING DEMAND – ARE YOU CLEAR ABOUT THE SIZE OF THE PROBLEM YOU WANT FDAC TO ADDRESS?

### ASSESSING THE LEVEL OF NEED FOR FDAC

Your scoping of suitable cases for FDAC will indicate how many cases are likely to be referred to FDAC during a year.

Scoping means collating information on the number of care proceedings issued in the most recent 12-month period that had parental substance misuse as a key feature. Include cases that also involve parental mental health and domestic abuse issues.

This information is not always easy to identify. You will almost certainly have to carry out some manual searching of files as local authority data systems may not support a search for parental substance misuse and care proceedings. You will probably need to combine case information from the children's services legal department and social work teams with that held by your local court administrators. In Milton Keynes and Buckinghamshire, for example, an audit of cases by the local court proved particularly helpful in pinpointing both the number of potential FDAC cases and their geographical distribution, the latter being invaluable for helping determine where to locate the FDAC office and court hearing centre.

Disseminating information about your proposal for a local FDAC service is another way of identifying possible cases. Interested professionals (social workers, child protection chairs, local authority and family lawyers and IROs) can be invited to alert you to cases where parental substance misuse is causing or likely to cause significant harm to the child or children. Independent Reviewing Officers are relevant here because children of parents with substance misusing difficulties might be in section 20 accommodation (s.76 in Wales).

The information you need is:

the number of care proceedings issued in one year

the number of these cases where parental substance misuse and domestic abuse and/or parental mental health were a key factor in issuing proceedings

from which local authorities (if scoping across more than one area)

the number of cases in pre proceedings in a one year period where parental substance misuse (and DA and/or Mental health) was a key factor in concerns

if the information is available, geographical plotting of where cases come from.

## COLLECTING BASELINE DATA FOR COMPARISON AND FOR VALUE FOR MONEY:

It is also helpful to record what happened with the cases identified: the final orders made, how long the case took, whether the children were looked after children during the course of the proceedings, and what was spent on expert assessments obtained pre-proceedings and/or during proceedings. Collecting this information will give you a baseline against which to measure the outcomes from the first year of operation of your FDAC.

The information you need is:

the number of cases over a period of a year where parental substance misuse and domestic abuse and/or parental mental health were a key factor in issuing proceedings (as above)

the number, type and cost of expert assessments commissioned by the LA in pre-proceedings in your sample cases

the number, type and cost of expert assessments ordered by the court once proceedings were issued in your sample cases

overall length of proceedings of your sample cases

the total number of hearings in your sample cases

in how many of your sample cases were there contested final hearings

give the timings of all contested final hearings in your sample

the legal costs of proceedings for the local authority (what did they pay for legal representation, per case in your sample if possible, if not, an average spend on legal representation in care proceedings)

the number of children in each of your sample cases

the age of the children in each case: use 0-4;5-10; 11-18

placements of the children in your sample during the proceedings – at home, with relatives, kinship foster care, foster care, residential

final orders on each child at the end of proceedings

placements of each child at the end of proceedings

the number of mothers in your sample cases who have had a previous child removed through care proceedings.

*We recommend using or adapting the scoping template provided in the templates section of 'Starting an FDAC'*