Centre for Justice Innovation

## SCOPING DEMAND – ARE YOU CLEAR ABOUT THE POTENTIAL NUMBER OF CASES FOR FDAC IN YOUR AREA?

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

For the scoping exercise you will probably need to combine case information available from the previous year 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.

The evaluation of the London FDAC established that many cases also include parental mental health and domestic abuse issues. This is why scoping of case numbers should include those cases where substance misuse is part of a range of overlapping and complex problem.

Disseminating information about your proposal for a local FDAC service is another likely way of identifying possible cases. Interested professionals (social workers, CP 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. IROs are relevant here because children of parents with substance misusing difficulties might be in section 20 accommodation.

Another way of approaching this task is to develop a profile of all the cases where - from the child's perspective - you should be seriously considering care proceedings, and then identify which of those cases involve parental substance misuse, domestic abuse and mental health as factors contributing to your concerns.

### ASSESSING THE LEVEL OF NEED FOR AN FDAC

The information you need:

- 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.


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## COLLECTING BASELINE INFORMATION

While scoping the potential number of cases for an FDAC, it is also helpful to collect some baseline information about cases which in future might be referred into FDAC. This will help you with measuring outcomes once your FDAC is up and running and with making the value for money case for sustaining FDAC in your area.

### Collecting baseline data for comparison and for value for money

The information you need:

- 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
- 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 proceeding


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## WHAT RELEVANT SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE IN YOUR AREA?

The FDAC teams will provide some of the interventions that parents are assessed as needing. They will also be helping parents' access local services and so you will need to develop a clear picture of the relevant services that are available in the area and where they are located. You will want to build up a picture of where services are located, what referral systems are used, what thresholds and exclusions apply, how many people can be catered for and the speed of entry to the service. Doing this exercise will also draw attention to any services that are not provided locally.

The information you need:

- the range of community and residential adult drug and alcohol treatment services (detox, prescribing, rehab)
- the psychosocial services for parents to achieve and maintain abstinence from street drugs & alcohol
- the services working with parents and children where parental substance misuse is an issue
- specialist midwifery services for pregnant women affected by substance misuse
- specialist health services for adults affected by substance misuse
- types of adult and child/adolescent mental health services and access issues
- talking therapies for individuals/couples/families affected by parental substance misuse/domestic violence/mental health issues
- parent support groups run by voluntary organisations
- support to women and children affected by domestic abuse
- psychosocial interventions to prevent intimate partner abuse
- services for domestic abuse perpetrators
- family support services
- hostels and housing support
- help with education, training & work
- child-centred interventions and activities
- job centres and advice agencies
- existing mentor schemes, and
- volunteer transport schemes.


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## THE IMPACT OF GEOGRAPHY

In order to get a realistic impression of how geography will impact on the viability of setting up an FDAC, it is helpful to collect information on where cases are likely to originate from, and consider the location of courts and services together with issues of transport, as follows:

- Location or locations of cases
- Location of possible courts
- Possible locations for FDAC team
- Map of local services
- Transport routes and types of transport
- Length and cost of journeys.


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