



### Contacts

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The C-Change Assessment Manual and supporting materials are free downloads on the C-Change website:

[www.capacitytochange.org.uk](http://www.capacitytochange.org.uk)

Links are also available to other relevant sources.

### Reference:

**Platt D. & Riches K. (2015),**  
C-Change: Capacity to Change Assessment Manual.  
Bristol, University of Bristol. [www.capacitytochange.org.uk](http://www.capacitytochange.org.uk)

# C-Change

## Capacity to Change

Assessment of Parental  
Capacity to Change

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## Assessment of Parental Capacity to Change

C-Change is a flexible approach to assessing parents' capacities to change where the children are in need or at risk of maltreatment. It is of interest to social workers in local authorities and other settings, and to other professionals working with children in need.

It focuses specifically on parental capacity to change, with the aim of better informing future planning and decision-making for the child. It is designed as a complementary process, to be used alongside standard methods of assessing children and their families, such as the *Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need, Signs of Safety*, or other equivalent approaches. For details of practice manual, see back of this leaflet.

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### The C-Change assessment combines two essential elements, understanding & action:

1. **Understanding** – assessing barriers and facilitators that are affecting the parents' attempts to change their behaviour;
2. **Action** – time-limited assessment of the parents' efforts to make changes (with appropriate support and intervention)

### 1. Understanding Barriers and Facilitators

C-Change provides a framework of barriers to and facilitators of change drawn from theories of behaviour change. Each barrier or facilitator is explained using practice examples, theory and research. The framework guides practitioners in exploring relevant issues with families. Supporting materials include questions to address with parents, and access to a range of scales and questionnaires.

### 2. Action – Assessing Actual Changes

C-Change draws on the work of Harnett<sup>1</sup> on assessing the significance of changes made by parents. The technique of Goal Attainment Scaling is key, and provides a careful and thorough approach to setting goals and reviewing progress. It offers clarity in identifying what is acceptable behaviour (in terms of ensuring the child's safety & well-being). At the same time, parents have found it useful and accessible.

Strategies in addition to Goal Attainment Scaling are offered, including observation and/or measurement of parents' behaviours, both before and after an intervention.

### Uses of C-Change

- Assessment of a child and family following a child protection conference.
- Supporting the choice and application of therapeutic or other interventions with a family.
- Assessment of a child and family following the issuing of a letter before proceedings.
- Parenting assessments for the Family Court.
- Planning or considering reunification.
- Planning contact arrangements.
- Working with so-called 'stuck' cases.

### Other Key Features of C-Change

- Supports clear identification of parental behaviours that need to change;

- Integrates flexibly with existing assessment processes;
- Applicable to all relevant parents/carers;
- Focuses on achieving change within child's timescale;
- A range of materials supports flexible usage. The approach can be tailored to individual and local needs.

### Introducing C-Change in your organisation

The University of Bristol can offer training and consultation. Training for practitioners is based on a two-day programme. However, for successful implementation, preliminary work with managers is recommended, to embed the approach within organisational systems and supervision arrangements.

### Benefits of C-Change

(based on pilot evaluation)

- Significantly improved practitioner skills, knowledge and confidence in assessing parental capacity to change;
- Improvements in social workers' analyses in assessments;
- Court reports well received by judges;
- Improved decision-making within the child's timescales, and potential avoidance of delay;
- Potential reductions in the need for expert witnesses during court proceedings.

<sup>1</sup> Harnett P. A Procedure for Assessing Parents' Capacity for Change in Child Protection Cases. Children and Youth Services Review 2007;29:1179-88.