

Virtual School

Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaires

Practice Guidance for Designated Teachers
of Educational Establishments

September 2020



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Introduction

Strengths and Difficulties questionnaires were introduced as a screening tool to assist in measuring the emotional and behavioural health of children and young people.

All Local Authorities are required to provide information on the emotional and behavioural health of children in care.

The data is collected through the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaires (SDQ) and a summary figure for each child (the total difficulties score) is the outcome measure used for tracking the emotional and behavioural difficulties of children in care at a national level.

When to use Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaires

It is best practice to use the questionnaire as part of the assessment processes, assisting with identifying need, analysis and planning.

While there is a requirement to use the SDQ for the circumstances below this does not exclude alternatives.

In North Yorkshire the SDQ must be completed for ;

- All children who have been subject to a Child Protection Plan for 12 months. The SDQ must be completed by the Review Child Protection Conference.
- All children subject to a Public Law Outline process.
- **All Children in Care between the ages of 4-16 (completed up until their 17th birthday)**
- All children who are on a Child Protection Plan and require a referral to the domestic abuse therapeutic service

Children in Care and the Personal Education Plan

Where this guidance refers to SDQ for schools this will also mean Further Education establishments and Early Years establishments depending on the age of the child/young person.

The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire is required to be completed for all children in care and will form part of the Personal Education Plan.

As you will appreciate, when children/young people experience emotional and behavioural difficulties this can impact on their educational attainment.

There are two SDQ's, one for Parents/Carers and the other to be completed by the Designated Teacher for schools.

The SDQ's for schools and scores

From the SDQ Guidance - the scoring range is between 0-40. On an individual basis a score of 13 or below is normal and 17 and above is a cause for concern, between 14-16 is borderline.

The member of staff, who has the day-to-day knowledge about the child / young person and has known them long enough, will be ideally placed to answer the questions that the SDQ asks. It must not be done in collaboration, as to do so would invalidate the responses.

When completing the questionnaire, the member of staff must be satisfied they are not basing answers on the child's behaviour on a particular day.

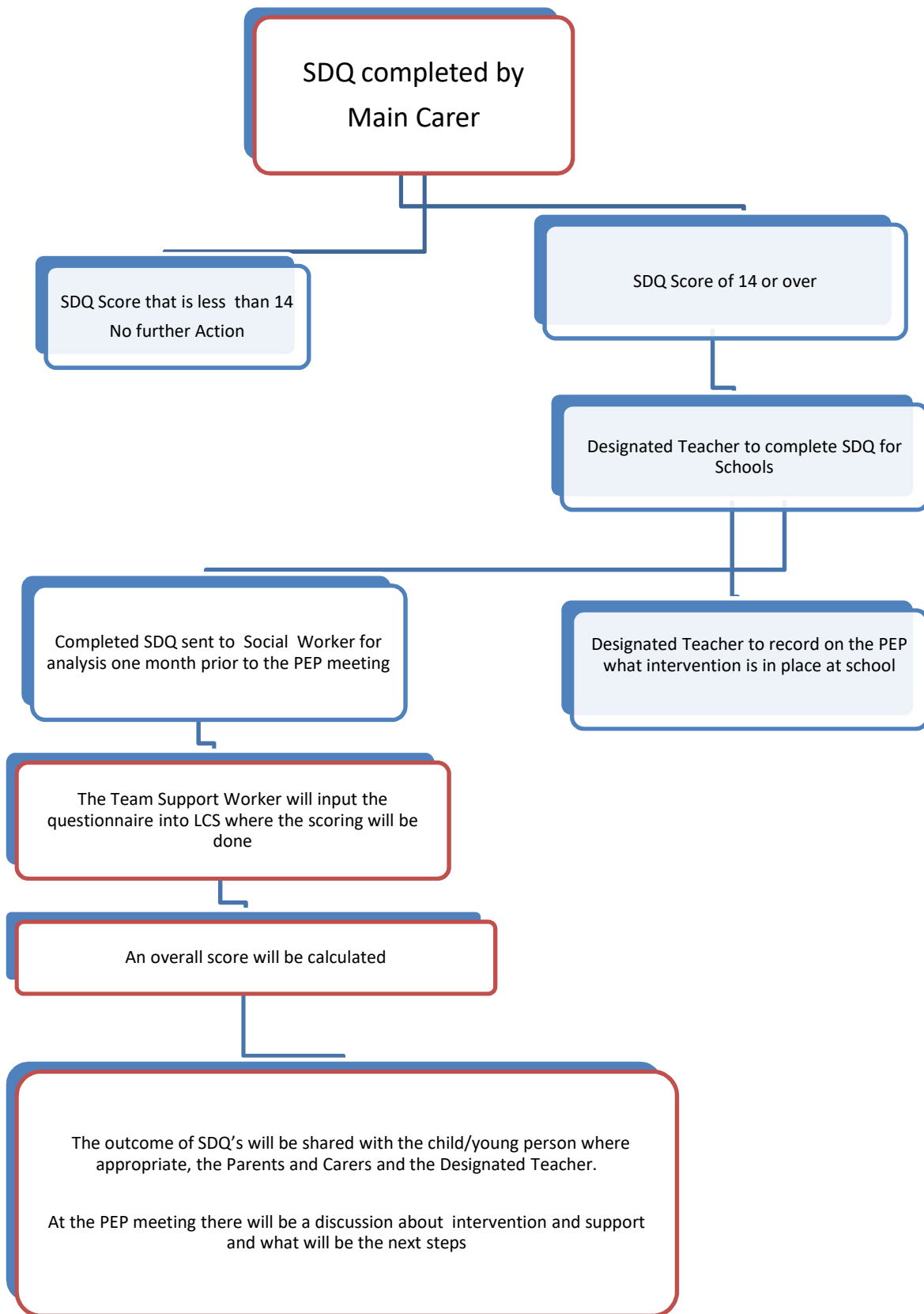
This will result in a skewed score that does not reflect how the child is most of the time.

When schools have completed an SDQ, any intervention and support can be discussed at the PEP meeting.

The process

- The Carer's SDQ is completed by the main carer for the child/young person in time to inform his or her health assessment. (Promoting the Health and Well Being of looked after children, Statutory Guidance, 2015).
- On the PEP form there will be a question about the SDQ score. The Designated Teacher will need to acquire this score from the child's/YP social worker.
- The SDQ score is included within the Personal Education Plan, so enabling the school, all professionals involved and Virtual Head, to have an understanding of the young person's emotional needs and required interventions.
- If the score is above 14, then a SDQ for schools must be completed by the Designated Teacher of the school (or member of staff with the day to day knowledge) one month prior to the PEP meeting.
- It is expected that the school return the completed SDQ to the Social Worker, so the analysis can be undertaken.
- The use of SDQ's in schools would assist clarification of the educational dimensions of the child's development needs. It would identify any difficulties the child is having within the school environment and their strengths, thus providing an opening for interventions to promote resilience.
- If the score of the SDQ, completed by the Carer is below 14, the Designated Teacher may still want to complete the SDQ for schools. The child/young person may be experiencing difficulties at school which would not be picked up from the SDQ that the Carers have completed (and vice versa).

Flow Chart for SDQ



Appendices

Appendix A - Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaires for Schools

Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire

T 4-17

For each item, please mark the box for Not True, Somewhat True or Certainly True. It would help us if you answered all items as best you can even if you are not absolutely certain or the item seems daft! Please give your answers on the basis of the child's behaviour over the last six months or this school year.

Child's Name

Male/Female

Date of Birth.....

	Not True	Somewhat True	Certainly True
Considerate of other people's feelings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Restless, overactive, cannot stay still for long	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Often complains of headaches, stomach-aches or sickness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shares readily with other children (treats, toys, pencils etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Often has temper tantrums or hot tempers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rather solitary, tends to play alone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Generally obedient, usually does what adults request	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Many worries, often seems worried	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Helpful if someone is hurt, upset or feeling ill	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Constantly fidgeting or squirming	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has at least one good friend	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Often fights with other children or bullies them	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Often unhappy, down-hearted or tearful	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Generally liked by other children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Easily distracted, concentration wanders	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nervous or clingy in new situations, easily loses confidence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kind to younger children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Often lies or cheats	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Picked on or bullied by other children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Often volunteers to help others (parents, teachers, other children)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thinks things out before acting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Steals from home, school or elsewhere	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gets on better with adults than with other children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Many fears, easily scared	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sees tasks through to the end, good attention span	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Do you have any other comments or concerns?

Please turn over - there are a few more questions on the other side

Overall, do you think that this child has difficulties in one or more of the following areas: emotions, concentration, behaviour or being able to get on with other people?

No	Yes- minor difficulties	Yes- definite difficulties	Yes- severe difficulties
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you have answered "Yes", please answer the following questions about these difficulties:

- How long have these difficulties been present?

Less than a month	1-5 months	6-12 months	Over a year
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- Do the difficulties upset or distress the child?

Not at all	Only a little	Quite a lot	A great deal
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- Do the difficulties interfere with the child's everyday life in the following areas?

	Not at all	Only a little	Quite a lot	A great deal
PEER RELATIONSHIPS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
CLASSROOM LEARNING	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- Do the difficulties put a burden on you or the class as a whole?

Not at all	Only a little	Quite a lot	A great deal
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Signature

Date

Class Teacher/Form Tutor/Head of Year/Other (please specify:)

Thank you very much for your help

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Appendix B - Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaires for Early Years Settings

Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire

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For each item, please mark the box for Not True, Somewhat True or Certainly True. It would help us if you answered all items as best you can even if you are not absolutely certain or the item seems daft! Please give your answers on the basis of the child's behaviour over the last six months or this school year.

Child's Name

Male/Female

Date of Birth.....

	Not True	Somewhat True	Certainly True
Considerate of other people's feelings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Restless, overactive, cannot stay still for long	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Often complains of headaches, stomach-aches or sickness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shares readily with other children (treats, toys, pencils etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Often has temper tantrums or hot tempers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rather solitary, tends to play alone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Generally obedient, usually does what adults request	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Many worries, often seems worried	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Helpful if someone is hurt, upset or feeling ill	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Constantly fidgeting or squirming	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has at least one good friend	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Often fights with other children or bullies them	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Often unhappy, down-hearted or tearful	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Generally liked by other children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Easily distracted, concentration wanders	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nervous or clingy in new situations, easily loses confidence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kind to younger children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Often argumentative with adults	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Picked on or bullied by other children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Often volunteers to help others (parents, teachers, other children)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can stop and think things out before acting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can be spiteful to others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gets on better with adults than with other children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Many fears, easily scared	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sees tasks through to the end, good attention span	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Do you have any other comments or concerns?

Please turn over - there are a few more questions on the other side

Overall, do you think that this child has difficulties in one or more of the following areas: emotions, concentration, behaviour or being able to get on with other people?

	No	Yes- minor difficulties	Yes- definite difficulties	Yes- severe difficulties
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you have answered "Yes", please answer the following questions about these difficulties:

• How long have these difficulties been present?

	Less than a month	1-5 months	6-12 months	Over a year
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

• Do the difficulties upset or distress the child?

	Not at all	Only a little	Quite a lot	A great deal
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

• Do the difficulties interfere with the child's everyday life in the following areas?

	Not at all	Only a little	Quite a lot	A great deal
PEER RELATIONSHIPS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
LEARNING	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

• Do the difficulties put a burden on you or the class or group as a whole?

	Not at all	Only a little	Quite a lot	A great deal
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Signature Date

Playgroup leader/Nursery teacher/Other (please specify):

Thank you very much for your help

