

Placement of a child subject to a Care Order with parents

Procedure for social workers

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1. Scope of this procedure

- 1.1 This procedure applies to any placement of a child looked after subject of a Care Order or Interim Care Order with a parent/s or other person with parental responsibility. It applies to a placement of more than 24 hours including regular overnight stays with parents as part of the Care Plan.
- 1.2 This procedure is for social workers and social work managers. It applies to immediate and planned arrangements and those circumstances where the local authority's plan is for the child to remain placed with the parent immediately after the granting of an Interim Care Order or Care Order. Usually however this procedure will apply to situations where the plan is to progress towards the discharge of the Care Order.
- 1.3 The procedure is determined in accordance with [The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review \(England\) Regulations 2010](#)

2. Assessment before placement

- 2.1 Before deciding whether the child should be placed with the parent the local authority, in consultation with other agencies must obtain in writing or through a formal meeting their views regarding the proposed plan. It is good practice to seek the views of and consult with the:
 - GP and other health professionals;
 - the child's current carer/s;
 - any other person who holds parental responsibility including the parent with whom it is proposed that the child will not be placed;
 - significant extended family members;
 - schools/preschool provider;
 - the police;
 - Probation Service and Youth Justice Service, if known to the parents.
- 2.2 Social care records and police checks to be undertaken on the parent and other people aged 18 years and over who are members of the household. The views of the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) for the child must also be sought.
- 2.3 The child's' views and wishes must also be obtained depending on the child's age and ability.

- 2.4 A [Warwickshire County Council Single Assessment](#) must be completed tailored towards the parent's suitability to care for the child. Based upon the [Assessment Framework](#) it will include the assessment of the suitability of the parent/s and also will also demonstrate how the placement will safeguard and promote the child's welfare.
- 2.5 The completed assessment will specifically cover the following aspects of the parent's capacity to care for the child under each domain of the assessment framework. Their ability to:
- Meet the child's physical health care and emotional needs;
 - To protect from harm and danger including from any person who presents as a risk to the child;
 - Ensure that the home environment is safe;
 - To meet the child's emotional needs, recognising those needs arising from identity, religious persuasion, racial origin, cultural and linguistic background and disability;
 - Promote the child's learning and intellectual development through educational and social opportunities;
 - Regulate the child's emotions and behaviour by modelling appropriate behaviours and interactions with others;
 - Provide a suitable environment to enable the child to develop secure attachments.
 - To provide a safe and secure home into adulthood.
- 2.6 The assessment also addresses the parent's state of physical, emotional and mental health and medical history, including any current or past issues of domestic violence, substance misuse or mental health problems
- 2.7 Details of the family composition must cover the identity of household members, their ages and relationship with the child and with each other with specific reference to any person who is in a relationship with the parent of the child.
- 2.8 The assessment under 'any *other important information*' should also include details of any person who will be having regular contact with the child.
- 2.9 The assessment of the parents own history under '*family history and understanding of family relationships*' will cover their childhood and upbringing including their strengths and difficulties of their own parenting experiences, their relationships within the extended network and the parents educational achievements and/or specific learning needs. A chronology of significant events must be included, with the details of other relatives who may have cared for the child. Particulars of any criminal convictions and cautions past

and present and employment and income information are required. Finally details of the neighbourhood and availability of community support services are to be outlined

- 2.10 In the '*social worker analysis section*' the assessment report will include a risk analysis that summarises within the home situation those circumstances that have changed or that are no longer evident from the time that the child was removed from their parent's carer

3. The initial Child Looked After Review (CLA)

- 3.1 In the majority of circumstances, the child's placement with his or her parent must be part of the Care Plan upon the recommendation of a Looked After Review.
- 3.2 However where the child's name is or has previously been on the Child Protection Plan it is good practice, at the discretion of the service manager, that a Child Protection Conference will reassess the risk factors and make recommendations to be incorporated in the Care Plan.

4. Approval of the Placement

- 4.1 Before the placement is made, approval must be obtained from the service manager who will require evidence that the consultation, enquiries, assessment and checks required under this procedure have been carried out. For this purpose, he or she will require a copy of the:
- Single Assessment completed in accordance with this procedure;
 - Minutes from the Looked After Review which considered the proposed plan where this is a planned arrangement;
 - A copy of the amended Placement Plan to be signed by the parent including any specific agreements relating to the proposed placement, to include details of support services provided and the monitoring arrangements required.
- 4.2 The service manager will also want to know the child's wishes and feelings and that the IRO has been consulted.
- 4.3 Where the service manager is in support of the proposed placement he/she will sign the amended Placement Plan.

5. Immediate placements

- 5.1 Regulation 19 permits the service manager to approve an immediate placement of children with their parent. This applies to exceptional circumstances where the assessment under Regulation 17 has not been completed.
- 5.2 In these circumstances the following checks and assessments have to be completed before the service manager can give their approval:
- An interview is held with the parent/s which obtains as much of the information as possible that is required for the Assessment of the Parents Suitability to Care for the Child Report and the parent agrees to the placement;
 - All members of the household are met so that there is clear understanding of the household composition and relationships;
 - Police checks are completed pending the full DBS disclosure;
 - An initial assessment is completed as fully as possible to cover the impact of any domestic violence or substance misuse issues on the child's welfare;
 - The accommodation has been inspected;
 - A Placement Plan is completed and signed by all parties.
- 5.3 In these circumstances the Looked After Review must take place within ten working days of the child being placed or the order being made in circumstances where the children have remained at home. Within ten working days of the assessment being completed, and no longer than 20 working days from when the child goes to live with the parent, the service manager must confirm whether the placement can continue.

6. Notifications

- 6.1 Once the service manager has approved the proposed placement all agencies that have been consulted are to be informed in writing by the child's social worker of the approved plan and proposed placement date.
- 6.2 Where the placement is outside the county, the children's services department for the area where the parent/s live must also be notified.
- 6.3 The social worker must ensure that the child is registered with a GP, dentist and optician; and that a Health Assessment and Personal Education Plan are completed and reviewed in line statutory requirements.

7. Visiting requirements and ongoing assessment

- 7.1 Regulation 28 (4) specifies that where the child is subject of an Interim Care Order the social worker must visit at least once a week until the first review and thereafter at intervals of not more than four weeks. Where the child is subject of a Care Order and placed with the parent/s the child must be visited within one week and thereafter at intervals of not more than six weeks for the duration of the order being in place.
- 7.2 Wherever possible, the child must be seen with the parent and alone. If this is not possible, a further visit must be made at short notice in order that the child can be seen alone and observed with the parent.
- 7.3 The statutory visiting requirements are minimum expectations and the social worker should visit when reasonably requested by the child or the child's parents or person with parental responsibility
- 7.4 The social worker visits contribute to the ongoing assessment of the suitability of the placement to safeguard and promote the child's welfare.
- 7.5 As a best practice the Single Assessment will need to be updated and presented to the service manager within 10 working days, in the following circumstances:
- There has been a change in the household address and circumstances;
 - There are additional household members;
 - There are concerns reported about the care and welfare of the child.
- 7.6 The updated Single Assessment report will need to consider the impact these changes are having on the care and welfare of the child and the IRO is to be informed. The service manager will decide whether the change in circumstances warrant the CLA Review being brought forward.

8. Reviewing and monitoring requirements

- 8.1 The statutory Looked After Review is to be convened within twenty working days of the placement starting and thereafter at 4 months and then at 6 monthly intervals. Each review should consider the ongoing suitability of the placement arrangements and consider the appropriateness of applying for the revocation of the Care Order. In most circumstances it would

be expected that this would be actively progressed within **6 months** of the placement.

- 8.2 The child should only remain in the placement beyond the review with no plan to discharge the Care Order where there are exceptional circumstances. These must be clearly identified at the Looked After Review and agreed by the district service manager. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, plans should be made to end the placement.
- 8.3 In all circumstances the IRO will ensure that the service manager receives copies of the review minutes.
- 8.4 The Service Manager (Central) will maintain an overview of placements with parent's arrangements. This is to ensure that these permanency arrangements are secure and appropriate and to ensure that children do not remain subject to care orders for longer than is necessary in order to protect and promote their welfare.

9. Further Information

[Single Assessment Word Template](#)

[Framework for the assessment of children in need and their families.pdf](#)