

Care Planning Meetings for Children Looked After

An integral part of maintaining oversight on the Care Plan and achieving the outcomes identified as necessary to improve the quality of life for a child / young people, by the use of Care Planning Meetings.

Care Planning Meetings should be held regularly and provide a forum within which the Local Authority can consider the efficacy and direction of the current plan, work on a partnership basis with all professionals involved, family members and the young person.

Regularly held meetings provide an opportunity to avoid drift and ensure actions agreed by all have been addressed in a timely fashion. Ensure common understanding as to what everybody is supposed to do and where necessary, challenge, in promoting the child / young person's best interests and needs. The aim will therefore be to avoid drift, promote permanence and ensure the child/ young person develops successfully. The process will support the Local Authority's responsibilities as corporate parents to own the Care Plan and present proposals to the Child Looked After Review for scrutiny and approval of the plan and IRO ratification.

Different Types of Care Planning Meeting

a. Care Planning Meeting

The primary aim of a Care Planning Meeting is to secure or sustain permanence for a child that promotes and supports their safety and development now and in the long term. In some circumstances a Care Planning Meeting may be required to address other specific issues/needs that may arise and impact on successful outcomes for the child. It is important that the same form is completed in all circumstances ensuring the discussion is fully recorded on the child's / young person's file as well as distributed to participants. Distribution should be completed within 5 days of the meeting being held.

Whilst a range of issues will be discussed at Care Planning Meetings, as a minimum a Care Planning Meeting should be held looking at the Care Plan and activity supporting positive outcomes for the child / young person in all cases. A set Agenda (Appendix A) has been devised and is expected to be followed. Reports should be recorded on the Care Planning Meeting Form in Liquid Logic.

The schedule is as listed below;

- Between the 1st and 2nd Review – A minimum 1 Care Planning Meeting should be held
- Between each subsequent 6 monthly Review – A minimum of 2 Care Planning Meetings should be held.
- Where a Review is scheduled earlier than the usual 6 month cycle – A minimum of 1 Care Planning Meeting should be held.

Alteration to this schedule can only occur in specific circumstances.

Where a child / young person is placed in a matched long term placement, the undertaking of Care Planning Meetings will remain the same, unless the situation is so settled that such a degree of oversight no longer supports the need of the child / young person to experience a normalised family life. Such a

decision will need to be independently reviewed and agreed at a Child Looked After Review. The level of regularity will be the matter for the review, with recommendations integrated into the Care Plan.

Whilst the minimum held is in accordance with the above standard, Care Planning Meetings can be called more frequently reflective of the need to review activity and working towards the outcomes in the Care Plan.

b. Specific Issue Care Planning Meeting

However, there are Specific Issue Care Planning Meetings that can be held in respect of a number of issues.

For Example, these meetings could be held in respect of

- Education Provision
- Placement Difficulty
- Reunification Programme
- Specific issues relating to contact

All such meetings should be held and recorded on the Care Planning Meeting Form, the standard Agenda would not apply and not be expected to be applied. In such circumstances the Form asks as to the type of Care Planning meeting it is, the Specific issue section should be ticked. The format therefore will be subject to the Practitioner ensuring they record the discussion as a reflection of activity.

Whilst actions agreed regarding the specific issue will be listed, it is expected the practitioner should consider ;

1. That the recommendations and discussion should then be fed back into the next Standard Care Planning meeting ensuring all maintain oversight
2. The IRO must be updated or consulted if a significant event has occurred and a Child Looked After Review is required to revise the Care Plan.

c. Chairing of Care Planning Meetings

Care Planning Meetings as a standard will largely be chaired by the Social Worker as an integral part of maintaining oversight and momentum in supporting the child / young person in accordance with the care plan, working with the multi-agency team working around the child.

In respect of more complex circumstances, where there are contentious issues or a more challenging situation a discussion with the Team Manager should occur to discuss who should Chair the meeting. The Advanced Practitioner or Team Manager may be the more appropriate person. The degree of authorisation regarding the area under discussion would also influence who should Chair to ensure wherever possible decisions can be sanctioned and agreed at the meeting and avoid delay.

d. Legal Care Planning Meetings

There are occasions where Legal Planning Meetings are held to consider the direction and can encompass local authority consideration and directions. These are a separate type of meeting where the Local Authority considers its position, post the legal gateway. The Care Planning Meeting form should be used to record activity. However, it should be listed and titled specifically as a Legal Care Planning Meeting.

e. Recording Location.

All forms need to be completed and downloaded onto the Childs File in Documents. For each Form loaded into documents a case note should be added citing the meeting has been held and minutes are located in documents.