

PLACEMENT AGREEMENT MEETINGS

Principle

The best outcomes for children and young people are achieved if foster carers, residential workers, family placements, access and child care operations staff work together respecting the skills and abilities that all bring to a child's placement.

1. Placement agreement meetings are a positive way to support and maintain a placement.
2. It is important to ensure that the carer has enough information to last them until the placement agreement meeting has happened. As part of the implementation of this procedure foster carers will receive a checklist to help them ensure that they have all the information they need at the start of a placement.

Obtaining a Placement

1. Referrals for short term, time limited, respite and day care placements are made to the duty desk at Bassett Street ☎ 0116 2759 321/312. Information, which supports a risk assessment, must be provided. Initial and core assessments should be faxed to the duty worker – Fax No 0116 2759 341.

The long-term referral list is kept by Clare Marshall ☎ 0116 2759313. Referrals for The Short Break Scheme are dealt with by Lee Pinnegar ☎ 0116 2759 274 and Lynda Hubbard ☎0116 2759332.

2. Potential carers are contacted who seem to offer the best match. The Duty Worker takes the following into consideration when contacting carers:
 - Geography
 - Contact arrangements
 - Other children in placement
 - The needs of the child
 - The length of time for which the placement is needed
 - Any additional support needed by the carers, this includes additional financial support

3. Suitable carers are contacted. They will be encouraged to use their checklist to see if they can meet the needs of the child (a copy of the checklist is attached). If a placement seems likely the family placement team will inform the child's worker of the placement details. (If there are no suitable in-house foster placements or the young person needs a residential placement; the duty desk worker will work with residential services to identify a suitable placement.)
4. The child's worker will speak to the identified carer to provide additional information and to agree how and when the placement will start. If possible this should include introductory visits. Some of the residential units do not have emergency placements as part of their Statement of Purpose so they cannot take emergency placements
5. When the duty desk worker knows a placement has been agreed they will email or fax The Estate Agent details to the child's social worker. (Estate Agent details should be available for all in house foster and residential children's homes). The child's social worker should make sure the child or young person has a copy of the 'Introduction to Foster Care' (the yellow leaflet.) a version for younger children (aged 4-7) is also available. This should be read to a younger child. Parents should also receive a copy of these leaflets.
6. The fostering social worker is responsible for preparing the foster family for the placement. This includes ensuring that the carer has the right equipment and in ensuring that they are told of all the information available to the duty worker. If a young person is going into residential care the information is faxed or emailed to the unit.

Day of Placement

7. If appropriate, a family placement worker will go to the placement, in advance of the child arriving, to support the carer. The circumstances in which this is most appropriate are: when a placement is planned in advance, when is likely to be particularly difficult because of previous placement breakdowns, when it is due to be of a reasonable duration or if the foster carer is relatively new. This joint approach will allow everyone concerned with the placement to ensure together that sufficient information has been provided to the carer. It will also ensure, from the start, that the aims of the placement are agreed, that roles and responsibilities are allocated and that appropriate support mechanisms are in place.
8. The child's social worker and the child (and parent) should arrive with Essential Information Part 1 and Placement Plan part I. The foster carer or residential worker should agree that there is sufficient information for the next 3 days. The planned length of placement (especially if a strictly short-term admission has been agreed through the panel system), contact arrangements, safe caring and risk assessments must all be discussed. Children and young people should be taken to their new placement by their social worker or by a member of staff known to them. They should never arrive by taxi. In some circumstance when a

9. young person is going to carers already known to them for respite or where introductions have been made carers can take or collect the young person
10. The family placement duty worker will also let the Foster Care Support Line worker know that a new placement has been made. The support line worker will then contact the carer in the evening to offer support to them.

Day 2

The childcare worker should phone the carer to check that all is going well and that there is no additional information needed by the carer.

Day 3

The worker from the Family Placement Team (ideally this is done by the carer's fostering social worker but if not the duty officer) phones the carer to offer support and advice.

The placement agreement meeting should be arranged to be held as early as is practicable and never be beyond 7 working days of the start of the placement. For residential placements this must occur by day 3.

Before Day 7

A Placement agreement meeting should be held. The childcare team manager will usually chair the meeting, as this will allow the care plan to be completed. If the team manager is not available this should not cause the meeting to be delayed. If the case is held in access, the access worker and team manager are responsible for calling this meeting and for inviting a representative from Ops. This meeting will normally be the transfer meeting for case responsibility to go from access to ops.

The meeting should be attended by: -

- The child's social worker or a representative from the team
- A representative from the receiving team
- The fostering social worker or a representative from the team
- The carer, in residential units this will usually be the key worker. Assistant managers or team managers may also attend but their absence should not stop the meeting going ahead
- The young person if age appropriate
- The parent, if appropriate
- A representative from the family support team or any other worker who may be involved in supporting the placement
- YOTs team representative if the young person is on remand.

The purpose of this meeting is to clearly define and allocate tasks and responsibilities. If there are no managers present, agreement should be reached about who will chair and minute the meeting. It is important that all those who attend the meeting receive the minutes of the meeting within 3 working days of the meeting being held.

Post Placement Panels

On occasions a Panel may agree that a young person be accommodated for a time limited period. A second Panel is then arranged. If a second Panel is being arranged a placement agreement meeting should still be called but the emphasis of the meeting will be on the actions that need to happen to enable the young person to return home. Foster carers and residential workers still need sufficient information to enable them to care for the young person even if it is only for a relatively short period of time.

PLACEMENT AGREEMENT MEETING AGENDA

Care Planning

If a team manager chairs the placement agreement meeting the Care Plan should be devised or updated and written up. If there is no team manager a placement plan is agreed. The care plan is updated /created with the manager at a later date. A rehabilitation plan may be an important part of this agenda.

A. Placement

Does the carer's safe caring policy needs to be changed or adapted to meet the particular needs of the child. If there is bedroom sharing a formal risk assessment should be undertaken and recorded.

The visiting pattern by both sets of social workers should be agreed. Tasks should be allocated and agreed upon. The importance of periodic joint visits to the foster home should be considered. Other support mechanisms should be agreed. Is any equipment or clothing needed? Are any other support mechanisms needed such as day care. Are there any financial issues?

B Health

If the child or young person is a new admission to care the Health Assessment forms should be completed and given to the carer at this first meeting. The carer should be asked to make an appointment to enable the health assessment to be undertaken. (More guidance on this is due to be issued) If the child has an up to date health assessment and health plan this should be given to the carer.

C Education

When will the PEP be completed, what school will the child attend, what are the arrangements if the child is not in school?

D. Emotional and Behavioural Development

What is the child's young person's behaviour pattern? Are smoking, drinking drugs issues? How should the carer respond to particular behaviours? What should the reward mechanisms be? Have there been any previous allegations against others carers?

E. Culture and identity

If the placement does not reflect a young person's religious or cultural background, what support mechanisms need to be put into place to support the placement. Are there any special dietary or other needs? Should there be a referral to the Black Cases panel?

F. Family and Social relationships. Who will contact be with?

Contact arrangements to include, transport arrangements, frequency and location. A Contact Risk Assessment should be carried out and recorded. Supervised or not? Who is to do the supervision? Should the carer's telephone number and address be given to parents? There is an expectation that carers will contribute to some of the transport arrangements. Should an Independent Visitor be appointed?

G Social Presentation and Self Care Skills

What are the young person's interests and hobbies? Is the young person going to maintain any friendships or activities whilst they are in care? Is the young person subject to any restrictions because of offending behaviour? What is the pocket money? What are the expectations about doing tasks about the house? What are the house rules?

H Leaving care

Does the young person need independence training? Will the 16 Plus Service be involved in the near future? Does the carer need advice about further education / work opportunities?