

CASE CONFERENCES, PLANNING MEETINGS AND REVIEWS

The Children & Young People's Service is required by law to review the progress of all children who are in foster care and to ensure that the plans made for them are being carried out.

Child Protection Conferences are generally held in one of the Leicestershire County Council offices and are usually chaired by an independent chairperson. These are often quite large meetings and include people from other agencies who have a part to play in the child's life, e.g. teacher, health visitor, nursery officer etc.

Children and Young People's Service has a policy of including the child's parents in as much of the conference as possible.

There are times when parents do not wish to attend or in extreme cases the Department may feel they should not have the parents present. If this is so their views will be sought prior to the conference and presented to the conference. Most initial case conferences are held before children come into care or just as they come into care.

Initial child protection conferences decide whether a child should be subject to a protection plan. The meeting decides what is the level and type of concern that everyone has for a child and if necessary agrees an outline protection plan. Significant professionals in the child's life then form a **core group** who meet at least monthly to review progress and to co-ordinate activity. Foster carers may be part of a core group or may be asked to a review conference. **Review** child protection case conferences are held at regular intervals

Strategy Meetings are usually chaired by the child care operations service manager. These meetings are usually called when there is a great deal of concern for a child perhaps because the child is always going missing or there is concern about drug taking or prostitution. These meetings are an opportunity for everyone to pool their knowledge about the current situation, to try and problem solve the situation and to assess if other courses of action should be tried. Foster carers will be involved in strategy meetings.

Review of Arrangements Meetings. All young people in the care of the local authority must have regular reviews of their situation. Review meetings are chaired by an Independent Review Officer (IRO) These meetings agree and modify the care plans for the young person. The same IRO will try and chair all the review meeting for a young person to enable them to get to know the young person. If the IRO has not met the young person before the meeting they may attend early to speak to them and get to know their wishes.

The young person's Social Worker is responsible for organising these reviews. They should agree a time for the review that suits you, the young person and their family. This is especially important if the review is to be held in your home.

During the review consideration is given to the child's progress in the widest sense - including his emotional, physical, social and educational developments. Also considered will be the child's future - does accommodation in a foster home continue to be appropriate? Should there be a return home? Is the child's legal status correct? Does the child have a personal education plan (PEP)? Does the child know about the Children's Rights Service etc.?

Frequency

When a child first comes into care the first review is held after one month, then after three months. Thereafter they are held every six months. Reviews can also be called if there are significant changes in the young person's circumstances that require a change to the care plan. Reviews must be held within these time scales so social workers will be unwilling to cancel them if the delay puts them outside of the time limits.

Who Attends LAC Reviews?

An independent officer whose role is to ensure that the best interests of the young person are met usually chairs the review. Other people at the meeting (or who may send reports to the meeting) are the social worker, health worker, teacher and of course yourself, the young person and their family. Other people may be invited if they are currently actively helping the young person. The young person should be consulted about who they want to attend their review meeting. They may request that an advocate speaks on their behalf or that you put their views for them.

Agenda

The meeting will consider all the information relevant to the young person and make a long-term plan for the future. Plans will also be made in relation to education, health and development, recreation, contact and any other issues of significance. Try to speak to your foster child before their review to get them to think about what needs to be discussed and whom they want to attend.

Significant dates

You will be asked the dates that the child attended any health or dental appointments. It may be a good idea to check your diary before the review to ensure that you have all your significant information to hand.

Paperwork

Special forms are used for the meeting and you will be given copies of these. You must keep them safely and securely for yourself and the young person.

If you are concerned about the content of the meeting, where it will take place or any decisions made please raise these with the young person's social worker. Your fostering social worker should also attend review meetings to offer you support and to help in the development of the care plan

Placement Agreement Meetings

A meeting is also held when a young person moves to a new placement, but this is not a full review of arrangements. The purpose of this meeting is to agree how to develop the care plan in this particular placement. Parents can often be asked to these meetings.

These meetings are a good opportunity for you to check that you have all the information you need to care for a child. Make sure that you know what the contact arrangements are and that you are sure who can and who cannot see a child. A risk assessment should be carried out at this meeting to ensure that any contact arrangements are safe for you, your family and for the foster child.

Remember to ask about diet, interests and school attendance.