

**Disruption Meetings**

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1. **Disruption Meetings**

**Purpose**

Disruption meetings are an opportunity for all those involved in a particular case to look in an open way, and with the benefit of hindsight, at the issues that may have contributed to the placement breakdown. They are a forum that can provide valuable information and feedback, which can inform future practice and benefit, looked after children.

The purpose of the Disruption Meeting is not to attribute blame, it is important that all participants are aware of this.

The aim of the meeting is to ensure:

* All participants are provided with an opportunity to share information, feelings and views about the causes of disruption;
* All are in agreement of the factors that have led to the disruption;
* A child or young person’s current and future needs can be more satisfactorily met. This is achieved via an Action Plan;
* That the support and training needs for previous and future prospective carers and staff are identified (if appropriate);
* That both the Fostering Panel and the agency receive feedback and recommendations about the issues arising from the disruption that affect Fostering policy and procedures;
* That the development of good practice is highlighted and assisted and to identify learning opportunities, actions and areas of policy development for all agencies involved.

**Timing**

A disruption meeting must be held when a permanent (long term fostering or residential) placement has broken down.

The child’s Social Worker or Fostering Supervising Social Worker should inform the Fostering Team prior to (when possible) or within 5 working days of a disruption to request a meeting. Service Manager of Independent Reviewing and Conference Team will chair the meeting.

The disruption meeting must take place no sooner than 28 days and no longer than 42 days after the date of disruption, unless a complaint is in process. In this instance, a Disruption Meeting should be held within 4-6 weeks of complaint resolution.

It is expected that the matter should be referred to the Fostering Panel, when there have been serious concerns or when there is a change of approval for the foster carer.

**Participants**

The circumstances of each particular case will influence the number of people invited to a disruption meeting, but care should be taken to ensure the meeting does not become too unwieldy.

As a minimum the following should be invited:

* Independent chair who has not been previously involved in the management or reviewing of the case;
* Child/young person’s Social Worker and Child’s Social Worker’s Team Manager;
* Child/young person if of an appropriate age and understanding and attendance is considered in their best interests;
* An advocate or supporter for the child/young person if after consultation s/he requests this service;
* Foster Carers – past, present and respite;
* Supervising Social Workers and their Team Managers;
* Birth parents (dependent upon the status of the disrupted placement and whether considered to be in the best interests of the child/young person);
* Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO);
* Carers involved in the disruption and their Supervising Social Worker at the time of disruption;
* Relevant Fostering Support Team Managers and Service Manager;
* Fostering agency representative;
* Previous Childcare Social Workers, including child’s social worker at the time of disruption;
* Team Manager of current and previous Childcare Social Workers, including child’s social worker at the time of disruption;
* Service Manager of current and previous and childcare Social Workers, including child’s social worker at the time of disruption;
* Designated Teacher from school currently attended, previously attended and at the point of disruption;
* Virtual School representative
* Health representatives e.g. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, or Health Visitor
* Birth parents / family.
* Other professionals directly involved with the child/young person (i.e. therapists, GP).

If the child/young person or their previous carers or birth parents do not attend the disruption meeting, steps should be taken to ensure their views are accurately obtained and conveyed to the meeting in writing or via a prior meeting with the independent chair.

Participants are expected to attend for the duration of the meeting and partial attendance should be avoided where possible. It is important that participants are reminded of this at the point of invitation and any partial attendance discussed with and agreed by the independent chair, prior to the meeting.

The Social Worker is responsible for drawing up the list of invited participants, agreeing these with the independent chair and arranging for invites to be circulated.

**Preparation**

Proper preparation for a disruption meeting is essential to its success.

* Children/young people, previous carers and birth parents.

If the child/young person, their previous carers and birth parents are attending the meeting, it is vital they are briefed appropriately to help prevent or minimise unnecessary distress.

In preparing a child/young person, their Social Worker should ensure they are aware of their personal and family history to avoid the possibility of any unknown information about their past being discussed.

Arrangements for the appointment of an advocate or other support should be made following consultation with the child/young person and the Children’s Rights Service, as appropriate.

The independent chair should make arrangements for the child/young person, their birth Parents and their previous carers to have the opportunity to meet with/have contact with them prior to the meeting. This option should be made available regardless of whether they intend to attend the disruption meeting.

If the child/young person, their birth parents and previous carers are unable to attend and wish their views to be conveyed, the responsible Social Workers should ensure this occurs;

* Background reports for the disruption meeting.

The chair will need to receive the following documents at least two weeks before the meeting:

* The Foster Carers original Form F
* At the least the last three annual review reports
* Any matching report and fostering panel paperwork
* The last 4 looked after child review including feedback/consultation forms
* Chronology
* The life story work completed with the child/young person
* Minutes of any Placement Stability Meeting.

The child/young person’s Social Worker and the previous foster carers’ Supervising Social Workers must prepare a joint written report for the disruption meeting.

*Appendix 1* outlines the report guidelines and the report should be with the independent chair **5 working days** prior to the disruption meeting and copies made, by the Social Worker, for participants to read at the beginning of the meeting. This report must be shared with the child/young person (as appropriate), birth Parents (as appropriate) and the Carers, past and present, prior to the disruption meeting.

The Supervising Social Worker must also ask the previous Carers to prepare a written background report for the disruption meeting. *Appendix 2* outlines the report guidelines. The report should be with the independent chair **5 working days** prior to the disruption meeting and copies made, by the Supervising Social Worker, for participants to read at the beginning of the meeting.

Previous Carers should prepare a report even if they intend to attend the disruption meeting; if they are unable to attend, this report becomes even more significant.

Supervising Social Workers are responsible for informing the independent chair if it has not been appropriate or possible for the previous Carers to complete a report.

The child/young person’s Social Worker and the previous Carers’ Supervising Social Worker should have access to case files, for reference as necessary, during the course of the meeting;

**Chair’s preparation**

The independent chair should arrange a preparatory discussion prior to the disruption meeting with the child/young person’s Social Worker and the previous prospective adopters/Carers Supervising Social Worker, in order to clarify arrangements and issues.

The chair should study the child/young person’s file prior to the disruption meeting, paying particular attention to the chronology, Child's Matching Report, any minutes from the Fostering Panel meeting.

**Venue**

The Fostering Service is responsible for organising a suitable, neutral venue for the disruption meeting. There should be breaks built into the meeting agenda, with tea, coffee and where appropriate.

**Recording**

A team administrator who has skills and experience in recording complex meetings should minute the disruption meeting;

**Timing**

Disruption meetings normally take a significant period of time and often last several hours. Good preparation can reduce the actual meeting time.

**Format**

A “model” agenda for a disruption meeting is based on the Signs of Safety framework (Please see *Appendix 3*) the following themes will be addressed during this meeting:

1. Introductions and apologies;
2. Purpose of and arrangements for meeting;
3. Ground rules;
4. Study of background reports and submissions received from participants unable to attend disruption meeting;
5. Clarification of any issues arising from or further comments on child/young person’s history;
6. Reasons for permanency match between child/young person and carers;
7. Exploration of preparations and introductions process;
8. Placement history;
9. Possible causes of disruption;
10. Child/young person’s situation since the disruption;
11. Lessons to be learned – general and specific to the child/young person;
12. The child/young person’s view – unless already addressed;
13. Action plan for the child and the previous carers;
14. General recommendations for the agency/Panel;
15. Any other issues that should be considered.

**Post disruption meeting**

The team administrator who has taken the minutes should complete a draft report for the chair, within **5 working days** of the disruption meeting.

The independent chair should complete, within **5 working days** of receipt of the minutes, the following paperwork:

* An Action Plan for the child/young person and previous foster carers;
* Practice feedback – for completion only in those cases where agreed policy or practice was not adhered to;
* Recommendations – which should include proposed changes to current agreed policy and practice.

The independent chair is responsible for circulating the summary, action plans and general recommendations to the participants of the disruption meeting, requesting any amendments with regard to factual inaccuracies, **within 10 working days**. The practice feedback section should only be copied to the Social Workers and relevant Managers and not to the other meeting participants.

The chair should finalise the summary, action plan, practice feedback and general recommendations and send a copy to the child/young person’s Social Worker for the case file, together with the minutes of the meeting. The child/young person’s Social Worker will arrange circulation to the meeting participants.

The final version of the summary, action plan, practice feedback and general recommendations should be sent to the Fostering Panel if there are any serious concerns or if a change of approval is required. The Agency Adviser to the Fostering Panel will seek any necessary clarification and advise whether attendance of either the independent chair or child/young person’s Social Worker is required at the Panel meeting. The Agency Adviser will inform the independent chair and child/young person’s Social Worker of the date the paperwork will be presented to the Fostering Panel.

Once the Fostering Panel has considered the disruption and related recommendations, the Agency Adviser will discuss any necessary action with the relevant Agency Decision Maker. Any immediate action, and those responsible for taking it, will be agreed by the relevant Agency Decision Maker.

The Independent Chair and the Agency Adviser will meet annually to monitor all recommendations of disruption meetings and make any necessary recommendations to the relevant Agency Decision Maker regarding changes to policy, procedures and practice.

The chair-person will arrange a follow-up meeting with the fostering service team manager, fostering team service manager and Looked After Children’s Service manager in order to discuss practice and procedures from the recommendations and how they have been implemented within the service.

***Appendix 1* - Guidelines for Joint/Young Person's Social Worker and Supervising Social Workers' Report for Disruption Meeting**

**1. Basic information**

1. Name of child/young person & date of birth;
2. Child/young person’s gender;
3. Child/young person’s ethnicity;
4. Child/young person’s religion;
5. Date of agency decision to match child/young person with previous carers;
6. Names of birth parents;
7. Name & address of previous carers & date of their approval by Panel;
8. Legal status of child;
9. Date of placement;
10. Date of disruption;
11. Name & address of present carer(s);
12. Legal status of current placement.

**2. Life history of child/young person (to be completed by child/young person’s Social Worker)**

1. The circumstances of the child/young person’s whilst in the care of birth parent(s);
2. Child/young person’s experience of being looked after;
3. Reasons for seeking permanency for child/young person;
4. Contact with birth parents & wider family.

**3. History of placement that has disrupted (to be completed jointly by Social Worker for child & Supervising Social Worker)**

1. The consideration of the family by the Fostering Panel & agency;
2. The reasons why this family was selected for this child/young person & why the family wished to care for this child/young person;
3. The pattern of introductions & the decisions made regarding this
4. The placement experience, what went well & not so well;
5. The support network & support services offered.

**4. The disruption (to be completed jointly by Social Worker for the child and Supervising Social Worker)**

1. Circumstances of the disruption;
2. Possible causes/factors (with the benefit of hindsight);
3. Initial professional judgement about lessons to be learnt.

**5. Child/young person’s current situation & needs (to be completed by Social Worker for child)**

**6. Initial consideration of child/young person’s future needs (to be completed by Social Worker for child)**

**7. Initial consideration of previous carers’ needs (to be completed by Supervising Social Worker)**

The social work report should be with the independent chair **5 working days** prior to the disruption meeting & prepared in consultation (as appropriate) with the child/young person, the previous Carers & Birth Parents

**Appendix 2 - Guidelines for Previous Carers Report for Disruption Meeting**

These guidelines are suggested headings for a report that previous carers may wish to prepare for a disruption meeting. Advice and support in preparing a report can be obtained from the Supervising Social Worker.

**1. Basic information**

1. Child/young person’s name, date of birth & how long she/he was living with you.

**2. Information about the child/young person**

1. How did you come to hear about the child/young person? Did you receive enough information?
2. How did you find their behaviour? Was this as you expected?
3. What did you learn about her/him as a result of living together?

**3. Matching the child with your family**

1. Why do you think your family was selected for this child?
2. What were your reasons for wishing to care for her/him?

**4. The placement**

1. How were the introductions organised and who was involved?
2. How do you think the introductions went?
3. What worked well and not so well in the placement?
4. Did you have the opportunity to express any concerns or withdraw?
5. How did you feel during the introductions? Did you feel you received enough support?
6. What do you think caused the disruption? What lessons should be learnt?

**5. The child’s future**

1. How do you think her/his needs can be met in the future?
2. Do you have any unresolved issues in your relationship with her/him?
3. Do you think on-going contact with the child/young person would be of benefit to her/him?

**6. Your family’s current & future needs**

1. Are there any additional measures you would like the department to take regarding your relationship with the child/young person?
2. Is there any other assistance you would wish the department to consider?

**7. Agenda for disruption meeting**

1. Are there any specific issues you would wish raised at the disruption meeting?

Your Supervising Social Worker will ensure copies of your report are available to be read at the beginning of the disruption meeting.

**Appendix 3- Signs of Safety Framework for Disruption Meetings**

Signs of safety / Foster Placement Disruption / Case mapping

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **What we think about (*CHILDS NAME*) placement disruption with (*FOSTER CARERS NAME*)** | | |
| **What concerned us?** | **What worked well?** | **Moving off from the disruption. What needs to happen?** |
| **Events leading to disruption**  **Specific/ Observable / factual details of the:**   * First incident * Last incident * Worst incident   **What vulnerabilities were evident before the placement ended?**   * Any relevant information from previous placements?   **What is the child view on events leading up to the disruption?**  *(If the child is not present the ccsw or appropriate worker to have completed direct work with the child prior to the meeting. E.g. Three Houses / wish wizard etc.)* | **What were the strengths of the placement and foster carer?**  **What did you like best about the child?**  **What support / resources were helpful?**  **Other ‘good’ things about the child e.g. school, activities, friends, extended family relationships**  **What is the Child’s view of this placement?**  *(If the child is not present the ccsw or appropriate worker to have completed direct work with the child prior to the meeting. E.g. Three Houses / wish wizard etc.)* | **For the child, to prevent future placement disruptions.**  **For the fostering household, to prevent future placement disruptions.**  **For CYP teams, to prevent future placement disruptions**. |
| **Complicating factors** | Disruption statement | Next steps |
| **What increased the likelihood of the disruption?**   * Childs history with birth family * Matching issues – how much pressure was there to place with this family? * Introductions / preparation for the family * Was there a clear care plan for permanency? * Support or resource issues * Contact * Foster family circumstances | **‘why I had to move’**  Provide a coherent narrative for the child and carers to understand why the placement ended. It is important to use simple language and be honest and open. | **Learning needs for foster carers**  **Learning needs for child care or fostering workers**  **Need for changed in approach or policy for the wider CYP services** |
| Scaling | | |
| Please use a scaling question that is most appropriate for this case / situation  0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 | | |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Meeting Title – foster placement disruption / Key learning points** | | | |
| **Participants :**  **Apologies :** | | | |
| **Date:** | **Venue:** | **Chair:** | **Scribe:** |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| AGENDA ITEM | DISCUSSION | AGREED ACTION | WWW (WHOS DOES WHAT AND WHEN?) |
| Disruption statement  ‘why I have to move’ |  | Child to be supported to understand the reasons for the disruption. Child to be given consistent message regarding the disruption from all parties. |  |
| What needs to happen for the child to prevent future disruptions? |  |  |  |
| What needs to happen for the foster carer to prevent future disruptions? |  |  |  |
| What needs to happen for the fostering service / CYP to prevent future disruptions? |  |  |  |
| Learning needs for the foster carers |  |  |  |
| Learning needs for the child care / fostering social workers |  |  |  |
| Learning needs for the wider CYP services |  |  |  |

**Appendix 4 - Disruption Process Flow Chart**

**Appendix 5 - Information on Disruption Meetings for Young People**

Disruption meetings are held when a fostering placement has broken down. The purpose of the meeting is about trying to learn what happened, what could have been done differently, what worked well and what should happen in the future. It’s about trying to make sure that your needs and your previous Carers’ needs are met. It’s also a chance for social work Managers to learn from these experiences and, where necessary, make changes to the way things are done.

The disruption meeting is not about blaming people, it is about talking about what happened and helping people come to terms with and make sense of things.

Disruption meetings are chaired by an Independent Reviewing Chair, who will be different from the IRO who has been chairing your Looked After Reviews.

The people invited to the disruption meeting can include

* Your Social Worker and their Manager;
* Your previous carers;
* Your current carers;
* The Supervising Social Workers for the carers, and their Manager;
* A teacher (where appropriate);
* Individual worker (Placement Support Team/therapist etc);
* Advocate (where appropriate);
* Birth parents (where appropriate);
* You.

Disruption meetings can feel overwhelming and difficult for all those involved, particularly young people. You are the most important person in the process so it’s important that you have an opportunity to say what you want to say. Your Social Worker, your advocate (if you want one) and the independent chair will all help to make this happen.

Young people are generally invited to attend their disruption meetings and their contribution is very important. It may be that in some cases, young people aren’t invited to the meeting. If this happens in your case, your Social Worker will explain why this decision has been made.

Disruption meetings can last for a number of hours and some young people only want to attend part of the meeting. Other young people only want to attend if their previous carers are not there. Some young people don’t wish to attend any of the meeting, preferring instead to tell an advocate their views or by sending the meeting a note or recording. Any of these options are available and your Social Worker will talk these through with you.

If you would like an advocate appointed to help you express your views, let your Social Worker know and they will arrange this.

A week or so before the meeting, independent chair will make a time to come and meet with you. This will be a chance to talk about who will be at the meeting, what will be discussed and how you want to be part of things. If you are worried about anything to do with the disruption meeting, let the independent chair know and they will try and help sort things out.

Your Social Worker, together with your previous carers’ Social Worker, will be writing a report for the disruption meeting. Your Social Worker will generally show you this report prior to the meeting and make sure you are clear about what has been written.

This report will then be read by everyone who attends the disruption meeting. Your previous carers will also be asked to write a report for the meeting so that their views about the placement can be obtained. You may have decided to write a report or make a recording and if so, this will also be read/listened to/watched at this point.

Once all the reports have been read/heard, the meeting will then spend time looking at your placement with your previous carers, from the beginning when you first met them, through to the breakdown. The meeting will then look at what is happening for you now, what should happen in the future, and what support and help you may need. It will also look at what support and help your previous carers may need.

Following the meeting, a summary of what was discussed will be written. You will generally be sent a copy of this and a copy will be put on your social services file. A copy of this report will then be sent to Bexley Local Authority Fostering Panel, who may have originally approved your placement with your previous Carers, who may wish to ask your Social Worker or the independent chair some further questions.