

# **LEICESTERSHIRE Children and Family Services**

**The Road to Excellence**

## **Care Planning and Decision Making Guidance**

**January 2018**

# Contents

1.	Introduction	3
2.	Children looked after care planning and decision making	4
3.	Context	5
4.	Care planning – Family Care and Protect Meetings	7
5.	Care planning – Children’s Decision Meeting	9
6.	Care planning – Placements	12
7.	Care planning - health	14
8.	Care planning – education and training	.....15
9.	Care planning – emotional and behavioural development	.....16
10.	Care Planning – Contact	.....17
11.	Participation and Consultation	.....18
12.	Care planning – Permanence Panels	.....19
13.	Children and young people ceasing to be looked after	21
14.	Leaving Care – The Pathway Plan and preparation for independence	22
15.	Transitioning Arrangements	23
16.	Documents and further reference	24

Options for Permanence Guidance – Leicestershire County Council

# 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This guidance should be used by all staff and managers within Children and Families Directorate, other business units concerned with the effective support and management oversight of children, young people and families where consideration is being given to, or the decision has been made to look after a child/young person. Discussions around permanence for a child or young person must be considered at the earliest opportunity. Signs of Safety will be used at all stages of planning for children.
- 1.2 This document has been updated to reflect the revised permanence panel and the new decision making processes for children becoming looked after. It reflects the commitment to ensure early permanence planning for children who cannot remain at home or where re-unification is being considered and how that can be achieved safely with appropriate service provision.

## 2. Children looked after care planning and decision making

2.1 The guidance covers the following:

- Early Help and Transition Meeting and Family Care and Protect Meetings whose primary function is to formulate an appropriate multi-agency plan or to review plans which may not be working and where the child/young person is assessed as potentially needing to be escalated to statutory social care services and who are at risk of being accommodated; Neither of these meetings make the decision to accommodate a child and the focus is on appropriate multi-agency planning as long as that is commensurate with the safeguarding of the child
- Children's decision meeting – where the plan for the child is potentially to accommodate the child/young person, to initiate public law out-line (PLO) or care proceedings; and where consideration needs to be given as to whether a range of assessments are required in order to meet the child/young person's needs or determine the future direction of the plan;
- Care plan – plan for the child/young person;
- Placement plan – the day to day arrangements for the care of the child/young person, the delegation of authority to foster carers and how these meet the requirements of the care plan;
- Permanence Panel – to ensure that children are safe, to improve life chances of children emotionally and educationally and ensuring that every child is in a stable and permanent home and identifying those children who could be returned home with an appropriate plan of support. There will be effective matching on long term foster placements.

2.2 This process of assessment, planning, intervention and review is represented within Care Planning Regulations April 2015. The regulations outline the arrangements for children and young people in care and the concept of long term fostering by definition and review:

- Care Planning, Placement and Case Review implemented in April 2011
- The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review and Fostering Services (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2013.

## 3. Context

- 3.1 In line with Leicestershire County Council's (LCC) corporate plan, children and young people should be cared for within their own families. Where this is not possible permanent and secure alternatives should be found. As corporate parents LCC aim to ensure that children and young people are secure and supported to do well, that they are encouraged to have full and fulfilled lives which raises their self-esteem and confidence. To achieve this they are afforded placement stability at the earliest possible opportunity wherever possible within their family network. This is achieved through timely and outcome focussed intervention and support based upon assessed needs, clear plans and best practice. It is the intention of LCC to provide community based alternatives and to fully deploy early intervention and parenting support services which helps more children and families, so reducing the need for children and young people to enter care. (Permanence Policy updated 2016).
- 3.2 This guidance primarily focuses upon assessment, planning, intervention and the review processes for children looked after, and the arrangements for children and young people ceasing to be looked after.
- 3.3 Central to LCC's approach is the idea that children and young people are best brought up within their own families. The revised decision making panels will seek to ensure that children will receive an appropriate service as an alternative to becoming looked after, reduce the period of time of being looked after and ensure permanence at the earliest opportunity.
- 3.4 LCC will ensure consistency across the county so that every child with the same needs has the right to be offered the same response and standards of service.
- 3.5 As 'corporate parent' this guidance sets out that at every stage there is a multi-agency approach to the identification of need and response. It also offers the opportunity to bring together a number of differing plans into one care plan designed to meet the needs.
- 3.6 The expertise of senior staff and managers, together with colleagues in other agencies, will support front-line staff. Good social work flows from good assessment, analysis judgement and timely intervention. Value is added where multi-agency expertise is used to make sure that blocks and problems with decision making and planning are resolved when they occur.
- 3.7 Services should be informed by research and be robustly evidenced based. At each stage systems should be focussed on outcomes rather than process, and should not be professionally bureaucratic. LCC uses the Signs of Safety model to underpin practice and the formulation of plans and services – can we link to the SOS Procedures here

3.8 There are three stages in the 'looked after' process which are particularly important:

- The development of a plan to support the child/young person within their family or extended family network;
- If this is not feasible, the decision to look after a child and determine the needs, how they will be met and timescales for doing so;
- Permanence options, including rehabilitation and what needs to happen for permanence to be achieved.

## 4. Care planning – Family Care and Protect Meetings

- 4.1 Care Planning for children and young people should be seen within the context of the overall LSCB Thresholds Document and work should be undertaken to support children to remain within their families through Early Help. The Early Help Transition oversight and planning meeting may identify children who need to be escalated to social care. In recognition that this may not be the only route to children's social care, families at risk of breakdown will be considered by the Family care and protect meeting. Every endeavour should be made to ensure that early help processes do not build in delay therefore leading to increased likelihood of family breakdown.
- 4.2. The Early Help and Transition Planning Meeting is chaired by Head of Service for Early Help or deputy and the Family Care and Protect Meeting by the Service Manager for Strengthening Families. The former takes place monthly and the latter is convened as the need arises or within 5 working days of the request from family or social worker, whichever is the soonest. In all but exceptional cases of emergency, previous interagency work is expected to have taken place including the completion of a single assessment and the input of early help services delivered by locality teams. This meeting may also consider where the child protection plan is not working and where the potential for a child to be accommodated is likely. In exceptional circumstances, a Service Manager may give agreement to legal advice being sought or action outside of this process.
- 4.3 All meetings should be multi-agency and should be individual to the needs of the child and family but is expected to include:
- Parent(s) and where appropriate the child or young person;
  - School/college;
  - Early help;
  - Targeted youth services / YOS services;
  - Where involved Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS);
  - Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) where there are complex needs to be considered.
- 4.4 If the child/young person is not present then their views should be established prior to the meeting and be recorded within the meeting and taken fully into account. There should be an informed understanding of the range of possible interventions, and which is most suitable to the needs of the individual child/young person. Each agency present should be able to commit resources within the meeting. The focus of the decision making '*is what more can be done to ensure that the family situation is strengthened so that the child/young person can remain at home*'. A SMART child in need plan will be developed to ensure that the child/young person is supported within their family Child in Need Policy and Practice Guidance.

If a child's plan is formulated it will be important that all agencies prioritise and commit to the agreed tasks in order to avoid the family reaching crisis point again.

- 4.5 Where relationships have broken down with immediate family, the family should be encouraged to identify other family members or 'connected people' with whom young people may be supported to live with. This may be through Section 17 support or accommodated under Section 20. In addition, use of genograms should be seen as part of the relationship building at the start of intervention and can be used to help facilitate planning for children at various stages of planning.
- 4.6 In some cases, efforts to ensure the child or young person remains within the family will not be successful and the consensus is that the child/young person needs to be 'looked after'. The threshold must be carefully considered and is set out within the Children Act 1989. These early planning meetings cannot make the decision to look after a child but can make a recommendation that assessment, including the meeting minutes can be forwarded onto the Children's Decision Meeting
- 4.7 A full appreciation of the child's needs and circumstances should be documented as well as the risks associated with the various options. The meeting should consider the strengths of the family's situation and what evidence based interventions might be appropriate in the circumstances.
- 4.8 Where accommodation has already happened (which will be an exceptional circumstance), the meeting will consider whether rehabilitation can be safely achieved or determine whether this is not possible and this will inform the Children's Decision Meeting. Continuation of accommodation should be considered by the Children's Decision Meeting. Any needs arising from safeguarding should be considered under Section 47 child protection procedures. The outcome will be recorded on FWi / MOSAIC as the child's plan and/or referral to Children's Decision Meeting with reasons and decisions.



## 5. Care planning – Children’s Decision Meeting

- 5.1 The Children’s Decision Meeting is chaired by the Head of Service (Fieldwork) who, with the presenting service manager, is responsible for the plan and has a number of functions in relation to the child/young person.

Outcomes from the meeting will be carefully recorded within FWi / MOSAIC by the administrator to the panel. The panel’s membership will be multi-agency, and should include the following;

- Health professional for LAC
- Placements Commissioning team manager
- Permanence team manager;
- SLF manager,
- A primary mental health practitioner;
- A representative from Targeted Youth Support;
- Representative from education
- IRO Service Manager
- ADM
- Consistent Legal Representative
- Dedicated Placements Support Team
- DCS

- 5.2 Each representative must be in a position to share information known to that agency/service. Individuals should be empowered to commit resources towards implementing the decision reached or act in an advisory capacity.
- 5.3 Legal services will attend the panel having first received all of the papers in relation to the child/young person in order to be able to offer an informed view about threshold for PLO or care proceedings. The decision to seek legal advice will be informed by a discussion, and recording of the decision with reasons, between the Service Manager and Team Manager in the locality and as such LPM’s will no longer be necessary
- 5.4 Legal services undertake to review all of the papers prior to panel and prepare legal advice based on what is known and will share that view at the children’s decision meeting. Once the PLO has been initiated, tracking by the panel will ensure that there is minimum delay and that care proceedings are issued in a timely manner. The panel can also decide to end the PLO process and recommend an alternative. Recommendations for final care plans will be presented to this panel for decision making and as such care proceedings will be tracked by this panel and followed up.
- 5.5 The Service Manager should be familiar enough with the child’s circumstances to attend the panel, have seen and authorized an updated single assessment and contribute to the formulation of an appropriate plan; the team manager may decide that the child’s social worker should

attend where the child's circumstances are complex. It is crucial that the child's views are made known to the meeting, and that the service manager will take responsibility for conveying the plan and its implementation to the team. The team must then ensure the involvement and participation of the child/young person and family members throughout the ongoing care planning process.

- 5.6 The children's decision meeting's primary function is decision making and ensuring proactive care planning which promotes permanence at the earliest opportunity. It should acknowledge those cases where the child/young person is already recently accommodated and whether continuation of this episode is necessary. (Children's Decision Meetings – Terms of Reference) Pre-proceedings, oversight of proceedings and the proposed permanence plan including the final care plan are dealt with by this panel.
- 5.7 A single assessment which illustrates the 'child's journey' and a genogram together with a summary document including evidence and analysis should be submitted to the case decision meeting. The summary document should set out the reasons and what route is being sought and/or is being recommended. These should be submitted to the panel 5 working days beforehand and distributed to attendees 3 working days before the panel meeting. In exceptional circumstances if the child is already 'looked after' then a care plan and placement plan should accompany the documentation. Use of chronology, mapping, danger statements, safety goals and plans and Words and Pictures with families should be presented to panel. Where PLO is being considered there is a requirement for the draft LBP to come to panel.
- 5.8 Children's decision meetings will be locality based as far as is possible, with one in the north and one in the south of the county. Disabled children's services can book on to the most appropriate one for those cases needing to be considered. Any additional meetings will be held at County Hall. Any delays should not impact upon the safety and well-being of the child. Team and Service Managers should ensure that the child's views are captured. The panel will work to ensure that there are consistent thresholds around the need to look after a child and work to the principle of 'family resolution'. The panel will consider emerging themes arising from requests to accommodate a child, and set up systems for establishing a 'gap analysis' which may inform future commissioning activity e.g. children missing education (CME) and missing. Reporting of themes arising from 'gap analysis' will be included in the quarterly reporting to SMT by the chair of the panel
- 5.9 Panel outcomes may agree:
- the child/young person should be looked after;
  - initial endorsement of the proposed care plan which may include twin-tracking, and or additional comments from panel members;
  - PLO to be initiated;

- that the child does not need to be looked after and advise other pathways are followed to include early help, child in need, child protection plan or
- that more information or more work is needed before a panel can reach a decision.
- Where the decision is made to 'look after' after a child, or agree continuation of the looked after period, proactive planning, including permanency should be undertaken.
- Legal advice given at panel should help inform whether further assessments are needed including the support needs of parents and carers. Panel should be clear about whether parents can participate in PLO and legal processes (functioning) and whether assessments are needed in relation to:
  1. hair strand testing,
  2. drug and alcohol testing
  3. DNA testing;
  4. Psychological assessments (commissioned) to include domestic abuse, pre-birth assessments or capacity to change assessments, PAM's assessment, cognitive assessments; consideration of Pack A requests for twin tracking.
  5. Children whose care plan is adoption from birth and where 'foster to adopt' is proposed will be dealt with by this panel and fast tracked
  6. Final Care Plans following assessments

- 5.10 Where section 20 accommodation, is recommended, consideration should be given to impact on education and SEND – involve SENA early if on an EHC Plan. Agreed, timescales should be noted around rehabilitation and what needs to happen to achieve this and if not, whether proceedings are needed. Attention must be paid to the capacity of parents to agree to section 20 accommodation (the Mental Health Act 2005 and Human Rights Act)
- 5.11 A standard agenda will include matters arising from previous meetings and tracking of decisions particularly in relation to reviewing of PLO processes with a clear review of progress taking place at 3. The panel will monitor the time from agreement to the initiation of care proceedings with an expectation that pre-proceedings are concluded by 4 months. There will be a short verbal update from the service manager as to progress. Legal services will also be able to give feedback in relation to the PLO process and where necessary assist panel in making an informed decision as to the need to initiate care proceedings.
- 5.12 Where the long term plan is for the child to live outside their own family, it will be necessary to fully explore extended family options or adoption. The case decision meeting will have the remit to consider what support is offered to potential carers in order to make application to look after a child, and support on an ongoing basis. Support mechanisms should be considered in order to ensure that the plan is robust and enduring.

## 6. Care planning – Placements

- 6.1 Where the decision is made to look after a child/young person, information gathered from previous meetings and the children's decision meetings will be used to inform the needs of that child/young person in placement. A care plan and placement plan will need to be completed alongside the single assessment. These should clearly state the needs the intervention is trying to address; the services required and anticipated outcomes as well as details of the intervention itself.
- 6.2 Quality of referrals to the placement team will be balanced. Needs will be adequately described and include positive features and strengths of the child as well as areas of potential risk. It will be informed by the child's voice. Referrals should not be made to the Placement Commissioning Team without consideration at a Children's Decision Meeting and/or agreement by the Head of Service.
- 6.3 Care plans will be SMART, outcome focussed, and describe who is doing what. They should include the child's voice, what needs to happen, how and when this will be achieved and the purpose and intended outcome of contact.
- 6.4 Placement plans will describe who is doing what, what the child's needs are, any issues of support, delegated responsibility, contact, and should be informed by the child's voice. 10.3 The purpose of a placement plan is to determine how a child/young person will be cared for and safeguarded on a day to day basis (Care Planning Regulations Schedule 2:9). It also includes a summary of delegated authority, and through the risk management matrix will address such issues as promoting positive behaviour.
- 6.5 It is anticipated that the child's needs arising from diversity are consistently recognised and plans put in place to meet these. Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers will be considered by the Children's Decision Meeting.
- 6.6 The period immediately after a child becomes looked after is critical. All meetings and the Placement Team will give a high priority to discussing transitions for the child into their new placement, where this has not already occurred. A timely decision on permanence needs to be taken.
- 6.7 The Placements Commissioning Team will undertake a number of key functions upon receipt of a quality assured placement request referral. The Placement Team will adopt a concurrent approach to identifying the most suitable placement option/s and determining the placement support needs giving preference to LCC internal provision.
- 6.8 The Placements Commissioning Team will identify broader placement possibilities for LAC, including residential options, with the endorsement of

the Head of Service, via the team's broker, and will offer an opinion as to the most appropriate placement. The Placement Team Manager will be expected to be fully involved in any discussion or decision making where residential care or external provision is being considered. The decision to accept an external placement rests with the Director for Residential Placements and Assistant Director for Independent Fostering Agencies.

6.9 The Placement Team will receive and respond to all LAC placement requests and in doing so will:-

- Ensure that the placement referral request provides an accurate assessment of the child's needs and placement requirements;
- Identify placement options (including support services) to meet LAC needs;
- Carry out recording of new placements on FWI MOSAIC;
- Establish contracts for new placements within the independent sector and resolve contractual issues arising from external placements;
- Arrange for the loading of all placements onto FWI / MOSAIC;
- Complete the "CLA placed in OLA" form and send it to notifications at [notifications@leics.gcsx.gov.uk](mailto:notifications@leics.gcsx.gov.uk)
- Complete the agreement form where it is a distant placement;
- Will determine who is best placed to consult regarding proposed distant placement;
- Will complete the Individual Placement Agreement (IPA) for Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) placements and forward to the agency with the placement plan completed by the child's social worker;
- Will determine the support needs required at the point of placement and make arrangements for these to be put into place
- Will maintain a database of placement activity, performance and outcomes;

6.10 Social workers are advised to notify the Child Benefit Office that a child/young person has become looked after, where it is clear that it will be for longer than 8 weeks. (Form CH193 (from the HMRC/Child Benefit)

## 7. Care planning - health

- 7.1 The responsibility for ensuring timely health assessments remains with the social worker. The designated health service will require copies of the placement plan (incorporating consent), care plan and single assessment to initiate the health assessment following the integrated health care pathway.

[http://lrcchildcare.proceduresonline.com/leicestershire/p\\_healthcare\\_assmt.html](http://lrcchildcare.proceduresonline.com/leicestershire/p_healthcare_assmt.html)

- 7.2 Consideration should be given to the health of the child/young person and whether this has had an impact on the child's development. Consideration should also be given to the child/young person health history and where relevant that of family members and other relevant parties and whether this has had impact upon the child's development. Existing arrangements for health and dental care and whether there are any planned changes to those arrangements should also be taken into account. It is the expectation that birth parents attend the health assessment appointment and this should be undertaken through social care co-ordinators who are responsible for the system for maintaining health information and completing returns
- 7.3 SDQs should be undertaken and recorded on the child's records in line with local procedures and any therapeutic interventions should be done following the procedures to be found within Leicestershire local procedures.

## 8. Care planning – education and training

- 8.1 The social worker retains responsibility for ensuring that the Personal Education Plan (PEP) is initiated as soon as the child/young person is accommodated using the agreed process.

[http://lrcchildcare.proceduresonline.com/leicestershire/p\\_educ\\_lac.html#one\\_PEP](http://lrcchildcare.proceduresonline.com/leicestershire/p_educ_lac.html#one_PEP)

- 8.2 When looking at education and training the social worker should consider the child's history including attendance, conduct and special educational needs. Consideration should be given to existing arrangements and any impact of planned changes to those arrangements. The child/young person's leisure interests and how they can continue should also be taken into account. It is important that any risk of temporary or permanent exclusion is reduced through enhanced support as necessary, in order that the foster placement is not undermined.
- 8.3 The social worker is responsible for making arrangements for school transport in appropriate circumstances and for following the agreed protocol.
- 8.4 Key stage 4 pupils cannot move schools without consultation with the Virtual School, designated teacher at the current school, IRO and Head of Service (Reg. 10). The child's wishes and feelings as well as parents' views should be ascertained. In the event of agreement being given to a change of school this change must be noted on the child's records

## **9. Care planning – emotional and behavioural development**

- 9.1 The social worker will consider any services already in place with regards to the child/young person's emotional wellbeing. Where wishes and feelings work has commenced this should be built upon as the child's care plan progresses.
- 9.2 For some children and young people a referral to a targeted emotional health and wellbeing service for LAC is necessary taking care to safeguard any confidential information.

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/413368/Promoting\\_the\\_health\\_and\\_well-being\\_of\\_looked-after\\_children.pdf#page=30](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/413368/Promoting_the_health_and_well-being_of_looked-after_children.pdf#page=30)



## 10. Care Planning – Contact

- 10.1 When considering the contact arrangements for the child/young person consideration should be given to promoting contact in all forms. Therefore it will be important to consider the child in the context of his/her family and/or other social relationships. Social workers should consider the recent research and guidance on contact issues for children in care and NICE research on the importance of contact with important people including previous foster carers.
- 10.2 When planning contact for children/young people the importance of pre-existing court orders under Section 8 and 34 of the Children Act 1984 should be considered as should the importance of sibling contact and other pre-existing relationships. Contact with parents or others with parental responsibility should always be prioritised as long as it is in the child's best interests; contact can only be stopped for a period of seven days giving written notice to parents, child and IRO.

## 11. Participation and Consultation

- 11.1 Children and young people should be consulted and involved in decisions that affect them, throughout their journey. It is an expectation that the 'child's voice' is clearly recorded throughout their records and that their views inform their care plan and chronology of events. Children and young people should be provided with advice, assistance and support to enable participation in all meetings and reviews. It is particularly important that the child/young person is well prepared for their statutory 'looked after' review and has the relevant information including access to an advocate. The IRO will send the 'consultation document' to the child/young person prior to the 'looked after' review and will make arrangements to see them, and record their views clearly on the records. For children with disabilities there is recognition that additional tools may be needed to record views but this should not deter social workers from ensuring views through observation and or appropriate tools are evident.
- 11.2 The child/young person should be consulted with at least 20 working days before the review in relation to (i) who they would like to attend the meeting and (ii) where the meeting will be held. The level of consultation and whether it is feasible will be dependent upon the child/young person's level of understanding. However every endeavour should be made to ensure that the child/young person's 'voice' is apparent within his or her journey through care.

## 12. Care planning – Permanence Panels

- 12.1 Permanence Panels will take place monthly and will be chaired by the Head of Service for Children in Care (see Terms of Reference)The same practice standards will exist when working with children, young people and their families as in other parts of the service.
- 12.2 Permanence planning is based on the philosophy that every child has the right to a permanent and stable home, preferably with his or her own family. The primary focus of permanence planning is to prevent children being unnecessarily looked after in care and for them to have a sense of permanence and where they belong. As corporate parents LCC will work to find permanent, safe homes for children in care, in a timely manner and where a family option is not viable this is evidenced and the reasons for this clearly recorded. The best possible care involves giving children security, stability and commitment throughout their childhood and beyond. It requires their carers to be able to respond and adapt to their emerging and changing needs.
- 12.3 Permanence is the long term plan for the child's upbringing and provides an underpinning framework for all social work with children and their families from family support through to adoption. It ensures a framework of emotional, physical and legal conditions that gives a child a sense of security, continuity, commitment, identity and belonging.
- 12.4 Early planning for permanence is paramount in ensuring minimal delay and uncertainty. There is a requirement to take into account when making placement decisions, that the local authority has a rehabilitative duty to return children/young people to a parent or other connected person with parental responsibility or any person who previously held a Child Arrangement Order. Where the care plan is rehabilitation to family there is a need to address how the child can retain continuity with parent(s) and their place within the family home. The care plan will need to address the problems that led to the period of being looked after, how continuity of care can be maintained, any hobbies or interests and how these can be pursued. The permanence plan will be endorsed by the Service Manager / Head of Service. From the Children's Decision Meeting to the permanence panel cohorts of children and young people will be tracked, monitored and reviewed in order to ensure minimal delay in securing permanence for all children and young people.
- 12.5 Progress meetings between children's teams, adoption team and kinship team are helpful in avoiding drift in planning and using the expertise invested in adoption team and kinship team for securing permanency. Where the plan may be for adoption, a joint approach between the children's team and the adoption team will ensure the timeliness and accuracy of paperwork and the process to the ADM and will ensure that other processes are incorporated which includes ADM in respect of

adoption plans and ADM in respect of fostering approvals particularly in regard to 'connected others'.

- 12.6 The IRO has a clear responsibility in ensuring that a child 'looked after' has a SMART plan and that there is minimal delay in ensuring that progress is made. If there are any concerns, the IRO can refer the matter to the Service Manager and or Head of Service through the 'escalation policy' and IRO quality assurance alert and challenged meeting with AD. Through careful monitoring and tracking, CLA will be considered by the Permanence Panel (see Terms of Reference).
- 12.7 Where the child/young person has become 'looked after' as a result of abuse and neglect, preceded by a child protection conference then any plan to return the child/young person home (or place with parent/s under section 31) should only be undertaken following a full assessment as required.(See Placement with Parents Procedures and Guidance.)
- 12.8 A looked after review should be held before a decision is made to cease looking after a child/young person section 20 or before that young person moves into semi-independent accommodation. In the matter of the former situation, the Director of Children Services should be notified and discussions held with the IRO where there is a change of care plan. This refers to decisions to cease looking after a child/young person which is different to a child/young person missing from placement.
- 12.9 A care plan should be drawn up detailing the advice, assistance and support that the local authority intends to provide to the child/young person in circumstances where the young person returns home in:
  - (i) an unplanned way through his/her own volition;
  - (ii) where the person with parental responsibility ends the period of section 20 accommodation; and
  - (iii) circumstances whereby the young person is not eligible.
- 12.10 This must include an ongoing assessment of the ability of the parent/s to meet the child/young person's needs, as it is not acceptable to simply cease providing a service when either the local authority has made the decision to end a period of section 20 accommodation, or when the child/young person and his or her family have done so.

## **13. Children and young people ceasing to be looked after**

- 13.1 For those young people who are 16 and eligible and within the definition within 19B of Schedule 2, who have been looked after for a period of 13 weeks in total from the age of 14, the local authority must assess the young person's needs in accordance with regulations and prepare his or her pathway plan.
- 13.2 For other children and young people the plan may be to 'step down' services and support the family, with their agreement, in accessing targeted, early intervention support.

## **14. Leaving Care - The Pathway Plan and preparation for independence**

- 14.1 Arrangements for assessing, supporting and reviewing an eligible young person are governed by separate procedures.
- 14.2 There are extended duties to care leavers if undertaking a period of higher education between the ages of 21 years and 25 years, and these duties exist until the end of the programme of education.
- 14.3 For care leavers entering custody who are the subject of a care order, then pathway planning must continue and the young person visited on a regular basis. If the young person is in a youth offender's institution then the social worker must visit within 1 week of the start of the placement and at intervals of not more than 6 weeks in the first year and thereafter every 3 months

## **15. Transitioning Arrangements**

- 15.1 For children and young people with disabilities transitioning arrangements will be undertaken, including an updated assessment, in enough time to enable a seamless transition to Adult Services for those young people who are going to need longer term service and or/care provision.

## 16. Documents and further reference

- The **Family and Friends Care : Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities**
- **Kinship Care Strategy and Practice Guidance**
- Delegation of authority to foster carers policy
- Permanence Guidance and Procedures  
[http://lrchildcare.proceduresonline.com/leicestershire/g\\_perm\\_plan.html](http://lrchildcare.proceduresonline.com/leicestershire/g_perm_plan.html)
- Placement with Parents Practice Guidance
- Advocates and Independent Visitors procedures
- Looked After Reviews Procedure
- CLA – Integrated Health Pathway
- Attachment to Important People (NICE)
- Leaving Care - Get Ready for leaving Guidance and Procedures
- Youth Justice Service - Children’s Safeguarding Services Protocol
- Leicestershire’s Protocol for assessing and managing the housing needs of homeless young people
- Single Assessment Guidance and Procedure
- Early Help Offer

### **Options for Permanence Guidance – Leicestershire County Council (Includes Section 20 Guidance.)**

[http://www.proceduresonline.com/lr/childcare/leicestershire/user\\_controlled\\_lcms\\_ar\\_ea/uploaded\\_files/Options%20for%20Permanence%20Guidance%20and%20S20%20guidance.docx.pdf](http://www.proceduresonline.com/lr/childcare/leicestershire/user_controlled_lcms_ar_ea/uploaded_files/Options%20for%20Permanence%20Guidance%20and%20S20%20guidance.docx.pdf)