

Stable Homes Process

This document helps you to understand how to arrange a stable homes meeting, advice on who to invite and time frames for the meeting to take place. A stable homes meeting would be arranged when any professional, carer or child is worried that the current living arrangement for a child in our care is likely to end because of the feelings, behaviours or circumstances which are happening in that home at that time mean things are tough, and the child is at risk of having to move to a new home.

This guide and process chart is to support workers in planning and identifying support and resources that will help our children in Gateshead to remain in their homes, repair and stabilise their relationships with the adults caring for them. In order to address any concerns or worries related to the child/carer relationship it is vital that these are raised at the earliest opportunity. This could be children in our care who live with foster carers (both Gateshead carers and IFA carers), living in children's home (both Gateshead homes and private providers) and children who live with connected carers.

The aim is to identify any difficulties for the child or carers at the earliest stage. The key to the success of helping young people and their carers regain stability is to get in at the earliest opportunity. Don't wait until the issues are 'big enough' the quicker we respond the more chance we have of helping at the first stages.

The [flow chart](#) below shows who can request a meeting, how a meeting is then arranged, the timescales for the initial meeting and the first review. The meeting can be chaired by either a fostering team manager/assistant manager, Kinship care team manager/assistant manager, or a manager from the child's social work team (whoever chairs this meeting needs to then be responsible for co-ordinating reviews and ensuring that actions are agreed and followed up). **Choose the person who knows the child and the carers the best.**

You need to establish whether it is the chair, the child's social worker or the fostering social worker who is responsible for ensuring the meeting is arranged and who is invited. This is agreed with the chair at the point when a decision to hold a stable homes meeting is reached. The initial stable homes meeting should be held **within five working days** from the decision to hold the meeting.

As a guide the following professionals should be considered when thinking about who should attend a stable homes meeting:

- The child's social worker
- the foster carer (if they live within a fostering family) and if they are an independent foster carer (IFA) their fostering social worker,
- the supervising social worker for the foster carer or the kinship care team worker or the children's home manager depending on where the child lives
- the child's Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO)

- the family advocates for the relevant service
- someone from the commissioning service
- a representative from specialist support services to consider Family Group Conference (FGC) /mediation
- A member of staff from the play service
- if relevant a worker from the Youth Justice Team and any other member of the care team that could provide support

The service that can be considered from specialist family support services would include the following interventions:

- Family Group Conference (FGC)
- Mediation
- YJS Support
- Family Support
- Missing support
- Domestic abuse support for young people
- Domestic abuse support for adults
- Direct domestic abuse work with children
- Behaviour change work (work with perpetrators of domestic abuse)

The meeting should consider the issues at hand for both the child and for their carers, it should consider the support network around the child and those caring for them as well as what professional interventions might be appropriate to support the child and their carers.

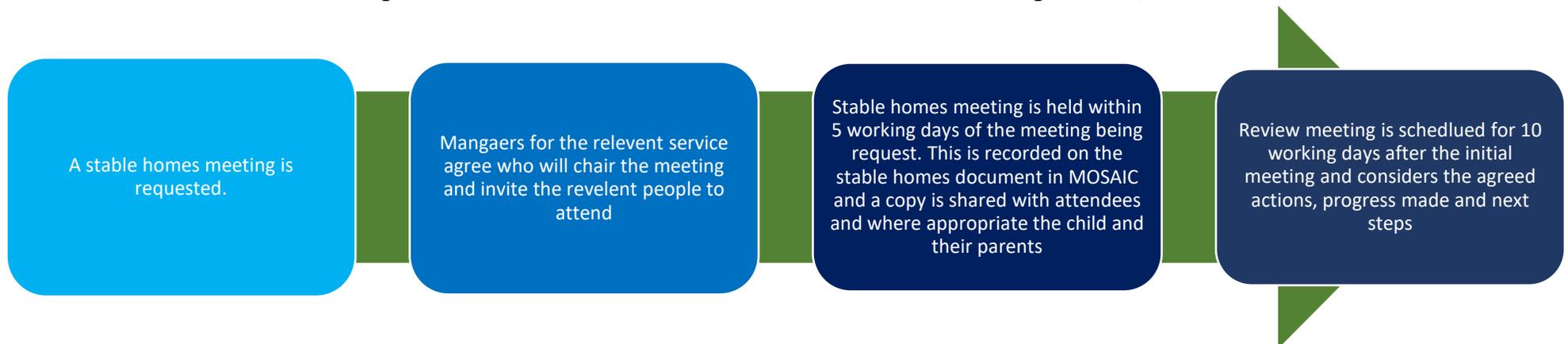
The key to setting up the meeting is to think about the steps you need to take to help. When emotions are high it's important we consider who does what and when. Sometimes it is better to think about not overwhelming a family and child with lots of new professionals but thinking about who brings the most value to helping stabilise and exactly what they are doing, purpose and goals need to be discussed and recognition that things take time. Think about how you look at the different situations which have occurred or might happen in the short term and what the response will be from the people around the table – planning helps people understand their role, the ask and what they need to do and when.

At the meeting you will need to **agree a review date**. This will be determined by the level of concern people have in relation to the plan working and the needs of the carers and child. As a rule of thumb ten working days after the initial meeting is a sensible point in time however you might be worried and bring it forward or need time to carry out the actions and agree extending this review meeting by five days.

It is important these meeting do not replace good and effective care team and looked after review meetings. Should the team at the review point feel that consideration for a brought forward care team or looked after review is required then agreement from the IRO is to be sought.

The stability meeting is to be recorded on Mosaic using the stable homes meeting document. **The records should clearly show:**

- who was invited,
- who attended,
- The reason for the meeting be arranged,
- the views of all parties and the child's views,
- any decisions and any actions,
- timescales for the agreed actions,
- the outcome of the meeting and what success would look like for the child and those caring for them,



***Oversight of the actions and coordination of further reviews will come from the chair of the stable homes meeting.**