<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contents</th>
<th>Page number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Introduction</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Policy</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Legal Framework</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The Purpose of a Child In Need Meeting</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Chairing the Child in Need Meeting</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Reason to Convene a Child in Need Meeting</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Setting up the Child in Need Meeting</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Issues to be addressed by the Child in Need Meeting</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Timescales for Child in Need Meetings</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. The Child in Need Plan</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Administration and Authorisation</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Timescales for Child in Need Visits</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Monitoring</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Dispute Resolution Process</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Effectiveness of Child In Need Meetings</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Document Control

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Version</th>
<th>Updated By</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Document Owner</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FSW SM</td>
<td>Heather Brown</td>
<td>01 06 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final</td>
<td></td>
<td>01 06 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review</td>
<td>Briege Gilhooly</td>
<td>17 01 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final</td>
<td></td>
<td>09 03 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Update</td>
<td>Briege Gilhooly</td>
<td>26 06 18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---
Lewisham Child in Need Policy

1 Introduction

1.1 The majority of the children involved with Lewisham’s Children’s Social Care are ‘children in need’ who are living with their families. Every local authority must protect and promote the welfare of Children in Need in its area. To do this it must work with the family to provide support services that will enable children to be brought up within their own families.

1.2 These procedures set out:
- How Lewisham’s Children’s Social Care will assess whether children are ‘in need’.
- How services will be provided, if this is seen as the most appropriate form of support.
- How services will be planned, monitored and reviewed.

2 Policy

2.1 Lewisham’s Children’s Social Care seeks to promote children’s well-being within their families and communities, and to enhance the outcomes for children ‘in need’ (within the meaning of the Children Act 1989) and their families.

2.2 It will do so by, undertaking assessments of the needs of individual children in collaboration with families and with partner agencies, who share responsibility for these assessments determining what action should be taken and what services should be provided to respond to that need.

2.3 Lewisham’s Children’s Social Care will plan and coordinate the provision of a range of services to enable children to remain within their own families, as long as this is consistent to promoting and safeguarding their welfare. Such services can either be provided directly and solely by Children’s Social Care or in collaboration with other agencies ensuring that the impact of service provision, or other intervention is monitored and plans are reviewed.

2.4 A child who has been assessed as being ‘in need’ is the threshold for Children’s Social Care interventions with children and their families. However not all children assessed as being ‘in need’ will require or receive a service from Children’s Social Care. Other agencies (e.g. Education or Health) might be best placed to provide services directly without requiring Children’s Social Care’s involvement. In addition, services in the community (e.g. voluntary or statutory agencies) might be able to support children and their families without a continuing Children’s Social Care involvement.
3 Legal Framework

Children Act 1989

3.1 The Children Act 1989 sets out the responsibilities Children’s Social Care to be the lead agency for establishing whether a child is in need and for ensuring services are provided to that child as appropriate.

3.2 The duties and powers of the local authority to assess the needs of a child and to provide services are outlined in Part III of the Children Act 1989, in particular Section 17, and Schedule 2 Part I. Part III is the main part of the Act (titled Local Authority Support for Children and Families) about the delivery of services by Children’s Social Care departments. Other Parts (I, II, IV and V) outline the way in which court orders may be obtained to authorise or enforce certain actions, in relation to family proceedings, care and supervision and the protection of children.

Children in Need

3.3 The Children Act 1989 states the general duty of every local authority:

It shall be the general duty of every local authority (in addition to the other duties imposed on them by this Part):

(a) to safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their area who are in need; and

(b) so far as is consistent with that duty, to promote the upbringing of such children by their families by providing a range and level of services appropriate to those children’s needs.

Children Act 1989 Section 17 (1)

3.4 This duty rests with the local authority as a whole. The provision of the range and level of services appropriate to children’s needs is done by local authorities, schools, health and voluntary agencies working together in partnership.

Definition of Children in Need

3.5 The Children Act 1989 provides a definition of a ‘child in need’

For the purposes of this Part a child shall be taken to be in need if:

(a) he is unlikely to achieve or maintain, or to have the opportunity of achieving or maintaining, a reasonable standard of health or development without the provision for him of services by a local authority under this Part;

(b) his health or development is likely to be significantly impaired, or further impaired, without the provision for him of such services; or

(c) he is disabled and “family”, in relation to such a child, includes any person who has parental responsibility for the child and any other person with whom he has been living.

Children Act 1989 Section 17 (10)
“development” means physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development; and “health” means physical or mental health.

Children Act 1989 Section 17 (11)

Children with Disabilities

3.6 All Authorities are required to provide services for disabled children which are designed to minimise the effects of their disabilities and to give them the opportunity to lead lives that are as normal as possible (Children Act 1989 Schedule 2 paragraph 6).

Definition of Children with Disabilities

3.7 The Children Act 1989, disability is defined as follows:

A child is disabled if he is blind, deaf or dumb or suffers from mental disorder of any kind or is substantially and permanently handicapped by illness, injury or congenital deformity or such other disability as may be prescribed.

Children Act 1989 Section 17 (11)

3.8 The DfE definition is "someone who has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day to day activities".

Child Protection

3.9 The Children Act 1989 sets out the local authority’s duty to investigate child protection concerns.

Where a local authority:

is informed that a child who lives, or is found, in their area – is the subject of an emergency protection order; or is in police protection; or
reasonable cause to suspect that a child who lives, or is found, in their area is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm,

the authority shall make, or cause to be made, such enquiries as they consider necessary to enable them to decide whether they should take any action to safeguard or promote the child’s welfare.

Children Act 1989 Section 47 (1)

Children Act 2004

3.10 The Children Act of 2004, section 53, amends the Children Act 1989 and requires local authorities to give due regard to a child’s wishes when determining what services to provide under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, and before making decisions about action to be taken to protect individual children under section 47 of the Children Act 1989. These duties complement requirements relating to the wishes and feelings of children who are, or may be, looked after (section 22(4) Children Act 1989), including those who are provided with accommodation under section 20 of the Children Act 1989 and children taken into police protection (section 46(3)(d) of that Act);
Section 10 of the Children Act 2004 establishes a duty on local authorities to make arrangements to promote co-operation between agencies in order to improve children’s well-being defined by reference to the five outcomes and a duty on key partners to take part in those arrangements.

The Equality Act 2010

This Act puts a responsibility on public authorities to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and promote equality of opportunity. This applies to the process of identification of need and risk faced by the individual child and the process of assessment. No child or group of children must be treated any less favourably than others in being able to access effective services which meet their particular needs; and

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

This is an international agreement that protects the rights of children and provides a child-centred framework for the development of services to children. The UK Government ratified the UNCRC in 1991 and, by doing so, recognises children’s rights to expression and receiving information.

The definition of disability under the Children Act 1989 is different from Health and Education definitions. A disabled child under the Children Act 1989 is one whose disability is ‘substantial’ and ‘permanent’ and where their needs which arise from their disability requires more support than is available through the capacity of their parents/carers and mainstream services.

Substantial will mean considerable or significant factors which are life changing or limiting, and might include issues to do with risk and dependency. Permanent means existing indefinitely, not expected to improve. However, there must be sufficient flexibility to take account of intermittent or episodic conditions.

Parental Rights and Consent

It is important that as part of working in partnership with service users (parents and carers) social workers seek consent before seeing children or sharing information with other organisations. Under a Child in Need process we have a duty to ensure that parents and carers are clear not only about what they are consenting to for example, ‘I would like to see your children in school tomorrow, with your permission;’ but that they are aware that they can withdraw that consent at any time.

Consent is only time and issue specific. Therefore social workers need to clarify with a parent or carer what they need them to consent to i.e. agency checks as well as for the social worker to see the children regularly. It cannot be assumed a parent has provided that consent. This is part of best practice with service users.
Championing Children, Transforming Futures

3.18 It is also important to ensure that, as part of efforts to obtain consent from a parent or carer, they have the mental capacity to give that consent.

3.19 Accordingly S17 of the Children Act 1989 relies on the consent and participation of the parent or carer. It cannot be imposed on a family. If the lack of consent or cooperation from a parent or carer leads to increasing concern about the welfare and safety of a child consideration needs to be given to escalating the status of the case to s47. The reasoning for this needs to be communicated to the parent or carer and clearly recorded on LCS.

4 The Purpose of a Child in Need Meeting

4.1 The purpose of the Child in Need meeting is to share information, identify need and agree the most effective plan to meet those needs with measurable outcomes for the child identified within stated timescales.

5 Chairing the Child in Need Meeting

5.1 Child In Need meetings in Lewisham are chaired by the allocated social worker within the relevant teams or in specific cases by a team manager.

6 Reason to Convene a Child in Need Meeting

6.1 If a Child and Family assessment concludes that a child is ‘in need’ as defined by the legal framework a Child in Need meeting will be arranged. The reasons for convening a child in need meeting may include:

- Domestic violence identified using the Safe Lives Risk Indicator Checklist (RIC) & Quick Start Guidance for Domestic Abuse, Stalking and ‘Honour’-Based Violence.
- Parental mental health, learning disabilities or substance misuse that results in difficulty in providing adequate care for the child;
- Chronic/significant neglect;
- Parental lifestyle which impacts significantly on the child (Inability of parent to provide appropriate boundaries for the child's behaviour);
- Evidence of attachment issues for the child;
- Risk of sexual exploitation;
- Repeated incidents of going missing;
- Serious substance or alcohol misuse by the young person;
- Those at risk of accommodation.
- The child is being discharged from Care and/or the child is no longer subject to a Child Protection Plan;

6.2 If the criteria for a Child in Need Meeting are met, then consideration should also be given to offering the family the option of a Family Meeting. Family Meetings can be used at any stage and will be the responsibility of the allocated social worker to arrange. Another worker in the service can chair this meeting as appropriate.

7 Setting up the Child in Need Meeting
Championing Children, Transforming Futures

7.1 The Child in Need Meeting should be held at a time and place that maximises the ability of the family to participate in a meaningful way. Therefore the social worker will discuss the venue and timing of the meeting with the child and parent(s) prior to the meeting being set up and invites being sent out.

7.2 The meeting will include professionals, the family and where appropriate the child or young person based on his/her maturity and what is in his/her best interests.

7.3 In all circumstances the views and wishes of all children old enough to express their views and wishes should be ascertained using whatever medium is most appropriate. The child or young person's involvement and participation in the process is essential whether they attend the meeting or not.

7.4 If a child or young person wants to attend the meeting, and is of an age and understanding to do so and has the agreement of their family, then careful consideration of the issues and preparation of the child would be needed.

7.5 The family should be prepared for the meeting and the issues on the agenda discussed with them in advance of the meeting. They should be informed of the structure and format of the meeting and how they can participate.

7.6 Parents and young people should be given the chance to put their views in writing if they so wish. It should also be explained to parents and young people that they may need independent support, information and advice to be able to participate fully from an informed position, particularly where there is a disagreement of views. They should also be advised that they may be accompanied to the meeting by a supporter if they wish.

8 Issues to be addressed by the Child in Need Meeting

8.1 The Meeting should address issues arising out of the Child and Family Assessment, which should be updated annually as a minimum or sooner if new information or a significant event indicates the need for an updating assessment, as well as:

- Departmental and other agency involvement with the family and family background
- Child’s developmental needs (each child of the family/household should be considered individually)
- Parents’/carers’ capacity to respond appropriately to the child/young person’s needs
- Family and environmental factors
- Child’s views
- Parent’s views
- Analysing needs and actions requested to safeguard and promote the child’s welfare
Whether any additional protective action should be taken, including consideration of whether the situation fulfils the criteria for holding a Child Protection Conference

Whether a Family Meeting is required to continue to develop the plans being developed for the child/young person

Any specialist assessments required and arrangements for commissioning these (i.e. who is to do what and when is this to happen)

9 Timescales for Child in Need Meetings

During the period of the Child and Family Assessment a Child in Need meeting can be convened at any time between the family and the professional network.

The initial Child In Need meeting will be set up no later than 15 working days following the completion of the Child and Family Assessment and decision to progress a child in need plan.

The second Child in Need meetings will take place no later than 6 weeks after the first and serves the function of bringing the whole network together to review the progress of the Child In Need Plan.

Subsequent reviews should take place at no less than three monthly intervals.

If the needs of the case should escalate or new concerns arise an earlier meeting can be arranged/brought forward.

Following a child protection conference where a child was not made subject to a child protection plan but rather was made subject to a child in need plan or was stepped down form a child protection plan the same timeframe will apply.

All CiN meetings must be recorded in the workflow of the child/ren’s electronic records, which should include details of the discussions that took place during the meeting, the progress in relation to the plan and the meeting attendees.

In cases involving supervision orders the team manager will chair the 9 month review to discuss whether the supervision order needs to be renewed and to ensure appropriate plans are made, in line with the need and risk in the case, and decisions communicated to Legal.

10 The Child in Need Plan

10.1 The Child in Need Plan will be developed at the initial Child in Need Meeting and will;

- Identify any resources or services that will be needed to achieve the planned outcomes within the agreed timescales and who is responsible for which action and the timescale involved.

10.2 In particular, the Child in Need Plan should:

- Describe the identified developmental needs of the child, and any services required;
10.3 At the end the meeting it is the responsibility of the social worker to make sure that parents and child (ren) are clear about the objectives of the plan, the causes of concern, what needs to change and what is expected of them as part of the plan. The family need to accept the plan and be willing to work to it and to understand the consequences if things do not change.

10.4 If the family do not speak English, the plan should be constructed with the family in their first language and they should receive a written copy in their first language.

11 Administration and Authorisation

11.1 The social worker as Chair of the Child in Need Meeting will read any relevant reports or background information, which should be available at least three working days before the commencement of the meeting/review.

11.2 The social worker will draw up the multi-agency Child in Need Plan together with a full record of the meeting/review within 7 working days and update LCS accordingly. The team manager will endorse the recommendations.

11.3 The social worker will then forward the minutes of the meeting, the recommendations and the Plan to all those invited to the meeting.

12 Timescales for Child in Need Visits

12. Once the Child in Need Plan is drawn up and agreed the social worker will progress the actions therein and will visit the child no later than every 20 working days. They will produce a written record of the visit within 3 working days clearly recording the needs, actions and expected outcomes and place on LCS.

13 Monitoring
13.1 Good communication is essential for promoting the child’s safety and ensuring that the Child in Need Plan is effective. In the event of a change/event in the child’s life all parties involved in the plan must be informed.

13.2 Such changes might include:

- Proposed change of Child in Need Plan;
- Court Care Plans and directions;
- Major change to contact arrangement which affects the safeguarding the child;
- Changes of allocated social worker;
- Child protection enquiries and outcome of Child Protection Conferences;
- Complaints from or on behalf of child, parent or carer.

13.3 Prior to case closure to CSC the team manager will chair the final multi-disciplinary Child In Need Meeting, which will consider whether there is a need for the child to receive services from Team Around the Family (TAF), targeted or universal services. The C&F assessment should identify that the family’s needs now meet level 3/2 of the Lewisham Continuum of Need.

13.4 If a TAF is required the final Child in Need meeting will identify the lead professional and a support/Action Plan will be formulated to identify needs within the family and proposals for how these will be met.

13.5 The social worker will complete a closing summary and place on LCS and either close the case if all needs are met or transfer responsibility to the identified lead professional. The Early Help Team can provide advice regarding help and support services- see also /Early Help Directory.

14 Dispute Resolution Process

14.1 One of the key functions of the social worker as Chair of the Child in Need meeting is to resolve problems arising out of the child in need planning process. It is expected that the social worker will establish positive working relationships with professionals involved in the child in need process.

14.2 Where problems are identified in relation to a child’s case, for example in relation to child in need planning, the implementation of the Plan or decisions relating to it, resources or poor practice, the social worker and team manager, where possible and appropriate, will in the first instance, seek to resolve the issue informally. A record of this initial informal resolution process will be placed on the child’s file.

14.3 If the matter is not resolved in a timescale that is appropriate to the child’s needs, then the social work team will provide the complainant with a form detailing how to make a complaint and the social work team will refer the complainant to the LSCB Resolving Professional Differences Policy.
Effectiveness of Child in Need Meetings

15.1 Child in Need cases will be tracked against a series of benchmarks, as a part of the safeguarding quality assurance process.

15.2 Service managers will ensure service audit activities, through their own and their team managers’ activities, such as supervision and individual oversight.

15.3 CIN cases are sampled at times throughout the year, as part of the themed monthly audit activity within the QA audit framework; these are reported to the SMT group and feedback to individual auditors.