

Placement Support Meetings Guidance

A Placement Support Meeting brings the network together where there are identified difficulties and challenges that risk the stability of a child/young person's placement. These meetings consider the worries and challenges and use the network's strengths and best ideas to address the worries and prevent them escalating and develop a plan with rules and bottom lines. The overall aim is of supporting the stability of the placement for the child/young person and to enable them to make sense of their experiences.

Within a Placement Support Meeting, the Signs of Safety Practice Framework offers consistency in our approach providing us with a common language, methodology and tools. [Delivering Excellent Practice](#) also includes key information, practice expectations and bottom lines for service areas and key activities, including placement stability and disruption.

Guidance for Disruption Meetings, which are held following a placement which has ended abruptly or in an unplanned way, is set out in [Placement Planning and Disruption Meetings \(4.1.6 proceduresonline.com\)](#) and should be considered if a placement ends unexpectedly.

Placement Support Meetings should be convened/consideration should be given to convening a Placement Support meeting if:

- There are clear worries or risks that a placement may break down
- The child's previous experiences or trauma mean that they require additional support or development of new plan rules to support the carers and those in the network, in caring for the child, understanding and meeting their needs
- A placement move is planned (and may be in line with the overall care plan) but it is anticipated that the child's needs are such that they may need additional support to move successfully and build positive attachments. This may be due to the child's understanding/acceptance of the need to move, impact of previous placement moves, placement breakdown and developmental trauma.
- Children who have experienced previous placement breakdowns are likely to benefit from additional support around placement moves, and consideration of the impact of any previous moves, experiences and losses*
- Anticipated changes in the current placement where the carers and child may benefit from additional planning and support to ensure needs are understood and strategies are identified to support carers and children in managing these – for example, changes in the carer's health or situation, children joining or leaving the placement
- Any other identified needs relating to the placement and requires more targeted planning and oversight around the placement in particular and is additional to that which can be provided through 6 monthly statutory LAC Review.

*For children who have previously had unexpected endings to placements, or placement breakdowns, consideration should be given to convening a Placement Support Meeting in the new placement to ensure that the child's wishes, feelings and views can be heard and considered, the impact of any previous trauma and experiences, the impact of previous placement moves, disruptions to attachments and relationships and any learning from previous experiences of carers and those working with the child (considering worries, and in particular what worked well) can be understood and can contribute to the development of the updated plan which will support the child and those caring for them in their new placement.

Where possible, Placement Support Meetings should be convened at an early stage and when worries about a placement are identified rather than at 'crisis' point. However, Placement Support Meetings can be convened in order to respond to a crisis or emergency situation if this arises to support future planning and to support the child through this experience (e.g. a carer gives notice on a placement).

The meeting should be chaired by a suitable manager. This may be a Fostering Team Manager for in house foster placements, a Social Work Team Manager for external placements or residential placements, or a residential home manager or IRO if this is most suitable for the individual child.

The child's view as to who they would like to chair their meeting should be considered. In complex cases, consideration can be given to appointing an independent person, e.g. a manager without line management responsibility, or senior manager to chair the meeting.

The meeting should be attended by all relevant members of the naturally connected network, including, foster carers, birth family, other connected people to the birth family and foster family, as well as professionals. Consideration should be given to who has helped the child/network when the worry has been present in the past. This may include previous carers and consideration should be given to how the child can maintain important relationships. The child/young person should attend the meeting if appropriate, and if not, consideration given to how their views will be incorporated into the Plan which is developed through the meeting and how it will be shared with them in a way in which they can understand.

Within the meeting, the issues around the Placement will be mapped. A Goal will be identified – this may be either to support the child and the carers in the current placement on an ongoing basis, or to acknowledge that the placement will end and to support the child in moving on from the placement positively.

The meeting will develop actions which will form part of the 'timeline', as well as 'plan rules' which will detail how the child and any specific behavioural worries or presentations can be supported within the placement. The Plan should identify the roles and responsibilities of the network around the young person. The importance of the young person's key relationships, including with birth family, friends, carer's network and any previous carers need to be considered, in terms of how the

child/young person will be supported to have contact and maintain relationships and what role these people may be able to provide in supporting the child/young person as part of the Plan.

The meeting should be minuted on the Placement Support Meeting form. This needs to be uploaded to Liquid Logic Documents following the meeting on the child's record and the fostering record.

Following the meeting, the child's Care Plan needs to be updated (timeline actions and plan rules to be copied across to the new LL care plan). It is agreed and documented in the meeting who will do this. The Social Worker will ordinarily have responsibility for updating the Care Plan. However, if the IRO has Outcomes currently open, the IRO will have responsibility for updating the Care Plan as part of the Outcomes and will include the explanation; **'This Care Plan also includes the recommendations and plan rules agreed at the Placement Support Meeting held on DATE'**. When the IRO Outcomes are finalised, this will create a Liquid Logic generated version of the Care Plan including the actions and plan rules from the Placement Support Meeting.

The minutes of the meeting and the updated plan should be shared with all attendees. An appropriate version of the Plan needs to be shared with the child.

A date should be set for a Review meeting, until it is agreed that the review and oversight of the plan return to that of statutory Looked After Child Reviews (usually 6 monthly).

Julie Khoosal – Service Manager. IRO Service.
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