

## **Children's Services**

### **Children Act Section 20 Placements and Parental Consent Additional Guidance**

#### **1. Context**

- 1.1 Procedure and guidance in relation to looked after children can be found Children's Services Procedures (tri.x) chapter 5.1.1 Decision to Look After and Care Planning. Within this chapter there is also specific guidance in section 1.3 in relation to children who are to be looked after under CA1989 Sec 20 arrangements.
- 1.2 This document sets out additional local guidance in respect of these matters.

#### **2. Process**

- 2.1 There are occasions when a young person over the age of 16 and under 18 can request accommodation under section 20 in their own right. A placement under section 20 can be offered if not doing so will result in the young person being at risk of significant harm. This will not require additional consent from someone with parental responsibility however assessment must be undertaken as to why someone with parental responsibility is not able to provide care or the young person is rejecting their care.
- 2.2 A child ceases to be looked after if they return to the care of someone with parental responsibility for more than 24 hours. However, there are occasions within a section 20 arrangement where there are extended periods of contact with parents where it is clear within the plan that the need for placement provision and care planning remains. If this is the case it may not be necessary to change the child's legal and placement status on MOSAIC and agreement should be reached with the Service Manager to confirm if this is necessary or not.
- 2.3 The delegated responsibility form should be completed no later than the placement planning meeting to ensure that both parent and carer are aware of all aspects of delegation in addition to that provided alongside initial consent. If the child is aged 16 plus this form should be completed with them, with the child retaining decision making responsibility as appropriate and commensurate with the overall placement agreement.
- 2.4 Whilst there is no set time limit for how long a section 20 arrangement can last the appropriateness of the arrangement should be explicitly considered at each statutory review and will be considered by the Leadership Oversight Panel if it continues for longer than a period of 3 months. The allocated social worker should ensure that parental agreement to Sec 20 is continual and that the parent continues to exercise their parental responsibility. Recording should reflect regular contact with parents, and this should be addressed in the social work report for the statutory review.