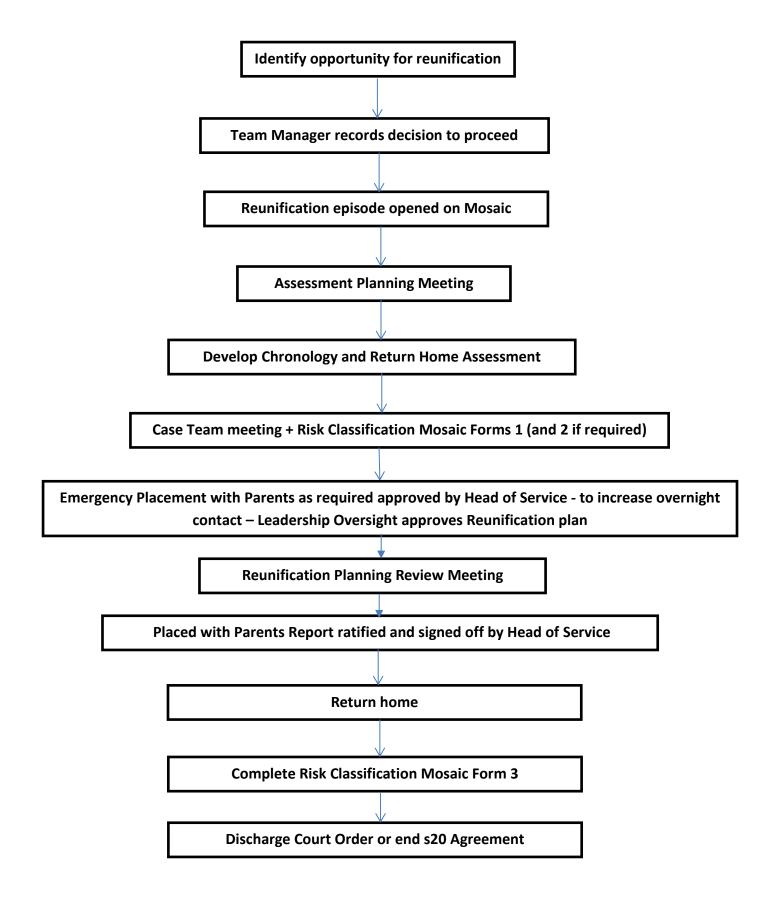


# **Reunification Process**

This is a summary of the reunification process. A more detailed workflow is set out on the following pages. For more information regarding reunification please read the following link: Reunification: an evidence-informed framework for return home practice (nspcc.org.uk)





# **Detailed Reunification Work flow**

#### Identification

Allocated social worker (SW) or QARO identifies potential candidate for reunification

Where text is highlighted in **blue** – record the activity on the Reunification Monitoring | form

### **Discussion between SW and QARO**

Discussion could be supported by quick completion of risk classification

**Discussion in Supervision** 

SW and Team Manager (TM) discussion in supervision / 1:1

### Decision 1 - TM Case discussion and decision in Supervision + Reunification Episode opened on Mosaic

- TM and Social Worker discussion and TM records case decision on Mosaic that reunification framework to be followed to explore possibility of reunification for the child; Case decision copied to Chronology, SW, AP and SM as appropriate
- Reunification Monitoring Form is opened on Mosaic Record Decision 1, name of TM and date of decision if to pursue

## **Assessment Planning Meeting**

- Team Manager identifies who will carry out the Return Home Assessment (usually the allocated social worker) and who will be the Chronologist. Record this on Mosaic with the dates the Chronology + Return Home Assessment started + completed
- If relevant, attend Line of Sight to request Harbour Youth Practitioner to support with reunification.
- Hold Assessment Planning Meeting to set timetable for the reunification actions to follow.
- To include Chronologist; Assessing Social Worker; Harbour Youth Practitioner, relevant Team Manager; the care givers; the parents and the child or young person is this is appropriate.

**Timetable** 

# Meet the child to explain the reunification process and identify Trusted Adult

- Meet with the child and see them alone; use the Accessible Risk Classification Table (Traffic light tool) to explain the purpose and rationale behind the assessment
- Identify a Trusted Adult for the child to talk to about the reunification. It may be an advocate, independent visitor, Harbour Youth Practitioner – could also be current care giver; Social worker should explain the reunification process and record this in the assessment

Accessible Risk Classification **Table** 

# **Chronology and** Genogram

Allocated worker starts to produce the chronology and genogram

The time commitment required to complete the task must be factored in

# **Conduct the Return Home** Assessment (RHA) with parent and children

Assessment is the Return Home Assessment; Refer to guidance on assessment in the Reunification Practice Framework and Guidance

Check housing, finances and school; highlight any issues early

## **Identify and** address support needs

And make referrals where necessary to Signpost for example. Consider whether to book

FGC

## **Police Check** Carry out for all over 16s in

the household, extended family members and regular visitors where reunification

considered

# Mid-point Supervision

Halfway through the development of the RHA - SW and TM meet for supervision and refer to the draft assessment and chronology

Analytical Chronology **Template** 

Genogram

Return Home Assessment **Template** 

Risk Classification Meeting – Risk Classification 1

Meet to discuss risk classification based on the draft RHA and completed Chronology; includes social worker, chronology, Harbour Youth Practitioner and Team Manager; and make recommendation about the level of risk

Risk Classification Table

Decision 2 - TM discussion with Service Manager (SM) in Supervision - to confirm level of risk and make case decision Record Risk Classification 1; Case decision on progression with reunification; Date of decision and name of SM Provides recorded approval to proceed; record key dates and level of risk (Low, Medium, High, or Severe) on the episode

# **Low Risk**

Actively consider reunification

# Parental Agreement

Consider support needs

Plan for return home

# **Medium Risk**

Reunification should be considered

# Parental Agreement

Consider support needs

Look for sustained change and reclassify the risk

Plan for return home as appropriate

# **High Risk**

Further interventions and evidence of change needed before reunification considered

# Parental Agreement

Consider support needs

Look for sustained change and reclassify the risk

If risk remains high for six months → Severe Risk

# **Severe Risk**

Possibility of abuse or neglect too high to permit a return home

Work with child and parents about the decision

If child accommodated under s20 - consider proceedings

Plan for permanent placement



For Low, Medium and High Risk only – plan as appropriate towards reunification

# Confirm the risk classification with the parents, child or young person and the care giver

- Assessing social worker meets with the parents and the carer giver to discuss the Risk Classification, RHA and Chronology
- Use the risk classification table to help explain the decision and Young Persons Report for children and young people
- The QARO as with others involved will be informed in advance of the review

# Finalise the Return Home Assessment Report

Return Home Assessment is completed and signed off by team manager; key dates recorded on the episode Accessible Risk Classification Table

Young Persons Report

Return Home Assessment

# **Reunification Planning Meeting**

- To include the social worker, Harbour Youth Practitioner, the Team Manager, the current care giver, the parents and the Team around the Child and the fostering service (to discuss support package needed)
- Identify intervention/services to support the parent to achieve their goals and to support the child to return home
- If level of risk is suitable to proceed, request whether to hold an FGC, update Leadership Oversight

### **Parental agreement**

Meet with the parents to explain and agree the changes that are needed for reunification to take place, based on the assessment; refer to the Risk Classification Table; complete the outcomes tool with them again

Work with parents to set SMART goals – what changes need to be made, how evidenced + timescales - monitor progress

Set this out on the Parental Agreement and Goal Setting Template.

# Create contingency plans and share with parents Monitor progress

against the agreed goals.

A contingency permanence plan will be in place.

Identify role of current care givers

# Communication with children

Agree who will see the child alone (might be the Trusted Adult) and discuss the next steps; ask them about their hopes and fears and best timing of a return home.

Ask them about the support they need to prepare for a return home and the changes they think their parents need to make a

return safe

# Hold FGC as required

Where an
FGC is held,
a Family
Plan is
developed
and forms
part of the
reunification
plan

Schedule in
a review FGC

## Develop Reunification Plan

Develop the reunification plan and implement any actions that can be actioned at this stage.

Record on the Reunification Plan template Risk Classification Table

Parental
Agreement
and Goal
Setting
Template

Reunification Plan Template

# Implement the Reunification Plan - monitor progress and review the plan and the Parental Agreement

- Continue to monitor progress with the parents about their goals; look for sustained change
- Continue to monitor the support provided including from FGC Family Plan and impact on the parents' progress
- Use professional judgement about the length of time needed to monitor progress and for how long sustained change is needed

# Re-classify risk and decide on reunification – Risk Classification 2 (if required – if previously medium or high)

- Review evidence of parent's ability to make and sustain changes and review risk classification.
- If previously assessed as high risk, look for sustained demonstrated improvement and that risk has remained medium or low for six months.
- Case discussion with team manager and agree a reclassification of risk to recommend to the Service Manager with recommendation to proceed with or with not for reunification

Risk Classification Table

# Decision 3 - SM and TM Discussion and SM records in Management Oversight - Decision ratified by Head of Locality/Service

- Record Risk Classification 2 if required; Case decision on progression with reunification; Date of decision
- Case decision is recorded on Mosaic that plan is for reunification or that the risk is Severe and alternative plan for permanence must be put in place
- Social worker asked to prepare for Change of Placement and Allowance Group (CPAG) if a significant change of plan required

# Communicate risk classification

Communicate the risk classification and reunification decision to children and their parents and current care givers.

Use Young Peoples report for the children or young people; liaise with the Trusted Adult

Young Persons Report

3

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**Emergency Placed with Parents approval from Head of Locality/Service to enable start or increase in overnight contact** 

Head of Locality/Service approval for Emergency Placed with Parents to enable increase in overnight contact (over 24 hours). Documents needed are the RHA and Placed with Parents front sheet (if required). Case Decision recorded on Mosaic by SM.

Placed with Parents Front Sheet

### Reunification Planning Review – no longer than three months from the Reunification Planning Meeting

- To include the assessing (and allocated) social worker, the Team Manager, the current care giver, the parents and the Team around the Child and the placement service (to discuss support package needed) and the young person depending on their age
- Agree transition planning needed and confirm roles and responsibilities + key timescales for reunification.
- Decide if FGC review needed
- Include schedule of visits be mindful of key dates for court process
- If child was s20 before reunification, incorporate the goals within the Child in Need plan

Update Parental Agreement Update the parental agreement

# Hold FGC review as required

Plan the specific details about the return home and any practical issues to address
Consider, transition, bedrooms, family changes, continuity and feelings

# Increase contact and gradual return home

Ensure child is consulted and timing and manner of return home
Carry out visits - announced and unannounced.

## Update the Reunification Plan

Confirm the support and services that will be in place when the child is home
Confirm with Team around the Child how services will be provided

# Prepare documents for CPAG and present at panel

Documents required are RHA; Chronology; Decisions from last CLA Review; Parental Agreement; Reunification Plan; Placed with Parents front sheet

### **CPAG and Child in Care Review**

- Present with required documents at CPAG; Adjourn CIC review as required to fit with CPAG.
- Provide updates to CIC Review and to Placement Service (to give adequate notice to care givers)
- Hold CIC review if this has been adjourned
- Record if reunification plan recommended at CPAG and forward to Corporate Director for agreement; As required, if Placement with Parents regulations been adhered to; and date of panel

# When child is living back at home - monitor and review

- At point of child return home, change legal status as required; Record date of when child actual returned home
- Support services should continue for at least 12 months post reunification and provided by the Team around the Child
- Visits announced and unannounced by social worker minimum frequency no less than statutory requirement
- Child must be seen alone each time and at times out of the home
- Team around the Child meetings at three months between CIC reviews or Pathway Plan reviews which continue at every six months
- For children on a care order, CIC reviews will continue to be chaired by QARO
- For children formerly on s20, the first review after returning home will be chaired by the QARO; then subsequent reviews will be undertaken by the Team Manager or the social worker as part of the Child in Need plan dependent on the status of the child
- Placement details will be updated on Framework
- SDQs will continue to be carried out at a frequency of no less than the statutory minimum

# Re-classify risk - Risk Classification 3

- TM and Social worker should formally reclassify the risks again at six months; Record Risk Classification 3 and date carried out
- If risks remain low, continue with the plan
- If risks have increased discuss with SM
- Hold a Team around the Child meeting to review parental goals and support provided to support risk being reduced to low

# Social work involvement – how long this continues

- Social work involvement continues until parents have sustained low risk for at least six months. Any withdrawal of support should be tapered and gradual, signpost to Universal and Targeted services
- Complete the *outcomes tool* and SDQ after the child has been back home for six months and add goals to CiN Plan

# Rescinding of care order

- Decision made about timescale for care order to be rescinded; Discharge chronology, statement, assessments
- Liaise with CAFCASS and the courts to ensure this is carried out in most efficient timescale possible

# Complete the Reunification Monitoring form by stating Outcome of Reunification Activity

 Record Outcome of Reunification Activity including other reasons for exit part way through the process and date of exit part way through. When all recording completed, click Section completed for each section and save and close the form.