**West Sussex – Practice Guidance**

IROs are qualified social workers with at least five years’ experience, and who have acquired the right skills to carry out this role.

**Care and Placement Plans**

*Please also see practice guidance on ‘Placements and Admissions’.*

**Information gathering**

* Once a referral has been accepted, the children’s home will require the following documentation prior to the commencement of the placement from the social worker:
* Child Looked After (CLA) Placement Plan
* CLA Care Plan
* CLA review notes
* Chronology of significant events relating to child’s accommodation
* Signs of Safety documents (if used by local authority)
* Pathway Plan
* Health Plan
* All current documentation in place from previous placement:
  + Support Plan
  + Safety Plan / Risk Assessments
  + Positive Handling Plan
  + CSE Risk Assessment/Screening Tool
  + Missing Plan
  + Keyworker monthly reports for 3 months
* Any other relevant information

**Admission criteria**

*Please see ‘Statement of Purpose’ for the admission criteria.*

* Our intention is to ensure that every child who comes to live at any WSCC children’s home, irrespective of the duration, will benefit from effectively planned care that meets their assessed needs and promotes their wellbeing.
* We aim to involve children in every stage of their care planning, in line with their cognitive ability and understanding. Working in partnership with children and the team of people around them, we find that outcomes for children are improved. We will communicate openly and transparently with every child and the people involved in their care and will ensure that we continue to prioritise the child’s views, wishes and feelings at every step.
* Our children’s homes will only accept placements for children where they are satisfied that the home can respond effectively to the child’s assessed needs as recorded in the child’s relevant plans and where they have fully considered the impact that the placement will have on the existing group of children. This will inform the Impact Risk Assessment that the new home undertakes.

**Placement Planning**

* In consultation with the child and the placing authority, the registered manager of the children’s home will ensure everyone is clear on the reasons for the child being placed there and the focus and purpose of the placement.
* Staff will refer to the child’s CLA Care and Placement Plan and agree a set of outcomes for the child while they are living at the children’s home.
* Children will be fully involved in identifying areas they would like support with, how to do this and who with, as far as is practicable.
* Contact with family members and people who are an important part of the child’s life is a key consideration in planning the care of all children in WSCC children’s homes. The placing authority will ensure staff and the child are aware of permitted contact arrangements and staff will ensure that contact is supported wherever possible.
* It is the responsibility of the placing authority to supervise, plan and co-ordinate all contact arrangements.
* There may be circumstances where staff assess that restriction of contact is necessary in the interests of the child, to safeguard them or promote their welfare. This decision should not be taken lightly and must be agreed with the placing authority, where possible, except in an emergency situation, where the placing authority must be notified within 24 hours.

**Care and Support Planning**

* Staff will thoroughly assess the child’s needs by observation, reading case chronologies and referral documentation and talking with the child. The allocated keyworker will then produce a Support Plan and a Safety Plan which brings together how the home will support the child to achieve their best potential.
* The Support Plan will be reviewed monthly and updated with input from the child and involved professionals and family members as necessary, or in response to any significant events. The Support Plan will incorporate any recommendations or areas as identified in the child’s Health assessment.
* Support planning is constructed around a personalised document that aims to keep the child at the centre of everyone’s thinking.
* The child will be supported to participate in Looked After Medical as soon as possible which will identify any ongoing areas for attention.
* The child will also be supported to participate in a Personal Education Plan meeting as required.

**Review meetings**

* Staff will support children to contribute to and attend all statutory review meetings and ensure, wherever possible, that they are convened outside of the education timetable to avoid any unnecessary disruption.
* The child’s social worker will convene an initial CLA review within the first 28 days of admission and three monthly thereafter.
* They will receive regular visits from their allocated social worker and may also have an Independent Visitor, or advocate who will support the child to voice their concerns and feedback at review meetings.
* The child will also be involved in regular reviews by the health team and other specialist staff on a needs-led basis.

**Transition and Exit Planning**

* An important part of care planning for children living in WSCC children’s homes is ensuring that arrangements for the child to move on begin as early as possible following initial placement.
* Exit planning from the very start of the child’s time at the home allows both the child and those providing support to them to be clear about how and when the child is prepared for and reaches the point of moving on.
* Exit planning will be discussed at each review meeting and the child’s progress will be monitored and their views and future plans will inform the process of transition.

**Links to related documents:**

Placement and Admissions

Contact with Parents, Siblings and Others

Complaints