**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.

**Moving to Another Placement**

* There may be several reasons why a child moves to another placement. A planned move may take place when a child returns home or reaches independence and moves to an alternative provision.
* If the needs or circumstances of the child have changed substantially, it may warrant a move to another placement who can better meet their needs. This may be on a planned or unplanned (emergency) basis, dependent on the individual circumstances.
* The decision to move a child from a children’s home should usually only be taken at a Looked After Child review where there is agreement that the current placement does not meet the needs of the child.
* The child themselves and their social worker must be consulted about any potential move, and their views recorded. Moving to another placement can be very disruptive for a child, so any planned moves while the child is in Key Stage 4 (years 10 & 11) need senior management approval.
* However, there may be occasions where a placement move is necessary on an urgent basis – *see practice guidance on ‘Emergency Placements and Emergency Reviews’.*
* Where it appears that a child would benefit from transferring to another home, the Registered Manager should discuss this with the child’s social worker and Independent Reviewing Officer. Any decision to terminate a child’s placement and request that they are moved to another home must be approved by a senior manager.
* Normally, children will remain in the existing home for a minimum of 28 days after the decision to move has been reached to enable proper planning to take place. During this period staff must help each child to prepare for the move. In cases where children are returning home or moving to independent living this includes supporting the child to develop emotional and mental resilience to cope without the home’s support.

**Arrangements for the transfer to another home**

* The Registered Manager of the child’s current placement should contact the Registered Manager of the new proposed placement to make practical arrangements for a smooth transition. The key activities during this period are as follows:
* Child and their parent/carer should visit the new placement
* Child and their parent/carer should be provided with the Statement of Purpose and/or Children’s Guide for the new placement
* The Registered Manager should contact the social worker, Head teacher and any other professionals to ensure all statutory documents are up to date (see below)
* Key workers should update and complete all plans and records held on the child.
* Plans that should be updated are as follows:

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| Name of document | Person responsible |
| Care Plan | Social Worker |
| Pathway Plan (if appropriate) | Social Worker or Personal Advisor |
| Personal Education Plan (PEP) / Individual Education Plan (IEP) / Education Care & Health Plan (EHCP) | Social Worker |
| Health Care Assessment and any related details, plans or arrangements | Designated LAC Nurse and Registered Manager |
| Placement Plan (or Placement Information Record) | Registered Manager |
| End of Placement Report | Registered Manager |
| For moves within West Sussex, the child’s residential file must be brought up to date, collated, tidied then passed to Registered Manager of new home | Key worker |
| For moves to external providers, a transition file should be prepared with copies of all current documents on file | Key worker |

* Tasks for the Registered Manager of the new placement:
* Ensure a risk assessment has been completed if there is a risk the child may go missing
* Arrangements are in place for the child to be registered with a GP, Dentist and Optician (*see Practice Guidance ‘Health Notifications and Access to Services’*) and any existing arrangements for equipment or medication are in place
* A Health Care Assessment has been arranged as needed
* Child has been provided with a copy of the Children’s Guide, complaints procedure, details of advocacy services and all personal items and belongings.
* For all transfers to another home or other placement, the existing home manager should ensure the following arrangements are made:
* That the child has all clothing and personal belongings packed in a suitcase or holdall (or arrangements are made for them to be passed to the new home manager). (Please note, any failure to provide suitable resources for transporting belongings i.e. using bin liners, will result in disciplinary action for the staff member leading the move).
* Where children have been in the care of a home for an extended period, memento albums and photographs and moments about the home should be prepared for them so they have a record of their period of life at the home;
* The existing and new Registered Manager must ensure that the social worker has notified the following agencies in writing about the child’s transfer:
* Clinical Commissioning Group
* Local Education Authority
* Children’s Services Department
* Child’s family and other people who are important to them

**Ongoing Contact**

* Any arrangements for ongoing contact between staff and the child or his/her parents/family must be agreed with the social worker and set out in the child's Placement Plan.
* It is essential that the child’s wishes and views are taken into account when agreeing ongoing contact.

**Links to related documents**

Emergency Placements and Emergency Reviews

Placement Planning Meetings

Preparation for Leaving Care

Health Notifications and Access to Services

Complaints