# Introduction

The Children Act 1989 sets out clear responsibilities in respect of the making of placements for children in care. In accordance with Section 22C (7) to (9) of the Children Act 1989 we must always ensure that, as far as reasonably practicable any placement.

* allows the child to live near his/her home.
* does not disrupt his/her education (particularly at Key Stage 4).
* enables the child and his/her sibling to live together, if the child has a sibling who is also looked after by the local authority.
* provides accommodation which is suitable to the child’s needs if the child is disabled; and
* is within the local authority’s area.

To ensure that all placement decisions are consistent with our statutory responsibilities, all requests for placements must be submitted on an Approval to Search and Accommodate Form (Appendix 1) and presented to the Placement Forum. Once a suitable placement has been identified, the Approval to Place Form (Appendix 2) must be completed and presented to the Placement Forum to ensure that all required checks have been completed as well as the matching matrix completed to confirm how well the proposed placement will meet the needs of the child.

This Guidance for Practitioners have been produced to provide clarity on the placements process and the roles, responsibilities, and expectations of those involved in the placement of children and should be read in conjunction with the process flow at the end of this guidance.

# The Role of the Placement Forum

The Placement Forum considers all requests for Internal and External Foster Placements, Supported Accommodation, Supported Lodgings, independent Flats, Emergency Crash Pad and Staying Put placements. The Placement Forum will also consider single agency funded (SCT) residential placements including step up and step down from foster care. All other placements that require joint funding with education and / or health must be referred to the Multi Agency Resource Panel (MARP).

Care Leaver accommodation and support costs will be agreed in the Placement Forum. Agency Accommodation panel will be noted at the placement Forum so that there is a clear record of all decisions made.

16 and 17year old young people who present as homeless and require assessments of need in respect of accommodation and support, in accordance with the G v Southwark judgement and Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 will also be considered by the Placement Forum.

The Placements Forum will provide oversite of all decisions in respect of agreements to searches as well as approvals to place.

The Placement forum will also have oversite of any Children home warning notification letters shared by Children's Commissioner of an inadequate judgement of a children's home to the authority. This will be updated by commissioning and tracked on the placement tracker spreadsheet and will record on a separate tab, date warning notification received, name of provider, names of any children placed there, date of NTK (if applicable) and review date.

**Appendix 4** - provides the full process of the notification letters shared by the Children's Commissioner of an inadequate judgement at a children's home to the authority.

As part of the process. **Appendix 5** – A Childs / YP Safety Plan Assessment will need to be completed to identify if it is safe to maintain the placement and sent to the Head of Service.

Before any decision on a placement is made a final cross refence check of the warning notification letter will be made. No child or young person where a provider is on a warning notification will be placed in that setting.

Process

**This process should be read in conjunction with the process flow at the end of this written guidance.**

Please note - The Record of Accommodation Decision (SofS on Mosaic) is to be completed prior to completing the request to search form, please note this process does not include Connecting Carers Placement although please refer to the unregulated / unregistered process if required.

1. [Approval to Search and Accommodate](https://southglos.sharepoint.com/:w:/r/sites/ChildrensServicesdecisionmaking/_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?sourcedoc=%7BCFA4F5BC-8DB8-4E26-8F43-9BC44276418D%7D&file=Appendix%201%20-%20Approval%20to%20Search%20and%20accommodate%20%20form.docx&action=default&mobileredirect=true) Form and [Approval to Place](https://southglos.sharepoint.com/:w:/r/sites/ChildrensServicesdecisionmaking/_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?sourcedoc=%7B34590F5F-A6F5-48F6-A932-D3EAA617E3EE%7D&file=Appendix%202%20-%20Approval%20to%20place%20form.docx&action=default&mobileredirect=true) Form must be sent to the HOS for approval, please email

[CAHNotetakersBMR@southglos.gov.uk](mailto:CAHNotetakersBMR@southglos.gov.uk)

1. The Approval to Search and Accommodate Form and Approval to Place Form must be fully completed by the social worker and the placement officer.
2. The views of the IRO must be included in the forms.
3. The views from school must be included in the forms and where there is a placement change at Key Stage 4 the view from the Virtual School must be included.
4. Attempts to support the placement including referrals to Waypoint and holding of signs of stability meeting must be clearly evidenced in the Approval to Search and Accommodate Form and Approval to Place Form in respect of any placement move requests.
5. Current placement details and costs **must be** clearly identified as well as the proposed placement details and costs.
6. Approval to Search and Accommodate Form and Approval to Place Form **must** be signed off by the Team Manager and Service Manager before being sent to the Head of Service for authorisation. This process step in the main will be completed by attending the placement forum meeting.
7. Review dates will be set by the Placement Forum (Best Care Value) for children where a long-term resource commitment is needed for them.
8. MARP and CHC funding processed should be considered where applicable.
9. **All financial decisions made are subject to a SIX-MONTHLY REVIEW from the date of Placement forum at which time payments will cease until further approval is agreed by the placement forum.**
10. Once approval has been granted to search for a placement, the placement request step for new request or Child in Care planning for changed request will be completed on Mosaic by the social worker and the signed Approval to Search and Accommodate Form will be uploaded to the placement step request / CIC planning step on Mosaic and the placement request will be sent by the social worker to the Family Placements Team (FPT) as confirmation of approval to search. Business support will be informed to update the placement search tracker log a separate tab on this tracker will also be held to track those young people 16/17 years old who have presented as homeless.

If a placement is found by the Family Placement team, then the social worker and Family Placement team must then complete the Approval to Place form. The form **must** be signed off by the Team Manager and Service Manager before being sent to the Head of Service for authorisation of the place to live.

1. The Family Placement team will update the address, input the placement and provision onto MOSAIC ensuring the correct coding for type of provision is used and complete the looked after episode and update the personal and organisation relationships on Mosaic. The Approval to place form will also be uploaded to placement request or CIC planning step on Mosaic and Business support will be informed to update the relevant placement tracker log. The social worker will then update the placement information on Mosaic and inform the parent / carers where applicable. The placement will be managed by the Family Placement Team and the process will end.
2. If a placement is not found by the Family Placement Team, then the Family Placement Team and the child’s social worker need to seek authorisation of other types of placements to be searched from the Head of Service. Once authorisation is obtained the family placement team will upload the amended approval to search and accommodate form (if it has changed) to the placement step and send the placement request to the Commissioning Placement team. Business support will be informed to update the placement search tracker log.
3. All Placement Referral Forms will be screened by the Commissioning Placements Officer. If the referral is of poor quality or key information is missing it will be returned to the social worker, team manager and service manager with an explanation of what additional information or changes are required.
   1. **A placement search will not be initiated until a satisfactory Approval to Search and Accommodate Form has been provided.**
4. Internal placement searches must always be undertaken first unless there is a clear reason why this should not happen and approval for an external search has been granted by the Head of Service for a twin tracked search.
5. The Commissioning Placements Officer will send details of any appropriate placement offers to the child’s social worker. The child’s social worker will review the placement offers and identify a preferred option based on a full consideration of all factors, including:
   1. The ability of the placement to meet the child’s needs including matching considerations with any other young people currently in placement.
   2. The quality of the provider including the most recent inspection judgement (where the provision is regulated); and
   3. The cost of the placement in the context of the above considerations, and whether it is felt to offer value for money.

The social worker will also provide the commissioning placement officer the days and times they are available for a placement meeting.

1. Once searches have been completed and an appropriate placement identified, the social worker must complete the Matching Matrix on the Approval to Place Form.
2. The Commissioning Placements Officer is to complete the full details of the placement and a clear breakdown of costs of the placement on the Approval to Place Form. The Placements Officer will also complete the checklist confirming due diligence in respect of the commissioning of the placement.
3. Social worker will send the completed Approval to Place form to Head of Service for sign off.
4. If the Place to live is in an Unregulated place to live, then this requires approval via Head of Service & Service Director of Children's Social Care and an Unregulated notification form must be completed, please refer to the policy and staff guidance for Unregulated and Unregistered placement.
5. If the Place to live is an Unregistered place to live, a Director’s Decision report (DDR) must be completed and signed by the Executive Director before a placement can be made.  **All Unregistered Placement will also require the legal comments to be obtained.**
6. If the place to live is out of authority, then the Out of area authority must have been consulted with and the care plan shared. This should be recorded in the approval to place form.
7. The Approval to Place forms together with any relevant notification form (process step 20 and 21) will be uploaded to placement step on Mosaic by the social worker.
8. The Commissioning Placement team will update the care package and provision ensuring the correct costs are added and ensure the following is also updated the address, the looked after episode, the organisation relationships and the IPA contract is uploaded to the placement request or CIC planning step and the relevant tracker log is updated by Business support.
9. The social worker will update the placement information on Mosaic and inform the Parent Carers where applicable and the process will end.

# Placement Forum

**Frequency & Location**: Weekly. The **Placement Forum** meeting will consist of 3 parts as show and will be held via a team’s meeting.

**Friday 9.00 - 10.00 Part 1: Placements and Leaving Care.**

* (Internal and External Foster placement requests, including mother and baby placements, step down from residential placements), supported accommodation and supported lodgings for children in care)
* (Supported Accommodation and Supported Lodgings for Care Leavers through SHIP, Staying Put arrangements, independent flat, emergency crash pad, Homeless 16 & 17year olds in accordance with the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017), Share the care fostering arrangements. Share the care fostering arrangements.

**Wednesday 9.00 - 10 Part 2: Best Care and Value**

* (Review all residential placements (Including parent/baby), Approve requests where placement changes will result in change of care plan, Re-unification (planned and unplanned) and discharge plans, including looked after young people aged 16/17 who are supported under S20, Regularly review and monitor the high-cost placements and the use of internal resources to ensure the efficient use of the full range placements and resources available, Monitor and record unmet needs and service provision gaps which will be included in the annual refresh of the Placement Sufficiency Strategy.)

**Friday 12.30 -1.30 Part 3: Unregulated and Unregistered / Out of Authority Tracking**

* (Tracking of Children and Young people identified as being in and unregulated or unregistered place to live ensuring Child / Young person is safe, All necessary action where possible to make placement a regulated placement is taken, Permanency planning is in place., All unregistered placements are reported to Ofsted)
* Tracking of Children and Young people identified as being in out of authority place to live ensuring Child / Young person is safe, all necessary action where possible to find a place to live within the local authority, Permanency planning is in place.
* **Membership: Placement**

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| Chair & Vice Chair | Shanti Eaves HoS Localities, Corporate Parenting and Fostering (Chair)  Beverly Mann, Head of Service, Prevention, ART and 0-25 Disability (Co Chair) |
| Oversight/Tracking Meeting Membership | Children’s Commissioning manager  Placements Officer, Commissioning  Placements Officer, Fostering)  Service Manager Fostering  Head of virtual school  Quality Assurance and Reviewing Manager  Service Manager Children in Care and Care Leavers  HomeChoice Service Manager (where applicable for care leavers) |

* **Membership: Best Care Value.**

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| Chair & Vice Chair | Shanti Eaves, Head of Service. Localities, Corporate Parenting and Fostering (Chair)  Beverly Mann, Head of Service, Prevention, ART and 0-25 Disability (Co Chair) |
| Oversight/Tracking Meeting Membership | Children’s Commissioning manager  Service Manager Children in Care and Care Leavers  Quality Assurance and Reviewing Manager QAS manager  Finance Representative  Head of virtual school or Representative  HomeChoice Service Manager  Service Manager, 0 – 25 (for CWD cases only) |

* **Membership: Unregulated and Unregistered and Out of Authority Tracking.**

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| --- | --- |
| Chair & Vice Chair | Shanti Eaves, Head of Service. Localities, Corporate Parenting and Fostering (Chair)  Beverly Mann, Head of Service, Prevention, ART and 0-25 Disability (Co Chair) |
| Oversight/Tracking Meeting Membership Representatives | Service Managers or respective Team Mangers -   * Service Manager, 0 – 25 (for CWD cases only) * Preventative Services Service Manager * Service Manager, ART * Service Manager, Localities * Service Manager Children in Care and Care Leavers * Service Manager, Fostering * Quality Assurance and Reviewing Manager QAS manager |

# Process Map - Place to Live Request and Approval process.





**Requests for unregistered placements, approval to search & approval to place forms should be uploaded to the child’s file on Mosaic.**