**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 Planning**

**General**

The local authority must comply with the statutory duties for all children looked after (CLA). There are clear timescales that must be met and the local authority is measured on their performance in meeting these statutory duties.

The principles of good quality assessment, planning and review are fundamental to our core offer to children and young people in West Sussex.



The key timescales for a looked after child are set out in the CLA Timeline



**Care Plans**

Every Looked After Child must have a Care Plan completed and updated by the allocated Social Worker (unless they are 16 and have a completed Pathway Plan).

The Care Plan must be prepared prior to a child’s placement, or, if it is not practicable to do so, within 10 working days of the child being placed.

The Care Plan must be regularly reviewed at Looked After Reviews; it must then be redrafted/updated and circulated within 10 working days of the Review.

The Care Plan prevents drift and sets out the overall plan for thechild, (including, by the time of the second Looked After Review, how permanence will be achieved for the child). Care Plans contain descriptions of children's needs and how these needs will be met while they are living away from home. The Care Plan must include the name and contact details of the child's Independent Reviewing Officer.

Before a Court grants a Care Order it must be satisfied that a suitable Care Plan has been drawn up. The Care Plan for Court is currently a different template to the statutory Care Plan

The Care Plan is built into MOSAIC (this is an example)



**Placement Plans**

Every Looked After Child must have a Placement Plan, which sets out why the placement was chosen and how the placement will contribute to meeting the child's needs. It sets out how on a day-to-day basis the child will be cared for and his/her welfare safeguarded and promoted, and the arrangements for matters such as contact, medical care, education/training, as well as details of the Social Worker, Independent Reviewing Officer and Independent Visitor if one is appointed and detail of who (in the home) has the authority to take particular decisions about the child regarding:

The Placement Plan should be reviewed where necessary following a Looked After Review or any change to the Child's Care Plan/Placement Information.

The Placement Plan is built into MOSAIC (this is an example)



**Other Key Plans/Records**

**Social Worker Report for LAC Reviews:** A report must be prepared by the Social Worker for each Looked After Review, summarising the changes and progress since the last Review. The report should contain an updated assessment of the child’s circumstances and if there are any significant changes, it may be necessary to also update the Child & Family Assessment.



**Education**

**A Personal Education Plan (PEP);** must be drawn up for all Looked After Children which sets out the day to day arrangements for educating the Child e.g. short term targets, strategies to be used, outcomes.

Personal Education Plans (PEPs) must be drawn up, by the child’s social worker, before the child is placed (or within 10 working days in the case of an emergency placement), and be available for the first Looked After Review. Children with Special Educational Needs will also have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). (more detailed guidance is available in; Education)

**Health Care**

All children who are Looked After must have a Health Care Plan which incorporates a statement of the child's health care needs and how those needs will be addressed. This is incorporated within the Care Plan unless there are more complex health problems. (more detailed guidance is available in; Health)

**Leaving Care – Pathway Plan**

The Pathway Plan is a Care Plan, detailing the services and support needed by young people aged 16 to 21 years. ... "The Authority should work to ensure that the plan is owned by the young person and is able to respond to their changing needs and ambitions’’

All Children who are preparing to leave care must have a Pathway Plan setting out the route to the future for young people leaving the Looked After service and will state how their needs will be met in their path to independence. The Pathway Plan will continue to be implemented and reviewed after they leave the looked after service at least until they are 21; and up to 24 if in education.

**(Refer to separate Practice Guidance for ‘Pathway Planning’)**

**Other Key Records (for more detailed guidance refer to the relevant sections in the procedures)**

This summarises the other key records that all children must have, it does not address specialist records or plans:

**Child & Family Assessment:** provides a structured, in-depth assessment of the child's needs. The assessment provides a framework for social workers to record information gathered from a variety of sources to provide evidence for their professional judgements, and facilitate analysis, decision making and planning. The assessment must be completed within 45 days of the referral to CSC and will inform the child’s Care Plan. The needs of the child will be updated at each CLA Review and the CFA must be updated where there is any significant change in the circumstances of the child **(refer to Practice Guidance; Circumstances Requiring An Updated Assessment)**

**Chronology:** records all significant events and changes in the life of a child or young person. The Chronology is an analytical tool designed to help social workers understand the impact, both immediate and cumulative, of events and changes on the child or young person.

**Looked after Review Meeting Notes:** the Chair (Independent Reviewing Officer) should produce a summary of the decisions and circulate within 5 days of the meeting and the Team Manager should respond with any queries within 5 days. A detailed report will be circulated within 20 working days of the Review.

**Reference Points;**

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