One Minute Guide

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Placement Disruption Meetings

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When a child's [Care Plan](http://trixresources.proceduresonline.com/nat_key/keywords/care_plan.html) is - either a long-term foster placement, connected person placement or adoption and this has not been realised, then a Placement Disruption Meeting should be held. This is regardless of whether matching or an [Adoption Order](http://trixresources.proceduresonline.com/nat_key/keywords/adoption_order.html)has been agreed.

Prior to a child being matched and placed in an alternative family a great deal of work will have been done to ensure the placement is as successful as possible. At a minimum, in a foster care/connected person placement, it will be expected that the child will be staying with the family until 18 years of age. In an adoptive placement the family will commit themselves forever to the child. Such placement disruptions are fairly unusual and should therefore be viewed as seriously as when the child was separated from their birth family.

All attempts to sustain the placement should be fully explored before the Placement Disruption Meeting is requested.

A Placement Disruption Meeting is a stand-alone process. It is not the same as a Planning Meeting and should not be used as such. The meeting is essentially to establish why the placement disrupted, and what lessons can be learned about meeting a child's future needs. It is not to apportion blame.

It can be useful to hold a Placement Disruption Meeting where a short-term placement has disrupted and where the child has had a series of short-term placements, which have disrupted. It may highlight issues/themes for the child that may be preventing a long-term placement being identified.

Purpose of the Meeting

* Identify significant factors leading to the disruption.
* To hear from the child and family their reasons/understanding about why the placement has disrupted.
* Enable participants to share feelings and information about the placement and disruption.
* Gain information about the child to inform future planning.
* Look at the quality of preparation, matching and support offered to the family and child.
* Highlight areas for development in practice.
* To enable the team, with the information gathered, to be able to formulate an action plan for the child.

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For children that have been placed with the prospective adopters, the adoption team will arrange the meeting and usually involve and Independent Chair from outside the local authority or a senior manager from outside the operational teams to support the learning. The prospective adopters will be invited to the first meeting, and their adoption social worker will ensure that they are supported in their attendance. These meetings can be highly emotive for the prospective adopters and others, and the independent chair’s role is to enable feelings to be expressed and emotionally contain the meeting to ensure that the meeting is focussed on the learning and in supporting the future planning for the child.

The second meeting is for professionals to consider what could have been done differently to support the learning to prevent future disruptions for both the children involved and other children in similar situations. Could be

National guidance indicates that these meetings should be held no sooner than 28 days and no later than 42 days, however the timing of the meeting requires professional judgement between the management teams of the adoption agency and the child’s social work team.

For children that have been placed with the foster carers, the child’s social work team will arrange the meeting. The foster carers are invited to the meeting and are supported by their supervising social worker to attend and will be chaired by the child’s allocated social work team’s practice or group manager.

For children where the foster care placement was their agreed permanent placement, the meeting should be chaired by the group manager of the child’s social work team. Their role is equally to emotionally contain the meeting to ensure that the meeting is focussed on the learning and in supporting the future planning for the child.

For children where they have had three or more placements that have been disrupted, the meeting should be chaired by the group manager. The meeting is to review what had worked well and what the worries were, to review the needs of the child and the support that is required is in place to best try to ensure future placement stability.

These meetings should be held as soon as practically possible, balancing the need for future planning for the child and for the foster carer to be ready to attend

Further information for adoption disruption can be found in the procedures [here](http://www.proceduresonline.com/westsussex/cs/p_disrup_adopt_plac.html)

And for fostering disruption [here](http://www.proceduresonline.com/westsussex/cs/p_place_disrup_meet.html#2.-disruption-meetings)