One Minute Guide

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Placement of Children Subject to a Care Order with Parents

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Placing a child subject to a care order with their parent enables the Local Authority to

continue to share parental responsibility for the child whilst enabling the child to live

with their parent. The procedure only applies to any placement that meets the following

criteria:

•The child is subject to a care order or interim care order;

•The placement is for 24 hours or more;

•The placement is with a parent, other person with parental responsibility or any person who had a Child Arrangements Orders in respect of the child immediately before the interim care order/care order was made.

It is not ordinarily expected that the local authority, upon making an initial application

for a care order or interim care order, will simultaneously be seeking to place the child

at home subject to the [Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations 2010](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/959/made). In

such circumstances it may be more appropriate to seek an alternative order e.g.

supervision order.

Placement of a child with parents under these regulations may often take place as part of a rehabilitation plan. It is therefore expected that if the placement continues, and the plan is for the child to remain with his parents, that consideration will be given to the making of an application for discharge of the Care Order.

**Decision Making and Authorisation**

The decision to make a placement can only be made by the Nominated Officer; the Head of Children’s Social Care.

The Nominated Officer must be satisfied that:

* The child's wishes and feelings have been ascertained and given due consideration;
* The ‘Assessment of Parents' Suitability to Care for the Child’ has been completed
* The placement will safeguard and promote the child's welfare;
* The Independent Reviewing Officer has been consulted.

The Nominated Officer will make a decision within 5 working days of receipt of the information. However, this may be a provisional decision if the results of background checks have not been received at that time.

**Placement of Child with Parents before a full assessment is completed**

When the Nominated Officers considers it necessary and consistent with the child’s welfare, the child may be placed with parents before the full Assessment of Parents’ Suitability to Care for the Child has been completed. This may for example be necessary where a foster placement breaks down whilst a return home is being considered and a move to another foster placement is not in the child’s best interest. In those circumstances for following work must be undertaken before the placement can take place:

* Arrangements must be made for the parents to be interviewed to obtain as much of the assessment information required as can be readily ascertained at that interview.
* The proposed accommodation should be visited by a Social Worker.
* Practitioners should also seek to meet with all other members of the household before placing the child. This is particularly relevant to identifying issues such as a domestic violence and substance misuse which may impact on the child’s safety.
* The placement agreement should be completed with the parent.

After Placement:

* The assessment and the review of the child’s case must be completed within 10 working days of the child being placed:
* The decision on placement must be made and approved within 10 working days of the assessment being completed: and
* If the decision is to confirm the placement, the Placement Plan will be reviewed (and if appropriate amended);
* If the decision is not to confirm the placement, the placement must be terminated.

**Termination of Placements**

If it is decided that the placement is no longer in the child's best interests, Children's Social Care have a duty to terminate the arrangement. This should be the subject of a specially arranged Looked After Review, and should be treated where possible like the breakdown of a local authority placement

**Supervision of Placement**

When a placement is made under these regulations, the Local Authority continue to share parental responsibility for the child, and, the child remains Looked After. All the statutory monitoring mechanisms for Children looked after continue to apply. Looked After Reviews and Statutory Visits are still required.

Looked After Reviews are required to take place at the following intervals:

* Within 20 working days of the start at the placement;
* Within 3 months of the first review;
* Thereafter at 6 monthly intervals.

In order to ensure that the first review can take place within 20 working days of the child’s placement with their parent the Social Worker should contact the IRO once the decision has been made to apply for approval of the placement. The Looked After Review for a child placed with parents will be conducted in the same way as for a child in a local authority placement. All relevant paperwork and documents should be completed in the usual way by the Social Worker.

Statutory Visits should take place at the following intervals:

* Within one week of the start of the placement (and then weekly until the assessment is completed)
* Every 6 weeks for the first year
* Thereafter, at intervals of not more than 6 weeks (3 months if the placement is intended to last until the child is 18).