One Minute Guide

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 Parent and Child Foster

 Placements

 No 66, January 2019

 V1. 14/01/19

It is important to understand the purpose and legal basis of a Parent and Child Foster placement prior to it being agreed.

There are essentially two types of Parent and Child placements; placement for

assessment during, or in preparation for, Care Proceedings, and the placement of a

Looked After Child and her own child. This guide is primarily concerned with the first

although the principles of assessment and care planning apply equally.

Where the parent is either a young person (under the age of 18) or a care leaver it is

important that their needs are considered separately from that of their child. In practical

terms this means that there should be separate social workers for the parent

and child, and that planning should look at a range of different options.

The purpose of a Parent and Child assessment placement is to assess the parent’s ability

to care for a child to a good enough standard, and to plan ahead for a return home or for

an alternative form of permanence should this prove unsuccessful.

The purpose of a placement for a CLA parent under the age of 18 with their child is to

assess parenting capacity, to provide supervision and support and to plan for eventual

independence. This may have a longer timescale than the assessment placement but the

aim of permanence for the child must be the same in each case. The parent might be looked after, or the child and not the parent; or both

The Court may agree with the local authority’s care plan for a Parent and Child placement

during Care Proceedings, and grant an Interim Care Order in relation to the child as part

of the care plan.

In this case, [Regulation 17](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/959/regulation/17/made) of [The Care Planning, Placement and Review (England)](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/959/made)

[Regulations 2010](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/959/made) outlines the assessment that is required prior to placement of the child

where the local authority holds parental responsibility.

This should be completed before placement, however under [Regulation 19](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/959/regulation/19/made) provision is made, where the Nominated Officer considers it to be necessary and consistent with the child’s welfare, to agree the placing the child with the parent on the basis that the assessment will be completed within 10 working days of placement.

For all parent and child placements, a risk assessment of the parent is required.

This should also include any regular visitors to the placement. Risk Assessments must be completed before a placement decision is made. A pre-placement planning meeting and contract are essential tasks. The meeting should be chaired by the Practice Manager of the child’s social work team, and the placement forms completed, and Contract for Parent and Child Placement.

This meeting must set out the assessment required, day to day arrangements and expected duration of placement (a maximum of 14 weeks).

Placement reviews should be arranged at 2 weeks, 4 weeks via the first CLA

review, then at 7 weeks and 10 weeks. Every review should consider the placement

exit plan and future plans for family, with a clear trajectory in place to prevent

unnecessary drift. Should placements continue for longer than 12 weeks and if

agreed by the relevant service lead, there should be on-going placements reviews

at a minimum of 4 weekly.

**The Social Worker for the child must:**

* Visit fortnightly to see the parent, child and carer.
* Maintain weekly contact with carer by phone and/or email.
* Ensure that the parent is aware of and included in all planning for the child.
* Ensure that the comprehensive assessment has been started before or at the point of placement. This should include the parent not in placement and significant others and should address the family history and context, with a focus on both risk and protective factors within the wider family and the parents’ history.
* Ensure that a permanency planning meeting has been arranged at the earliest opportunity

**The Supervising Social Worker must:**

* Visit in the first week of placement and three weekly thereafter to provide supervision and support as well as weekly phone contacts. SSW will also undertake unannounced visits.
* SSW will read and sign off all daily record sheets and report any issues that are appropriate. SSW will discuss with the carer the recorded observation to ensure objectivity remains. The SSW to liaise with the SW to update on placements.

**The Group Manager for the child must:**

* Ensure that there is clear management oversight and be able to report on progress at the monthly permanency tracking meetings.
* Ensure that the practice manager and social worker are continually reviewing the need for a parent and child placement and other alternatives such as community settings.

If the parent is also looked after, the allocated social worker for the parent must:

* Visit the placement a minimum of once every 4 weeks

**The Foster Carer must:**

* Complete daily reports which are shared with the parent, and forward them weekly to the social worker.
* Inform the social worker immediately if the parent leaves the placement or behaves in a way in a way which breaches the placement agreement.
* Accompany the parent to the initial service agreement meeting.