**CHILDREN’S SERVICES**

**EARLY HELP AND SAFEGUARDING**

**PRACTICE STANDARDS**



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# Introduction

Our vision is one where we all work creatively together to inspire and empower children, young people and their families to be the best they can be: safe, healthy, happy, learning and working. Help and support is most effective for children and their families when it is provided at the right level and at the right time, when they need it most.

Practice standards are an essential part of ensuring that when we need to become involved in children and families lives, they receive high quality and consistent support and care. This booklet has been created to provide an easy reference guide to our standards here in Derbyshire, that describe the (minimum) service or practice that can be expected by all children and families we support.

This booklet **does not replace** the more detailed policies, procedures and guidance, which everyone working with children and families should ensure they are aware of and understand. This booklet **does** provide easy links to the key documents in each section, which we hope will help give greater assurance and confidence of where that more detailed information is located.

Derbyshire’s established strength-based practice model, **Stronger Families Safer Children (SFSC)**, provides an overarching framework for **all** our practice with children and families and is designed to support practitioners and managers to be as impactful and effective as possible. Make sure you have read the **SFSC** [handbook](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fproceduresonline.com%2Ftrixcms%2Fmedia%2F8677%2Fstronger-families-team-handbook.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK) and [toolkit](https://proceduresonline.com/trixcms/media/7090/stronger-families-safer-children-toolkit.pdf) and that your practice incorporates its values and guiding principles. If you haven’t already, training on **SFSC** can be accessed [here](https://derbyshire.learningpool.com/course/view.php?id=1865).



Good record keeping and ensuring the child and their lived experience is at the centre of our practice and recording is vital. Since August 2022 we have been writing to the child in many of our reports, workflows and case recordings to strengthen our practice in this area. Guidance on this how and where to do this can be found [here](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fproceduresonline.com%2Ftrixcms%2Fmedia%2F8126%2Fwriting-to-the-child-july-2023-v-23.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK).

# Early Help and Single Assessments

**Key Timescales:**

* Initial home visit (Single Assessment) should take place within **5 working days** of the referral decision
* Assessment plan and timescales for the overall assessment should be recorded within **7 working days** of the referral decision
* Early help assessment should be started within **10 working days** of the referral decision
* Should be completed within a maximum of **45 working days** from referral decision to full sign-off and sharing with the family – this includes all visits to the child and family, consultations with other agencies, recording the document, analysis, and recommendations for the outcome
* Workers should not wait until the assessment is concluded to commission or initiate support or services to the family.

**.**

**Brief Outline: *What****it is and****why****we do it*

* The single and early help assessments are the processes through which we begin most of our involvement with children and families in social care and early help
* They are Mosaic workflow steps, usually opened as the outcome of a referral identifying concerns for a child’s welfare
* Completing an early help or single assessment helps us to clarify the concerns raised in the referral
* We can use it to understand the child’s wishes and feelings, the parents’ capacity to meet the child’s needs and the other factors that can impact on the child’s life
* By doing this and considering the impact of all these factors on the child we can decide whether they need services from social care or other agencies.

**Key responsibilities:**

* The **allocated practitioner** has the lead responsibility for undertaking and completing the assessment; this will include consultation with other involved agencies and practitioners
* The **Practice Supervisor/Senior Family Support Practitioners/Children’s Centre Coordinator** will offer advice and guidance during this process
* The **Team Manager** is responsible for agreeing the outcome of the single assessment and any subsequent actions.

**Linked Documents:**

* [Single Assessment Process](https://derbyshirecaya.proceduresonline.com/p_sing_as_over.html)
* [Assessments](https://derbyshirecaya.proceduresonline.com/p_sing_social_care.html)
* [Single Assessment - Guidance](https://proceduresonline.com/trixcms/media/7558/single-assessment-guidance-002-april-2021.docx)
* [Single Assessment - Flowchart](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fproceduresonline.com%2Ftrixcms%2Fmedia%2F8198%2Fupdated-single-assessment-flow-chart-v-2-oct-2023.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK)

# Child’s Single Plan

**Key Timescales:**

* Should be developed, together with the family and involved professionals, within10 working days of the assessment being completed or Initial Child Protection Conference, usually at the appropriate multiagency meeting (TAF, CIN (Network) meeting or Core Group)
* Should be reviewed at least every **6 weeks** at the appropriate multiagency meeting (TAF, CIN meeting or Core Group). The exception to these 6 weekly plan reviews is those stable cases within Children’s Disabilities Services where there are no safeguarding risks and the plan acknowledges the need for longer term support.

**Brief Outline: *What****it is and****why****we do it*

* The child’s single plan is the written document which details how any risks and needs, identified in the assessment, will be addressed to keep the child safe and achieve other outcomes identified to promote their wellbeing
* The plan is developed and used across the range of threshold levels: early help, child in need, child protection
* The purpose of the plan is to ensure all involved professionals work effectively together to achieve the agreed outcomes for the child effectively and in a timely way and respond quickly to any changes in the level of risk or circumstances of the child.

**Key responsibilities:**

* The **allocated practitioner** is the lead professional who is responsibility for developing and reviewing the plan. They are responsible for arranging and recording the review of the child’s file (Mosaic). They are also responsible for ensuring the family and involved professionals get copies of the updated plan following reviews
* The **Practice Supervisor/Senior Family Support Practitioner/Children’s Centre Coordinator** will offer advice and guidance during this process and oversees the plan and its review (ensuring they are robust and effecting the necessary change – in a timely way).

**Other Helpful Links:**

* [Practice Matters – Lead Practitioner](https://proceduresonline.com/trixcms/media/7586/practice-matters-lead-practitioner.docx)
* [Derby City and Derbyshire Threshold Document](https://www.proceduresonline.com/derbyshire/scbs/user_controlled_lcms_area/uploaded_files/Threshold%20Document%20Final%20September%202022.pdf)
* [Multi-Agency Dispute Resolution and Escalation Policy](https://www.proceduresonline.com/derbyshire/scbs/user_controlled_lcms_area/uploaded_files/Multi%20Agency%20Dispute%20Resolution%20%26%20Escalation%20Policy%20Dec%202019%20Final.pdf)
* [Multi-Agency Dispute Resolution and Escalation Template](https://derbyshirescbs.proceduresonline.com/docs_library.html)
* [Working together to Safeguard Children](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/942454/Working_together_to_safeguard_children_inter_agency_guidance.pdf)

**Linked Documents:**

* [Plan, Do, Review](https://derbyshirecaya.proceduresonline.com/p_plan_do_rev.html)
* [Child in Need Plans and Reviews](https://derbyshirecaya.proceduresonline.com/p_cin_plans_rev.html)
* [Implementation of Child Protection Plans](https://derbyshirescbs.proceduresonline.com/p_imp_cpp.html)
* [Practice Matters – Child’s Plan](https://proceduresonline.com/trixcms/media/7512/practice-matters-childs-plans.docx)
* [Agenda to Review Plans](https://proceduresonline.com/trixcms/media/7510/agenda-for-meetings-to-review-plans.docx)
* [Exemplar – Initial CP Plan](https://edrm.webapp.derbyshire.local/livelink/llisapi.dll?func=ll&objId=104102345&objAction=Open&nexturl=%2Flivelink%2Fllisapi%2Edll%3Ffunc%3Dll%26objId%3D104099196%26objAction%3Dbrowse%26viewType%3D1)
* [Exemplar – Plan at 2nd Core Group](https://edrm.webapp.derbyshire.local/livelink/llisapi.dll?func=ll&objId=104103057&objAction=Open&nexturl=%2Flivelink%2Fllisapi%2Edll%3Ffunc%3Dll%26objId%3D104099196%26objAction%3Dbrowse%26viewType%3D1)
* [Guide to using the CIN Improvement Cycle Meeting Document](https://proceduresonline.com/trixcms/media/7407/cin-icm-document-guidance.pdf)
* [Oversight of CIN cases via Improvement Cycle Meetings and Performance Meetings](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fproceduresonline.com%2Ftrixcms%2Fmedia%2F7408%2Fcin-meetings-guidance.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK)
* [CIN PowerBI Dashboard Guide](https://proceduresonline.com/trixcms/media/7409/cin-powerbi-dashboard-guidance.pdf)
* For CIN cases, if a plan remains open for 6 months the **Practice Supervisor** will have a discussion with their Team Manger to consider if one of them should chair the multi-agency meeting to offer some independent scrutiny on the case
* For CIN cases, the **Practice Supervisor** will chair a weekly Improvement Cycle Meeting with practitioners and the Team Manager where plan progress is reviewed
* For EH cases it is good practice for **Senior Family Support Practitioner/ Children’s Centre Coordinator** to review cases open for 12+ months to consider updating the assessment
* The **Team Manager**, together with the **Practice Supervisor**, is responsible for ensuring the plan is robust and effecting the necessary change actions, addressing the right things at the appropriate threshold level
* **Family members** and **involved professionals** are responsible for completing the actions identified for them on the plan and contributing to the review and update of the plan.

# Chronologies

**Key Timescales:**

* **Start:** A chronology should be started for a child’s file every time there is an open referral to social care or early help
* **Updates:** The chronology should be updated to reflect case progress. Ideally this should be every **6 weeks** but at a minimum of every **3 months**
* **Closures:** When the case closes to Children’s Services, the Chronology should be updated and closed as part of that process.

**Brief Outline: *What****it is and****why****we do it*

* A chronology is a concise, factual, visual list, in date order, of all the major changes and significant events in a person’s life. A chronology seeks to provide a clear account of all significant events in a child’s life to illustrate what life has been like for the child, to date, drawing upon the knowledge and information held by the family and agencies
* Chronologies help us to analyse a child / family’s history in a way that makes it easily accessible so key information is not missed when decisions are being made. They help us to notice emerging patterns of concern or progress and make connections, which can help us explore trends and make predictions about the future. They help us to keep the child at the front and centre of our thinking and understand the impact of current issues in light of the whole of their lives. They are key to identifying neglect and emotional abuse which, by definition, requires us to evidence the persistent and ongoing nature of concerns
* A chronology is not an end in itself. It is a tool which practitioners and managers should use to assist the process of assessment and planning and can be used to great effect in supervision.

**Key responsibilities:**

* The development and maintenance of the chronology remains the responsibility of the **lead practitioner** for in the case. They should oversee and agree any information inputted from others.

**Linked Documents:**

* [Practice Matters – Chronologies](https://proceduresonline.com/trixcms/media/7513/practice-matters-chronologies.docx)
* [Care and Supervision Proceedings and the Public Law Outline](https://derbyshirecaya.proceduresonline.com/p_care_supervis_plo.html?zoom_highlight=chronology)
* [Children with Perplexing Presentations (PP) in whom Illness is Fabricated or Induced (FII)](https://derbyshirescbs.proceduresonline.com/p_ch_illness_fab_ind.html?zoom_highlight=chronology)
* [Complex Abuse Chronology Template](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proceduresonline.com%2Fderbyshire%2Fscbs%2Fuser_controlled_lcms_area%2Fuploaded_files%2FComplex%2520Abuse%2520chronology%2520template%2520Sep%252021.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK)

# **Step Up / Step** Down

**Key Timescales:**

* Step up to social care (including Disabled Children’s Team) should be implemented immediately that the worker is made aware of escalating need or risk
* Step down to early help should be planned as part of the child in need review, or following the completion of a single assessment.

**Brief Outline: *What****it is and****why****we do it*

**Step Up**

* Step up refers to the process of transitioning a case from a locality targeted early help team to social care when there is a clear escalation of need or risk
* The Early Help Practitioner will discuss their concerns with the Senior Early Help Practitioner providing evidence and with reference to the Derby City and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Threshold Document
* The Early Help Practitioner will complete a Stronger Families, Safer Children safety and well-being grid documenting the strengths and protective factors as well as the risks to the child, young person or family
* The Senior Early Help Practitioner will then have a discussion with the relevant Social Care Team Manager to agree next steps which may be no further action, a joint visit between the Early Help Practitioner and a duty Social Worker to the family or step up for single assessment
* If agreement is reached for step up for single assessment, the Senior Early Help Practitioner will direct the Early Help Practitioner to close any assessments or plans they hold in Mosaic and select an outcome of Step Up to social care and ensure that any toolkits like the CRE toolkit or the graded care profile are brought up to date
* The step-up workflow must be completed by the Senior Early Help Practitioner and must reflect the agreement for the case to be escalated to social care
* If there is agreement for a joint visit, the outcome of that visit may be no further action or step up to social care
* If there is a disagreement between the Senior Early Help Practitioner and the Social Care Team Manager about step up, then the processes within the Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Board escalation policy must be followed.

**Step Down to targeted Early Help**

* Step down refers to the process of transitioning a case from social care to a locality targeted Early Help team when the levels of need and risk have reduced but the child, young person or family still have intensive level needs (as set out in the [Derby City and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Threshold Document](https://www.proceduresonline.com/derbyshire/scbs/user_controlled_lcms_area/uploaded_files/Threshold%20Document%20Final%20September%202022.pdf))
* The Social Worker and Practice Supervisor will agree in supervision, or at a child in need review meeting what specific support is needed from the locality targeted Early Help Team
* The Practice Supervisor will then discuss and agree the step-down with the Senior Early Help Practitioner
* If the Social Worker’s recommendation is that there is no role for social care following the completion of a single assessment, then an outcome for step down to early help can be selected in Mosaic. This will generate a step-down workflow
* If the Social Worker’s recommendation is that there is no further role for social care as part of a child in need meeting, then the Social Worker should invite the Early Help Practitioner to the final meeting to develop a plan for the targeted early help intervention
* The Social Worker should ensure they close any assessments or plans they hold in Mosaic and select an outcome of Step down to Early Help and ensure that any toolkits like the CRE toolkit or the graded care profile are brought up to date
* If there is a disagreement between the Senior Early Help Practitioner and the Practice Supervisor about step down, then the processes with the escalation policy must be followed.

**Case closure with support from the Early Help Development Team for the partner agency**

* The Social Worker and Practice Supervisor will agree in supervision, at a Child in Need Review meeting, or at the end of a single assessment that a case can be closed to social care and what if any specific continued support is needed from partner agency at level 2 Threshold Emerging need
* The Social Worker should ask the partner agency to identify a new lead worker and then support the development of the plan to be progressed
* Where a partner agency requires additional support with the early help process the Practice Supervisor should discuss the case with the Early Help Development Officer within the Early Help Development Team and agree a workflow to be opened to the Early Help Development Team for an Early Help Advisor to support the partner agency with the early help process
* If Early Help Development Team support is agreed the Social Worker can close the plan or assessment they hold in Mosaic and select an outcome of step down to early help
* Once the Social Worker has completed the step-down workflow, they can select pass to Early Help Development Team as an outcome and the Early Help Development Team Support for Partner Agency workflow will be generated
* The Social Worker should ensure they close any other assessments or plans they hold in Mosaic and ensure that any toolkits like the CRE toolkit or the graded care profile or chronologies are brought up to date and closed.

**Linked Documents:**

* [Derby City and Derbyshire Thresholds Document](https://www.proceduresonline.com/derbyshire/scbs/user_controlled_lcms_area/uploaded_files/Threshold%20Document%20Final%20September%202022.pdf)
* [Stronger Families Safer Children Toolkit](https://proceduresonline.com/trixcms/media/7090/stronger-families-safer-children-toolkit.pdf)
* [Safety and Well Being Grid](https://proceduresonline.com/trixcms/media/7093/sfsc-safety-and-wellbeing-grid.docx)
* [Practice Matters Step Down to Partner Agencies](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fproceduresonline.com%2Ftrixcms%2Fmedia%2F8138%2Fpractice-matters-step-down-to-partner-agencies-revised-august-2023.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK)
* [Multi-Agency Dispute Resolution and Escalation Policy](https://www.proceduresonline.com/derbyshire/scbs/user_controlled_lcms_area/uploaded_files/Multi%20Agency%20Dispute%20Resolution%20%26%20Escalation%20Policy%20Dec%202019%20Final.pdf)
* [Multi-Agency Dispute Resolution and Escalation Template](https://www.proceduresonline.com/derbyshire/scbs/user_controlled_lcms_area/uploaded_files/Multi%20Agency%20Dispute%20Resolution%20%26%20Escalation%20Template%20Dec%202019%20Final.docx)

**Key responsibilities:**

* The **line manager** of the allocated practitioner is responsible for agreeing case closure or transition to partner agency
* The **allocated practitioner** is responsible for communicating case closure or transition to partner agency to all stakeholders.

# Parenting Assessments

**Key Timescales:**

* Parenting Assessment is agreed at Scrutiny, PLO or directed by Court
* Planning meeting held prior to the assessment start date including the Social Worker, parents and assessor and their line manager or supervisor
* Midway review at **6 weeks** including the Social Worker, parents and assessor and their line manager or supervisor
* Final review prior to the assessment write-up
* Direct work sessions completed within **12 weeks** (12 direct work sessions and 12 observation sessions)
* Parenting Assessment Report – **2 further weeks** at the end of the assessment are required to complete the report (this includes full sign-off, sharing with the family and submission to Courts where appropriate)
* The full Parenting Assessment process takes **14 weeks** from the point of allocation (liaising with the PAFT Senior Practitioner before completing the PAFT referral is essential – this ensures that timescales are achievable and timely for court).

**Brief Outline: *What****it is and****why****we do it*

* A parenting assessment is an assessment of a parent/carers ability to meet their child’s needs. It identifies strengths, the areas of support required and capacity to make positive changes, to meet their child’s needs. The parenting assessment is done with a parent not at a parent, it is their assessment
* Parenting assessment sessions are a combination of direct work (1-1 sessions) with parents and observations during family time (supervised contact between children and birth family)
* A good quality parenting assessment will be child centred, focussed on outcomes, is holistic, and addresses the child’s needs within their family along with any risks. Any learning needs of a parent are identified at the planning meeting or by a cognitive assessment and are accommodated throughout the assessment period
* It should bring together and analyse all the information known by all agencies working with the child and their family, to give a wholistic picture of what life is like for the child
* The parenting assessment process will also identify and provide the support needed to improve a child’s outcomes to make them safe
* It is recorded on a Mosaic workflow step.

**Key responsibilities:**

* The **Senior Early Help Practitioner** is responsible for arranging the planning meeting
* The **Early Help Practitioner** in the role of assessor is responsible for undertaking the parenting assessment.

**Linked Documents:**

* [Family Time / Contact with Parents and Siblings](https://derbyshirecaya.proceduresonline.com/p_contact_parents.html?zoom_highlight=family+time)
* [East Midlands Parenting Assessment Framework](https://www.proceduresonline.com/llr/childcare/leicestershire/user_controlled_lcms_area/uploaded_files/East%20Midland%20Parenting%20Assessment%20Framework%20Sept%202022.doc)

* Following the implementation of the Public Law reforms there is an expectation that, where it safe and appropriate to do so, the risk should be managed at a lower level. Therefore, requests will be made for parenting assessments prior to involvement with the court i.e. during child protection or PLO
* The completed parenting assessment is used by the Courts to inform decisions to support a child’s safety and care and where the assessment has been completed during the child protection process or PLO to inform the future care plan.

# Family Time

**Key Timescales:**

* As directed by Court of by Social Worker.

**Brief Outline: *What****it is and****why****we do it*

* Family Time is most often contact between a looked after child and their family. In most situations Family Time is supervised in order prioritise a child’s welfare
* Family Time should be planned and will consider the capacity of the people involved to cope emotionally with the arrangements
* Family Time may take place within a Children’s Centre or other appropriate local authority building. Sometimes Family Time can take place in the community such as parks, playcentres etc. There are also opportunities for virtual Family Time, if appropriate, using video conferencing technologies (MS Teams, WhatsApp video calls, Zoom, etc)
* Arrangements for Family Time should be dynamic and flexible so that they can develop in response to changing plans for a child's future. When the child's plan and circumstances change, Family Time arrangements should be reviewed and never allowed to drift
* It should be acknowledged that Family Time can be intrusive for families and careful consideration needs to be given to the level of supervision required
* For example, an enhanced level of supervision may be to prevent immediate harm to the child, to prevent oral messages being passed to the child, to see that the child does not become upset in contact, or to form part of an assessment of the relationship between child and parent
* As with frequency of contact, the level of supervision required in Family Time should be regularly reviewed to ensure that what is provided continues to meet a child's needs
* In all cases consideration should be given as to whether family members, friends or foster carers can appropriately assist in supervision of contact, but not where it might place the safety of the child or proceedings in jeopardy
* Derbyshire’s Parenting Assessment and Family Time Team are unable to supervise contact in private law proceedings or non-court work, except in exceptional circumstances, which will be agreed by a locality Head of Service.

**Key responsibilities:**

* The **Assistant Early Help Practitioner** is responsible for the transportation of children to and from family time if the foster carer is unable to do so
* The **Assistant Early Help Practitioner** is responsible for the supervision of the family time session, and for recording observations and uploading these to Mosaic.

**Linked Documents:**

* [Family Time / Contact with Parents and Siblings](https://derbyshirecaya.proceduresonline.com/p_contact_parents.html?zoom_highlight=family+time)
* [East Midlands Parenting Assessment Framework](https://www.proceduresonline.com/llr/childcare/leicestershire/user_controlled_lcms_area/uploaded_files/East%20Midland%20Parenting%20Assessment%20Framework%20Sept%202022.doc)

# Private Fostering

**Key Timescales:**

* First visit to the child – within **7 days** of notification of the situation
* Statutory visits – initial visit within **7 days** and minimal interval of **6 weeks** between visits for first 12 months
* Assessment – Single Assessment within **45 working days** of notification
* Meetings – network meetings held regularly at similar intervals to CIN meetings
* Reviews – at intervals of **at least every 12 months** (unless it meets CIN criteria too – then more regular
* Annual Review – to be shared with the Designated Manager for Private Fostering and at the Private Fostering Panel.

**Brief Outline: *What****it is and****why****we do it*

Private Fostering is when a child is:

1. below the age of 16, or below the age of 18 if the child has a disability

and

1. living with an adult who is not an immediate relative or an approved foster carer for a period of 28 days or more

Derbyshire is required to undertake an assessment of any child notified to them as possibly being in a Private Fostering arrangement, to ensure that this arrangement is suitable to meet the child’s needs and is reviewed at required intervals.

The responsibility for conducting the assessment sits with the Children’s Social Care teams and is tasked to a qualified social worker to complete.

**Key responsibilities:**

* **Parental Responsibility holder** – responsible for financial support to the child, delegation of authority for decisions on behalf of the child
* **All children’s practitioners** - responsible for referring any situation likely to meet the criteria for Private Fostering to Starting Point or locality Social Care if already open
* **Allocated Fostering Social Worker** – completion of the assessment, statutory visits, network meetings and PF plan, annual report to Designated PF Manager
* **Practice Supervisor** – monthly supervision of PF case
* **Team Manager** – approval of PF arrangement, review of PF arrangement
* **Designated Private Fostering Manager (Countywide)** – quality assurance on Private Fostering cohort, advice and guidance on potential and active Private Fostering cases.

**Linked Documents:**

* [Section 3.2 - Private Fostering](https://derbyshirecaya.proceduresonline.com/p_private_fost.html)

**Other Helpful Links**

[Private Fostering -- Derbyshire Website](https://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/social-health/children-and-families/foster/thinking-of-fostering/types-of-fostering/private-fostering/private-fostering.aspx#:~:text=You%20can%20also%20find%20helpful,gov.uk%20to%20discuss%20it.)

[Private Fostering Guidance - MOSAIC](https://derbyshirecountycouncil.sharepoint.com/sites/CS/SitePages/Other-workflows-in-Mosaic.aspx#cs-private-fostering-guidance)

# Early Help (an overview)

**Key Timescales:**

* Early Help Assessments to be started within **10 working days** from the date of the referral decision
* Early Help Assessments to be completed within **45 working days** from the date of the referral decision including full management sign-off and sharing with the family
* Workers should not wait until the assessment is concluded to commission or initiate support or services to the family
* Workers and managers should ensure that Child’s Plans are reviewed and updated every **6 weeks**

Where there are concerns about escalation of risk to the child, these should be discussed with the Senior Early Help Practitioner or Early Help Team Manager immediately for a decision on whether step-up to Social Care is needed.

**Brief Outline: *What*** *it is and* ***why*** *we do it*

* Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) sets out that ‘Providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child’s life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years. Early help can also prevent further problems arising’
* Derbyshire’s Early Help offer uses evidence-based approaches and programmes, and the important focus on the early years given the increasing body of evidence around early attachment and baby brain development
* Derbyshire’s Early Help offer is available for children and young people 0-19 and their families providing targeted support designed to reduce or prevent specific problems from escalating or becoming entrenched
* The Early Help offer is a key part of our system for improving outcomes for children, young people, and families. Early help in Derbyshire plays a critical role in providing essential support, building resilience, and preventing needs from escalating
* There are six locality Early Help Teams in Derbyshire who deliver targeted support to children, young people, and families with an intensive level of need.
* Each of the Early Help Teams offer the following:
	+ Children’s Centres teams who work closely with health visitors and early years providers. Children’s Centres provide a targeted core offer around child development, school readiness and parenting support
	+ Individual family support focussed on parenting, improved routines and relationships, and reducing conflict
	+ Targeted youth support focussed on family relationships, reducing conflict, healthy lifestyle choices and reducing risks of exploitation
	+ Undertaking parenting assessments and supporting the delivery of family time (supervised contact for children in care)
* Derbyshire’s targeted Early Help offer is available to vulnerable children and families and it is accessed through Starting Point via the completion of an online early help request form
* Requests are triaged, and the locality early help teams will work with local partners to provide the most appropriate level of support.

**Key responsibilities:**

* **Allocated Early Help Practitioner (including Family Support Workers in Children’s Centres)** – act as lead professional including undertaking the Early Help Assessment with the whole family and convening Team Around the Family Meetings. Regularly visit and see the child, undertake direct work with the child, ensure what life is like for the child is understood and if things are improving. Co-ordinate the contributions of family and Team Around the Family members to ensure the child’s plan is effective and improving things for the child. Regularly review the progress against outcomes identified. Ensure the child’s file is kept up to date
* **Senior Early Help Practitioner / Children’s Centre Coordinator** – provides supervision and management direction to the Early Help Practitioners and will facilitate case escalation discussions with Social Care when required
* **Early Help Team Manager** – monitors the team’s performance and provides appropriate challenge.

**Other Helpful Links:**

* [Thresholds for Children’s Services](https://derbyshirecaya.proceduresonline.com/p_ch_servs_thresh.html)
* [Working Together to Safeguard Children](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2)

**Linked Documents:**

* [Early Help Strategy 2022-2024](https://proceduresonline.com/trixcms/media/7623/201-derbyshire-early-help-strategy-2022-24.pdf)
* [Derbyshire Children’s Services Plan](https://democracy.derbyshire.gov.uk/documents/s13545/Appendix%20B%20Childrens%20Services%20Service%20Plan%202021-25.pdf)
* [Practice standards – assessments – see page 4](#_Early_Help_and)
* [Practice standards – Child’s Plans – see page 6](#_Child’s_Single_Plan)
* [Practice standards – Step-up / Step-down – see page 10](#_Step_Up_/)

# Children in Need (an overview)

**Key Timescales:**

* Within **1 working day** of a referral being made, a decision will need to have been made about the type of response required (if an assessment is necessary and at what level) and receipt of the referral will need to be acknowledged
* The child must be seen within **7 working days** of the referral being made by a social worker and regularly whilst the case remains open. Frequency of visiting will be bespoke to the level of risk / complexity identified and should occur at least **6 weekly** and be recorded within the child’s plan
* The Assessment should be completed within a maximum of **45 working days** (from the referral decision) to full sign-off and sharing with the family, though the timeframe for the assessment on any child should reflect the complexity of the case and should be highlighted in the assessment plan
* If needed a child’s plan should be developed, together with the child, family and involved professionals, within **10 working days** of the assessment being completed. This plan should be reviewed at least every **6 weeks** at the child in need network meeting. There may be some exceptions to the **6 weekly** plan reviews, for example those cases where the plan acknowledges the need for longer term support in relation to disability services. All such plans will be reviewed at least every **3 months**
* The Practice Supervisor will chair a weekly Improvement Cycle Meeting with practitioners and the Team Manager where progress on plans for child in need cases is reviewed
* If a child in need plan remains open for **6 months**, the Practice Supervisor will have a discussion with their Team Manager to consider if one of them should chair the multi-agency meeting to offer some independent scrutiny on the case.

**Brief Outline: *What*** *it is and* ***why*** *we do it*

* A Child in Need is defined in law (Section 17 of the Children Act 1989) as “a child who is unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable level of health or development, or whose health and development is likely to be significantly or further impaired, without the provision of services; or a child who is disabled”. Distinguishing the threshold between S17 and S47 is key because families can refuse to engage with us and/or accept support under S17
* If a child is identified as a child in need an assessment is completed by a social worker to consider the risks and needs of the child (ren) and to determine if a child’s plan is needed to support those risks / needs. The purpose of the Plan is to ensure all involved professionals work effectively together to achieve the agreed outcomes for the child effectively and in a timely way, to reduce any risks, to improve their outcomes and to prevent the child’s need’s escalating
* As risks / needs decrease (or increase) and thresholds change it may be appropriate to step-down to our Early Help teams or partner agencies or initiate a Strategy Discussion to consider if threshold for a S47 Enquiry is met.

**Key responsibilities:**

* **Allocated Social Worker** – Undertake the assessment for any Child in Need Regularly visit and see the child, undertake direct work with the child, ensure what life is like for the child is understood and if things are improving. Co-ordinate the contributions of the child, family members and network members to ensure the child’s plan is effective, reviewed regularly and improving things for the child. *Ensure the child’s file is kept up to date and that the family and involved professions get copies of the updated plan following any review*
* The **Practice Supervisor** will quality assure the assessment being completed and will offer advice and guidance during this process. They oversee the plan and its review, ensuring they are robust and effecting the necessary change – in a timely way
* The **Team Manager** signs off the assessment completed, agreeing the outcomes identified. Together with the practice supervisor, they are responsible for ensuring the plan is robust and effecting the necessary change actions, addressing the right things at the appropriate threshold level
* **Family members** and **involved professionals** are responsible for contributing to the assessment completed and completing the actions identified for them on the plan and contributing to the review and update of the plan.

**Linked Documents:**

* [Practice Matters – Child in Need](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fproceduresonline.com%2Ftrixcms%2Fmedia%2F7776%2Fpractice-matters-child-in-need-jan-2023.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK)
* [Single Assessment Process](https://derbyshirecaya.proceduresonline.com/p_sing_as_over.html)
* [Assessments](https://derbyshirecaya.proceduresonline.com/p_sing_social_care.html)
* [Single Assessment Guidance](https://proceduresonline.com/trixcms/media/7558/single-assessment-guidance-002-april-2021.docx)
* [Single Assessment Flowchart](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fproceduresonline.com%2Ftrixcms%2Fmedia%2F8198%2Fupdated-single-assessment-flow-chart-v-2-oct-2023.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK)
* [Plan, Do, Review](https://derbyshirecaya.proceduresonline.com/p_plan_do_rev.html)
* [Child in Need Plans and Reviews](https://derbyshirecaya.proceduresonline.com/p_cin_plans_rev.html)
* [Practice Matters – Child’s Plan](https://proceduresonline.com/trixcms/media/7512/practice-matters-childs-plans.docx)
* [Agenda to Review Plans](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fproceduresonline.com%2Ftrixcms%2Fmedia%2F7510%2Fagenda-for-meetings-to-review-plans.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK)
* [Improvement Cycle Document Guidance](https://proceduresonline.com/trixcms/media/7407/cin-icm-document-guidance.pdf)
* [Child in Need Meetings Guidance](https://proceduresonline.com/trixcms/media/7408/cin-meetings-guidance.docx)
* [Practice Matters – Step Down to Partner Agencies](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fproceduresonline.com%2Ftrixcms%2Fmedia%2F8138%2Fpractice-matters-step-down-to-partner-agencies-revised-august-2023.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK)

**Other Helpful Links:**

* [Practice Matters – Lead Practitioner](https://proceduresonline.com/trixcms/media/7586/practice-matters-lead-practitioner.docx%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)
* [Child in Need Power BI Dashboard Guidance](https://proceduresonline.com/trixcms/media/7409/cin-powerbi-dashboard-guidance.pdf)
* [Thresholds for Children’s Services](https://derbyshirecaya.proceduresonline.com/p_ch_servs_thresh.html)
* [Multi-Agency Dispute Resolution and Escalation Policy](https://www.proceduresonline.com/derbyshire/scbs/user_controlled_lcms_area/uploaded_files/Multi%20Agency%20Dispute%20Resolution%20%26%20Escalation%20Policy%20Dec%202019%20Final.pdf)
* [Multi-Agency Dispute Resolution and Escalation Template](https://derbyshirescbs.proceduresonline.com/docs_library.html)

# Child Protection (an overview)

**Key Timescales:**

* Where it is considered that a child may be suffering or be at risk of suffering significant harm a strategy discussion meeting should take place **as soon as possible, but within 24 hours** – to determine if a S47 Enquiry is needed and to agree how the investigation will be conducted
* If an Initial Child Protection Conference (ICPC) is required, this should take place within **15 working days** of the strategy discussion where S47 enquiries were initiated. If concerns relate to an unborn, conference should be held **prior to birth and before 28 weeks**
* All S47 Enquiries should be completed within a **maximum of 15 working days;** sooner if an Initial Child Protection Conference (ICPC) is needed, as this is the Social Worker’s report for ICPC which needs to be shared in advance with parents prior to the conference - minimum of **2 working days** for an initial conference / **3 working days** for any subsequent review. Management oversight (within the S47 Workflow) must be completed within **7 working days** from the start of the S47 enquiry. An interim safety plan will be put in place during these enquires, until the more comprehensive multi-agency plan can be put in place
* Visits – within a S47 the child needs to be seen and spoken to (alone) **as soon as possible, within 24 hours**. The visiting pattern for a child will be agreed at the initial/review child protection conference, reflecting the current level of risk to the child
* Core Groups – Initial Core Group must take place within **10 working days** of the initial child protection conference; then at least every **6 weeks** to review the plan and its effectiveness
* Review Child Protection Conferences – within **3 months** of the initial child protection conference; if the initial conference was a pre-birth conference within **1 month** of the child’s birth, or within **3 months** of the initial one (whichever is sooner). Further reviews should be held at intervals of not more than **6 months** for as long as the child remains the subject of a Child Protection Plan.

**Brief Outline: *What*** *it is and* ***why*** *we do it*

* Investigations or enquiries under S47 of the Children Act 1989 is a key duty of the Local Authority, led by an experienced social worker where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm. The decision to initiate a S47 Investigation is agreed at a strategy discussion involving as a minimum social care, the police and health. Often a S47 Investigation is part of a joint investigation with the police where there is a possibility that a crime has been committed. Child Protection medicals and police interviews are often undertaken as part of these investigations
* In all cases where it is considered that the child is at risk of significant harm, any imminent risks to the child should be immediately addressed and an interim safety plan put in place, until the more comprehensive multi-agency child protection plan is in place
* A child protection conference is a meeting that brings together family members and those practitioners working with the child(ren) / family to discuss risks, protective factors and their impact on the child (ren) to agree if threshold (significant harm) is met and whether a child protection plan is needed to manage the risks (or if it can be managed at a lower threshold level). The meeting will agree an outline plan to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child and will identify a core group of practitioners to develop, implement and review the progress of the plan (between conferences)
* The purpose of a Child Protection Plan is to facilitate and make explicit a co-ordinated approach to: Ensure that each child in the household is safe and prevent them from suffering further harm; promote the child's health and development (i.e. welfare); provided it is in the best interests of the child, to support the family and wider family members to safeguard and promote the welfare of their child. If the child protection plan is not able to effect necessary change in a timely way, consideration would be needed regarding whether the PLO process / care proceedings is needed to ensure the child is safe. Scrutiny Panel would be where this option is explored and decided
* The Core Group is responsible for the detailed formulation and implementation of the Child Protection Plan, which will have been previously outlined at the conference and to review the effectiveness of the plan against agreed outcomes.

**Key responsibilities:**

* **Allocated Social Worker** – Undertake S47 Enquiries and present that assessment at ICPC where one is convened. Regularly visit and see the child, undertake direct work with the child, ensure what life is like for the child is understood and if things are improving. Co-ordinate the contributions of family and core group members to ensure the child protection plan is effective and improving things for the child. Regularly review the child protection plan’s progress against outcomes identified. Ensure the child’s file is kept up to date
* **Child Protection Manager** - chairs all child protection conferences, advises around thresholds, quality assures case files between conferences – to provide independent assurance that plans are effective and progressing.

**Linked Documents:**

* [Section 47 Enquiries](https://derbyshirecaya.proceduresonline.com/p_sect_47_enqs.html)
* [Child Protection Conferences](https://derbyshirescbs.proceduresonline.com/p_ch_protection_conf.html#cp_conf)
* [Implementation of Child Protection Plans](https://derbyshirescbs.proceduresonline.com/p_imp_cpp.html)
* [Practice Matters – Section 47 Investigations](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fproceduresonline.com%2Ftrixcms%2Fmedia%2F6709%2Fpractice-matters-s47-investigations.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK)
* [Practice Matters – Child Protection Conferences](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fproceduresonline.com%2Ftrixcms%2Fmedia%2F6717%2Fpractice-matters-child-protection-conferences.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK)
* [Practice Matters - Section 47 (S47) Assessment or Report for Initial Child Protection Conference (ICPC)](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fproceduresonline.com%2Ftrixcms%2Fmedia%2F6718%2Fpractice-matters-s47-assessment-or-report-for-icpc.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK)

**Other Helpful Links:**

* [Thresholds for Children’s Services](https://derbyshirecaya.proceduresonline.com/p_ch_servs_thresh.html)
* [Achieving Best Evidence in Criminal Proceedings](https://www.cps.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/legal_guidance/best_evidence_in_criminal_proceedings.pdf)
* [Working Together to Safeguard Children](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2)
* [Locality Scrutiny Panel – Terms of Reference](https://proceduresonline.com/trixcms/media/7349/locality-care-planning-scrutiny-panel-terms-of-reference.docx)
* [Derbyshire Child Protection Conference – Professional Dissent Process](https://www.proceduresonline.com/derbyshire/scbs/user_controlled_lcms_area/uploaded_files/Derbyshire%20Dissent%20%20Flow%20April%202019%20V1.pdf)
* [Multi-Agency Dispute Resolution and Escalation Policy](https://www.proceduresonline.com/derbyshire/scbs/user_controlled_lcms_area/uploaded_files/Multi%20Agency%20Dispute%20Resolution%20%26%20Escalation%20Policy%20Dec%202019%20Final.pdf)
* [Multi-Agency Dispute Resolution and Escalation Template](https://derbyshirescbs.proceduresonline.com/docs_library.html)

# Court Work (an overview)

**Key Timescales:**

* **Care Proceedings** should be completed within **26 weeks** (including PLO); revisions/reforms to the PLO were made to support this timeframe. The ideal aim is that PLO should be completed within **16 weeks**
* Throughout proceedings (care proceedings and private), the local authority must comply with court directions made regarding the timetabling and conduct of the case and the delivery of additional information and any specialist reports or updated assessments relevant to the local authority’s case which the court decides are necessary. This additional material should be delivered within the timeframes set by the court
* When issuing care proceedings: **On Day 1** – the following must be attached to the application filed with the court: Chronology, Statement (SWET) and Genogram, any current assessment relating to the child and/or the family and friends of the child to which the social work statement refers and on which the local authority relies, the Care Plan, an index of checklist documents. **On Day 2** the local authority must serve on the other parties the application form and annex documents, together with the ‘evidential checklist documents’. **On Day 2** the local authority must serve on the other parties (but must not file with the court unless expressly directed to do so) the application form and annex documents as set out above, together with the ‘evidential checklist documents’. **Between Day 12 and 18** – the first Case Management Hearing should take place.

**Brief Outline: *What****it is and****why****we do it*

* The reforms of family justice have led to an increased emphasis on local authority assessments (including family and friends viabilities) and support to families being completed / offered earlier during the pre-proceedings period and evidence provided to the court being more focused, succinct and analytical. You don’t have to wait until you’re in PLO to do this assessment work
* Pre-Proceedings – work done in this period is vital for two main reasons: (1) it may divert a case along a route which avoids the need for proceedings; (2) when that is not possible, and proceedings have to be commenced, the preparatory work will facilitate the smooth running of the case
* Decision to initiate PLO and/or Care Proceedings takes place at [**Scrutiny Panel**](https://proceduresonline.com/trixcms/media/7349/locality-care-planning-scrutiny-panel-terms-of-reference.docx)
* Diverting to Private Law - A good robust single assessment, which addresses the key points (e.g. residency, management of any risks, contact arrangements with non-resident parent together with a supporting letter to the Court - may mean a S7 Report is not needed (this is the court’s decision).

**Other Helpful Links**

* [Applications for Special Guardianship Orders and the Special Guardianship Support Scheme](https://derbyshirecaya.proceduresonline.com/p_spec_guard_order.html)
* [Public Law Outline Flowchart](https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ukgwa/20130128112038/http%3A/www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/protecting-the-vulnerable/care-proceeding-reform/public-law-outline-flowchart.pdf)
* [Recommendations to achieve best practice in the child protection and family justice systems – Final Report](https://www.judiciary.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/March-2021-report-final_clickable.pdf)

**Linked Documents**

* [Care & supervision proceedings and the public law outline](https://derbyshirecaya.proceduresonline.com/p_care_supervis_plo.html)
* [Template - letter before proceedings](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fderbyshirecaya.proceduresonline.com%2Ffiles%2Fletter_before_proc_template.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK)
* [Template – letter of issue](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fderbyshirecaya.proceduresonline.com%2Ffiles%2Fletter_of_issue_template.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK)
* [Social work evidence template](https://coppguidance.rip.org.uk/social-work-evidence-template/)
* [Regional PLO Toolkit](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fproceduresonline.com%2Ftrixcms%2Fmedia%2F7749%2Fplo-toolkit-v2-wef-280323.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK)

**Key responsibilities:**

* **Social Worker** – prepares the social worker statement and court care plans (signed off by their manager / Head of services as needed). Complies with any directions in court orders (within timescales requested). Attends and provides any evidence for the court as requested
* **Children’s Guardian (CAFCASS)** – their role is to make sure that local authority arrangements and decisions for and about children protect them, promote their welfare and are in their best interests. During care proceedings they make independent enquiries and checks the local authority’s plans for the child protects children, promotes their welfare and is in their best interests
* **Local Authority Solicitor** – provides legal advice the local authority and represents them and their directions in court and at advocates meeting during care proceedings (or arranges for someone to). They draft court applications and communicate between solicitors during proceedings. They forward any court orders to the social worker
* **The Judge** – presides over the case – ensures it progresses in a timely way. Makes decisions in court and any court orders (interim and final).

# Children in Local Authority Care (an overview)

**Key Timescales:**

* Visits: within **1 week** of the start on any placement, then at intervals of no more than **6 weeks** / **4 weekly** for IFAs and private residentials – For other exceptions see [here](https://derbyshirecaya.proceduresonline.com/p_sw_visits.html)
* Placement Planning Meeting: within **5 working days** of the start of the placement, further as required (e.g. to resolve any issues in relation to the day-to-day arrangements of the placement)
* Care Plan: located in the Children in Care Planning and Review Episode – completed within **10 working days** of the child coming into care and updated in preparation for any subsequent Looked After Review. This paperwork should be available for the IRO at least **3 working days** before the Looked After Review.
* Looked After Reviews**:** initially within **20 working days** of the child becoming looked after, second review within **3 months** (after initial), then at least **6 monthly**
* Health Care Assessments: First assessment should be completed within **20 working days** – ideally prior to first Looked after review, then at least **annually** (for children 5yrs +), at least **6 monthly** (for children under 5yrs)
* Personal Education Plan (PEP): First PEP should be initiated within **10 working days** of a child becoming looked after and reviewed in line with Looked After Reviews (if school remains the same). If there is a school move there should be a PEP within **10 working days** of that move
* Strength and Difficulties Questionnaires (SDQ) (for all children 4-17) aresent out by business services to carers / education provision and the young person (if 11 or above) when a child enters care; then twice yearly (May and November), to ensure an up-to-date understanding of the child’s wellbeing needs are understood and can be supported. Responses are then entered into the workflow step on Mosaic, creating scores in a variety of categories (e.g. total difficulties, emotional, conduct, hyperactivity, peer, prosocial).

**Brief Outline: *What*** *it is and* ***why*** *we do it*

* While the best place for most children to live and be cared for is with their birth family; for some this is not safe or possible – even with support. These children may need to become looked after by the Local Authority. A child can only be accommodated by a Local Authority if a court has granted an interim (S38) or full Care Order (S31) or an Emergency Order for their protection (S44 & 46), parents have given consent under a voluntary agreement (S20) or they are compulsorily accommodated by a court (S21)
* Authorisation to bring a child into Local Authority Care must be given by a Head of Service, and [**Scrutiny Panel**](https://proceduresonline.com/trixcms/media/7349/locality-care-planning-scrutiny-panel-terms-of-reference.docx) provides robust assurance that all suitable alternatives (including viabilities with extended family and friends) have been fully considered
* If accommodated using S20 consent is needs to be properly informed and fairly obtained. The person(s) with parental responsibility must have “capacity” to consent. If there is any doubt, then legal advice must be sought, and a mental capacity assessment undertaken where indicated. Record parent(s) consent in writing, with their signature and the date it was given
* If accommodated using S20 consent is needed to be properly informed and fairly obtained. The person(s) with parental responsibility must have “capacity” to consent. If there is any doubt, then legal advice must be sought, and a mental capacity assessment undertaken where indicated. Record parent(s) consent in writing, with their signature and the date it was given
* A Child’s Change of Circumstances Workflow needs to be completed when a child first comes into care, if they move placement and / or is there is any change to their legal status (e.g. if they go from S20 to S31). This workflow ensures the legal status of a child in our care is accurately recorded and there is a seamless continuation of looked after workflow steps. It ensures foster carer payments are generated, where applicable and notifications to health, educational provision, GP, virtual school, IRO and out of county notifications are generated
* Every child in care must have an up-to-date Care Plan, which is regularly reviewed – located in the Children in Care Planning and Review Episode
* The local authority’s Corporate Parenting responsibilities have a duty to promote every Child in Care’s physical, emotional and mental health and education. To this end, every Child in Care needs to have a Health Assessment (so that a Health Plan can be developed to reflect the child’s health needs), SDQ Assessment and PEP (to ensure their educational needs are met). These are included as part of the child’s overall Care Plan.

**Key responsibilities:**

* **Allocated Social Worker** – Undertake Statutory Visits to the child and ensure the child is spoke with alone and seen in placement. They are responsible for completing any social Work Assessments, the Children in Care Planning and Review Episode and ensuring the Child’s Heath Assessment and PEP are completed on time so they can contribute to the child’s Care Plan. They usually would take the child to where they will be living, arrange any placement planning meeting and ensure carers and parents are all kept updated and involved
* **Independent Reviewing Officer** – primary focus is to quality assure the care planning and review process for each child and to ensure that his/her current wishes and feelings are given full consideration. IRO’s chair all Looked After Reviews and monitor the child’s case on an on-going basis. They also ensure that the Local Authority is fulfilling its role as corporate parent for each child. The IRO speaks directly with the child prior to their Looked After Review
* **Supervising Fostering Social Worker** - visit the foster placement and see the carer and child; provide direct supervision to foster carers; ensure carers are up to date with policies, procedures and training; ensure children and carers are matched well and provide support to carers to ensure they are able to meet developing / changing needs – ensuring they continue to receive high quality care which meets the child’s needs. They play a key role in liaising with the child’s social worker, keeping them up to date with any changes / issue and helping to respond to / resolve any problems
* **Foster Carer / Residential Worker** - provides care for the child on a day-to-day basis
* **Virtual School –** Responsibility for the local authority’s statutory duties relating to the education needs, provision, and outcomes, for Children in Care. Ensure that the educational needs of children in care, and other children as identified as being in scope, are properly identified and supported by schools and educational establishments and their educational progress is tracked and monitored both by schools and the local authority. Make sure additional support and resources e.g. Pupil Premium + for target children are used effectively and efficiently to support education outcomes.

**Linked Documents:**

* [Decision to Look After and Care Planning](https://derbyshirecaya.proceduresonline.com/p_dec_look_aft.html#2.-the-care-plan)
* [Social worker visits to children in Care](https://derbyshirecaya.proceduresonline.com/p_sw_visits.html)
* [Looked After Reviews](https://derbyshirecaya.proceduresonline.com/p_look_aft_rev.html)
* [Health Care Assessments and Plans](https://derbyshirecaya.proceduresonline.com/p_healthcare_assmt.html)
* [Placement Planning and Disruption Meetings](https://derbyshirecaya.proceduresonline.com/p_place_disrup_meet.html)
* [Education of Children in Care and Previously Looked after Children](https://derbyshirecaya.proceduresonline.com/p_educ_lac.html)
* [Placement Planning Meeting Agenda and Prompts](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fproceduresonline.com%2Ftrixcms%2Fmedia%2F7673%2Fguidance-placement-planning-meeting-agenda-and-prompts.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK)
* [Placement plan for fostering placements including delegated authority decision support tool](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fproceduresonline.com%2Ftrixcms%2Fmedia%2F6301%2Fplacement-planning-meeting-template-delegated-authority-decision-support-tool.doc&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK)
* [Planning for Permanence Outside of Care (PPOC) – Meeting Structures](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fproceduresonline.com%2Ftrixcms%2Fmedia%2F7411%2Fppoc-meeting-guide.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK)
* [Planning for Permanence Outside of Care (PPOC) – Guide for Team Coordinators](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fproceduresonline.com%2Ftrixcms%2Fmedia%2F7410%2Fppoc-guide-for-team-coordinators-2022-v3.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK)
* [Guide to using the Power BI POOC Dashboard](https://proceduresonline.com/trixcms/media/7412/ppoc-powerbi-dashboard-guidance.pdf)

**Other Helpful Links:**

* [Foster Carers Charter](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fproceduresonline.com%2Ftrixcms%2Fmedia%2F7654%2Ffoster-carer-charter.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK)
* [Care and Supervision Proceedings and the Public Law Outline](https://derbyshirecaya.proceduresonline.com/p_care_supervis_plo.html)
* [Practice Matters – Use of Section 20 Accommodation](https://proceduresonline.com/trixcms/media/7535/practice-matters-use-of-s20-accommodation.docx)
* [Placement Finding Request](https://proceduresonline.com/trixcms/media/7843/placement-finding-request.pdf)
* [Referrals to Central Placements Team](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fproceduresonline.com%2Ftrixcms%2Fmedia%2F7842%2Freferrals-to-central-placements-team.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK)
* [Practice Matters – Pathway Plans](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fproceduresonline.com%2Ftrixcms%2Fmedia%2F6895%2Fpwp-practice-matters-oct-21.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK)
* [Locality Scrutiny Panel – Terms of Reference](https://proceduresonline.com/trixcms/media/7349/locality-care-planning-scrutiny-panel-terms-of-reference.docx)
* [Multi-Agency Dispute Resolution and Escalation Policy](https://www.proceduresonline.com/derbyshire/scbs/user_controlled_lcms_area/uploaded_files/Multi%20Agency%20Dispute%20Resolution%20%26%20Escalation%20Policy%20Dec%202019%20Final.pdf)
* [Multi-Agency Dispute Resolution and Escalation Template](https://derbyshirescbs.proceduresonline.com/docs_library.html)

# Child Exploitation - Children at Risk of Exploitation and Children Experiencing Exploitation

**Key Timescales:**

* Initial high risk Child Exploitation Meeting to be convened within **1 working day** of Child Exploitation assessment sign off. This meeting is to be a combined s47 Strategy Discussion / Child Exploitation meeting (where possible). If not combined with a s47 strategy Discussion, the initial Child Exploitation high risk meeting to take place within **3 working days** of assessment sign off
* Initial medium risk Child Exploitation meeting to be convened within **15 working days** of Child Exploitation assessment sign off. Child Exploitation element to be combined with the Child Protection /Child in Need /Team Around the Family meeting. For Children in Care the Child Exploitation element to be incorporated within any ongoing professional’s meetings that may be being held
* Child Exploitation assessment to be updated **4 weekly** (high risk), **6 weekly** (medium and low risk).

**Brief Outline: *What****it is and****why****we do it*

* Child exploitation relates to forms of child abuse including (but not exclusively) the sexual and criminal exploitation of children under 18 years of age and possibly up to age 25 for children who have Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND); or have previously been in the care of the Local Authority
* Any child who is at risk of or suffering any form of exploitation should be treated as a victim of abuse, regardless of the circumstances of the case
* Exploitation can happen in a few contexts involving contact and non-contact abuse, via 1-1 (i.e., child on child or adult on child), constrained choices (a child feels they have no choice) or an organised abuse (group) basis such as paedophile ring or exploited via gang association
* Types of exploitation may include:
	+ Child sexual exploitation
	+ Child criminal exploitation, including drugs supply, acquisitive crime and county lines
	+ Modern slavery
	+ Extremism and radicalisation
	+ Internet based exploitation - contact and non-contact offences, including sending Nudes and Semi nudes
	+ Female genital mutilation (FGM)
	+ Honour based abuse and violence
	+ Forced marriage
	+ Serious adult and youth violence, including gang violence
	+ Financial exploitation

**Key responsibilities:**

* **Allocated Worker** – Undertake Statutory/Non statutory Visits to the child and ensure the child is spoken with alone and seen in placement (consideration to increased visiting to address the presenting risk and need). They are responsible for completing any Child Exploitation Assessment (or any other assessment which may help inform the plan for the child). The worker needs to ensure that all information is shared with relevant agencies and there are regular Child Exploitation meetings held at the timescales outlined. The worker needs to ensure that the actions to reduce any Child Exploitation risk are progressed and that they work with the young person and their carer/parent around their Child’s Plan. It is the role of the worker to ensure that there is strong relationship-based practice to allow the child’s voice to be heard and their voice is reflected in their plan
* **Practice Supervisor/Senior Practitioner**- primary focus is to quality assure the overall plan (including the review of the Child Exploitation concerns and how they are been mitigated). To ensure the case file is up to date and in relation to Child Exploitation, to ensure that the Child Exploitation element has been reviewed as part of the Child’s Plan meeting (standalone meeting for Children in Care) and this is recorded on the case file. For medium risk cases held by social care, to have a discussion with the Team Manager about the most appropriate worker to chair the Child’s Plan meeting – Team Manager/Practice Supervisor or Social Worker. For Children in Care – the Practice Supervisor discussion with the Team Manager which one of them is to chair the Child Exploitation meeting. For this cohort, this cannot be chaired by a Social Worker. As part of supervision to ensure that what life is like for the child is captured and their voice is evident within the social care/early help intervention. For Early Help – senior practitioner to alert their team manager to any medium risk Child Exploitation case so it can be arranged for the team manager to chair this meeting
* The earlier the intervention, the better the chances of success
* Early sharing of information is also key to ensure that effective help is provided where there are emerging problems
* The completion of a child exploitation risk assessment will identify the vulnerability and welfare needs of the child. This must include contextual safeguarding and consider the lived experience of the child and their direct wishes and feelings. This assessment will identify if the child is being exploited (high risk) or at risk of exploitation (medium and low thresholds) to inform what level child exploitation meeting is required
* For high and medium risk cases, a child exploitation meeting should be convened (within timescales) with multi agency partners to enable a plan to be formulated which seeks to reduce risk and harm. The concerns need to be discussed with parents/carers and the child. Whilst a meeting is waiting to be convened, consideration to an interim safety plan must be given and any plan to be recorded clearly on the case file.

**Other Helpful Links:**

* [Online Safety and Internet Abuse](https://derbyshirescbs.proceduresonline.com/p_esafety.html)
* [Safeguarding Children at Risk of Abuse Through Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)](https://derbyshirescbs.proceduresonline.com/p_fem_gen_mut.html)
* [Forced Marriage](https://derbyshirescbs.proceduresonline.com/p_force_marriage.html)
* [Honour Based Abuse and Violence](https://derbyshirescbs.proceduresonline.com/p_honor_based_viol.html)
* [Investigating Complex (Organised or Multiple) Abuse](https://derbyshirescbs.proceduresonline.com/p_invest_complex_abuse.html)
* [Safeguarding Children and Young people against Radicalisation and Violent Extremism](https://derbyshirescbs.proceduresonline.com/p_sg_ch_extremism.html)
* [Derby and Derbyshire Modern Slavery Guidance](https://www.saferderbyshire.gov.uk/site-elements/documents/pdf/derby-and-derbyshire-modern-slavery-guidance.pdf)
* [Care Leavers Exploitation Risk Assessment 18 plus](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proceduresonline.com%2Fderbyshire%2Fscbs%2Fuser_controlled_lcms_area%2Fuploaded_files%2FFinal%2520Care%2520Leavers%2520Exploitation%2520Risk%2520Assessment%252018%2520plus%2520(005).docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK)
* [Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-exploitation-of-children-and-vulnerable-adults-county-lines)
* [Child Exploitation Language Guide | The Children's Society](https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/information/professionals/resources/child-exploitation-language-guide)

**Linked Documents:**

* [Children at Risk of Exploitation (CRE)](https://derbyshirescbs.proceduresonline.com/p_ch_risk_exploit.html?zoom_highlight=cre)
* [Joint Runaway or Missing From Home or Care Protocol](https://www.proceduresonline.com/derbyshire/scbs/user_controlled_lcms_area/uploaded_files/Joint%20RMFHC%20Protocol%20FINAL%20July%202020.pdf)
* [Children at Risk of Exploitation Operational Workflow](https://derbyshirescbs.proceduresonline.com/files/cre_operational_workflow.pdf)
* [Child Protection Section 47 Enquiries](https://derbyshirescbs.proceduresonline.com/p_ch_protection_enq.html#strategy)
* [Children at Risk of Exploitation Information Report Operation Liberty](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proceduresonline.com%2Fderbyshire%2Fscbs%2Fuser_controlled_lcms_area%2Fuploaded_files%2FCRE%2520Information%2520Report%2520Operation%2520Liberty%2520-%2520FINAL%2520SEP%25202020.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK)
* **Team Manager** – to have oversight of the case and for this to be evident on the case file. To chair high risk meetings (social care team managers) as per the Child Exploitation operational workflow and to ensure there is close monitoring of this cohort. To decide the most appropriate worker to chair the Child’s Plan meeting in conjunction with your practice supervisor. The Team Manager to sign off all plans and meeting workflow (for Children in Care). For Early Help – the Team Manager will be required to chair medium risk Child Exploitation meetings combined with a Team Around the Family meeting.

# Life Story Work

**Key Timescales:**

* Life story work is ongoing and should be completed and revisited with the child throughout our involvement, to enable them to gain an increased understanding of their story and decisions made about them
* The completed Life Story Book should be given to the adoptive parents at the time the child is placed with them or, if that is not possible, within **10 days working days** of the adoption order being made (at the latest)
* The Later Life Letter should be given to adoptive parents within **10 days working days** of the adoption order being made (at the latest).

**Brief Outline: *What****it is and****why****we do it*

* Most of us are lucky enough to know our own history or at least have access to a family member or friend who might know the answer. For children who grow up in local authority care away from their birth parents, this is not always the case. Their files may be incomplete, inaccessible or inaccurate; they are unlikely to include many of the intimate personal details that give us a sense of who we are and where we come from. For many children not living with their birth parents, the stories that they need to understand are complex and painful: stories of violence, loss, illness, death, drugs and sexual abuse. Subjects that many adults find hard to discuss and are fearful of tackling. But these children need answers, they need stories, they need the adults around them to be brave enough to try to explain and help them to understand
* Life story work is about telling the story of a child’s life to enable the child to understand and make sense of their past and the decisions made that have affected them. Children need truthful and honest explanations that they can understand, which means using language they know
* Life story work is based on a relationship and should not be seen as simply completing a task. It shouldn’t be seen as a one-off activity but rather as ongoing work with the child, repeatedly telling their story (or parts of it) in an age-appropriate way, as children need different levels of understanding at different points in their lives
* Life story work provides the child with a factual narrative about their life, but also often has a therapeutic impact; enabling the child to begin to acknowledge their feelings about themselves, others and their lives. For some it enables them to begin to bridge the gap between the stories being told about them and their lived experience. It is often an essential part of the recovery process for all traumatized children
* Life story work involves direct work with the child; it also involves the collection of photographs, memorabilia and key documents – to bring to life their story

**Brief Outline** (Continued)**:**

* Life story work should always be undertaken with any child who isn’t living with their birth parent, but can also be helpful for other children where key decisions have really impacted their life (e.g. if one parent has had to leave them home)
* Every child with a plan for adoption should be provided with a Life Story Book – which provides adopters with an accessible / child friendly account of the child’s story (in words / pictures and documents) up to the point they were adopted (so they can share that story with the child) and a Later Life Letter - an expanded version of the Life Story Book written, giving more detail about the child's history and the decision making process – to be given to the child when their adoptive parent considers they are old enough
* Life Story Books and Later Life Letters are also helpful resources (though not a mandatory requirement) for children not living with their birth parents in other circumstances.

**Key responsibilities:**

* The **allocated Social Worker** is responsible for coordinating the life story work for the child with the support of other involved workers
* The **child’s carers** are responsible for keeping appropriate photographs and other mementoes to inform the life story work
* The **Practice Supervisor** is responsible for ensuring the life story work is progressing through supervision
* The **Team Manager** is responsible for confirming the completion of the life story work.

**Linked Documents:**

* [Life Story Books](https://derbyshirecaya.proceduresonline.com/g_life_story_book.html)
* [Later Life Letters](https://derbyshirecaya.proceduresonline.com/g_later_life_lett.html)

# Care Leavers

**Key Timescales:**

* Referral to this team at least one month before any eligible young person’s **16th Birthday** to ensure allocation by the time they are 16
* Visits: An initial visit should be facilitated together with the Social Work team within **4 weeks** of allocation. Post 18 how much contact you have depends on how much you need. But as a minimum, your leaving care worker will try and see you at least **6 times a year**. When you first leave care though, you could be seeing each other several times a week
* Pathway planning - All young people will have a Pathway Plan in place within **3 months** of becoming eligible, wherever possible, by their 16th birthday. The plan will continue to be implemented and reviewed after they leave care at least until they are 21; and up to 24 if in education. The Pathway Plan must be reviewed at least every **6 months**. It is good practice for a review to be held within **28 days** of any change in the care leaver’s accommodation or when there is a significant change in a young person’s life
* Preparing for Adulthood – If a young person is likely to need support from adult services a Preparation for Adulthood Data Record should be completed by the time they are 16 years old at the latest (14 if they have complex needs) and updated every **6 months** (if that support is still likely to be needed). By the time a young person is 16.5 years a Preparation for Adulthood Referral to Adult Care should be completed by their children’s worker and passed to the appropriate Adult Care Team.

**Brief Outline: *What****it is and****why****we do it*

* Care Leavers are OUR children – we never give up on our young people
* Relevant young people – those who are aged 16 or 17, have been Looked After for a period or periods totalling at least 13 weeks starting after their 14th birthday (this doesn’t have to be consecutive) and have been in care at least one day since they turned 16. As a Local Authority we have a duty to support eligible care leavers up to the age of 21, and maintain contact with them, at least yearly, until they are 25
* Qualifying care leavers (less than 13 weeks in care) or those who have moved back home before they are 18 are able to access some support depending on their circumstances but will be contacted at least once a year
* The Leaving Care Service focuses on developing independence readiness, positive participation, building stronger relationships by the allocation of Leaving Care Workers at 16, and protocols and strategic agreements with key agencies– e.g. Housing, Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and Probation to support our young people

**Other Helpful Links:**

* [Joint housing protocols for care leavers: good practice advice](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/joint-housing-protocols-for-care-leavers/joint-housing-protocols-for-care-leavers-good-practice-advice)
* [16 to 19 education: financial support for students](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/16-to-19-education-financial-support-for-students)
* [The Children’s Act 1989 guidance and regulations – Volume 3: planning transition to adulthood for care leavers](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1051441/CA1989_Transitions_Guidance.pdf#page=21)
* [Practice Matters – Preparing for Adulthood](https://proceduresonline.com/trixcms/media/7580/practice-matters-transition-to-adulthood.pdf)

**Linked Documents:**

* [Leaving Care and Transition](https://derbyshirecaya.proceduresonline.com/p_leaving_care.html#appendix-1-needs-assessment-and-content-of-pathway-plans-for-relevant-and-former-relevant-children)
* [Care Leavers Charter](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/264694/Care_leavers__charter.pdf)
* [Staying Put](https://derbyshirecaya.proceduresonline.com/p_stay.html)
* [Derbyshire Local Offer for Care Leavers](https://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/social-health/children-and-families/children-we-look-after/leaving-care/leaving-care-service.aspx)

**Key responsibilities:**

* **Leaving Care Worker** – after the young person is 18, is responsible for carrying out an assessment of the needs to determine what assistance (if any) it would be appropriate to provide; help to prepare the Pathway Plan, and ensure this plan is regularly reviewed; provide appropriate assistance for the young person's educational or training needs if they require it. This worker is the young person’s principal source of contact in any matter relating to the Pathway Plan and is accountable for the effective implementation of the Plan (including ensuring the coordination of other agencies and individuals)
* **Child in Care Social Worker** – responsible for statutory visits, care and pathway plans and any other paperwork for children up until they are 18; at which point the Leaving Care worker becomes the lead practitioner
* **Adult social care** may be the lead agency where the young person is open to them.
* The primary task of a Leaving Care worker working with young people under 18 is to build a meaningful relationship with the young person and prepare them for independence at 18
* Leaving Care workers work alongside the social work team until the child is 18; increasing their involvement as the child gets closer to 18 at which point, they pick up the lead practitioner’s role
* Pathway Plans are the key tool used to ensure a young person’s independence readiness is appropriately supported. A good plan will consider accommodation and housing issues, personal support, education training and work issues, health and development, life skills, financial issues
* A key focus of all Leaving Care work, both pre and post 18 should be on helping our young people develop lifelong relationship links to help secure positive attachments.

# Transition to Adulthood Planning Process

**Key Timescales:**

* All young people who are 14 years old and above, who are likely to require adult services post 18 will require a Transition Plan Review (multi-disciplinary discussion at meetings already taking place for the child – an adult worker should be invited to these meetings). If the child has complex needs this should be initiated at 14 years, if less complex by 16 years at the latest. Once completed this transition plan should be reviewed (and updated) at least every **6 months**. The aim of this is to focus on transition planning to achieve more independent outcomes for individuals
* In line with the multi-disciplinary discussions the Transition Plan Review Record (found in forms and documents on Mosaic) will be completed every **6 months** to capture SMART actions that represent the young person’s aspirations and needs for their post 18 plan
* At the Transition Plan Review meeting it will be agreed when a Preparation for Adulthood Referral to Adult Care Workflow should be made – at the latest this should be completed by the time the child is 16.5 years

Transition locality meetings take place every **2 months** within each of the 6 localities, alongside lead professionals from key teams (Health, SEND, Leaving Care Team) to review the transition cases using the Power BI dashboard. *This is currently specific to the Disabled Children’s Service who hold a significant amount of the young people who transition through to adult services.*

**Brief Outline: *What****it is and****why****we do it*

* All transition work should be **done with** the young person, **not to** them
* The transition to adulthood planning process is in place to ensure early planning for young people who are likely to require adult services, to provide the right support towards post 18 independence
* Multi-disciplinary thought and challenge to seek, understand and promote the young person’s choice and aspirations
* A strength-based approach thinking about the young person’s skills before matching services
* Knowledge and availability of realistic options for support packages that best match the young person’s post-18 needs.

**Other Helpful Links:**

* [Practice Matters – Lead](https://proceduresonline.com/trixcms/media/7586/practice-matters-lead-practitioner.docx) Practitioner
* [Derby City and Derbyshire Threshold Document](https://www.proceduresonline.com/derbyshire/scbs/user_controlled_lcms_area/uploaded_files/Threshold%20Document%20FINAL%20December%202019.pdf)
* [Multi-Agency Dispute Resolution and Escalation Policy](https://www.proceduresonline.com/derbyshire/scbs/user_controlled_lcms_area/uploaded_files/Multi%20Agency%20Dispute%20Resolution%20%26%20Escalation%20Policy%20Dec%202019%20Final.pdf)
* [Multi-Agency Dispute Resolution and Escalation Template](https://derbyshirescbs.proceduresonline.com/docs_library.html)
* [Working together to Safeguard Children](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/942454/Working_together_to_safeguard_children_inter_agency_guidance.pdf)
* [The Care Act 2014 - Care and Support Statutory Guidance](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-act-statutory-guidance/care-and-support-statutory-guidance)

**Linked Documents:**

* [Transition to Adulthood – New Ways of Working](https://proceduresonline.com/trixcms/media/7579/transition-to-adulthood-new-ways-of-working.pdf)
* [Practice Guidance – Transition Plan](https://proceduresonline.com/trixcms/media/7578/practice-guidance-transition-plan.pdf)
* [Practice Matters – Transition to Adulthood](https://proceduresonline.com/trixcms/media/7580/practice-matters-transition-to-adulthood.pdf)
* [Transitions to Adulthood – Roles and Responsibilities](https://proceduresonline.com/trixcms/media/7581/transitions-to-adulthood-roles-and-responsibilities.pdf)

**Key responsibilities:**

* The **allocated children’s practitioner** is the lead professional who has responsibility for arranging and leading the Transition Plan Reviews. They are to record the outcomes of that discussion in the Transition Plan (Mosaic). They are also responsible for ensuring the family and involved professionals get copies of the updated plan following reviews
* The **Practice Supervisor** will offer advice and guidance during this process and oversees the plan and its review (ensuring they are robust and effecting the necessary change – in a timely way)
* The **Children’s Team Manager**, together with the practice supervisor, is responsible for ensuring the plan is robust and promoting the young person’s needs and aspirations
* The **Children’s Team Manager** and **Adult’s Group Manager or Senior Practitioner** are responsible for co-chairing the transition locality meetings and ensuring the young people requiring post 18 support are on track to receive the correct support and where they aren’t to escalate as appropriate. *This is currently specific to the Disabled Children’s Service who hold a significant amount of the young people who transition through to adult services*
* The **adult’s practitioner** is responsible for attending transition plan reviewconsidering if they meet the adults’ criteria and considering useful tools to aid the assessment and promote the young person’s choice and independence skills
* **Family members** and **involved professionals** are responsible for completing the actions identified for them on the plan and contributing to the review and update of the plan.

# Assessment Tools / Referral Forms and Flowcharts

**Key Guidance Documents (general):**

* [Derby City and Derbyshire Threshold Document](https://www.proceduresonline.com/derbyshire/scbs/user_controlled_lcms_area/uploaded_files/Threshold%20Document%20Final%20September%202022.pdf)
* [Multi-Agency Dispute Resolution and Escalation Policy](https://www.proceduresonline.com/derbyshire/scbs/user_controlled_lcms_area/uploaded_files/Multi%20Agency%20Dispute%20Resolution%20%26%20Escalation%20Policy%20Dec%202019%20Final.pdf)
* [Multi-Agency Dispute Resolution and Escalation Template](https://www.proceduresonline.com/derbyshire/scbs/user_controlled_lcms_area/uploaded_files/Multi%20Agency%20Dispute%20Resolution%20%26%20Escalation%20Template%20Dec%202019%20Final.docx)
* [Information Sharing Guidance for Practitioners](https://www.proceduresonline.com/derbyshire/scbs/user_controlled_lcms_area/uploaded_files/Information%20Sharing%20Guidance%20for%20Practitioners%20FINAL%20August%202022.pdf)
* [Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Multi Agency Guidance on Home Visits](https://www.proceduresonline.com/derbyshire/scbs/user_controlled_lcms_area/uploaded_files/5.3%20Multi%20Agency%20Guidance%20on%20Home%20Visits%20SEP%202020.pdf)
* [Use of written agreements](https://www.proceduresonline.com/derbyshire/scbs/user_controlled_lcms_area/uploaded_files/Use%20of%20Written%20Agreements%20Final%20April%202019.pdf)
* [Written Agreement Template](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proceduresonline.com%2Fderbyshire%2Fscbs%2Fuser_controlled_lcms_area%2Fuploaded_files%2FWritten%2520Agreements%2520Template%2520Final%2520April%25202019.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK)

**Key Assessment Tools and Guidance:**

* [Graded Care Profile – Assessment Tool Template](https://www.proceduresonline.com/derbyshire/scbs/user_controlled_lcms_area/uploaded_files/DDSCP%20Graded%20Care%20Profile%20Assessment%20Tool%20Template%20FINAL%20April%202020.pdf)
* [Graded Care Profile - Practice Guidance](https://www.proceduresonline.com/derbyshire/scbs/user_controlled_lcms_area/uploaded_files/DDSCP%20Graded%20Care%20Profile%20GUIDANCE%20FINAL%20April%202020.pdf)
* [Children at Risk of Exploitation (CRE)](https://derbyshirescbs.proceduresonline.com/p_ch_risk_exploit.html)
* [CRE Risk Assessment Toolkit](https://www.proceduresonline.com/derbyshire/scbs/user_controlled_lcms_area/uploaded_files/City-and-County-CRE-Risk-Assessment-Toolkit%20-%20FINAL%20SEP%202020.pdf) (form is included in this toolkit)
* [Care Leavers Exploitation Risk Assessment 18 plus](http://www.proceduresonline.com/derbyshire/scbs/user_controlled_lcms_area/uploaded_files/Final%20Care%20Leavers%20Exploitation%20Risk%20Assessment%2018%20plus%20%28005%29.docx)
* [Keeping Babies Safe - Three Steps for Baby Safety Partnership Strategy](https://www.proceduresonline.com/derbyshire/scbs/user_controlled_lcms_area/uploaded_files/Keeping%20Babies%20Safe%20Strategy%20Feb%202021.pdf)
* [Keeping Babies Safe - Safer Sleep Co-sleeping/Bed Sharing Assessment](http://www.proceduresonline.com/derbyshire/scbs/user_controlled_lcms_area/uploaded_files/CDT22-031%20Keeping%20Babies%20Safe_Safer%20Sleep_Co%20Sleeping%20Bed%20Sharing%20Assessment.pdf)
* [Keeping Babies Safe - Safer Sleep Quality Conversations Guidance](http://www.proceduresonline.com/derbyshire/scbs/user_controlled_lcms_area/uploaded_files/CDT22-031%20Keeping%20Babies%20Safe_Quality%20Conversations_Safer%20Sleep.pdf)
* [Keeping Babies Safe - Every Baby Matters Observations and Conversations Tool](http://www.proceduresonline.com/derbyshire/scbs/user_controlled_lcms_area/uploaded_files/KBS%20Every%20Baby%20Matters%20Tool%20Jan%2022%20Final.pdf)
* [Keeping Babies Safe - Every Baby Matters Supportive Guidance](http://www.proceduresonline.com/derbyshire/scbs/user_controlled_lcms_area/uploaded_files/KBS%20Every%20Baby%20Matters%20Supportive%20Guidance%20Jan%2022%20Final.pdf)
* [Practice Guidance on Bruising in Babies and Children](https://www.proceduresonline.com/derbyshire/scbs/user_controlled_lcms_area/uploaded_files/FINAL%20Practice%20Guidance%20on%20Brusing%20in%20Babies%20%20Children%20March%202021%20%284%29.pdf)
* [Hoarding and Multi-Agency Hording Framework](https://www.derbys-fire.gov.uk/community/health-and-wellbeing/mental-health/hoarding)
* [Domestic Abuse](https://derbyshirescbs.proceduresonline.com/p_domestic_abuse.html?zoom_highlight=domestic+abuse)
* [DASH Risk Identification Checklist](https://www.proceduresonline.com/derbyshire/scbs/user_controlled_lcms_area/uploaded_files/dash_risk_identif_checklist.doc)
* [Domestic Violence Risk Identification Matrix (DVRIM)](https://www.proceduresonline.com/derbyshire/scbs/user_controlled_lcms_area/uploaded_files/dv_risk_ident_matirx.pdf)
* [Self-harm and Suicidal Behaviour Guidance](https://www.proceduresonline.com/derbyshire/scbs/user_controlled_lcms_area/uploaded_files/Self%20Harm%20and%20Suicidal%20Behaviour%20Support%20Guidance%20September%202020.pdf)
* [Safeguarding Children from Dangerous Dogs Guidance](https://www.proceduresonline.com/derbyshire/scbs/user_controlled_lcms_area/uploaded_files/safeguarding_children_from_dangerous_dogs_guidance_final_july_%202023.pdf)
* [Guidelines for gathering information and assessing the needs of children whose parents have drug/alcohol issues](https://www.proceduresonline.com/derbyshire/scbs/user_controlled_lcms_area/uploaded_files/Guidance%20working%20with%20children%20whose%20parents%20have%20alcohol%20drug%20issues%20sep%2020.pdf)
* [Guidance for responding to Adults and Child Victims of Modern Slavery](https://www.saferderbyshire.gov.uk/site-elements/documents/pdf/derby-and-derbyshire-modern-slavery-guidance-v4.pdf)
* [DDSCP Child Sexual Abuse within the Family - Guidance for practitioners and managers](https://www.proceduresonline.com/derbyshire/scbs/user_controlled_lcms_area/uploaded_files/DDSCP%20Practice%20Guidance%20Child%20Sexual%20Abuse%20within%20the%20Family%20Final13052021.pdf)
* [Children who Present a Risk of Harm to Others](https://derbyshirescbs.proceduresonline.com/p_abuse_by_ch_yp.html)
* [Working with Parents who are Misusing Substances](https://derbyshirescbs.proceduresonline.com/p_wking_par_misusing_subs.html)
* [Working with Parents/Carers Who Have Mental Health Needs](https://derbyshirescbs.proceduresonline.com/p_wking_par_ment_health.html)

**Leaflets/Posters:**

* [Keeping Babies Safe - SIDS Grandparents Leaflet](https://www.proceduresonline.com/derbyshire/scbs/user_controlled_lcms_area/uploaded_files/SIDS%20Grandparent%20Leaflet%201.pdf)
* [Keeping Babies Safe - Every Baby Matters Identifying Vulnerabilities Poster](http://www.proceduresonline.com/derbyshire/scbs/user_controlled_lcms_area/uploaded_files/KBS%20Every%20Baby%20Matters%20Poster%20Jan%2022%20Final.pdf)
* [Derbyshire Managing Allegations Information Leaflet](https://www.proceduresonline.com/derbyshire/scbs/user_controlled_lcms_area/uploaded_files/Derbyshire%20Managing%20Allegations%20Information%20Leaflet%20December%202022.pdf)
* [Think Family Leaflet](http://www.proceduresonline.com/derbyshire/scbs/user_controlled_lcms_area/uploaded_files/Leaflet%20-%20Think%20Family%20%282023%2001%2019%29.pdf)

**Key Flowcharts:**

* [Derbyshire Multi Agency Safeguarding Domestic Abuse Incidents - Flowchart](https://www.proceduresonline.com/derbyshire/scbs/user_controlled_lcms_area/uploaded_files/Derbyshire%20Multi%20Agency%20DA%20Flowchart%20June%202019.pdf)
* [Appendix 1 - Multi Agency FGM Risk Assessment, Decision Making and Action Flowchart](https://www.proceduresonline.com/derbyshire/scbs/user_controlled_lcms_area/uploaded_files/Appendix%201%20FGM%20decision%20making%20Sep2020.docx)
* [Flowchart to Illustrate the Principles of Managing Cases of Fabricated and Induced Illness (FII)](https://www.proceduresonline.com/derbyshire/scbs/user_controlled_lcms_area/uploaded_files/Flowchart%20Children%20in%20whom%20Illness%20is%20Fabricated%20or%20Induced%20FINAL.pdf)
* [Working with Sexually Active Children and Young People Under 18](https://www.proceduresonline.com/derbyshire/scbs/user_controlled_lcms_area/uploaded_files/Working%20with%20Sexually%20Active%20CYP%20Flowchart%20FINAL.pdf)

**Key Referral Forms:**

**•**[Derby and Derbyshire LADO Referral Form](https://www.proceduresonline.com/derbyshire/scbs/user_controlled_lcms_area/uploaded_files/Derby%20and%20Derbyshire%20LADO%20referral%20form%20FINAL%20Sep%202020.docx)

• [Derby and Derbyshire CRE Operation Liberty Form (taken from CRE Toolkit)](https://www.proceduresonline.com/derbyshire/scbs/user_controlled_lcms_area/uploaded_files/CRE%20Information%20Report%20Operation%20Liberty%20-%20FINAL%20SEP%202020.docx)

• [Prevent Referral Form](https://www.proceduresonline.com/derbyshire/scbs/user_controlled_lcms_area/uploaded_files/Prevent%20Referral%20form.docx)

• [Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Intelligence Form](https://www.saferderbyshire.gov.uk/what-we-do/modern-slavery-and-organised-crime/modern-slavery-and-organised-crime.aspx)

# External placements – Commissioning and Quality Assurance

**Key Timescales:**

* If there are concerns with a placement, the commissioning team will link in with the relevant locality/service and hold a provider challenge/placement disruption meeting, ideally as soon as possible but certainly within **2 weeks**
* When a young person moves into a semi-independent home, a visit by the quality assurance team will be undertaken within **6 weeks**
* If concerns have been shared by a social worker or independent reviewing officer, a quality assurance visit will be undertaken within **4 weeks**
* Ofsted will notify Derbyshire County Council when a home has been judged as Inadequate; in these circumstances a quality assurance visit will be undertaken within **4 weeks**
* Any Ofsted notifications that require immediate actions are acted upon with urgency within our team.

**Brief Outline: *What****it is and****why****we do it*

* The commissioning team supports locality teams by ensuring external providers adhere to their contract and provide a good or better service for our children in care
* Quality assurance activity allows performance to be tracked across time, insight is gathered into how a child’s outcomes can be improved, and good practise is identified and shared. Undertaking audits closes the loop and enables services to benefit from the findings
* The commissioning and quality assurance teams can offer reassurance that children who are being placed in private provision are receiving high quality care. They can also alert locality teams when private provisions are not delivering a high quality of care and implement actions to facilitate improvement
* When placements do break down, the commissioning and quality assurance teams will meet with the providers to gather feedback and identify strengths and areas for improvement. The focus is on improving outcomes rather than attributing blame
* The commissioning and quality assurance teams also liaise with regulatory bodies and other local authorities about external providers, as and when necessary.

**Key Responsibilities:**

* **Social workers and/or independent reviewing officers and managers** should alert concern about externally commissioned provision by emailing cs.providerfeedback@derbyshire.gov.uk (externally commissioned services are services provided outside of the council)
* **Social workers** are to invite the ACQM to disruption meetings where appropriate to ensure a lessons learnt approach is reflected with the provider
* The **Assistant quality and commissioning managers** will complete routine monitoring visits as well as visits to respond to concerns. They will troubleshoot and provide advice and support on raising the quality of provision. They will also monitor the actions plans and recommendations
* The **Placement Commissioning Team** is responsible for ensuring that providers can be challenged appropriately and effectively in terms of adhering to their contractual obligations and delivering a quality service and will challenge this were necessary
* The **commissioning and quality assurance teams** are responsible for evaluating external services and disseminating this information to internal and external stakeholders. All actions with regards to individual children living in externally commissioned provision should be share with the child’s social worker.

**Linked Documents:**

* [Commissioning, Central Placements and Quality Assurance](https://derbyshirecountycouncil-my.sharepoint.com/%3Ab%3A/r/personal/louise_frensham_derbyshire_gov_uk/Documents/Presentations%20-%20Commissioning%20and%20QA/Quality%20and%20commissioning%20MASTER%20FINAL%2008.09.22.pdf?csf=1&web=1&e=WVxf9f)
* [Introduction to Commissioning and Quality Assurance - What we do and Who we are?](https://derbyshirecountycouncil-my.sharepoint.com/%3Ap%3A/r/personal/louise_frensham_derbyshire_gov_uk/Documents/Presentations%20-%20Commissioning%20and%20QA/Intro%20-%20presentation%201.pptx?d=w22b8ab0273734e219368061c6b2efdd3&csf=1&web=1&e=O6guhE)
* [Commissioning and Quality Assurance - A deeper understanding](https://derbyshirecountycouncil-my.sharepoint.com/%3Ap%3A/r/personal/louise_frensham_derbyshire_gov_uk/Documents/Presentations%20-%20Commissioning%20and%20QA/A%20deeper%20understanding%20-%20presentation%202.pptx?d=w46042694488c4a4c83eb546e7a9ca797&csf=1&web=1&e=2p1kZh)
* [Commissioning and Quality Assurance - Placements and regulations](https://derbyshirecountycouncil-my.sharepoint.com/%3Ap%3A/r/personal/louise_frensham_derbyshire_gov_uk/Documents/Presentations%20-%20Commissioning%20and%20QA/Placements%20and%20regulations%20-%20presentation%203.pptx?d=wb3f62057b54d46f3bb06a8800fcb2f08&csf=1&web=1&e=Fafbtd)
* [Commissioning and Quality Assurance - Referrals and working together](https://derbyshirecountycouncil-my.sharepoint.com/%3Ap%3A/r/personal/louise_frensham_derbyshire_gov_uk/Documents/Presentations%20-%20Commissioning%20and%20QA/Referrals%20and%20working%20together%20-%20presentation%204.pptx?d=wecf825bb2a564bfabac7e96b863604cd&csf=1&web=1&e=SbciyS)
* [Commissioning and Quality Assurance - Case studies](https://derbyshirecountycouncil-my.sharepoint.com/%3Ap%3A/r/personal/louise_frensham_derbyshire_gov_uk/Documents/Presentations%20-%20Commissioning%20and%20QA/Case%20studies%20-%20presentation%205.pptx?d=wcfff2bfc31284d22889569a35f8a2de7&csf=1&web=1&e=ijMtkJ)
* [Commissioning and Quality Assurance - A day in the life](https://derbyshirecountycouncil-my.sharepoint.com/%3Ap%3A/r/personal/louise_frensham_derbyshire_gov_uk/Documents/Presentations%20-%20Commissioning%20and%20QA/A%20day%20in%20the%20life%20-%20presentation%206.pptx?d=w1566e2a3d8be4c0c9a689544510e4557&csf=1&web=1&e=KKhjXz)

# Supervision

**Key Timescales:**

* The frequency of supervision will be decided by the needs of the individual employee and their role within the organisation
* Social Workers should receive supervision **monthly** (and newly qualified social workers should have supervision **fortnightly** in accordance with the requirements of the ASYE provisions)
* Other staff should have supervision at least every **4-6 weeks**.

**Brief Outline: *What****it is and****why****we do it*

Personal supervision:

The purpose of supervision is to ensure that services are delivered competently and effectively by staff who are well-motivated, well-equipped, and effectively supported to do the job, in the context of identified aims and objectives. This applies to staff in all sections of the organisation.

There are three main functions of supervision -

* Line Management – accountability for practice and quality of service, and support
* Professional supervision – case supervision, reviewing and reflecting on practice issues, roles and responsibilities and evaluating outcomes of work, considering application of theory in practice
* Continuing Professional Development of workers – to identify learning and development needs

Staff are usually supervised by their immediate line manager

Reflective Group Supervisions:

* Reflective group supervision sessions should be held on a regular basis in social care teams and others
* This is the opportunity for team members to have a group discussion about a case open to their team (especially one that may feel ‘stuck’) to consider how it has been worked so far and what may be hindering further progress
* The team members can then consider other ways of approaching the case and bring a fresh perspective. This can be a very effective way of sharing ideas and learning across the team. It should include a case presentation, completing a cultural genogram, considering the systemic approach and exploring hypotheses and curiosity to facilitate thoughtful practice.

**Key responsibilities:**

* Supervision is a joint responsibility between the **supervisor** and the **supervisee** and should be seen as a priority by all staff
* The **supervisor** is responsible for organising regular scheduled supervision time
* The **supervisee** is responsible for attending supervision and being prepared for the session by preparing supervision templates for cases to better inform the discussion
* If supervision cannot proceed at the scheduled time it is both parties’ responsibility to reschedule it at the earliest suitable time.

**Linked Documents:**

* [Supervision Policy](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fproceduresonline.com%2Ftrixcms%2Fmedia%2F8140%2F109-supervision-policy.doc&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK)
* [Supervision Template](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fproceduresonline.com%2Ftrixcms%2Fmedia%2F8142%2F109-supervision-template.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK)
* [Supervision Template Example](https://proceduresonline.com/trixcms/media/7772/new-supervision-template-example-0323.pdf)
* [Supervision Guidance](https://proceduresonline.com/trixcms/media/8141/109-supervision-template-guidance.pdf)
* [Reflective Supervision Questions](https://proceduresonline.com/trixcms/media/3420/reflective-questions.docx)

# Reflective Case Reviews

**Key Timescales:**

* From the point of allocation team managers will have on average **5 weeks** to complete the reflective case review
* Team managers will receive a PIN to complete a reflective case review on a **bi-monthly** basis.

**Brief Outline: *What****it is and****why****we do it*

* Quality Assurance, like safeguarding children, is everybody’s responsibility
* Case file reflections inform our work by providing monitoring and evaluation of practice within children’s services across the county, with the aim of improving our understanding of the work we do and whether it is making a difference to children and families. It provides us with continuous self-assessment with the aim of improving service delivery
* Reflections on cases review standards of practice, that are informed by statutory guidance and regulation. They review elements of practice which are most likely to lead to good quality services and positive outcomes for children, young people and their families and offer discussion and consideration on how to improve where practice is not meeting the expected standards.

**Key responsibilities**

**Managers/reviews:**

* In line with external (Ofsted) inspection methodology reviewers should complete the review ‘live’ with the allocated worker
* Confirm a grade for each section of the review and a clear rationale for the grading of the section
* Write up the findings and task the episode back to the relevant quality assurance manager for check and sign off as detailed in the mosaic episode
* Follow up and track on any agreed actions for reflective case reviews carried out for the team member you manage and sign off the action’s episode on Mosaic
* Discuss the learning in 1-1 sessions with your direct line manager and share with your team
* Action the quality assurance manager for oversight on the review.

**Practitioners:**

* Be available for the reflective discussion and offer reflections on the case, showcase good practice and be open to discuss areas of development
* Follow up on agreed actions identified in the review
* Discuss the learning in 1-1 sessions with your direct line manager and share with your team.

**Moderation:**

**Quality assurance managers:**

* The quality assurance section of the RCR will be used by the quality assurance team only
* The quality assurance manager may need to return the case review to the review if it hasn’t been fully completed or does not clearly justify the grades. The quality assurance manager will communicate directly with the reviewer to discuss the reasons for its return and the resolution required and by when. If the recommended changes are not completed, quality assurance managers should document the advice given in the quality assurance section of the reflective case review.

**Senior leaders:**

* Senior leaders will be allocated a small sample of completed reflective case review to moderate
* They will sample the case focussing on the last 6 months of practice
* The review will stand on its own and moderators should be able to makesense of the discussion that the reviewer has held with the practitioner and therefore further discussion with the allocated worker should not be required
* Senior leaders will discuss learning themes at the moderation panel and will be included in the report to the quality assurance board. Direct feedback will be given to the reviewers and case holding practitioners.

**Linked Documents:**

* [Top Tips for Managers completing Reflective Case Reviews](https://edrm.webapp.derbyshire.local/livelink/llisapi.dll?func=ll&objId=125810920&objAction=viewheader)
* [Reflective Case Review Template](https://edrm.webapp.derbyshire.local/livelink/llisapi.dll?func=ll&objId=125811027&objAction=viewheader)
* [Reflective Review – Leaving Care Specific Guidance](https://edrm.webapp.derbyshire.local/livelink/llisapi.dll?func=ll&objId=125811465&objAction=viewheader)
* [Grading Criteria for Reflective Case Reviews](https://edrm.webapp.derbyshire.local/livelink/llisapi.dll?func=ll&objId=125811251&objAction=viewheader)

# Corporate Complaints

**Key responsibilities:**

**Practitioners:**

* Inform your manager as soon as there is an expression of dissatisfaction or concern
* Make attempts to resolve the concern as quickly as possible
* Once a complaint enters the formal process, practitioners should support investigating team managers by being open and honest whilst focusing on rebuilding relationships and resolving concerns
* Discuss the learning in 1-1 sessions with your direct line manager.

**Brief Outline: *What****it is and****why****we do it*

* The corporate complaints procedure covers; expressions of dissatisfaction from a service user about a specific council service that has been already provided (but not covered under Part 3 of The Children Act 1989)
* This includes complaints about child protection matters or how the council assesses families and prepares reports for the court in private proceedings (Section 7 or 37 reports)
* Complaints are important to ensure individual concerns are identified and addressed. They support the continued improvement of services, enable individuals to provide feedback, and give a general indication on the quality of services.

**Key Timescales:**

* Where the complaint is not resolved at the time, or within **3 working days** of receipt, an acknowledgment will be sent including the expected date for the response
* A full response should be made at the earliest possible time and in general this should not exceed the standard target of **28 *calendar days***
* In exceptional circumstances, where the complaint is of a complex nature or there are ongoing internal procedures, it may be identified that a final response is not possible within **90 *calendar days***; in these circumstances the complainant should be informed at the earliest possible point, and a timescale for the remaining actions agreed.

**Key responsibilities:**

 **Feedback team:**

* Confirm if the person has a right to bring about a complaint
* Triage formal complaints and identify the correct procedure to respond under
* Confirm the exact statement of complaint and what can be complained about
* Monitor timescales
* Quality assure responses
* Support and advise practitioners and managers in resolving complaints.

**Key responsibilities:**

**Team managers:**

* Inform the feedback team as soon as a complaint is made and report to the complaints manager so they can triage, record the complaint, and monitor progress
* If the matter is resolved, the team manager must write to the complainant confirming the agreed resolution and the complaints manager should be informed of the outcome as soon as possible
* On a complaint entering the corporate process, team managers should investigate the concerns and provide a formal response within the required timescales and confirm outcome
* Team managers should implement any remedial actions and track the progress of these and implement learning within their team (also more widely where applicable) and confirm agreed outcome
* Inform the complainant of progress
* If a complaint progresses to a more senior manager or the complaints manager for review, team managers should provide relevant information, be available for interview and implement any actions or learning following the conclusion of the final response
* Discuss the learning in 1-1 sessions with practitioners named in the complaint and share learning points with your team.

**Linked Documents:**

* [Corporate Complaints Procedure](https://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/site-elements/documents/pdf/council/complaints/corporate-complaints-procedure.pdf)
* [Unreasonably Persistent Complainants Procedure](https://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/site-elements/documents/pdf/council/complaints/unreasonably-persistent-complainants.pdf)
* [LGSCO Guidance on Remedies](https://www.lgo.org.uk/information-centre/staff-guidance/guidance-on-remedies)

# Statutory Complaints

**Key Timescales:**

* Stage 1 - **10 *working day*** response time (regulation 14(1)) (**with a further 10 days for more complex complaints** - to be requested through consultation with the complaints manager) or additional time if an advocate is required (regulation 14(5))
* Stage 2 - Where it is not possible to complete the investigation within **25 *working days*** (regulation 17 (3)), stage 2 may be extended to a **maximum of 65 *working days*** (regulation 17(6))
* If the complainant is dissatisfied, they have **20 *working days*** to make a request to the local authority to escalate to stage 3 (regulation 17(8)
* Where stage 2 of the procedure has been concluded and the complainant is still dissatisfied, they will be eligible to request further consideration of the complaint by a review panel (regulation 18)
* The panel must be held within **30 *working days*** of the receipt of a request for a review (regulation 19(4)).

**Brief Outline: *What****it is and****why****we do it*

* The local authority has an obligation to operate a complaints and representations procedure in line with the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970, The Adoption and Children Act 2022 and The Children Act 1989
* Section 26(3) of the Children Act, 1989 states that all functions of the local authority under Part 3 of the Act may form the subject of a complaint
* We should ensure that children and young people who wish to make a complaint have their concerns resolved swiftly and feel that their voice is heard. It important to respond to concerns raised to rebuild trusting relationships with families by developing a listening and learning culture
* The regulations require the local authority to attempt to resolve complaints and address representations as soon as reasonably practicable and within specific timescales.

**Key responsibilities:**

**Practitioners:**

* Inform your manager as soon as there is an expression of dissatisfaction or concern
* Make attempts to resolve the concern as quickly as possible
* Once complaint enters the formal process, practitioners should support investigating team managers by being open and honest whilst focusing on rebuilding relationships and resolving concerns
* Discuss the learning in 1-1 sessions with your direct line manager
* If a complaint progresses to stage 2, practitioners should provide relevant information and be available for interview.

**Key responsibilities:**

 **Feedback team:**

* Confirm if the person has a right to bring about a complaint
* Triage formal complaints and identify the correct procedure to respond under
* Confirm the exact statement of complaint and what can be complained about
* Monitor timescales
* Quality assure responses
* Support and advise practitioners and managers in resolving complaints.

**Key responsibilities:**

**Team managers:**

* Inform the feedback team as soon as a complaint is made and report to the complaints manager so they can triage, record the complaint, and monitor progress
* If the matter is resolved, the team manager must write to the complainant confirming the agreed resolution, and the complaints manager should be informed of the outcome as soon as possible
* On a complaint entering the statutory process, team managers should investigate the concerns and provide a formal response within the required timescales and confirm the outcome
* Team managers should implement any remedial actions, track the progress of these, and implement learning within their team (also more widely where applicable)
* Inform the complainant of progress
* If a complaint progresses to stage 2, team managers should provide relevant information and be available for interview and implement any actions and learning following the conclusion of the investigation
* Discuss the learning in 1-1 sessions with practitioners named in the complaint and share learning points with their team.

**Linked Documents:**

* [Statutory Complaint Procedure](https://derbyshirecaya.proceduresonline.com/p_reps_complaints.html?zoom_highlight=statutory+complaints+procedure)
* [Unreasonably Persistent Complainants Procedure](https://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/site-elements/documents/pdf/council/complaints/unreasonably-persistent-complainants.pdf)
* [Getting the Best from Complaints](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/273895/getting_the_best_from_complaints.pdf)
* [LGSCO Guidance on Remedies](https://www.lgo.org.uk/information-centre/staff-guidance/guidance-on-remedies)