



DARLINGTON

Borough Council

Placement with Parents Procedure

Children's Social Care, People Group

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Contents	Page
1. Legal Framework.....	4
2. When a Placement with Parent Assessment is Required.....	4
3. Urgent Placements with Parents	4
4. Approval Process	4
5. Visiting Requirements.....	4
6. Assessment Review and Updates	5
7. Monitoring and Compliance	5

Placement with Parents Procedure

1. Legal Framework

This policy is guided by the **Children Act 1989** and relevant statutory guidance. A child who is subject to a care order but placed with their parent remains a **looked after child**, and the local authority retains responsibility for their welfare.

2. When a Placement with Parent Assessment is Required

A **Placement with Parent Assessment** must be completed before a child subject to a **Care Order or Interim Care Order** can be placed with a parent. This includes situations where a child is:

- Placed with a parent under a **Care Order or Interim Care Order**.
- Placed with a parent in a **parent and child assessment centre**.

The assessment evaluates the parent's ability to meet the child's needs and safeguard their welfare. The assessment is within the forms section of LCS and this sets out the areas that need to be covered.

3. Urgent Placements with Parents

There may be occasions when an urgent placement with a parent is necessary, for example:

- When directed by the **court**.
- Following an **urgent placement breakdown**.

In these circumstances, the Placement with Parent Assessment must be completed **within 5 working days** to ensure the child's safety and well-being.

4. Approval Process

Once the assessment is completed, the **Assistant Director** must review and approve the placement before it proceeds. No child should be placed with a parent without this approval, except in urgent situations as outlined above, where approval must be sought as soon as possible following placement.

5. Visiting Requirements

- Weekly visits must take place **until the first Looked After Child (LAC) review**.
- After the first LAC review, visits must occur **at least every four weeks**.
- Visits must include **direct engagement with the child** and discussions with the parent to assess ongoing safety and well-being.

6. Assessment Review and Updates

- The Placement with Parent Assessment must be **reviewed and updated at least once per year**.
- It must also be updated **immediately if there is any significant change in circumstances**, such as:
 - Concerns about the child's safety.
 - Changes in the parent's circumstances (e.g., new partners, housing issues, mental health concerns).
 - Any other factor that could impact the child's welfare.

7. Monitoring and Compliance

Team managers must ensure that social workers adhere to this policy, and any concerns regarding compliance should be escalated to senior management.

Service Managers and Heads of Service must ensure they regularly review the performance information and ensure assessments are within appropriate timescales.

This policy ensures that placement decisions are robust, child-centred, and compliant with legal requirements.

