Northamptonshire logo

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| **Placement Planning and Disruption Meetings** |  |

**RELATED CHAPTER**

**Stability Network Meeting Procedure for Children in Care**

**AMENDMENT**

**Section 2, Placement Stability Meetings** was removed and replaced in September 2019 with the Stability Network Meeting Procedure for Children in Care.

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**1.****Placement Planning Meetings**

Placement Planning meetings should be convened as part of the process of identifying and placing a child - as set out in the [**Placements in Foster Care Procedure**](https://northamptonshirechildcare.proceduresonline.com/p_place_fost_care.html) and the [**Placements in Residential Care Procedure**](https://northamptonshirechildcare.proceduresonline.com/p_place_resi_care.html). The first Placement Planning Meeting in relation to a placement should be held before the placement or, where this is not possible because of the urgency of the situation, within 72 hours of the placement.

Further Placement Planning Meetings should be held at intervals agreed with the manager of the residential home or the foster carers and their supervising social worker - or as required for example where there are issues to be resolved in relation to the day to day arrangements for the placement.

The child’s social worker and home manager/foster carers supervising social worker will agree the best format and venue for the meeting and who will chair/minute the meeting.

The following individuals should contribute to the meetings:

1. The child’s social worker and/or other professional associated with the child e.g. [**Personal Adviser**](http://trixresources.proceduresonline.com/nat_key/keywords/personal_adviser.html) or advocate;
2. The child;
3. The child’s parents;
4. For children in residential care, the child’s link worker/keyworker and, where appropriate the home manager;
5. For children in foster care, the foster carers and their supervising social worker.

Before any meeting, the child’s social worker, who will Chair the meeting, should obtain or be updated on the following, if available:

* The child's Placement Plan (recorded on the Placement Information Record on Carefirst);
* Any work which has been undertaken in supporting the child’s placement;
* If relevant: the child’s [**Care Plan**](http://trixresources.proceduresonline.com/nat_key/keywords/care_plan.html), [**Personal Education Plan**](http://trixresources.proceduresonline.com/nat_key/keywords/pers_education_plan.html) and [**Pathway Plan**](http://trixresources.proceduresonline.com/nat_key/keywords/pathway_plan.html).

Where the proposed placement has the effect of disrupting the arrangements made for the child's education and training - see [**Education of Looked After Children Procedure**](https://northamptonshirechildcare.proceduresonline.com/p_educ_lac.html).

The meeting should also ensure that the child, parent(s) and others who have been asked to contribute understand the purpose of the meeting, how it will be conducted and are given the opportunity to put their views and suggestions, this includes an agreement regarding Delegated Authority. (Please see [**Delegation of Authority to Foster Carers and Residential Workers Procedure**](https://northamptonshirechildcare.proceduresonline.com/p_del_auth_fc_resid.html)).

Where the proposed placement is out of area, see [**Out of Area Placements Procedure**](https://northamptonshirechildcare.proceduresonline.com/p_out_area_place.html).

If there are concerns about the suitability of the placement, consideration should be given to the following:

* Whether it is possible to sustain the placement until the next [**Looked After Review**](http://trixresources.proceduresonline.com/nat_key/keywords/looked_aft_review.html) by, for example, providing additional support to the placement;
* Bringing forward the date of the next Looked After Review;
* Ending the placement.

**2.****Disruption Meetings**

**2.1 Purpose of Disruption Meeting**

When a disruption occurs, no one person should blame themselves but equally everyone involved should accept their share of collective responsibility for what has happened.

The purpose of the meeting is to enable participants to share information and feelings about the approval process, the matching, the placement and disruption without assigning blame. The meeting is used to:

* Identify factors that lead to the disruption;
* Interpret the current needs of the child, the carers, the birth family and the agency or agencies;
* Formulate future plans for the child based on what has been learned from the disruption;
* Highlight areas for development in policy and practice.

Consideration should always be given to convening a Disruption Meeting in relation to children whose placement has ended abruptly or on an unplanned basis. A Disruption Meeting should be convened in the following circumstances:

* Disruption of a permanent foster placement i.e. a placement matched at a Fostering Panel;
* Disruption of a residential placement where it is agreed in the young person’s Care Plan that they will remain in the placement until independence;
* An unplanned ending of a placement, where the request to end the placement and the placement ending both occurred within a 24 hour period. This does not include Emergency Placements;
* Where the young person involved has had two to three unplanned placement moves in a period of three months;
* Where the young person involved has had three or more placement moves in a period of six months.

For children whose adoptive placement disrupts, a Disruption Meeting must take place - see [**Disruption of Adoptive Placements Procedure**](https://northamptonshirechildcare.proceduresonline.com/p_disrup_adopt_plac.html).

The emphasis of the disruption meeting will vary according to the age and care history of the child but all meetings will consider:

* The child's progress in the birth family;
* The child's progress in care;
* The permanent family's progress from application to matching;
* Agency practice;
* The birth family's involvement;
* The introduction;
* The placement;
* The disruption;
* The present and the future;
* The Chair’s decision and recommendations.

See [**Appendix A: Disruption Meeting Agenda**](https://northamptonshirechildcare.proceduresonline.com/files/app_a_dis_meet_agenda.docx) for a suggested agenda.

For those who are unfamiliar with Disruption Meetings, guidance for staff and carers have been produced - see [**Appendix B: Disruption Meetings - Guidance for Staff and Carers**](https://northamptonshirechildcare.proceduresonline.com/files/app_b_dis_meet_staff_carer.pdf).

**2.2 Chairing and Arranging of Disruption Meeting**

Disruption meetings must be convened between two to six weeks from the placement end date. Consideration should be given to the timing of this meeting. In some circumstances it may be useful to leave some time following placement breakdown for professionals and carers to reflect on the situation.

A Service Manager (who does not have line management responsibility for the case) will usually chair the meeting. In some cases it may be pertinent for the Service Manager who has line management responsibility to Chair the meeting.

The child's social worker in conjunction with the identified Chair will be responsible for arranging the Disruption Meeting.

The child's social worker should send invitations sent to the key participants at the meeting.

Those invited, or asked to contribute, should be:

1. The child (if it is not suitable or possible for the child to attend the meeting, every effort should be made to obtain their views, or arrange for an advocate to attend on their behalf);
2. The parents, if appropriate;
3. The child's social worker and manager;
4. The link worker/keyworker (for residential care) and home manager;
5. The foster carer(s) and supervising social worker;
6. The child's [**Independent Reviewing Officer**](http://trixresources.proceduresonline.com/nat_key/keywords/indep_reviewing_officer.html);
7. The child's current carers;
8. The child’s previous carer from the placement that disrupted;
9. Designated Teacher (if the child is of school age) or a Virtual School representative (if the young person is in alternative education provision or further education);
10. Placement Management Service representative (if the placement that broke down was commissioned);
11. Health professionals who may be involved in providing any therapeutic intervention;
12. Other relevant staff/professionals.

Where appropriate, foster carers and residential care staff should be supported to maintain links with children who leave their care.

The precise agenda will depend on the child and their individual circumstances, but the Chair should ensure the circumstances leading to the disruption are properly reviewed, and that all concerned are provided with opportunities to express their views freely with a view to establishing:

* How and why the disruption occurred;
* To learn from what happened and avoid the same thing happening again - for the child or others in the placement;
* To contribute to the future planning for the child;
* To identify work to be done and to ensure it is completed;
* To ensure that appropriate notifications and other post placement arrangements have been undertaken.

See [**Appendix A: Disruption Meeting Agenda**](https://northamptonshirechildcare.proceduresonline.com/files/app_a_dis_meet_agenda.docx) for the suggested Disruption Meeting agenda.

The Chair should produce minutes, which must be circulated to all concerned (see **Section 2.4, Record of Meeting** for circulation list).

**2.3 Essential Information to be provided to the Chair of the Disruption Meeting**

Paperwork that should be provided for the Disruption Meeting includes:

* Last Child(ren) in Care Review Documentation, including the Care Plan;
* Placement Plan;
* Placement Request paper work for the placement that has disrupted;
* Last Foster Carer Review documentation (when the child was placed with in-house foster carers);
* Any previous Disruption Meeting Minutes, that either the child or the carer has experienced;
* Statutory Assessment and any other relevant assessments;
* Child's Chronology from birth;
* Chronology of events leading up to the disruption and what support that was provided;
* Contract (if the child was place with an external agency);
* Child's Permanence Report;
* Form F (when the child was placed with in-house foster carers);
* Matching Report.

The child’s social worker will be responsible for providing the child's information and depending on where the child was placed, the following individuals will be responsible for providing information relevant to the carer:

* Child was placed with in-house foster carer – The carer’s supervising social worker;
* Child was placed with in an in-house residential home – The Home Manager;
* Child was placed with an external agency – Placement Management Service representative.

Written information should be provided to the Chair seven days before Disruption Meeting.

**2.4** **Record of Meeting**

The Chair should agree and circulate the minutes within 10 working days of the meeting being held.

The minutes of the meeting, including decisions and recommendations, should be available for everyone who attends the disruption meeting. The minutes should also be sent to relevant Service Managers. Copies should be forwarded to the Fostering Panel Advisor and Agency Decision Maker for future learning and feedback. Recommendations should be circulated to the Corporate Parenting Board for action and PORG.

It is not expected that the minutes will be a verbatim account of discussion. The minutes should capture the essence of what has been said and the agreed recommendations and actions.

Where complaints against carers have been made or emerged as part of the disruption process, reference should be made to the [**Allegations Against Foster Carers Procedure**](https://northamptonshirechildcare.proceduresonline.com/p_alleg_foster.html) and where necessary, a separate investigation instigated.

**2.6 Learning from Disruption Meetings**

Chairs of Disruption Meetings will meet at least twice per year to collate learning from disruption meetings. The learning will be collated into a short report by the Strategic Manager – LAC, which will be used to improve future practise.

In relation to the disruption of an external residential placement, consideration needs to be given to further use of the resource by the authority.

In relation to the disruption of a permanent foster placement, where the foster carers are in-house approved carers, consideration should be given to holding an early Foster Carer Review to consider the foster carer's approval - see [**Review and Termination of Approval of Foster Carers Procedure**](https://northamptonshirechildcare.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_review_fos_care.html).

**Appendix A: Disruption Meeting Agenda**

[**Click here to view Appendix A: Disruption Meeting Agenda**](https://northamptonshirechildcare.proceduresonline.com/files/app_a_dis_meet_agenda.docx).

**Appendix B: Disruption Meetings - Guidance for Staff and Carers**

[**Click here to view Appendix B: Disruption Meetings - Guidance for Staff and Carers**](https://northamptonshirechildcare.proceduresonline.com/files/app_b_dis_meet_staff_carer.pdf).

**End**

**The Department for Education has released the updated version of** [**Working Together to Safeguard Children**](http://www.workingtogetheronline.co.uk/)**.  
The changes will be reflected in this manual at the next update.**