

Visiting Children Subject to a Child Protection Plan

This chapter should be read in conjunction with the Sheffield Neglect Strategy found at

<http://www.safeguardingsheffieldchildren.org/sscb/safeguarding-information-and-resources/neglect-strategy-1>

Visiting Requirements

All children subject to a Child Protection Plan must be visited and seen at least **every 10 working days**.

All visits to children subject to a Child Protection Plan must be recorded on a **visit record by the visiting Social Worker**. Where visits do not take place, i.e. due to families not being in, then this must also be recorded.

In the key worker's absence, either through sickness or annual leave, it is the responsibility of the Senior Fieldwork Manager to ensure that cover has been arranged.

When preparing for a visit it is important that the Social Worker reviews all relevant up to date information about the child and family and the reason for the visit. This should include historical information including information from other authorities and other agencies if appropriate, as well as up to date needs, risk assessments and plans.

Seeing the child

Children subject to a Child Protection Plan must be **seen alone** at every visit and this should be clearly recorded on the file report. This should preferably be in the child's home.

If the child has not been seen alone, then this and the reasons for this must be clearly recorded. Any adults present must be clearly recorded.

Children's wishes and feelings must be explored at visits and they should be fully informed of all meetings that have taken place and the decisions and recommendations of those meetings, or the reason for not doing so clearly stated.

Attempts should be made to engage all children and even pre-school age children should, where possible, be seen alone. Whilst an in depth assessment of their wishes and feelings cannot be made, an observation of their behaviour can further a worker's knowledge and understanding and thus aid assessment of the family situation. Toddlers and pre-school children can be engaged in a play or craft activity that can aid this process.

Young children need to be kept informed about what is happening in an age appropriate way.

All children, whatever their age, may struggle to talk to a stranger about their feelings. A worker will need to spend time building up a relationship with a child over several visits for the child's trust to develop to a stage where they can begin to open up. Activity based sessions may assist this process.

Seeing the bedroom

The child's bedroom and/or sleeping arrangements must be seen **every 20 working days** except for **neglect** cases where they should be seen **every 10 working days**. This should be recorded and placed on file.

The condition of the child's bed and bedding should be observed. Note should be taken about whether there are light bulbs in the bedrooms and whether there are any locks on bedroom doors.

Rest of the house

Where concerns have been raised about hygiene and cleanliness then the house, both upstairs and downstairs should be fully seen.

Where concerns have been raised about diet and nutrition then it is acceptable practice to ask to see the contents of cupboards and fridges.

Visits should take place at different times in the day to ensure you see all household members and capture a sense of household routine.

Any concerns raised on a visit should be addressed ideally during the visit.

Unannounced Visits

These will take place regularly and checks made of all rooms in the house.

Please note that the frequencies of visits to children subject to a Child Protection Plan outlined above are **a minimum requirement**. There will be occasions when due to the complexity of the case and the level of risk it may be necessary to visit more frequently.

Children no longer in need of a Child Protection Plan

A child may no longer be in need of a Child Protection Plan if:

- It is judged that the child is no longer at continuing risk of significant harm requiring safeguarding by means of a Child Protection Plan. For instance, where the risks have been reduced by action taken through the Child Protection Plan, the child and family's circumstances have changed or reassessment of the child and family indicates that a Child Protection Plan is no longer necessary.
- The child has reached the age of 18, has died or has left Sheffield to live permanently elsewhere

Only under these circumstances can a Child Protection Review Conference decide that a Child Protection Plan is no longer necessary.

If a worker becomes aware that a family has moved to another local authority they must follow guidance in the Safeguarding Procedures Manual - 1.10 Cross Boundary Movement of Children with Child Protection Plans Including Moving Abroad which can be found at

http://sheffieldscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_cross_bound_move.html

Ongoing Support

A child who is no longer subject to a Child Protection Plan may still require additional support and services. A Child In Need plan must be drawn up and be in place for a minimum of 3 months. The plan should be reviewed every 8 weeks. It is important to note that a CIN plan following a Child Protection Plan has the same status as any other CIN plan, and the family may choose not to receive ongoing social care involvement. This will need to be discussed at the final Child Protection Review Conference.

Following the 3 month period, it might be agreed that continuation of support does not include the Social Worker and support will be co-ordinated by the Multi-Agency Support Team, through the lead professional.

Missing Families

The visiting requirement of a Child Protection Plan can be suspended where it is not possible to trace families, but only when thorough attempts to trace the family have been made. All efforts to trace a family must be recorded in the CP plan. Service Manager approval is required before the visiting requirement of a Child Protection Plan can be suspended. The rationale for the suspension of visiting requirements should be clearly written into the updated CP plan.