

Placement Planning and Disruption Meetings – Practice Guidance

1. Introduction

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 Guidance*** and the ***Placements in Residential Care Guidance***. The first Placement Planning Meeting in relation to a placement should be held before the placement. Where this is not possible because of the urgency of the situation, it should be held in order that the Placement Plan is prepared within 3 working days of the start 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 social worker and home manager/foster carers supervising social worker will agree the best format and venue for the meeting and who will chair the meeting.

The people listed below should contribute to the meetings:

1. The child's social worker and/or other professional associated with the child e.g. Personal Adviser 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 chairperson should obtain or be updated on the following, if available:

- The child's Placement Plan (recorded on the Placement Information Record on IC);
- Any work which has been undertaken in supporting the child's placement;
- If relevant: the child's Care Plan, Personal Education Plan and Pathway Plan.

Where the proposed placement has the effect of disrupting the arrangements made for the child's education and training - see ***Education of Looked After and Previously Looked After Children Guidance***.

Where the proposed placement is out of area, see ***Out of Area Placements Guidance***.

The chairperson 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.

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 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

Consideration should always be given to convening a Disruption Meeting in relation to children whose placement has ended abruptly or on an unplanned basis. For children whose adoptive placement disrupts, a Disruption Meeting must take place - see ***Disruption of Adoptive Placements Guidance***.

Definition

a. Definition of Disruption in adoption and foster care:

With regards to adoption, the term disruption is used to describe an event that ends the adoptive process during the time that the child is placed in an adoptive home and before the adoption is legally finalized, resulting in the child's return to care.

In foster care, the term disruption is used to describe the premature ending of a placement on an order that was not part of the child's care plan. For the purpose of this policy this will be defined as the premature ending of a placement where a child has been in placement for 3 or more years or in which the placement has been ratified as permanent.

b. Definition of Breakdown in adoption and special guardianship orders

The term breakdown is used to describe an adoption or special guardianship placement that comes to an end after the legal order has been finalised; often leading to the child's return into care.

2. Purpose of Disruption/Breakdown Meetings:

The purpose of disruption meetings is not to attribute blame and it is important that all members are aware of this. Placements rarely end due to the action of one individual but usually a combination of several factors. The purpose of disruption meetings is to:

- Address how the Child's future needs can be met
- Provide all participants with an opportunity to share views about the causes of disruption
- Agree factors that have led to the disruption
- Reassess needs of children, parents, carers and guardians
- Use information to inform the level of support needed and develop plans
- Identify learning opportunities, actions and areas of policy development for all agencies involved and develop a plan to implement learning

Participants required to attend the Disruption meeting will vary on the nature of the disruption, in addition to the Chair, the current social worker, Practice Manager and Group Manager, Adoption/Supervising social worker (if involved), and minute taker will need to be present. Further consideration will be given to the following participants:

- Child
- Adoptive Parents
- Special Guardians
- Independent Reviewing Officer
- Carers involved in the disruption
- Previous carers and their social worker
- Present carers
- Relevant Practice Managers (ie. CLA, Permanency Support, Fostering)
- Fostering agency representative
- Fostering/adoption panel advisors
- Previous social workers
- Virtual School
- School representative
- CAMHS
- Birth parents
- Advocates as needed

Participants who are unable to attend should be given the opportunity to put their views forward in writing.

If child is unable to attend it is for the current social worker to get their views and feelings.

If an adopter, special guardian or foster carer is unable to attend the meeting it is the role of the Supervising or the permanency support social worker to gather their views.

The meeting will ensure the child (depending on his or her age and level of understanding) is given the opportunity to understand the reasons for and be supported with managing the transition.

Where appropriate, foster carers must be supported to maintain links with children who leave their care.

The precise agenda will depend on the child/circumstances, but the chairperson 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 emergency/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.

The chairperson should keep minutes, which must be circulated to all concerned and recorded on the foster carer's record on Mosaic.

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 Guidance***.

Review / Contacts / References	
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