**Practice Note for all SCT Practitioners, Managers and Staff**

**Practice Note 2 – June 2019**

This is a Practice Note to advise you of recent changes to Process Maps, Practice Guidance and Procedures in Sandwell Childrens Trust.

1. **Practice Standards**

More copies of the Practice Standards that have been designed by practitioners for practitioners (Practice Improvement Board (PIB)) have been printed. All practitioners and managers should have their own copy. The A5 booklet contains practice standards that follow the child’s journey and sets the standard of practice we need to undertake with the children and families we work with. An A4 is downloadable from Tri-x .

**The key message** is to get your own copy of the Practice Standards. Read your booklet and reflect and discuss the Practice Standards in your supervision and team meetings. Make sure you apply them to your practice with children and families.

1. **Adoption and the links with the Regional Adoption Agency (RAA)**

Adoption process maps have been developed with the Adoption Manager, Care Management, PSW, IROs, LCS Team and Business Support that gives clear practical advice and guidance for practitioners and managers when undertaking adoption work with children, families and adopters. There are 5 linked process maps in total, and these give a step by step guide to adoption from the Best Interest Decision through to the Adoption Order being made by the court. Each map shows how the RAA practitioners link into SCT. In addition, there is a 1-page process map that shows how all the process maps for Adoption link together. There is 1 specialist process map that describes what to do when babies are relinquished for adoption.

**The key message** is for all practitioners and managers to familiarise yourself with the Adoption Process Maps as this is a long process for children to go through and understanding the child’s journey can prevent drift and delay for children whose plan is adoption.

1. **SEND – Children who have Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)**

SEND process maps have been reviewed and updated with the Inclusive Learning Service, Children with Disabilities Team, Front Door Service, PSW, LCS Team and Business Support. There are 4 maps in total that give a step by step guide and describe what to do, when, and who is responsible for doing it, when Advice Forms are received for children where there is consideration being given to an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). The Process maps also describe what to do when children have Draft EHCPs, as well as when their EHCP is finalised. In addition, there is a process map for when parents of disabled children need Direct Payments for services that will meet the needs of their child/ren. **The key message** is to know the process for SEND children and when an EHCP is required. This means that children can get the support and the essential wraparound and/or additional services that will meet their needs at the earliest opportunity.

1. **Looked After Children - Reunification of Looked After Children with their parent/s (0-17 yrs)**

A Process Map and Guidance has been developed by the Looked After Childrens Teams, Care Management, PSW, IROs, LCS Team and Business Support. The guidance helps practitioners and managers to identify what assessments and interventions are needed when it is identified that it is safe for children to return home to their parent/s. Following the process maps will ensure that there is an assessment, and it is clear what legislation children are returning home under, and how to avoid an unagreed or unregulated placement for children.

This will help and support practitioners and managers to understand what to do, and who does it, when we are starting to plan for children to return home.

**Key messages are** that all practitioners and managers need to know what needs to happen when plans are being made for children to return safely home to their parents. What we must all do to avoid having children in an unregulated placement at home, in a situation that has not been assessed as safe for them.

1. **Looked After Children - Long Term Fostering for Looked After Children**

A new process map with practice notes has been developed and co-produced between the Looked After Childrens Services, PSW, Care Mgt, LAC, Fostering Service, LCS Team, and Business Support. There are changes to how we will ensure that looked after children are matched with carers that have been searched and found for them. The Head of Service for Looked After Children will chair the long term fostering panel. There is a robust policy and procedure put in place, to help facilitate the process. **Key message** is to familiarise yourself with the process map as this describes each step and includes the new changes, which are due to go live on 01-07-19. This is a change to practice, and carers will now be found and matched to children, as part of SCT good practice. This replaces current practice where children are placed in unmatched placements, and because the placement is going well, the children are then automatically matched to the carers.

1. **Looked After Children – S.20 Voluntary Agreement for Entry into Care**

New practice guidance has been developed to support practitioners and managers understand s.20 (Children Act 1989) voluntary accommodation, when this is applied, and what consent is required. This supports the process map for a child’s ‘Entry into Care’, and has a new consent for (in the shared drive and Tri-x) for parents/carers to sign. The practice guidance supports all staff to know what needs to be considered when a child needs to come into care under s.20 provision. **Key messages are** that it is essential that we have thought about how parental consent for s.20 is obtained. That where children do become s.20, that there is signed parental consent (on the ‘S.20 (CA’89) Voluntary Accommodation Consent Form’). Copies are given to parents, carer and child (if it is age appropriate to do so), and a copy placed on the file. Where a young person (aged 16/17 years) is signing consent that the ‘S.20 (CA’89) Voluntary Accommodation Consent Form’ is used, and that consideration regarding capacity of the young person to sign themselves into care is understood.

*Note; All Process Map and Guidance are available on Tri-x. Go to the Start Button, All Programmes, Childrens Tri-x, click Sandwell Guidance Button, click 12.Process Maps, and find the process map you are looking for.*

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