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

**Practice Note 3 – August 2019**

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

1. **Child in Need (CIN) and Child In Need Review**

A Child in Need and Child in Need Review process map has been developed with the Front Door Service and Care Management, Business Support, LCS Team and the PSW.

The map describes what happens when children need to become subject to a Child in Need Plan and what needs to be completed, who needs to complete it and the timescale for completion. This map also describes the process for review of Child in Need Plans.

**The key message** is to make sure that you are aware of the child’s journey through their Child in Need Plan. It is important that there is a good handover from the Front Door Service, and if the Plan is stepping down to Targeted Services there is joined up practice and handover to the Targeted Services, so children experience a seamless, smooth transition from one service to another.

1. **Fostering Service – Overarching Fostering Service (IFA) Map/Managing Allegations against carers /Fostering Panel Approval/Foster Carer Reviews (FCR)/Approved Decision Maker (ADM) decision/consultation for FCRs)/medical/DBS/foster carer placements inc. exemptions /Interim Connected Carers assessments (Schedule 4/Reg 24)**

Fostering process maps have been developed with the Fostering Service, Care Management, Panel Advisor, Panel Administrator, PSW, IROs, LCS Team and Business Support. The maps give clear practical advice and guidance for practitioners and managers when undertaking fostering work with applicants, prospective carers and registered carers. The Fostering Service (IFA) Map is a one-page map that shows how all the process maps for Fostering link together. There are 19 maps in total, 11 of the Fostering Maps have now been completed, with 1 underway, and 7 still to be completed (look out for these in the next Practice Note). In addition, the maps are also useful for the child’s SW and the IRO service as they describe what the child’s SW and IRO needs to do for Connected Carer assessments and FCRs (Foster Carer Reviews).

**The key message** is for **all** practitioners and managers to familiarise yourself with the Fostering Process Maps as there are many steps to becoming a mainstream or connected carer. Understanding the carer’s journey, as well as the child’s journey, can prevent drift and delay for carer’s being assessed and approved, as well as children being placed with approved carers.

1. **Pre-Birth Assessments and Unborn Baby Network**

There is a now a pre-birth assessment on the LCS system that also offers guidance for key considerations when completing a pre-birth assessment, including ‘Child’s World’ guidance. The purpose of the pre-birth assessment on LCS is to ensure that the key areas to be considered for vulnerable unborn babies are captured within the assessment. Clear Pre-Birth Assessment Guidance has also been produced for Sandwell’s Children’s Trust practitioners to understand what is expected of them, in relation to working with vulnerable pregnant women, fathers and their unborn babies. The guidance also sets out the timeframes for receiving referrals into the Trust. The guidance is to be used alongside the Sandwell Children’s Safeguarding Partnership (SCSP) Local Pre-Birth Protocol, which can be found on the SCSP website.

**The key messages** are to know the importance of pre-birth assessments for vulnerable unborn babies, and how early identification of risk, and assessment can help and support positive change to parenting before a baby is born. Assessment Guidance and Child’s World Guidance is also available on Tri-x.

1. **Important and Urgent Change made to 3 x process maps - Entry in Care/Unregulated Placement/Connected Carer Process Maps**

A Practice Note (in red writing) has been added to the 3 x process maps

1. Entry into Care
2. Unregulated Placement
3. Fostering – interim Connected Carer

The practice note states;

**“No child can be placed with a relative as a looked after child without a Directors approval either at Directors Resource Panel (DRP) or outside DRP in an emergency”**

This note has had to be added due to a small number of children being retrospectively identified as being in unregulated placements. This is due to the child/ren being placed before approval was gained. This potentially puts children in a vulnerable position.

**The** **Key message** is that it is essential that everyone understands that children cannot be placed with family or carers as a looked after child before DRP approval has been given.

1. **Looked After Children – Notification from another local authority of a Child in Care living in Sandwell**

A Process Map and Guidance has been developed by the Front Door Service, Business Support, PSW, and LCS Team. The guidance helps Business Support to identify who does what and who does it, when a notification is sent through by another local authority that a child in care is living in Sandwell and is the responsibility of the other local authority/Trust.

**The Key message is** that all Business Support staff are aware of the process for children in care who live in Sandwell from another local authority/Trust.

1. **Targeted Services – Step up/Step down Process Map – from Child in Need/Child Protection/Single Assessment**

A new process map has been developed between Targeted Services, Care Management, Front Door Service, PSW, Business Support and LCS Team. The process map supports all staff to know what happens when a child, and their plan, are ready to step down to Targeted Services and a Team Around the Family Plan (TAF) from either a Single Assessment at the Front Door Service, or a Child in Need Plan. In exceptional and rare circumstances there may be a step down from a Child Protection Plan.

**The Key message** is to understand the step-down process for children and the importance of the joint visit to ensure a smooth transition for children and families from a statutory service to one based on voluntary consent.

1. **Child Protection Information System (CP-IS)**

A new process map and practice guidance has been developed to support practitioners and managers to understand the CP-IS (system). The Child Protection Information Sharing project (CP-IS) has been implemented nationally by Health with Local Authorities and Children’s Trusts. CP-IS is the bridge for information to flow between the NHS and Children’s Social Care. It allows the NHS via their own systems to check if a child who attends an unscheduled care setting has a Child Protection Plan (CP) or is a child looked after by the Local Authority/Trust (CLA).

Every time the NHS checks for this information, an alert is sent to the child’s file to show that the record was accessed.

The way that records are matched between health and social care systems is by using NHS numbers as the key identifier. The only information that can be seen on the child’s social care record is the date/s that the children became subject to a CP Plan or Care Plan.

**The Key messages** are to ensure that you know what CP-IS is, who accesses the information and why. It is important to ensure that the child’s NHS number is clearly and accurately recorded on the child’s file.

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 our Adoption Service (Adoption at Heart), which is part of the Black Country Regional adoption Agency link into SCT, and the importance of completing the Notification Form (Stage 1 and Stage 2). In addition, there is a 1-page process map that shows how all the process maps for Adoption link together, and 2 specialist process maps that describes what to do when babies are relinquished for adoption, and when children are adopted by a step-parent.

**The key messages** are 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. All practitioners and managers must complete the Adoption at Heart Notification Forms (Stage 1 and Stage 2), to ensure that a Family Finder is allocated.

*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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