



BCP Placement Stability and Disruption Meetings for Children in Care Procedure

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Produced By	Jill Aiken, Strategic Safeguarding and Quality Manager		
Revision History Date	Version	Summary of Changes	Section(s) Changed
Pre April 2019		BBC had stability meetings and both authorities had disruption processes	
Dec 2019		Revision of disruption process	
June 2020		Combination of procedures	
Equality & Impact Needs Assessment Location	Not needed – falls under wider EQIA for children in care		
Who must be aware of this guidance? / Distribution	CSC SMT for distribution to CIC, Fostering, Adoption and YOS Services I&F SMT for distribution to Services working with CiC Q&C SMT for distribution to IRO and Commissioning services		
Who Must Comply with this Guidance?	Services working with children in care.		

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. Children in Care nationally and locally are considered to be amongst the most vulnerable groups of children. Children in Care do less well than their peers in all areas of life and are more likely to encounter adversity in adulthood. Improving outcomes for Children in Care is a priority for the whole Council and partner agencies.
- 1.2. As Corporate Parents, the Council, other statutory agencies and the voluntary sector must work together to improve services and responses to Children in Care. We should do everything possible to work in partnership to improve placement stability and prevent placement breakdowns which can impact negatively on young people. On a service level, every professional who works with, or cares for a Child in Care must take personal responsibility for ensuring that each individual child has their particular needs identified and that provision is made in order to meet those needs.
- 1.3. Of all the needs that Children in Care have, they share one in particular and that is the need for a stable home life. Placement stability is absolutely essential to the lives of these children. Without a safe and stable home, children and young people will continue to achieve less well at school, present challenging and self-harming behaviour, suffer with poor mental health, be more likely to offend and be more likely to abuse drugs and alcohol.
- 1.4. Caring for a child who is presenting with challenging emotional and behaviour needs, can have an impact on the whole fostering family / residential provision. As professionals in their own right carers need to feel listened to, supported and fully included in the professional team around the child. Each fostering family / provision will have their own experiences, strengths and skill sets, along with individual stress factors that are unique to them.
- 1.5. One of the means by which we are attempting to support and stabilise placements is by the use of placement Stability Meetings to enable services which provide placement support to be co-ordinated. Placement Stability Meetings will be used to 'swarm' around a placement which is facing challenges, which range from not having sufficient communication, needing better co-ordination of responses, additional unmet needs, to a placement and/or their place at school are in jeopardy and ensure that timely and appropriate support is being offered to the foster carers.
- 1.6. If a placement cannot be maintained then consideration will be given as to whether the placement stability meetings have recognised the unmet needs and challenges faced. If it is felt there is further learning to be captured from the situation then a disruption meeting will be convened.
- 1.7. Using Signs of Safety Framework stability meetings and disruption meetings can be facilitated using a group supervision model.

2. Placement Stability Meetings

- 2.1. The term Placement Stability Meeting refers to gathering a number of key people who have a responsibility and/or a contribution to make in order to ensure that a child's needs are consistently met.

2.2. The aim of the process is to bring together a working group of professionals and family who can:

- identify what people are worried about in relation to placement stress;
- understand what has and is working well in order to reduce challenges;
- agree next steps and responsibilities.

2.3. The professional membership of the meeting is likely to differ slightly for each child, depending on their particular circumstances. However, there are certain people who would normally make up the core group for these meetings:

- In-house foster carer / IFA Carer / key worker for residential provider;
- child's social worker (and personal adviser if allocated);
- fostering supervising social worker (in house / IFA) / residential manager;
- access to resources team will be involved when it is an externally commissioned service
- someone who can represent the child's educational needs, eg. class teacher or designated teacher;
- representative from virtual school team;
- any therapeutic service actively involved with the child or carers;
- police, where issues indicate this;
- advocate.

2.4. Other attendees may include the designated nurse for children in care or any other professionals that are involved in work with the child or young person or if there is a likelihood that a referral will be made.

2.5. Wherever there are concerns that a young person may be at risk of offending or it is known that they have been involved in offending, a representative from the Youth Offending Service should be included.

2.6. In some circumstances, it might be appropriate to invite the birth parent(s) if it is felt they have a positive contribution to make. The views of the birth parents should always be fed into the meetings.

2.7. The IRO should be informed of the need for a meeting and invited to contribute / updated with the stability plan.

2.8. A flowchart of the process is available as [Appendix 1](#).

3. Attendance of Child or Young Person

3.1. The principle is that children and young people should be involved and included in decisions that are made about them as much as possible. However, we also accept that children and young people sometimes find participation in meetings difficult. Children in Care tell us that they are particularly sensitive to the fact that lots of different people know private and personal things about them. For this reason, there are times when all parents have discussions and make decisions about their children without including or involving them directly.

3.2. In family situations, good parents would endeavour to seek the views of the children in the family and give weight to those views. Once decisions have been made, a good parent would ensure that children were told as quickly as possible what has been decided and would be able to explain how the child's

views had informed the decision-making process. Children and young people should usually be given a choice about attending placement Stability Meetings but there may be some circumstances where this is not appropriate or in the child's best interests. Any conscious decision not to include the young person should be recorded, with an explanation of the reason.

3.3. Advocacy services should be considered and a record made of the decision and rationale.

3.4. An Interpreter must be provided if the young person does not understand English as a first language. Symbols should be used for disabled children and can be used for many children to assist in understanding.

3.5. Careful consideration should be given to children and young people with SEN / learning, language or physical disabilities in relation to involvement and the way in which the meeting operates. The Chairperson must allow for participation of the child or young person, which is at their speed and level of understanding. Cultural differences, particularly around gender, which may inhibit participation should be assessed and addressed.

4. Instigating a Placement Stability Meeting

4.1. Placement stability meetings should always be instigated in the following circumstances:

- as soon as it is known or suspected that the placement plan is not addressing the needs of the child or carers are struggling to meet needs;
- if there are particular difficulties in containing a child in a school or other educational facility;
- if there are challenges around contact with parents;
- if carers are experiencing health and well-being issues;
- where the combined needs of different children are causing challenges;
- changes of circumstances in the placement.
- where a placement is planned and it is predicted that it will face particular difficulties because of a child's challenging behaviour or specific emotional / mental health needs;
- where standard of care concerns are identified;
- in placements where children with black and minority ethnicity are in trans-cultural placements and their needs are quite specific and the placements may require additional guidance and support;
- young people with two or more unplanned placements.

4.2. Other situations may be considered in line with professional judgement for example transitions points in a child or young person's development or journey in care.

5. Chairing Meetings

5.1. The placement stability meetings for in-house placements should be chaired by the Fostering Team Manager, Assistant Team Manager or sufficiently experienced Advanced Practitioner.

5.2. The Placement Stability meetings for commissioned placements / residential / IFA / Supported Lodgings should be chaired by the Childcare Team Manager, Assistant Team Manager or sufficiently experienced Advanced Practitioner. An ART and Fostering Manager can support and advise the Manager in contractual and good practice expectations.

5.3. The chair should facilitate the stability meeting using a group supervision model from signs of safety.

6. Preparation for and record of meetings

6.1. The Child's Social Workers should attend the first placement stability meeting with the child or young person's Placement Plan and any other safety plans that have been put in place to support the placement.

6.2. The record and actions from the placement stability meeting should be recorded in a template available at [Appendix 2](#).

7. Timing of Meetings

7.1. Meetings should be held as often as is necessary to ensure that the actions are successfully implemented, monitored and reviewed. It may be that following the initially meeting, a smaller group of professionals continue to meet at a regular agreed basis. Meetings should continue to be held until the child's needs are routinely met, placement has stabilised or the areas of difficulty have been addressed. This may mean that meetings are held weekly or fortnightly to begin with; gradually reducing in frequency until a decision is made that they are no longer necessary. The needs of each individual situation will determine the frequency of meetings. The decisions to end placement stability meetings can only be taken by a Team Manager.

8. Child in Care Reviews

8.1. The Independent Reviewing Officer will be made aware that stability meetings are progressing and be made aware when records of meetings and actions are added to the electronic record for the child.

8.2. The most recent placement stability meeting action record, along with an updated Care Plan, will be submitted at each statutory child in care review.

8.3. IROs should routinely enquire about the use of placement stability meetings in any given situation and may recommend that they are instigated.

9. Disruption Meeting

9.1. Stability meetings and child in care reviews may recognise the need to undertake a placement change and plan for this. This will be a planned placement move. There will be some placement endings that are unplanned and in these cases a decision is needed as to whether there is further learning to be gained to understand the missed opportunities to create stability.

9.2. The Child in Care Monitoring meeting will make and record a decision following each placement move on whether or not a disruption meeting should be

convened (see flowchart as [Appendix 3](#)). This will apply regardless of the placement type. The record of the decision must be added to the child's record and copied to those who will convene the disruption meeting.

9.3. The disruption meeting does not replace or duplicate the immediate need for work with the child or young person to support a transition to a new placement and their understanding of the change. The placement plan for a new placement will consider whether links can be maintained with previous carers.

9.4. Disruption meetings are Chaired by the IRO service and a referral (using the referral template at [Appendix 4](#)) should be made for a disruption meeting within one week of the placement ending. The subsequent meeting should be held within four weeks of the referral being received by the IRO service. The meeting may be held as a group supervision using signs of safety methodology.

9.5. Those invited, or asked to contribute, should be:

- the child and or advocacy services;
- the parents;
- the child's social worker, personal adviser and manager;
- in-house foster carer / IFA carer / key worker for residential provider;
- fostering supervising social worker (in house / IFA) / residential manager;
- the child's Independent Reviewing Officer;
- access to resources team will be involved when it is an externally commissioned service
- Other relevant staff/professionals (eg. education / health / youth offending services).

9.6. 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 the placement move.

9.7. The suggested agenda for a disruption meeting is available as [Appendix 5](#)

9.8. The chairperson should keep minutes, which must be circulated to all concerned, including the Service Managers for Children in Care and Fostering and Permanence.

10. Reporting and dissemination of learning for stability and disruption meetings

10.1. Placement Stability data is monitored monthly in Performance Surgery and then in Quality Performance and Impact Board.

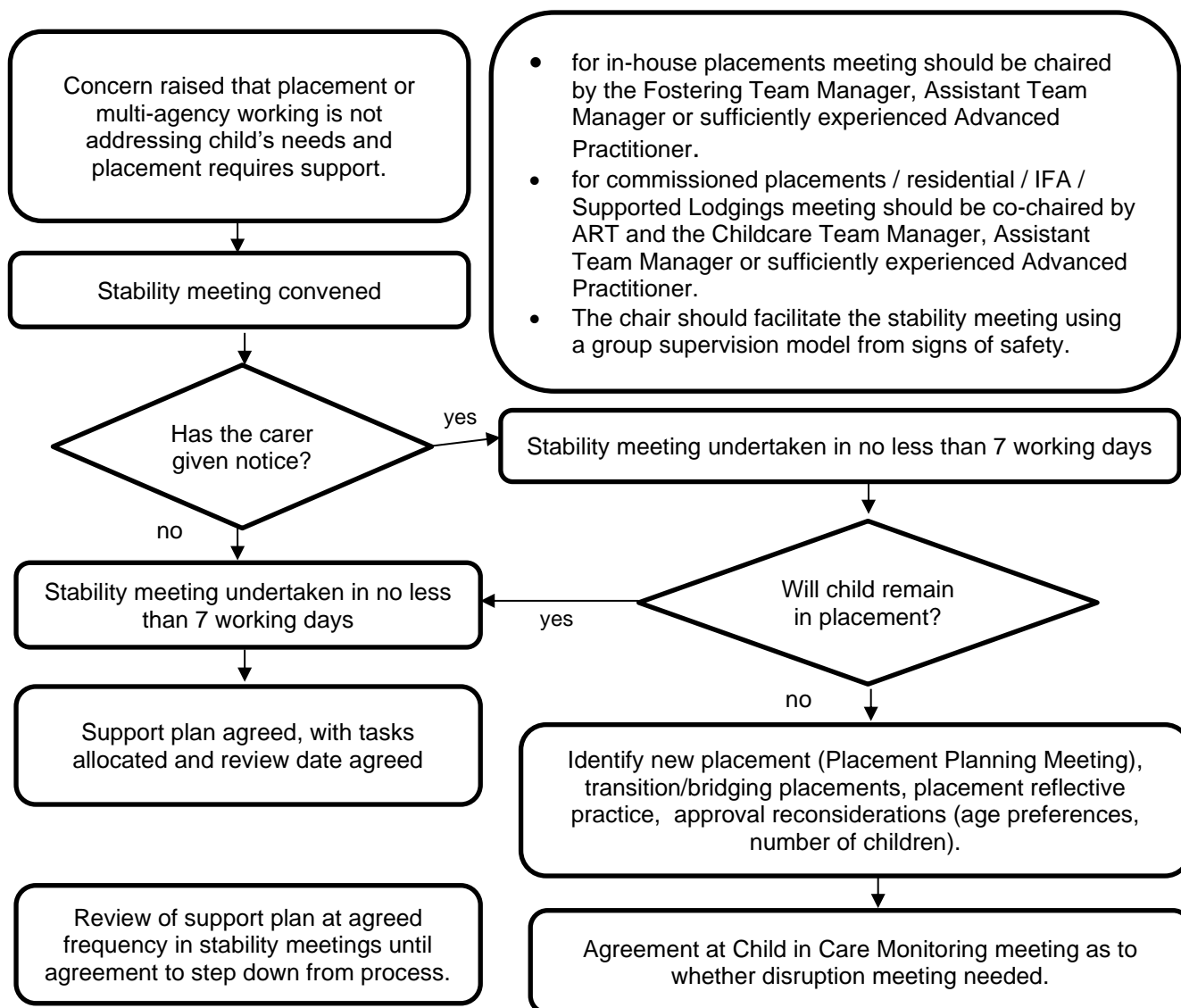
10.2. Transferrable learning captured from Stability and Disruption meetings will be collated and passed to Head of QA to ensure dissemination of learning and any actions to address system change are addressed.

10.3. Annual reports for Children in Care, Fostering and IROs will capture learning and how this has been addressed.

11. Fostering Panel

- 11.1. In relation to the disruption of a 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.

Appendix 1 - Stability Meeting Process Flowchart



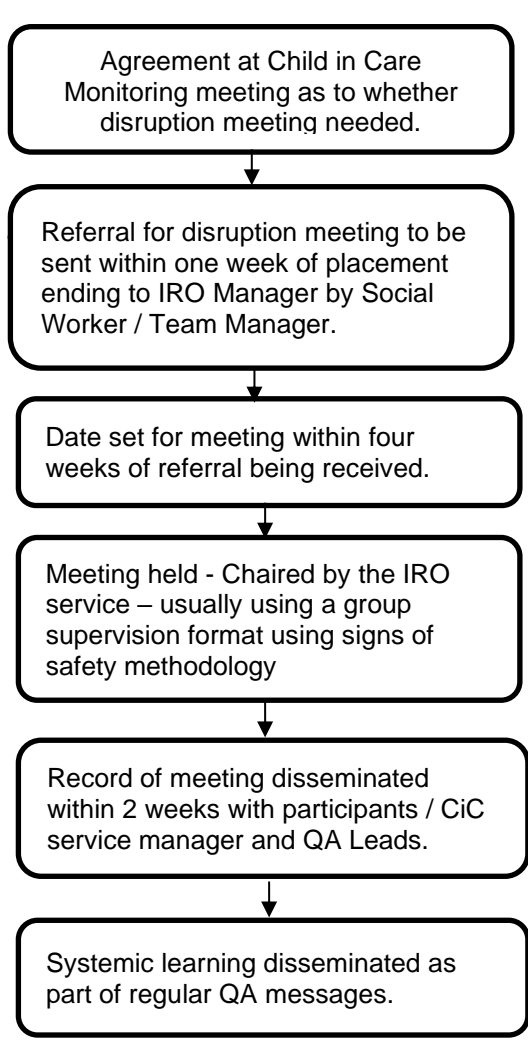
Appendix 2 Placement Stability Meeting Record

Date & Time	
Venue	
Attendees	
Apologies	
Minute Taker	
Agenda	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Worries and Concerns 2. What's Going Well? 3. What Needs to Happen? 4. Future Support <p>Each section to include child and parents' views</p>	
1. Worries and Concerns	
2. What's Going Well?	
3. What Needs to Happen?	

4. Future Support

Date of Next Meeting	
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Appendix 3 – disruption meeting flowchart



Stability meetings and child in care reviews may recognise the need to undertake a placement change and plan for this. This will be a planned placement move.

There will be some placement endings that are unplanned and in these cases a decision is needed as to whether there is further learning to be gained to understand the missed opportunities to create stability.

The Child in Care Monitoring meeting will make and record a decision following each placement move on whether or not a disruption meeting should be convened. This will apply regardless of the placement type.

The disruption meeting does not replace or duplicate the immediate need for work with the child or young person to support a transition to a new placement and their understanding of the change. The placement plan for a new placement will consider whether links can be maintained with previous carers.

Appendix 4 – Disruption meeting referral form

Disruption Meeting Referral Form

Once completed please send via email to the LAC IRO business support:
LAC.IRO@BCPcouncil.gov.uk

Details about child/children involved:

Name	
Mosaic/Care Director number	

Further information:

Date of disruption Referral should be made within one week of the disruption occurring.	
Brief summary of circumstances leading to disruption	
Attendees (to be invited by Fostering Supervising Social Worker)	
Disruption meeting required by: (this should be within four weeks of disruption)	

Referrer details:

Name	
Job role	
Team	
Date	

After receipt the LAC IRO business support or IRO manager will contact you for further discussion.

Appendix 5 - Disruption Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions
2. Apologies
3. Purpose of meeting
4. Worries and Concerns
5. What's Going Well?
6. What Needs to Happen?
7. Future Support

To include:

- Young person's care history (timeline to be provided by Social Worker)
- Health information for the young person
- Education
- Foster Carer's history (supervising social worker to provide detail of how/when they became foster carers)
- Matching Process
- Voice of the child/young person
- Voice of the parents'
- How and why the disruption occurred
- How did the placement end and how will it contribute to Life Story work?
- What can we learn to avoid the same thing happening again – for the young person or others in the placement

Disruption meetings will be chaired using SoS methodology;

Worries and concerns?

Prompts:

What is the impact on the child?

What happened to escalate the situation and how was the ending managed?

Were the child's needs met on a day to day basis – what were the challenges?

Has the child had a change of social worker or other consistent adult?

How many previous placements have there been?

Complicating factors:

Prompts;

How was the child matched to his/her carers,

Were there any significant events that contributed to the breakdown, (e.g another child placed, exclusion from school)

Was the child in full-time education?

Does that child have any significant health difficulties?

What is going well?

Prompts;

Were there times when the worries were present that the situation was managed?

Was the child kept safe from harm?

Was family time maintained and promoted?

*What were the foster carers strengths?
Is Life Story work ongoing?*

What needs to happen:

Prompts;

Does the child/young person need additional support to manage the breakdown of the placement?

Is additional training/support required for the foster carers?

Is contact being maintained between the child/young person and foster carers.