

Visiting Time Scales

We visit children and young people in line with legislation timescales as a minimum standard. Our visit frequency is driven by the need for developing relationships, their plan, urgency of their situation or level of concern and if additional visits are requested.

Enquiry or Contact to Children Services

Decisions on all referrals received are made within 1 day.

Child in Need (CIN) s.17 Children Act 1989

During a child in need assessment, all children are visited within 3 working days. For children with a Child in Need plan, all children are visited at least once every 4 weeks (20 working days).

Child in Need Plan for Children with Disabilities who have Short Breaks

All children in need are visited at least once every 4 weeks unless a variation for visiting frequency has been approved for the individual child by the Service Manager. This may be where the child's plan is successful and meeting the child's needs and is regularly reviewed through supervision. It is expected for the child to be seen in a variety of settings including their family home and short break setting.

Child Protection Enquiry s.47 Children Act 1989

The timing of the visit is discussed and agreed at the strategy meeting by the key participants sharing timely information, planning and making risk-based decisions. As a guide:

- Within 3 hours for serious physical injury or serious neglect
- Within 72 hours when the child / young person is missing 3 times or more within 90 days, or more than 24 hours once
- Within 3 working days of the referral / or within 3 working days of decision being made to hold a strategy discussion.

Child Protection Plan

Visits are at minimum fortnightly (10 working days) or at a greater frequency set by the Plan.

Private Fostering Arrangement

Within 7 days of being notified, then intervals of no more than 6 weekly for first 12 months, then intervals of no more than 12 weeks from the second or subsequent year.

Children who have a Series of Short Breaks

Children who have overnight short breaks under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989 are visited at their short break setting in accordance with our child in care visiting frequency of at least once every 6 weeks. Any variation to this visiting frequency will need to be approved for the individual child by the Service Manager. This may be where the child's plan is successful and meeting the child's needs and is regularly reviewed in supervision and the Child in Care Review. It is also expected for the child to be seen in other settings and in their family home in between the visit to the short break setting.

Children in Care Proceedings

During proceedings, visits are at least once every four weeks. If a child is living with a parent or temporarily approved carer, visits are weekly until the first Child in Care Review, then 4 weekly until the final hearing.

Children in Care

On the day they come into our care, then again within 1 week (5 working days). If the child is accommodated via s20 Children Act 1989, or subject to a Care Order s.31 Children Act 1989, visits will be at least once every 6 weeks.

When a child in our care has been matched with their carer and their permanence plan has been successful for at least 12 months, we consider a reduction in visits as part of the child's care plan and visit frequency can reduce at most, to 12 weekly visits.

Where a child is subject to a Care Order s.31 but lives with a parent, we visit within the first week of the Care Order being made and the child being in their parent's care and then at least once every six weeks thereafter.

Children in More than One Type of Accommodation

Children, who for example attend a residential school, as well as reside (in part) with a carer are visited minimum 6 weekly and meet the child in each living situation at least once every 12 weeks.

Children who are Living in Residential Settings (Education or Health) who are not Children in Care

Health or Education will send a notification through to our Front Door under Children Act. s.85 if the child is expected to be in hospital or residential education settings for a continuous period exceeding an/or likely to exceed 12 weeks. Front Door will review the information and determine if services are provided via Early Help or Social Work. If an assessment is required under s.17 Children Act, visits will be at the frequency of children in need.

Adoption Placements

The child should be visited within the first week of the adoption placement starting and then weekly until the first review. Thereafter the frequency is determined by the Adoption review, or if not specified every six weeks.

Custody

We visit within the first 10 days of a young person entering custody and at intervals of no more than six weeks thereafter.

Young Person aged 18 to 21 years old

We visit every 8 weeks with a keeping in touch contact between visits such as telephone/video call, text, email. An in-touch visit form is to be completed following each visit and within 24 hours of the visit taking place.

For young people in hotels, Bed and Breakfast, no fixed abode, emergency accommodation there is an expectation they are seen once a week. For some young people, this may need to be more than weekly dependent upon their circumstances. If a young person is found in a tent, or in a caravan, they need to be seen immediately and no longer than the day following when identified that the young person is living in such circumstances. A need to know document needs to be completed and shared with Head of Service and Deputy Directors in these circumstances outlining the actions taken to ensure that needs of the young person are being met appropriately.

Young Person aged 21 – 25 years old

Visits are as agreed between the Personal Advisor and the Young Person in line with their needs and their Pathway Plan.

Missing Child

We visit children within 72 hours (3 days) of being found/returning.