

**Children’s Safeguarding and Standards Unit (CSSU)**

**Guidance for Permanent Placement Disruption Meetings –**

**Fostering and Children’s Homes Placements**

**Version 4 August 2022.**

**PLEASE MAKE ANY CHANGES AS TRACKED CHANGES AND COMPLETE THE VERSION CONTROL BOX BELOW**

**Version Control**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Version & Date**  | **Reviewer**  | **Updates made?** |
| V2 D1 13.07.20 | Lynne Thomas (IRT Manager) | Yes |
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| V3 D3 30.09.20 | Stafford Devine (CSSU Service Manager) | Yes |
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**Introduction**

The purpose of this guidance is to review and learn from disruptions in placement for a child. That is, any move that happens that is not in the child's Permanence Plan, e.g. an unplanned move or ending of a permanent placement, in long term fostering, residential and adoptive placements. This guidance is based on the [Adoption and Children Act 2002](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/38/contents).

This guidance sets out a formal process to look at the sequence of events and to learn from placements which end in an unplanned way.

The right to family life is a fundamental right for all children. In exceptional circumstances, where it is not possible for children to live with their own families, children and young people should have the opportunity to live in an environment that enables them to develop strong attachments lasting into adulthood. Therefore, it must be the primary objective of all staff working with a child in care to ensure that the child is appropriately placed and supported. Consequently, regardless of placement type, as corporate parents we must do everything possible to work in a spirit of cooperation across Children's Services and wider partnership to prevent placement breakdown which results in multiple placements and poor outcomes for children.

**Sustainability Meetings**

If there are concerns that a child or young person may not be able to stay in their current placement **a sustainability meeting must be held as soon as possible**. It is the responsibility of the Fostering Service to convene this meeting in relation to fostering placements and the responsibility of the Registered Manager if the placement was in a children’s home. In both circumstances the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) should be invited to attend.

**Disruption Meetings**

**1. Why are Disruption Meetings Necessary?**

* 1. Placements break down through a combination of several factors. This process is not about blaming anyone, but it is a way of identifying why the disruption happened, could it have been avoided at the time and to avoid further disruptionsin the future.
	2. Disruption Meetings are held to:
* Look at what has happened leading up to the placement ending
* Listen and understand the views of the relevant people involved in maintaining the placement, particularly the child, their family and the relevant carers
* Examine whether the placement was appropriate
* Examine whether appropriate resources were provided to support the placement to continue
* Give different agencies involved with the child/young person a chance to talk through the reasons for the disruption
* Identify and act on any trends and patterns that would contribute to a future Care Plan for the specific child or children
* Identify any general learning points and make recommendations to improve outcomes for children

**2. Disruption Meetings**

* 1. In this instance the term ‘disruption’ refers to a placement that has ended in an unplanned manner.
	2. In Newcastle a Disruption Meeting **should be considered** in the following circumstances:
* When a child experiences two unplanned placement endings in a 12-month period
* When foster carer/s experience two unplanned placement endings in a 12-month period
* When a foster carer ends the placement without notice
	1. A Newcastle a Disruption Meeting **must be convened** in the following circumstances:
* When a permanent placement, identified as part of a Care Plan disrupts (fostering, residential and adoption). **This is irrespective of whether notice to end placement has been given.**
* When a placement of over twelve months duration ends in an unplanned way

Decisions about placements for children and/or carers should not be delayed awaiting the outcome of Disruption Meetings.

Any concerns about foster carers when a placement ends need to be addressed by the Fostering Service at the time and if any concerns about foster carers emerge during a Disruption Meeting these will need to be followed up by the Fostering Service as soon as is possible after the meeting. Consideration will also need to be given to a brought forward Foster Carer Review in relation to concerns about carers.

**3. Arranging a Disruption Meeting** (see flow chart **Appendix 1**)

It is the responsibility of the Independent Reviewing Team to convene Disruption Meetings.

Where a placement disruption has occurred the child’s Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) and allocated Social Worker should discuss the need for a Disruption Meeting alongside the Supervising Social Worker (fostering). If the criteria is met, the IRO will ensure a disruption meeting is organised with the Social Worker and an IRO who is independent to the child. If it is a disruption of a fostering placement the IRO who will chair the meeting must also be independent to the foster carers.

* 1. Once the child’s IRO is informed of the disruption they will make a request to the CSSU admin team to organise a disruption meeting. This needs to be monitored by the allocated IRO.

3.2 The allocated IRO should send their completed Request Form **Appendix 2** and Invitation List **Appendix 3** to the Manager of the Independent Reviewing Team (IRT), Children’s Safeguarding Standards Unit (CSSU)**.** The Manager of the IRT will allocate an Independent Reviewing Officer with no previous involvement with the case to chair the meeting. The CSSU admin will then arrange a date and minute taker and for a room to be booked. The child’s Social Worker should discuss with the IRO who will chair the meeting, who to invite to the Disruption Meeting, and the child’s Social Worker should then let the CSSU admin team know who to invite. Suggested participants for the disruption meeting are identified in Section 4.

3.3 The child’s social worker and foster carer’s supervising social worker should each complete a report using the templates at **Appendix 4 and 5.** These reportsshould be provided to the Chair of the disruption meeting 5 working days beforethe disruption meeting.

3.4 A disruption meeting should usually be held within 4 – 6 weeks of the placement disruption. However, it is important to strike a balance between the meeting taking place too soon after the disruption, when participants may be upset or possibly defensive, or too long after the disruption, when participants may be less open to considering issues or have rationalised events. **N.B** The above timescale may occasionally need to be adjusted to enable key participants to attend.

**4. Participants**

* 1. Consideration needs to be given to the number of active participants and whether they need to attend throughout the meeting. The emotive nature of Disruption Meetings does mean that it can be unhelpful for a number of people to move in and out of the meeting, particularly if the carers from the disrupted placement are present. Attendance options should be discussed with the IRO/Chair. See invitation list of suggested relevant people to attend the disruption meeting in **Appendix 3.** Birth parents may also be invited if it is felt that they could make a valid contribution. This must first be discussed and agreed with the IRO/Chair.
	2. If key participants are unavailable to attend the disruption meeting the Chair/IRO should decide whether the meeting should be rearranged
	3. All participants are required to provide a report to share at the meeting in terms of their involvement with the child and their placement.
	4. Young people should be given the opportunity to express their views. It may be appropriate to invite the child/young person for part of the meeting. However, attending their disruption meeting can be very stressful for young people. If a young person does not attend agreement must be reached about who is the most appropriate person to elicitthe child’s views (e.g. Social Worker, IRO, MOMO, Advocate etc.). This should cover the following:
* What did the child/young person think was best about the placement?
* What did the child/young person like least about the placement?
* How did the child/young person feel about leaving the placement?
* What is the child/young person’s understanding of why they had to leave the placement?
* What does the child/young person miss about the placement?
* Does the child/young person want to maintain contact with the carers?

4.5 The IRO/Chair should make every effort to see the child/young person to give their views directly to the Chair prior to the disruption meeting. If the child/young person does not wish to see the Chair they should be given the opportunity to feedback their views either through their social worker or advocate.

**5. Information to be viewed by the IRO/Chair of the Disruption Meeting**

5.1 Child’s documentation on electronic record

* Last Child in Care (CIC) Review Documentation, including the Care Plan
* Placement Plan
* Any previous Disruption Meeting Minutes for this child
* Child and Family assessments
* Contract (if another agency placement)
* Child’s Permanence Report and Matching Report
* MOMO information from child

5.2 Carer’s documentation on electronic record

* Form F Report
* Last Foster Carer Review documentation
* Any previous Disruption Meeting Minutes relating to this carer

5.3 In the case of agency foster carers the child’s social worker should request the above reports from the relevant agency.

5.4 In the case of a Newcastle or independent residential unit the child’s social worker should request a copy of the statement of purpose and the last Ofsted report and copies of the three most recent Regulation 44 reports.

5.5 All written information should be provided to the Chair 5 working days before thedisruption meeting.

**6. Agenda**

See **Appendix 5**: Agenda to be used at Disruption Meetings:

1. **Record of the Meeting**

7.1 The record of the meeting will be placed on the electronic records for the child and the foster carer within 28 days of the meeting by CSSU and CSSU will send out copies of the record of the meeting to participants as agreed at the meeting. In the case of the placement having been with an independent fostering agency or with a residential unit, a copy of the record of the meeting will be sent to the manager of the agency or unit. It is essential that there are clear recommendations made in terms of endings of the placement, so that these can be as positive for the child/young person as possible. The Chair should also write to the child/young person advising them of the outcome of the meeting.

* 1. Any feedback or comments regarding the Record of the Disruption Meeting should be returned to the Chair/IRO within 14 days of receipt.
	2. A copy of the record of the meeting is to be provided to the Looked After Children Services Manager/Fostering Panel Chair and Newcastle’s Foster a Future Team Manager.
1. **Learning and Improvement**

8.1 The Independent Reviewing Team Manager, Principal Social Worker and Service Improvement Lead for Children in Care will review the minutes from each disruption meeting to ensure identified learning is acted on and used to improve services and outcomes for children and young people. Learning points will be used to inform future care planning for the children concerned and significant issues effecting service development are to be raised with SMT at the earliest opportunity. The Independent Reviewing Team Manager will provide an annual report regarding learning themes identified through the disruption process.

**Process for arranging and carrying out Disruption Meetings**

Appendix 1

Placement disrupts, social worker informs IRO

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IRO and social worker discuss whether criteria for disruption meeting is met.

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IRO completes request form **Appendix 2** in conjunction with the child’s social worker

**↓**

 IRO sends completed form to the Manager IRT Children’s Safeguarding Standards Unitwith a copy to child’s social worker/supervising social worker

↓

Manager IRT allocates an Independent Reviewing Officer with no previous involvement with the case to chair the meeting

↓

CSSU admin to arrange a Disruption Meeting date and minute taker and room booking alongside the child’s social worker and the IRO.

↓

Child’s social worker agrees with the allocated IRO who to invite to the Disruption Meeting (see list of suggested participants)

↓

Child’s social worker sends out invites with a copy to the IRO.

↓

Child’s social worker and foster carer’s supervising social worker each completes report using headings in **Appendix 3** and sends to IRO 5 working days before Disruption Meeting

↓

Where relevant the child’s social worker requests reports from the fostering agency (Form F Report, last Foster Carer Review documentation, any previous Disruption Meeting Minutes etc) and sends to IRO 5 working days before Disruption Meeting

↓

Where relevant the child’s social worker requests a copy of the residential home’s statement of purpose and last Ofsted report and sends to IRO 5 working days before Disruption Meeting

↓

IRO visits young person to ascertain views

↓

Disruption Meeting is held and any learning is identified and recorded

↓

CSSU place record of Disruption Meeting on the child’s and foster carer’s electronic records and distributes record to participants as agreed at the Disruption Meeting within 28 days with copies to the Service Manager Corporate Parenting / Service Manager Long Term Social Work / Fostering Panel Chair and Newcastle’s Foster a Future Team Manager.

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Any feedback or comments regarding the Record of the Disruption Meeting should be returned to the IRO within 14 days of receipt

↓

IRT Manager reviews minutes of Disruption Meeting with PSW and Service Improvement Lead for Children in Care to identify any learning and recommendations that need to be acted on



Appendix 2

**Request Form for Disruption Meeting**

To be completed by the child/young person’s Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) following consultation with the child’s Social Worker and submitted to CSSU for the attention of the Manager of the Independent Reviewing Team

1. **Child/Young Person’s details**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name of Child/Young Person**  |  |
| **Care First ID** |  |
| **Date of Birth** |  |
| **Legal Status**  |  |
| **Child’s social worker**  |  |
| **Child’s IRO** |  |

1. **Carers details**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name of Carer/s** |  |
| **Address of disrupted placement**  |  |
| **Date placement started and ended** |  |
| **Supervising Social Worker** |  |

1. **Reason for Disruption Meeting**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Reason** | **Yes/No** |
| A permanent foster placement, identified as part of a Care Plan has disrupted  |  |
| A permanent residential placement, identified as part of a Care Plan has disrupted |  |
| A placement of over twelve months duration has ended in an unplanned way |  |
| A child has experienced two unplanned placement endings in a 12-month period |  |
| A foster carer/s has experienced two unplanned placement endings in a 12-month period |  |
| A foster carer has ended the placement without notice |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Request made by** |  |
| **Role**  |  |
| **Date of request**  |  |



Children’s Services Directorate

To be completed for invitations to: CP Conferences

Appendix 3

Decision Making Conferences

Disruption Meetings

Designated Review Conferences

**Failure to provide accurate details will result in this invite list being returned to the social worker.**

Please forward this form 2 weeks in advance of the conference by:

* Email to cssuconferenceinvites@newcastle.gov.uk

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Type of Meeting:** | **Date of Meeting:** | **Time of Meeting:** | **Venue of Meeting:** |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Name of Chairperson:** | **Name of Social Worker:** | **Base of Social Worker:** | **Name of Team Manager:** |
|  |  |  |  |

**Child’s Details**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name of child(ren) concerned (including aliases and other possible surnames)** | **D.O.B.** | **CareFirst ID** | **Full Address of child – This must match current CareFirst/Totalview records.** |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
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|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
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|  |  |  |  |

**Parent & other family members to be invited –** Please note, invitations will not be sent to parents or family members who are not on CareFirst.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name of Parent(s) or Family Member** | **D.O.B.** | **CareFirst ID** | **Full Address – This must match current CareFirst / Totalview records.** |
|  |  |  |  |
| Relationship to child: |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| Relationship to child: |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| Relationship to child: |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| Relationship to child: |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| Relationship to child: |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| Relationship to child: |  |

**Split Conference?**

Please note names and times of each person to attend

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Time to attend** |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |

**Professional’s Invitation List.** **Please provide full address, including postcode. Any incomplete fields will result in the invites not being sent out.**

**Please delete as appropriate.**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Status/ Title** | **Name** | **Address** | **Post code** |
| **First name** | **Surname** | **Address 1** | **Address 2** | **Address 3** |
| Independent Reviewing Officer |  |  | Children’s Safeguarding Standards Unit | Room 213, Civic Centre | Newcastle upon Tyne | NE5 3HU |
| Receiving Team Manager Long Term Team **(Initial Conferences only)** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Police CPU(newcastle.mash@northumbria.pnn.police.uk) – **To be invited to all ICPCs and reviews** |       |       | Send by secure email:newcastle.mash@northumbria.pnn.police.uk | Central Referral Unit,Protecting Vulnerable People, North Tyneside Area Command HQ,Middle Engine Lane | Wallsend | NE28 9NT |
| Safeguarding Nurse to be invited ONLY if child in hospitalYes [ ]  No [ ]  |  |  | Send by secure email:tnu-tr.safeguarding.children@nhs.net |  |  |  |
| GPfor child/children**must be invited to all ICPCs and Reviews. Invite list will be returned to SW if details not provided.** |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| GPfor parent/carers if different from child **must be invited to all ICPCs and Reviews. Invite list will be returned to SW if details not provided.** |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| GPfor parent/carers if different from child **must be invited to all ICPCs and Reviews. Invite list will be returned to SW if details not provided.** |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| Community Family Hub (prev Sure Start) **must be invited to Initial Conference if child under 2 years (including unborns).** Invites to be sent to a central address depending on the area where the family lives. (Admin action – check postcode spreadsheet for appropriate area).  |
| Invites to **Initial** Child Protection Conferences to be sent, by secure email, to the following team. This is for information only, and their name should not appear on the invite letter. sapp@cntw.nhs.uk |
| Midwife (if applicable) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Headteacher/Designated Lead  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Health Visitor/School Nurse  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Any other professionals/agencies involved with the child/young person |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| The following attendees should also be considered for Disruption Meetings  |
| Allocated IRO |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Current Carers  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Foster carers or residential carers involved in the disruption  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Previous carers |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Supervising social workers of current carers |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Supervising social workers of previous carers  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Fostering Agency Representative  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Previous School attended during the disrupted placement. |  |  |  |  |  |  |



Appendix 4

**Social Worker Report for Disruption Meeting**

**NB: The referral form requesting the Disruption Meeting should be used as the front page of the child’s Social Worker’s report**

1. **Child/Young Person’s details**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name of Child/Young Person**  |  |
| **Care First ID** |  |
| **Date of Birth** |  |
| **Legal Status**  |  |
| **Name of child’s social worker**  |  |
| **Name of child’s IRO** |  |

1. **Carers details**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name of Carer/s** |  |
| **Address of disrupted placement**  |  |
| **Date placement started and ended** |  |
| **Supervising Social Worker** |  |

1. **Reason for Disruption Meeting**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Reason** | **Yes/No** |
| A permanent foster placement, identified as part of a Care Plan has disrupted  |  |
| A permanent residential placement, identified as part of a Care Plan has disrupted |  |
| A placement of over twelve months duration has ended in an unplanned way |  |
| A child has experienced two unplanned placement endings in a 12-month period |  |
| A foster carer/s has experienced two unplanned placement endings in a 12-month period |  |
| A foster carer has ended the placement without notice |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Request made by** |  |
| **Role**  |  |
| **Date of request**  |  |

1. **People who are important to the Child**

|  |
| --- |
| **The Child’s Birth Family Members and any other important people (complete as appropriate)** |
| Mother  |  |
| Father  |  |
| Sister |  |
| Brother  |  |
| Grandparents  |  |
| Aunt/Uncle  |  |
| Advocate |  |
| Teacher |  |

1. **Recent Placements**

|  |
| --- |
| **Child’s Care** |
| Current placement and Carers details |  |
| Previous placement and carers details |  |

1. **Child’s life prior to care**

**Things to include**

* The Child’s lived experience
* Child’s relationship with brothers, sisters, parents, carers and other significant others
* The Child’s wishes, views and feelings
* Parents views, wishes and feelings
* Family time and the benefits/challenges for the Child
* Impact of abuse/significant harm on the Child and their development
* Any special needs
1. **Important information about the Child**

|  |
| --- |
| **Significant dates and information in the Child’s life since coming into care** |
| Date child first came into care and legal status  |  |
| Date child placed with carers  |  |
| Date of sustainability meeting – if this was not held the reason must be recorded below |  |
| Date the long-term plan was agreed for the Child |  |
| Rationale for the plan for the Child |  |

1. **Child’s legal status while in care**

|  |
| --- |
| **History of Child’s legal status since coming into care (in chronological order)** |
| **Date** | **Legal status**  | **Reason for change** |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

1. **Child’s placements while in care**

|  |
| --- |
| **History of Child’s placement changes since coming into care (in chronological order)** |
| **Date** | **Placement change**  | **Reason for change (More detail is required below if the change was due to placement breakdown)** |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

1. **The Placement and why the disruption happened?**
2. **What were the strengths of the placement in meeting the Child’s needs?**
3. **What led to the disruption?**
4. **What support was provided to the Child to sustain the placement?**
5. **What support was provided to the carers to sustain the placement?**
6. **Why did the support not address the issues/challenges with the placement?**
7. **How/why did the placement no longer meet the Child’s needs?**
8. **How was the disruption managed?**
9. **What does the Child think about the placement ending, how the ending was managed and staying in contact with the former carers?**
10. **What do the carers think about the placement ending, how the ending was managed and staying in contact with the Child?**
11. **Could we have done anything differently?**
12. **What can we learn from this disruption? (This must include what the Child, Parents think we can learn?)**

**Author’s Information**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Date**  |  |
| **Author**  |  |
| **Role**  |  |
| **Author’s email**  |  |

**Management Oversight**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Date**  |  |
| **Team Manager**  |  |
| **Team Manager’s analysis of the report**  |  |
| **Team Manager’s email**  |  |

Appendix 5



**Supervising Social Worker’s report**

1. **Carers details**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name of Carer/s** |  |
| **Address of disrupted placement**  |  |
| **Current Approval Status**  |  |
| **Date of original approval**  |  |
| **Supervising Social Worker** |  |

1. **Reason for Disruption Meeting**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Reason** | **Yes/No** |
| A permanent foster placement, identified as part of a Care Plan has disrupted  |  |
| A permanent residential placement, identified as part of a Care Plan has disrupted |  |
| A placement of over twelve months duration has ended in an unplanned way |  |
| A child has experienced two unplanned placement endings in a 12-month period |  |
| A foster carer/s has experienced two unplanned placement endings in a 12-month period |  |
| A foster carer has ended the placement without notice |  |

1. **What was the matching process and was it robust?**
2. **What were the strengths of the placement in meeting the Child’s needs?**
3. **What led to the disruption?**
4. **Have there been any previous disruptions with this carer and what were the issues?**
5. **What support was provided to the carers to sustain the placement?**
6. **Why did the support not address the issues/challenges with the placement?**
7. **How was the disruption managed?**
8. **What do the carers think about the placement ending, how the ending was managed and staying in contact with the Child?**
9. **Could we have done anything differently?**
10. **What can we learn from this disruption? (This must include what the carers think we can learn?)**
11. **Recommendations regarding status and training needs of carers or residential unit.**

Appendix 6

**Agenda for Disruption Meeting**

NB: Learning should be identified throughout the meeting and collated at the end

1. Introductions
2. Apologies
3. Information sharing
4. Confidentiality and equal opportunities
5. How the process will be recorded
6. Purpose and process of the Disruption Meeting
7. Child’s life prior to entering the care system
8. Reason for care episode
9. Selection process of the carers/placement, introductions and matching
10. Preparation of the carers
11. The consideration of the carer(s) by the Fostering Panel (if applicable)
12. Care Planning process (including outcomes of Child and Family assessments)
13. Chronology of events leading to the disruption
14. Date and outcome of Sustainability Meeting that was held - If a sustainability meeting was not held the reason must be discussed and recorded
15. Why the placement does not meet the child/young person’s needs
16. What could have made the placement work?
17. The Child in Care Review, Foster Care Review process or Regulation 44 process – were the relevant processes robust?
18. Identification of disruptive patterns
19. Disruption and subsequent events
20. Child’s views
21. Foster Carers/Children’s homes staff views
22. Parents views if relevant
23. Views of relevant others
24. Current Placement
25. Considerations for future Care Planning (to be taken forward outside the Disruption Review) including plan for contact with former carers
26. Learning points and endings for the child/young person and the carers
27. Conclusion
28. Recommendations - these must be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely)