

Levels of authority for casework management decisions in Children's Social Care

1. Purpose
 - 1.1 The purpose of this document is to identify the appropriate level of manager who can take responsibility for a specific decision or action in respect of an individual child's case. Whenever possible the decision / action will be made within the child's social worker's line management, but this document allows for any manager at the appropriate level or above to make a decision, where required, in order to avoid delay.
 - 1.2 Staff requesting a decision are expected to make informed recommendations to the relevant manager and to implement the decision in an agreed timescale.
 - DCS: Director of Children's Services
 - SD: Service Director Safeguarding and Care – in the absence of this person contact should be made with the relevant Assistant Director
 - AD: Assistant Director
 - HoS: Head of Service
 - GM: Group Manager
 - SM: Service Manager
 - TM: Team Manager
 - SW: Social Worker

Decision making area		Child in need						
	DCS	Service Director	Assistant Director	Group Manager/ Head of service	Service Manager	Team Manager	Social Worker	Notes
Convene child in need meeting							X	
Request family group conference							X	Also FIS/EH/LCPA as needed.
To end involvement without an assessment or visit having happened.				X				
To over-ride MASH recommendation for an assessment.				X				
Sign off assessment: child not seen.				X				
Submit serious incident notification			X					Share with SD prior to submission.
Chair strategy discussion						X		
Child protection planning								
Agreement to convene ICPC						X		Discuss with SW and duty CP Chair.
Agreement to convene ICPC for child subject to a repeat plan				X				In conjunction with Team Manager & duty CP Chair.
Change date of planned CP conference – within timescale.						X		SW and CP chair for child.
Change date of CP conference – outside timescale.				X				Needs AD sign off.
Legal planning and actions								
Decision to go to legal gateway panel.				X				
Decision to initial legal proceedings including pre-proceedings.		X	X					Via legal gateway panel.

	DCS	Service Director	Assistant Director	Group Manager/ Head of service	Service Manager	Team Manager	Social Worker	Notes
Prohibit private fostering arrangement.			X					
Apply for Child Assessment Order		X	X					Via legal gateway panel.
Apply for Emergency Protection Order		X	X					AD in conjunction with SD. Must go to next legal gateway panel.
Apply for Recovery Order				X				In consultation with AD and police.
Apply for Care or Supervision Order		X	X					Via legal gateway panel.
Apply for DOLO		X	X					
Approval of initial court care plan				X				
Approval of final court order plan if in line with initial plan.				X				
Approval of final court order plan if change from initial plan.		X	X					Via legal gateway panel.
Agreement to discharge care order		X	X					Via legal gateway panel.
To agree use of secure accommodation without a secure order	X							Informed by discussion between AD and SD.
To seek secure accommodation order	X							Informed by discussion between AD and SD.
To seek section 34 order reducing or ceasing contact.				X				Following discussion with child's IRO.
Sign off section 7 or 37 reports						X		In consultation with GM/SM.
Sign off all other court reports						X		
Sign off SGO support plan including financial support plan			X					
Appeal a court decision		X						Via legal gateway panel.

Children in care								
	DCS	Service Director	Assistant Director	Group Manager/ Head of Service	Service Manager	Team Manager	Social Worker	Notes
Agree entry to care (planned)		X	X					
Agree entry to care (unplanned)		X	X					
Agree external placement costs		X						
Agree change of home type for child in care		X (to residential)	X	X (IFA)				
Agree move to unregulated/unregistered home		X						
Requests for additional hours		X	X	X	X			
Agreement that a child is suitable for adoption			X					
Agreement to end s.20 for 16/17-year-old		X						Delegated by DCS to SD.
Child in care review change of date in timescale						X	X	In conjunction with IRO.
Child in care review change of date outside timescale				X				
School move for child in care in year 10/11				X				
Agree change of education provision for child in care that is not subject of EHCP						X		In consultation with virtual school.
Agree change of education provision for child in care subject of EHCP				See notes				Emergency EHCP review required.
Agreement to suspend foster carer				X				Fostering HoS who will initiate investigation process.
Agreement to suspend supported living provider			X					
Agreement to register foster carer/stepping stones carer			X (as fostering ADM)					Recommendation from HoS, Foster panel informs decision made by ADM.

	DCS	Service Director	Assistant Director	HoS/GM	Service Manager	Team Manager	Social Worker	
Request independent visitor							X	In conjunction with child's IRO.
End a care arrangement due to concerns for a child				X				
End care arrangement with prospective adopters due to concerns for a child			X					Relevant GM/HoS in consultation with Manager from Adoption West.
Approve placement with parents for child subject of a care order			X					Subject to PWP approval process.
Approve emergency connected persons arrangement			X					GM/HoS makes recommendation for approval.
Agree to child in care to leave the UK for a holiday (up to 1 month)			X					
Agreement to a child in care joining the Armed Forces				X	X			Parents should be consulted. Record decision on LL as management oversight
Agreement to a child subject of a care order to have medical/surgical procedure under general anesthetic or an abortion.			X	X				GM/HoS make recommendation to AD. Should involve parents where possible/appropriate. GM/HoS must speak to surgeon, recording risks/benefits. Legal advice if doubt/conflict.
Consent to change of name of child in care				X				Legal advice to be taken and recorded.
Agree foster carer to apply for child arrangements order, SGO or adoption of child in care				X				On recommendation of permanence planning meeting.
Agree application for British citizenship for a child in care				X				
Agreement to seek publicity in respect of missing child			X					Should be agreed in strategy discussion. Consult relevant AD if out of hours.
Decision to refuse parental contact with a child in care for up to 7 days				X	X			Consult IRO. Consult legal to discuss need for legal action.
Agreement to child in care having overnight stays with friends							X	F/c if delegated authority.
School trips and camps for a child in care where parent does not agree/cannot consent.						X		Need to give due weight to any objections of those with PR.

	DCS	Service Director	Assistant Director	HoS/GM	Service Manager	Team Manager	Social Worker	
Apply passport for child in care							X	Will need HoS signature.
Agreement for a child in care to move out of authority		X	X					AD via sign off discussion –HoS Commissioning to be made aware of need to notify AD in sign off of all OOA moves

Out of hours decision making

	DCS	Service Director	Assistant Director	On call HoS/GM	Service Manager	Team Manager	EDT Social Worker	
Apply for Emergency Protection Order				X				Cover manager to call relevant AD/SD.
Agree move to unregulated/unregistered home		X	X	X				HoS/GM to liaise with relevant AD and make recommendation to SD.
Agree entry into care				X				
Agreement for additional hours				X				
Agreement to seek publicity in respect of missing child				X				Relevant AD to be informed.
Approval for overnight stay with relative/friend.							X	In line with child's agreed plan and in conjunction with carers.
Safety planning with a family							X	
Facilitate unplanned move for a child in care.							X	Attempts should always be made to sustain children's homes though safety planning with carers. Where this is not possible, moves should be planned with carers/relevant others.

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