Reunification Support Service (RSS) Flowchart

Key –

Area Team Responsibility

RSS Responsibility

Joint Responsibility

Social Worker, Team Manager, IRO and key partners agree that reunification could be the child’s care plan. Any potential reunification plan should be discussed with RSS early to assist forward planning and avoid children returning home of their own volition without assessment.

Social Worker is unsure if the family are currently ready for reunification - SW requests a consultation with the RSS manager to discuss the proposed reunification plan. RSS manager offers guidance on the assessment process, whether pre-screening or full assessment should be considered, and what work/ support could be started with the parent during the assessment process, inc increase of contact/ FGC.

Social Worker is confident the family are ready for reunification currently - SW notifies RSS and requests support with Analytical Chronology (CLA only) to support Reunification Assessment. RSS manager reviews request, gathers any further information from the area team and accepts/ declines the request within 48 hours.

Social Worker completes pre-screening tool/ Reunification Assessment (Risk Classification High/ Severe) – further support is recommended for the parent to evidence change/ support for child to prepare for reunification. Timescale agreed for re-classification. Social Worker updates RSS.

Social Worker completes Reunification Assessment (within 12 weeks) to evidence the decision for reunification (approved by AD).

If suitable, RSS may offer support to the parent to improve the risk classification e.g. parenting work. However, for many parents, wider external service support is needed first.

Social Worker sends Reunification Assessment (Risk Classification Low/ Medium) to RSS – **this is the formal referral.**

Following the agreed timescale, Social Worker reviews the Reunification risk classification. If the classification has improved (Low/Medium), Social worker refers back to RSS.

Within 5 working days of referral being accepted, a meeting is convened with professionals to discuss the reunification plan of support, considering:

* Rationale and risks for why the child was in our care including why we sought a Care Order if child is subject to Care Order
* Key timescales for the child including school and placement notice
* Rationale for reunification including what current support systems are in place for the child/family
* What steps/support is needed for sustainable reunification
* Timescales for discharge of Care Order

A meeting is convened with the child and family to agree a SMART reunification plan (support and transition plan) – child and family fully contribute to this plan, consider how plan will be reviewed and ensure all parties know the goals for success and how all will know this is achieved. RSS support is expected to last 12 weeks.

RSS practitioner starts 12 weeks’ work with the family, following the SMART reunification plan. RSS practitioner receives supervision with RSS Manager but should also be invited to the child’s supervision with the social work team. Social Worker continues to visit and undertake Child Looked After reviews and all other aspects of child’s care plan (PEP, RHA).

Reviews are convened regularly by the Social Worker with the support and attendance of RSS practitioner/ manager (minimum of 6 weekly Midway Review and 12 weekly Final Review). The RSS plan of work and progress is reviewed at these meetings and any changes to the plan as suggested by the Social Worker, RSS practitioner, child or family are agreed.

If at any time the child (subject to a Care Order/ ICO) returns home for extended periods (over 23 hours) or at the agreed reunification time, a Placement with Parents Agreement will first need to be completed by the Social Worker and authorised by the relevant Assistant Director.

On completion of the 12 weeks reunification support plan, RSS practitioner withdraws. RSS will provide recommendations of further support (if needed) which would be delivered via Child Looked After plan, Child in Need plan, or Early Help services.

If the family remain open to Surrey Children’s Services, the Social Worker / allocated team continue to support the family following the completion of RSS involvement.

Social Work team will keep discharge of the Care Order under review within CLA Review Meetings and will seek legal advice/ Assistant Director agreement when ready to discharge the Care Order.

A formal Care Planning Meeting should take place every 3 months to consider discharge.

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| **Title** | Reunification Support Service – Checklist |
| **Purpose** | Process map for practitioner supporting children and families with reunification |
| **Updated by** | Nicola Adesuji, Team Manager, Reunification Support Service, Elaine Andrews Service Manager NW Looked After Team, Siobhan Walsh Assistant Director Looked After Children and Care Leavers |
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