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Child's Case Summary Practice Guidance

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Date Issued	January 2025	Review Date	January 2026

Child's Case Summary

Practice Guidance

1. What is a Child's Case Summary?

- 1.1 Every child's record should have a summary which provides an overview of what is happening for them and their families. This should always start with an understanding of who the child is; what makes them unique? What are their wishes and feelings? It should tell the child who is working with them and their family, what support they are being offered, by who, what we want to achieve and how we will know that the work has made a difference. It also shows what safety plan is in place for the child.
- 1.2 A good child's case summary is easy to read, short and factual. There should be a brief analysis and summary of the difference our work is making for the child, ensuring that the right support is offered at the right time.

2. When is a Child's Case Summary Required?

- 2.1 Every child who is open to Bradford Children and Families Trust (BCFT) should have a summary above the child's case note log.
- 2.2 The child's case summary should be -
 - Completed as soon as the child has an allocated worker
 - Updated at least every 3 months
 - Updated when there is any significant changes to a child's life
 - Updated before a child is allocated a different worker
 - Updated before support to a child ends and their record is closed

3. What should be included in a Child's Case Summary?

- 3.1 A Child's Case Summary should be completed using the headings below, using the notes under each heading for guidance.

(i) Pen Picture of the child

This should be a pen picture of the child and what their day to day life is like; who they live with, who is important to them and who they spend time with, what makes them unique, are they a child with a disabilities? What does this mean for them.

For young babies and children, include your observations of them, how do their parents/carers/family describe them?

For older children and teenagers, include their hopes for the future and their aspirations.

Where possible include the child's wishes and feelings setting out clearly what they want to happen. Where possible, this can be captured in the child's own words.

This should be recorded in blue.

(ii) Background information

This is a summary of previous support, any plans that have been in place and the difference that this made for the child.

Include here if there are any court orders in place about who the child should live with, spend time with and the arrangements for this.

This should be an analytical overview rather than a repeat of the chronology really thinking about what this all means for the child's lived experience and their journey.

(iii) Summary of our involvement

Summarise the current referral and what is happening for the child now, including what are the risks, what are the protective factors and what are the strengths. This should include what factors are keeping the child safe and how do we know this. Include the type of plan that is in place to support the child and their family.

Explain what difference we hope to make for the child and their family and how will we make this happen.

Include any current legal status and any arrangements for family time.

For a child with a disability, set out the care package and the personal budget details.

(iv) What difference have we made for [Child's Name]?

What has happened in the last 3 months? Note any key events. How do we know from what is happening how we are making a difference for the child and their family? What is the evidence for this? Capture what has or has not changed and what this means for the child's experience.

(v) Goals and what needs to happen next?

What are our goals for the child? Does the plan capture everything we think it needs to?

Capture what the child and the family think about what should happen next. Be clear about any contingency plans should the proposed plan not support the change that is desired or expected.

Be clear about timescales and how you will review the plan.

(vi) [Child's Name] Safety Plan

Be specific about how we are keeping the child safe, this should be a plan written jointly with the child's and their parents/carers. A safety plan is not a list of people involved but should be clear about what happens when a child is at risk of harm, what is in place and who is responsible for the action.

Capture the date the safety plan was agreed and how it was shared with the child and family. Also record when it was uploaded to forms.

This should be recorded in red.

(vii) [Child's Name] Family Contact Details and Professional Involvements

Record the contact details for the child's parent/carers and other family members or friends who are relevant to the child. Check that these are the most up to date details as this is essential information for our emergency duty team who may need this information out of hours.

List the key professionals and telephone number/emails.

4. Tips for writing a good child's case summary

- 4.1 Keep it brief, there should be enough information so that anyone reading it can quickly understand what is happening for the child. Child case summaries should not contain lengthy descriptions of events recorded elsewhere.
- 4.2 Each child's case summary should be individually written for each child in the family; although some of the information may be shared, the impact for each child will be different.
- 4.3 A child's case summary is your chance to critically reflect on whether we are making a difference for a child and why change is or is not happening. Asking "so what" will help us get the plan right and think about what needs to happen next.
- 4.4 The child's case summary should be current and not just latest information added to older information as this is confusing for the reader.
- 4.5 Read the child's case summary regularly to make sure that it is current, think about someone else reading this; would it make sense to them and tell them what the current situation is for the child and what the plan is? If the child reads this as an adult, will they understand it and what we were wanting to achieve?
- 4.6 The child's pen picture always stands out more if the child has helped you to write this.
- 4.7 Remember that the child's case summary sits alongside other key documents but fulfils a different function.