



Cheshire West  
and Chester

## Children and Young People's Services

### Children in Need Planning and Review Policy

POLICY/PROCEDURE APPROVAL			
Approved By	Sandra Campbell	Position	Head of Children & Families
Signature		Date Approved	March 2012
Post Responsible for Reviewing	Senior Manager, Children in Need	Date to be Reviewed	November 2012
Legal Services Approval	Not Applicable	Approved by	Not Applicable

## **CHILD IN NEED PLANNING PROCESS**

All children who receive services through allocation to a Social Worker are children in need and those services may be delivered through:

- A Care Plan for Children in Care
- A Child Protection Plan
- A Child in Need Plan.

A child in need plan may be developed following an initial assessment if services are to be offered in the very short term. However most Plans will be developed following a Core Assessment.

### **Every child in need receiving an intervention should have an individual child in need plan which details:**

- The overall objectives of the plan
- The services to be provided and what their purpose is
- Responsibilities for each aspect of the Plan
- The timescales for provision
- Review arrangements

### **The child in need plan ensures that:**

- All children and young people have clearly stated objectives for them to gain maximum life chance benefits from education, health care and social opportunities
- There is a strategy for achieving these objectives.
- Consideration is given to factors which protect children from emotional, physical and sexual abuse and neglect

## **CHILD IN NEED PLANS**

The child in need plan should be developed at a meeting which includes the children, parents, family and other people who can usefully contribute to the collation of the information and the formulation of the plan. If any significant family member of the planning group is unable to attend the meeting they should be assisted to present their contribution in either written or verbal format.

### **PRACTICE GUIDANCE:**

Meetings may proceed in the absence of the child and parents but the focus of the meeting must remain on progressing the child in need plan and should not become a forum for professionals to share their concerns.

It is important that the children and family attend the meeting and arrangements should be made which facilitate their attendance. Consideration should therefore be given to accessibility, location and timing.

The meeting can be chaired by a Social Worker, a Senior Practice Lead or another senior member of staff.

### **The team manager will decide in consultation with the social worker who will chair the meeting based on:**

- The complexity of the case

- The expertise of the worker
- The potential for conflict/disagreement

**The Chair will ensure that:**

- The meeting is as open and informal as possible consistent with the tasks
- Particular attention is given to the use of language and any special terms explained
- The child and parent(s) is given appropriate encouragement, assistance and opportunity to say what they wish
- Differences and disagreements are respected and recorded.
- Any needs with regard to age, disability, culture, religion or race are given special consideration

**PRACTICE GUIDANCE**

Staff should be alert to the many issues, which can impact on a child's identity. These can be race, religion, gender and disability. However should there be indications that sexuality (including transgender issues) might be an issue for the child particular attention should be given to supporting the child as this can be an often ignored or overlooked facet of a child's identity. Staff must agree with the child or young person any relevant information relating to these sensitive issues, which can be shared prior to the meeting in order to maintain the child's sense of privacy and dignity. Meeting participants will share information relevant to the dimensions and domains of the Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families outlined in the child in need assessment.

**The meeting may consider:**

- The information available and any gaps in information
- Who in the family needs to be involved and how they will be involved
- What services are needed to meet the child and family's needs?
- Whether any further specialist assessments are needed
- What are the objectives of the Plan?
- What actions need to be taken to meet the objectives of the Plan
- Who will undertake the actions and what timescales will apply

**RECORDING THE CHILD IN NEED MEETING AND PLAN**

Following the meeting a Record of Planning Meeting and Child in Need Plan document should be completed for each individual child on the child's Electronic Social Care Records.

**Each child should have their own plan that clearly states:**

- The overall objectives of the plan
- The services to be provided by all the agencies involved in the Plan and what their purpose is
- Responsibilities for each aspect of the Plan and agencies responsibilities for monitoring of the outcomes to be achieved
- The key worker with overall responsibility for the Plan.
- The timescales for provision
- Review arrangements

**PRACTICE GUIDANCE**

The plan must focus on the child in achieving improved developmental outcomes and ensuring the child is safe, even though services may be provided to a number of family members as part of the plan. The complexity or severity of the child's needs will determine the scope and detail of the plan. Any referrals for additional services made to other agencies that are not part of the planning and review group should be recorded on the Plan and their purpose indicated. Copies of the Plan should be provided to the children, family and participants in the planning and review group within 10 working days of the meeting.

### **REVIEWING THE CHILD IN NEED PLAN**

A child in need plan should be reviewed at 3 months and at a minimum frequency of 6 months thereafter. This is the minimum frequency and some cases may require review on a more frequent basis.

No child in need case should be closed unless a review of the plan has been completed and a decision made that the plan has achieved its objectives/is no longer required and that satisfactory arrangements for the continuing promotion and safeguarding of the child's welfare are in place. This may include continuing provision of services within a CAF.

The worker responsible should prepare for the review meeting by consulting with the key agencies/people concerned with the child/ren on a regular basis prior to the meeting.

The review meeting should include the child/ren, parents, family and significant other people who have been involved in delivery of services specified in the plan. If any family member of the planning and review group is unable to attend the meeting they should be assisted to present their contribution in either written or verbal format.

It is important that the child/ren and family attend the meeting and arrangements should be made which facilitate their attendance. Consideration should therefore be given to accessibility, location and timing.

**The meeting will be chaired by a Social Worker, a Team Manager or another senior member of staff. The line manager will decide in consultation with the case manager who will chair the meeting based on:**

- The complexity of the case
- The expertise of the worker
- The potential for conflict/disagreement

**The Chair will ensure that:**

- The review is as open and informal as possible consistent with the tasks
- Particular attention is given to the use of language and any special terms explained
- The child and parent(s) is given appropriate encouragement, assistance and opportunity to say what they wish
- Differences and disagreements are respected and recorded.
- Any needs with regard to age, disability, culture, religion or race are given special consideration

### **PRACTICE GUIDANCE**

Staff should be alert to the many issues, which can impact on a child's identity. These can be race, religion, gender and disability. However should there be indications that sexuality (including transgender issues) might be an issue for the child particular attention should be given to supporting the child as this can be an often ignored or overlooked facet of a child's identity. Staff must agree with the child or young person any relevant information relating to these sensitive issues, which can be shared prior to the meeting in order to maintain the child's sense of privacy and dignity.

### **The following are potential outcomes following the Review Meeting:**

Satisfactory arrangements for the continuing promotion and safeguarding of the child's welfare are in place and that the Plan will no longer be applicable. Children's Social Care will cease involvement and no further review meetings will be arranged. Other participants in the Plan also cease involvement or revert to normal provision within universal services and the child/ren and the family will no longer be subject to any multi agency assessment, planning and review framework.

Other agencies may continue providing services as part of the ongoing arrangements for the continuing promotion of the children's welfare. If the Review Meeting concludes that Children's Social Care will cease involvement, the Review Meeting should also consider whether 2 or more agencies should continue to be providing services and whether future planning and review should continue within the Common Assessment Framework. If the Child in Need Review reaches this conclusion, the Review Meeting will convert to a Common Assessment Framework Meeting, a CAF action plan put in place and lead professional appointed. Future reviews will be under the Common Assessment Framework. Information available to the Child in Need Review has heightened concerns for the child's welfare to the point where there are concerns of significant harm. In these cases Children's Social Care will initiate actions under the Safeguarding Procedures and future planning and review will take place within the safeguarding planning forum.

The date for the next review must be set at the end of the meeting.

### **RECORDING**

The review of the child in need plan should be recorded on the child in need plan.

Any amendments to the plan which have been required as a result of significant issues or changes to the child and/or their family should be recorded and the plan re-dated from the date of the review.

Copies of the review document and any amended plan should be provided to the children, family and participants in the planning and review group within 10 working days of the meeting.

### **CONSENT TO INFORMATION SHARING**

Any assessment under Section 17 1989 Children's Act will require written consent being obtained from the person with parental responsibility for information to be shared with and obtained from other agencies. The Directorate form should be used for this purpose.

It is the responsibility of any agency making a referral to Children's Social Care to obtain the consent of the person with parental responsibility before making the referral. The consent should be recorded on the Children's Social Care Referral and Initial Information Record.

### **PRACTICE GUIDANCE**

It is accepted that in some police interventions it will not always be possible to obtain written consent before making referral to Children's Social Care for example Children and Vulnerable Adult Database(CAVA's) or Section 47s.

Before professionals have discussions about any child welfare concerns with other agencies, they should seek the parent's permission, and/or the child's where appropriate, unless seeking permission itself place a child at risk of significant harm. Examples of where this may cause such harm include:

- Where sexual abuse is suspected or disclosed
- Where fabricated or induced illness is suspected

- Where there are fears for the safety of the child due to possible action by members of their family
- Where it is not possible to contact the person whose consent is required immediately and prompt action is required to establish or ensure the child's safety.