

Practice Standards for Children Looked After

Becoming a Looked After Child

- When the child first enters Local Authority care the foster carer/s must be given all the information required to care for the child/young person and that **Placement Planning Meeting** must take place within 7 working days, which sets out how the placement will meet the needs of the child. The care plan must be produced within 10 days of becoming looked after.
- When a child or young person comes in to care in a planned way good practice would involve the **Placement Planning Meeting** taking place and care plan being developed prior to placement.
- When a child/young person becomes **Looked After** the **IRO** service must be notified within 2 working days. This will happen via ICS. All other professionals involved in the child/young person's life will be informed by the Social Worker that the child/ young person is looked after. This must happen within 5 working days of the child becoming looked after and must include the host authority if placed out of Knowsley MBC.

Arrangement for Health Assessments.

- Initial health assessment will be requested within 5 days of placement. Where the child is under the aged 5 or below, an Adoption Medical should also be requested. Further Health assessments will be requested for children under 5, every 6 months and for children over 5 yearly to ensure their health needs are being met and to inform the child's **Care Plan** (See **Health Care Assessments and Plans**).

Arrangements for Education

- A **Personal Education Plan** PEP meeting will be completed within 15 days of placement and reviewed every school term. The PEP will set out how the educational needs of the child will be met and to inform the child's Care Plan. There are 3 PEP meetings per year, Autumn Term, Spring Term and Summer Term. The meetings should be held in the first half term of each term and no later.

Statutory Visits

- The statutory timescales for visiting a child looked after are - within 1 week of placement and then weekly until the first review and at a frequency of no less than every 4 weeks for children on an interim care order and 6 weekly when a section 31 care order has been granted. The minimum requirements are must be adhered to, however it is fully expected that more frequent visiting would be completed if the child or carers needs require this. Social Workers must visit if a child or young person requests this. If a child is placed outside of the borough and in a residential provision the visiting frequency will always be at least every 4 weeks.
- I will make some unannounced visits and I will see the child/young person alone at each visit.
- Where a child is in their permanent placement (intended to last until they are eighteen) and been in placement for more than 12 months, visits may take place at intervals of three months.
- The visiting frequency agreed in care planning meetings and reviews in all cases.
- Where the child is placed in an proposed adoptive placement awaiting the Adoption Order to be granted, The child's social worker visiting the child within the first week of the placement and then weekly until the first review and thereafter, the frequency of visits will be determined at the child's **Adoption Review** or, if not specified, every six weeks for the first year and after this, on a three-monthly basis.

Measuring the **IMPACT** on the child or young person of being looked after. Each Statutory visit will measure the Impact to the children by considering and expressly recording their daily lived experience such as how children and young people present for instance emotionally, physically, educationally, so we can measure progress of Looked After Children to inform their on-going care Where an emergency/unplanned admission has occurred (in exceptional circumstances), an assessment will be completed within 20 days, for the 1st **Looked After Children Review**. Assessments will include the wishes and feeling of the child and their parents and be completed in consultation with other agencies.

There will be an up-to-date Care Plan recorded on ICS within 10 days of the start of placement; this will reflect the child/young person's needs, considers outcomes and clearly indicates service provision. The Care Plan will take into consideration the

wishes and feelings of the child/young person. From the 2nd LAC Review the Care Plan will include a **Permanency Plan**.

The child's needs in relation to race, ethnicity, language, disability, gender, sexuality and placement with siblings will be taken into account.

Care Planning

The Care Plan for every child Looked After will be reviewed by an IRO, on a regular basis and within statutory timescales to make sure that plans continue to meet the needs of the child/young person and are being progressed in a timely manner, while taking into consideration the wishes and feeling of the child, their parents and other agencies. (See **Child Looked After Reviews Procedure**).

If the child is of sufficient age and understanding the child/young person will be encouraged and assisted to participate in their Review meeting. If they are unwilling or unable to attend their Children Looked After Review Meeting, their wishes and feelings will be presented and taken into consideration at the review.

Case records reflect that parents have been encouraged to participate in the Review process and their views taken into consideration and that where relevant, the birth parents will have been provided reports in advance of the meeting taking place.

The allocated social worker & other relevant workers (key workers, residential workers, and foster carers schools, health & **CAMHS**) will provide a report for every review - sent to the Independent Reviewing Officer at least 5 days in advance.

The IRO should be informed of any significant changes in the child/young person's circumstances. There will be no significant changes to the child/young person's care plan unless the proposed change has been considered at a CLA Review.

No child/young person's legal status as a Looked After child must be changed without first discussing this at a CLA Review meeting.

If the young person is 15 years and 9 months there will be an up-to-date **Pathway Plan**, based on an up to date needs assessment;

Life Story and Journey into Care

Life story work- all children who are Looked After by the Local Authority should have a life story book and understand their journey into care and family history.

Measuring Impact- all children who are Looked After will have their achievements and significant events recorded on ICS for example, first steps, first tooth lost, school awards, family holidays, awards and certificates from clubs and groups and other special achievements. This should then be kept up to date and used to measure progress as a result of the child or young person becoming looked after.

My Memories- All Looked After Children will have access to 'My Memories' where foster carers, staff who supervise family time, and Social workers can upload and input pictures, certificates and relevant events.

All children of a relevant age and understanding will be offered the opportunity to participate in the Looked After Children's Council known as MADE.

Single Assessment Arrangements

Annual Single Assessment for Looked After Children. At a frequency of no less than every 12 months, a Single Assessment will be undertaken to explore the holistic needs of every child looked after including but not exclusive to, review of their plan of permanence, review of family time and relationships with birth family, friends and connected persons who are important to them. Any significant change in circumstances will trigger the completion of a single assessment to consider the impact of that change on the care plan.

All children looked after will have access to an advocate and independent visitor should they want one.

Children Looked after will be told how to make complaints

June 2019