



## CHILDREN'S SERVICES

### GUIDANCE NOTE

#### Placement Stability

(Relates to PGN Dated January 2017)

To Be Read in Conjunction with Chapter 5.1.7 Placement Support Meetings

Placement Stability for Children Looked After must be prioritised across the whole of Children's Services.

Listed below are ways in which this can be achieved:

#### **Every child and young person is offered relationship building work in advance of placement to introduce them to their new home**

- Child-friendly carer profiles (or residential home children's booklet) to be shared with a child or young person prior to placement and their views sought about the placement.
- Planned introductions should take place before placement commences to include, where possible;
  - o Phased visits with new carers are facilitated in advance of placement
  - o Telephone call / visit
  - o Overnight stays are arranged with new carers

#### **Early and robust escalation processes to care and education professionals are in place to minimise placement breakdown**

- Reference and advice must be sought from the Virtual School when considering a placement move.
- The Virtual School to be included in any placement move discussion; at placement planning meetings, placement support meetings and / or the Placement Stability Panel.

#### **All reviews and planning meetings include key professionals responsible for the child or young person's welfare**

- A Placement Planning Meeting confirming delegated authority must take place every time a child or young person comes into care or changes their placement.
- An initial support plan, identifying any potential support needs, must be completed by the Supervising Social Worker for each looked after child or young person at the Placement Planning meeting. Additional focus to be given to those children and young people who may have already experienced a move or are in the 13-15 age group.
- All keyworkers and foster carers feedback into all CLA review processes
- All review meetings are attended by the key worker / foster carer
- Streamlined LCS Meeting Minute formats for Placement Planning Meetings and Placement Support Meetings should be used to record the discussions held and the agreements made.
- The guidance attached (Appendix 1, below) should be followed in respect of the roles and responsibilities of the child's social worker and the supervising social worker.
- A child's case must be presented at the Placement Stability Panel if escalation is required to access a service which is considered essential to achieve stability.
- It is essential that Placement Requests and Risk Assessments are as accurate as possible to inform Brokerage when matching a child to a placement. The streamlined formats are now available on LCS.

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### **Placements are ended in a planned way unless there are immediate safeguarding concerns**

- A placement move can only be agreed through HARP or via the relevant Head of Service.
- A Placement Support Meeting must be held as soon as there are signs that a placement is becoming unstable. The initial support plan must be reviewed at this meeting and at all subsequent placement support meetings.
- A discussion must take place between the Child's Social Worker, the Supervising Social Worker and the foster carer regarding when and how the child will be informed about the placement move.
- An urgent placement move should only be requested if there is an immediate safeguarding issue. Authorisation for this will not be given by the Head of Service until there is a full understanding of the alternative placement options.