



## **Children's Safeguarding and Family Help**

### **Corporate Parenting Service**

#### **Placement with parents procedures**

Camden's Children and Learning Directorate uses relational practice as the foundation for all our work. Our integrative relational practice framework is based on our values, and is designed to help achieve the Directorate's purpose: to work with children, families and communities to make a positive, lasting difference to their futures, so they have the best start in life.

We recognise the impact of structural inequalities on the lives of the children and families we work with and as a service we will embrace inclusive, anti-discriminatory and anti-racist practice based on our values and our mission to champion social justice.

Our practice framework centres on honest and compassionate relationships with those we serve and with each other. It is an expectation that all Directorate policies and procedures are implemented in line with our practice framework, and that any actions within policies and procedures reflect its ethics, values and practice expectations.

## Placement with parents

### 1 Introduction

This document sets out the local procedures to be followed whenever a child on a care order is placed with their parents. It should be read together with the *Placements with parents* policy: [Placements with Parents](#)

Children may be placed with parents because:

- the court orders that they remain at home on an interim care order during care proceedings until the final hearing or that they be placed with parents on granting a full care order **or**
- parents whose child is in foster care have made good progress in addressing concerns about parenting capacity and social workers wish to test a return home to see if rehabilitation is likely to be successful.

### 2 Assessing placement suitability

All assessments must be recorded on the suitability assessment record (available on MOSAIC) and should focus on the suitability of the parents to care for the child, as well as the suitability of household members and the accommodation.

#### 2.1 Parenting capacity

- The assessment must look at the extent to which the factors affecting parenting capacity that led to a care order being granted have been addressed and parenting capacity improved, as well as parent's ability to sustain changes. Social workers should also look at what support and services need to be in place to help parents overcome difficulties and improve capacity.
- The parent's past history of child care will need to be taken into account so social workers should review any previous CSFH case records for that child and any siblings who may have been removed from the parent's care.

#### 2.2 Household

- Social workers should focus on family functioning and the quality of relationships within the family. The impact of any recent changes to household composition must also be explored, especially if children are returning home from foster care.

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- Assessment of adult members of the household must include their capacity to care for the child and their own family history. Where there are young people aged under 18 living at home, social workers should assess their history and current lifestyles.
- Assessment should also look at the possible caring role of significant adults who do not live in the household but will have a high level of contact with the child, including their suitability and their relationship with the parents and the child.

### **2.3 Accommodation**

Social workers should visit the family home to assess the suitability of the accommodation, including:

- living conditions: the home should be warm, adequately furnished, and free from any avoidable hazards.
- sleeping arrangements: these should be appropriate and adequate with regard to the age and sex of the child.
- hygiene: the home, in particular the kitchen, should reach a good standard of cleanliness and hygiene.
- safety: safety issues such as garden ponds need to be addressed depending on the child's age. Parents may need help in purchasing safety equipment, for example, stair gates.
- pets: consideration should be given to any issues arising from the parent's pets and whether these pose a risk to the child.

### **2.4 Medical checks**

- Parents who will be caring for the child should ask their GP to provide Camden with a medical report as part of their assessment of suitability and how the state of their physical and mental health may affect their ability to care for the child. The information should be recorded on BAAF form AH by their GP and returned to the social worker.
- If the health assessment raises any health issues that may impact on the parent's ability to look after the child, social workers may request advice from Camden's medical advisor based in the Crowndale Health Centre.

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### 2.5 Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks

DBS checks should be carried out on parents/carers and all members of the household who are aged 16 and above. Social workers should liaise with administrators in Children's Provision regarding organising the checks.

## 3 Immediate placements

- There may be situations where it is necessary to place a child with their parent in an emergency, either because the child has remained at home at the onset of care proceedings or has returned home following the breakdown of a foster placement and rehabilitation is the long-term care plan.
- Before any immediate placement social workers must carry out the tasks set out in section 2 of the *Placement with parents* policy.
- Social workers should approach the CAIT for a police check on all adult members of the household and other significant adults under the division's Police Checks policy. [police-checks.pdf](#)
- Immediate placements may be authorised by the CLA service manager but within 10 working days:
  - the social worker must have completed the assessment
  - the CSFH Director must have made a decision regarding the placement
  - if the placement is authorised, arrangements must be in place for a statutory CLA review to take place
  - if the placement is not authorised, it is terminated and an alternative placement found.

## 4 Placement arrangements

Once the date of the placement at home has been agreed:

- Social workers should ensure that CLA Business Support are aware of the change and that statutory notifications are sent out.
- Every placement at home must be covered by a placement with parents agreement plan record between CSFH and the parent, that is available in the placement arrangement meeting episode on MOSAIC. The record should be completed at the placement agreement meeting which should be held prior to or within 5 working days of the placement beginning.

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- Parents should be aware of what support packages will be provided to meet the child's needs and support the placement. Services should support the child to live at home by:
  - helping parents to improve parenting skills or address their own issues
  - ensuring continued support to the child around their own identified needs
  - providing a resource to help the family rebuild their relationships.
- Social workers should be aware that as the child remains looked after, the procedures around health assessments and Personal Education Plans will continue to apply to children who are placed with parents.

## 5 Monitoring placements

- Placements at home with parents remain CLA placements and are subject to the same procedures for statutory visits and reviews. Monitoring should ensure that:
  - the child's welfare is safeguarded and promoted
  - the placement is meeting their identified needs
  - the placement agreement is being adhered to
  - the placement remains the most appropriate placement choice for the child.
- During statutory visits, social workers should observe the interactions of the child, parent and other household members to see if the placement remains viable and is in the child's best interests. There should be feedback regarding the visit to the child and parent so that they have an opportunity to discuss issues and make any changes to enhance the placement. The social worker should also see the child alone during each visit and ascertain the wishes and feelings.
- Where appropriate, social workers should also carry out additional visits including some unannounced visits.
- **Statutory reviews** of placements with parents should be held in line with the *Looked after review* policy. As part of the review process, social workers must assess whether the need for a care order remains and every review should consider applying for a discharge of the order and look at what continued support will be provided the family following discharge.

## 6 Ending placements with parents

- A placement with parents may come to an end either because the rehabilitation plan is successful and the care order is discharged or it is decided that the placement does not offer a suitable permanent home for the child due to concerns about their safety and welfare.

## Placement with parents

- Social workers need to be able to recognise when a placement with parents needs extra support to be successful, and equally when rehabilitation is no longer the best permanence option for the child and an alternative permanent placement needs to be found.
- It is only through close monitoring of the placement, regular reviews of the care plan and seeing and talking to the child that social workers will be able to gather information to support good decision-making with regard to this.
- If a placement is in danger of disrupting but is still considered to be a viable option for the child, social workers should consult with the child's IRO and consider convening a planning meeting to look at what extra resources can be made available to support the placement.
- Where it is clear that a placement at home is no longer in the child's best interest and cannot safeguard and promote their welfare, this should be acknowledged and action taken to move the child to an alternative placement. Wherever possible, this should be planned to minimise disruption to the child. Children and the parents may be deeply affected when a placement at home does not work out. It is important that social workers spend time talking to children and parents about the reasons why the placement cannot continue and help them to come to terms with this prior to moving on.
- The decision to terminate the placement should be taken by the CLA team manager, in consultation with the social worker and the IRO. Following this decision, the social worker should convene a disruption meeting to look at the reasons for the placement breakdown and what support should be provided to the child and the family following this.
- The meeting should also look at the long term plans for the child and consider what changes need to be made to their care plan, which should be amended by the social worker.