

Becoming looked after: a short guide for social workers

The following are the steps that social workers need to take when a child becomes looked after. Normally these steps would take place before the child becomes looked after in a planned manner but should otherwise be carried out within the stated timescales following an emergency placement. The relevant statutory guidance setting out these steps is the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations 2010 available at: [The Children Act 1989 guidance and regulations \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-children-act-1989-guidance-and-regulations)

Where a looked after child is being placed with a member of their family further steps will need to be taken and social workers should also refer to the Placement with connected persons policy available at: [Placements with Connected Persons](#)

Step/activity	Policy/action	Relevant policy/guidance
<p>Becoming looked after There are various routes to becoming looked after and these will affect the child's legal status and the duties and powers of the local authority. A child must be looked after for more than 24 hours for the regulations to apply.</p>	<p>A child may be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accommodated under section 20 with parent's consent • accommodated under section 20 giving own consent (16/17 years) • taken into care under Care Order following care proceedings • remanded into local authority accommodation by a criminal court • become looked after for a short time under police protection or emergency protection order where there is immediate risk of harm 	<p>Decision to Look After</p> <p>Remands to Local Authority Accommodation or to Youth...</p> <p>CP orders Children's Policy & Practice Hub</p>
<p>Placement (Reg 9) A placement plan must be drawn up covering all matters listed in Schedule 2</p>	<p>Social worker should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • complete <i>Request for initial placement and matching</i> on MOSAIC and liaise with Fostering/Resources to identify suitable placement • make arrangements for child to be taken to the placement • convene a Placement Agreement meeting (within 5 working days of an emergency placement) • ensure parents sign the <i>CLA placement and health consent</i> • complete the <i>Placement Plan</i> and ensure this signed by parents and foster carers/key workers (within 5 working days of an emergency placement) 	<p>Placement Planning and Disruption Meetings</p>
<p>Notification of placement (Reg 13) Local authorities must notify those listed in the regulation of arrangements to place the child</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A notification of the placement must be sent out to parents and local health and education services (within 5 working days of an emergency placement). • Social workers should notify the CLA Business Support Officer of the placement so that the notification can be sent. • Social workers should also provide a letter giving more details of the placement which will be sent out with the notification. 	<p>Placement Planning and Disruption Meetings</p>

<p>Care plan (Reg 4-6) CLA must have a care plan in place covering the matters listed in Schedule 1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child's care plan to be in place prior to placement or within 10 working days of placement • The first care plan will be in the form of a list of recommendations made by the social worker following assessment and recorded on the C & F assessment record. The full care plan should be developed at the first CLA review and recorded on the chair's report. • Care plan cannot be substantially altered unless discussed first at a statutory CLA review. 	<p>Care Planning</p>
<p>Health (Regs 5 & 7) CLA must have a health assessment and their health plan included in the care plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial health assessment to be carried out by Camden's Medical Officer within 28 days of the child becoming looked after and the health plan made available at the first CLA review • Review health assessments to be carried out by the CLA health nurse or GP every 6 months for children under 5 and annually for children aged 5 and over • Recommendations from the assessment to be included in the health plan which is part of the care plan and reviewed at each CLA review 	<p>Health Care Assessments and Plans health-care-planning.pdf</p>
<p>Education (Regs 5 & 10) LAC must have a Personal Education Plan and local authorities should avoid disrupting their education in years 6, 10 and 11</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any new school place must be identified within 20 working days of becoming looked after • CLA must have a Personal Education Plan (PEP) and the process must be initiated within 10 working days of becoming looked after and the outline plan available at the first CLA review • The PEP process, including the PEP plan, is accessed via the e-PEP system available at: https://epeponline.co.uk/camden • Social workers should liaise with the Virtual School Head around the PEP process 	<p>education-care-planning.pdf</p>
<p>Permanence planning (Reg 5) CLA must have a permanence plan in place by the 2nd CLA review</p>	<p>Once a child becomes looked after, the case should be referred to the Permanence Planning Clinic for advice on the best permanence option and for planning around achieving this permanence plan</p>	<p>Permanence Planning Guidance</p>
<p>Visits (Regs 28-31) CLA should be visited at their placement and the regulations set out the frequency and conduct of visits and what action should be taken following visits</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First placement visit to take place within 7 days of placement then at intervals of every 6 weeks for the first year • Visits to be scheduled in advance using the MOSAIC visits function • Child to be seen (and seen alone or awake where appropriate) at every visit • A record of each visit to be made on MOSAIC. • Concerns to be raised immediately with the IRO and social work supervisor 	<p>Social Worker Visits to Looked After Children</p>
<p>CLA reviews (Regs 32-38) Care plan to be reviewed at regular intervals with the review chaired by an IRO. The regulations set out the frequency and conduct of reviews, the role of the IRO and implementing decisions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An IRO is allocated to each child as soon as they become looked after and will chair CLA reviews • First CLA review is held within 1 month of the child becoming looked after, then at 3 months then every 6 months • Social workers should liaise with the IRO and the CLA Business Support Officer for support in making arrangements for and sending out invitations to review meetings 	<p>Looked After Reviews</p>