

Quality Standards and Practice Guidance for a Child in Care Plan and Review

Quality Standards

1. Every child/young person in Care must have an up to date Care Plan.
2. When a child/young person is to be accommodated under S.20 of the Children Act 1989, the Care Plan should begin to be completed where possible before the child comes into Care.
3. In all circumstances, the Plan should be completed within 10 working days of the first placement.
4. Children/Young People and parents should be involved in the completion of the Plan and their views on the Plan recorded.
5. Children/Young People should have a copy of their Plan, where age appropriate.
6. Parents/carers and foster carers should have a copy of the Plan.
7. Where the Plan is for a child/young person to return home, an assessment must be completed/updated, prior to this Plan being implemented, considering how the risks presenting prior to the young person coming into care have been addressed/changed. This Plan must be endorsed by the Team Manager and the IRO should be consulted.
8. Every child should have a plan for permanence by the time of the second review. Where this is not the case, the IRO must inform the Service Manager and agree a timescale for the completion of this Plan.
9. The review section needs to be completed at least three working days before the statutory review and must be read and referred to by the IRO's.

Practice Guidance

Plan section

One of the key purposes of the Care Plan, as set out in the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations 2010, is:

'To provide clarity about allocation of responsibilities and tasks in the context of shared parenting between parents, the child's carers and corporate parents and to ensure actions lead to improved outcomes.'

Needs identified

This column needs to address each identified need from the most recent assessment of the child/young person, using the Assessment Framework. i.e. health, education, emotional and behavioural development, identity, family and social relationships, social presentation and self-care skills.

The Care Plan is the overarching planning framework to which other Plans are linked.eg. health and education needs are covered by the Health Plan and PEP. These linked Plans should be cross referenced in this column. (i.e 'Health- please see Health Plan')

All other needs in this column should be specific and succinct, arising directly from the assessment. Family and social relationships should cover contact arrangements.

Action to meet needs

It is important that actions relate directly to the need identified. What has to happen so that this need is reduced?

It is also important that these actions are achievable. Where actions are to be undertaken by parents or young people, they will not be helped or engaged by actions that seem beyond their capacity.

Involving parents and young people in writing the Plan is a really helpful way of ensuring that actions that are needed to be undertaken by them are ones that they feel they can achieve and are signed up to.

For actions that are to be undertaken by other professionals/agencies, communication with them is essential, to ensure that what is written into the Plan accurately reflects the work they will be doing with the family and/or with the carers.

By whom?

The person or people responsible for the actions should be named. This will show clearly who, and how many, people are involved in working with the family and/or carers.

Children and young people, when asked about services they have received, tell us that one of the things they find difficult is having to tell their story to different people over and over again. When they have a social worker, children/young people value being able to build a relationship with them over time.

Parents/carers report the same views. Frequent changes of social workers can often hamper progress and can lead to families being disengaged or resistant.

Naming the professionals involved in the Plan is an important way of monitoring the continuity of relationships, and conversely, alerting those working with the family to possible disruption and fragmentation of the Plan when there are a number of changes of personnel.

By when?

The starting point for completing this section is that progress should be apparent by the first CIC review. If the tasks identified in the 'actions' column are very unlikely to have been achieved, at least in part, by the first review, then the actions are too broad or unrealistic and need to be amended.

A quality standard is that a permanence plan should be in place by the second review, so timescales against actions should be set with this in mind.

So in this section, state when work is to start, with what frequency, (if appointments are involved) and put in the first review date. We should avoid the use of the word 'ongoing' in this column as it does not give the young person or the parent an accurate enough description of how progress will be measured.

Outcomes (what will be different for the child/young person?)

This is an essential part of the Plan and should be completed for every need identified.

The question to be considered is; 'If nothing is expected to be different for the child/young person, in terms of their emotional health and well-being, their behaviour, their family and social relationships, why are the needs and actions in the Plan in the first place?'

As with the other columns, it is important to ensure that the outcomes for the child are SMART. An improvement in the child/young person's presentation, demeanour, daily life experience, needs to be seen, but expecting an overnight transformation is neither realistic nor helpful when working with children/young people, parents and carers.

Identifying smaller, tangible indicators that life for the child/young person is improving within the timescale set out in the Plan is more likely to lead to positive and sustained outcomes for the child/young person over time.

The review process

- 1.This guidance should be read in conjunction with the flowchart for the CIC Plan and Review.
- 2.The Review section comes after the Plan.
- 3.When the Plan is first completed, leave the progress section of the Plan, and the Review section, empty.
- 4.One week before the CIC Review, fill in Progress achieved column (or edit if second or subsequent review).
5. Fill in the review section
6. Manager finishes and saves.

7. Send to the IRO three days before the Review meeting
8. After the Review meeting, open up a new Plan and Review record.
9. View last and grab the Plan. Update the Plan to include agreed actions from the Review
10. Manager adds comments
11. The Plan and Review form sits open until one week before the next review meeting.

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