Practitioner Guide to Reviewing a Child's Plan

This guidance has been written to assist practitioners undertaking a Meeting in relation to reviewing a Child's Plan. It is informed by:

- Children Act 1989 (legislation.gov.uk)
- Review of children in need - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
- One minute guide: Leeds Practice Model
- Working together to safeguard children 2023: statutory guidance (publishing.service.gov.uk)
- Practice Standards for Children Social Workers and Managers

The key aims of the guidance are to ensure that:

- Meetings are arranged timely
- Meetings bring together family members, the child (when appropriate), supporters/advocates and those professionals most involved with the child and family to share information, assess risks and to formulate an agreed plan of management and support services, with the child's welfare as its centre
- Where parents are separated, and there is shared care or regular contact with a separated parent, a meeting ***should explicitly include both parents, unless to do so would increase risk****.* Where both parents have parental responsibility (PR) there should be a presumption that each parent has the information they need to exercise their PR and, if necessary, make arrangements to safeguard their children

Best Practice

The welfare of the child is paramount. Meetings in relation to a Child's Plan can take many guises – whether this is a Team Around the Child/Family Meeting, Child in Need Meeting, Child Protection Conference or Core Group, or Child Looked After Review, as examples. All plans need to consider the holistic need of the child/young person including risks outside the home (Roth). If there is an identified risk, then the Risk Matrix Toolkit should be used as a tool to identify the level of the risk and further planning of safety.

Parental Consent: Once it is determined that a Meeting is required and there is parental consent, the Meeting will usually be carried out by the Lead Professional, who should invite or seek the views of the child, parents/carers, and any service providers. At any point, parents/carers withdraw consent the practitioner should discuss this with their team manager at the earliest opportunity to discuss next steps.

Punctuality: Be on time, prepared, and confident of your abilities. Remain focused on the child's needs and keep to timescales. A draft plan (which is developed from an assessment, this could be from an Early Help Assessment, a Child and Family Assessment or a report for a Conference/CLA Review) should be present for discussion and development at the Meeting.

Diversity: Consider any learning needs and disabilities of parents, carers, or children. Consider if parents need an advocate to support them. Be aware of language barriers and ensure an interpreter is present to ensure effective communication. This is to ensure everyone can participate and give their views including children/young people if they are attending. Take account of a child/parent/carer identity including but not limited to, ethnicity, gender identity, religion, culture, disability including those that are invisible

Multiagency Professionals: It is important to identify which multiagency professionals are working with the child/parent/carer and if consent has been gained to invite them to the meeting for information to be shared and a plan of how everyone can work together to support the child. If a professional feels that there is no role for them as part of the plan, a clear narrative should be recorded to as to why they will no longer attend meetings. There should also be a clear narrative recorded as to ensuring how they can become reinvolved with the child and family if an emerging need is identified. The Meeting is a shared responsibility between multiagency professionals. It will be difficult to chair a meeting and take notes. Therefore, if you are in a meeting where there is not a dedicated note taker, arrange who will take the notes at the start of the meeting. This is a shared responsibility and all professionals involved should take turns to be note takers.

Child/young person focused: Ensure that the meeting is focused upon the child/young person's needs and how things are impacting them or may impact them in the longer term. You can consider the adults needs and how this is impacting upon the child/young person but do not allow this to divert the attention away from the child/young person.

Reviewing the Plan: The Child's Plan should have clear SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely) actions. Identify each action and ask for feedback from professionals and parent/carers. Challenge and question as you review the plan and discuss clear timescales to avoid drift and delay. The meeting must consider the needs of the child and family and work towards formulating a clear plan. The family should play a key role in decision making. If no agreement can be reached, disagreements should be noted, along with any action proposed. Be professionally curious. Be positive about progress and think about barriers that could be preventing progress from taking place and hold professionals and parents/carers to account. Give positive feedback to parents/carers when positive change has been achieved. Practitioners should consider the use of Rethink Formulation to support understanding of why previous interventions did not sustain positive change. This will prevent trying similar interventions again, which can result in the risk of families disengaging if these do not work.

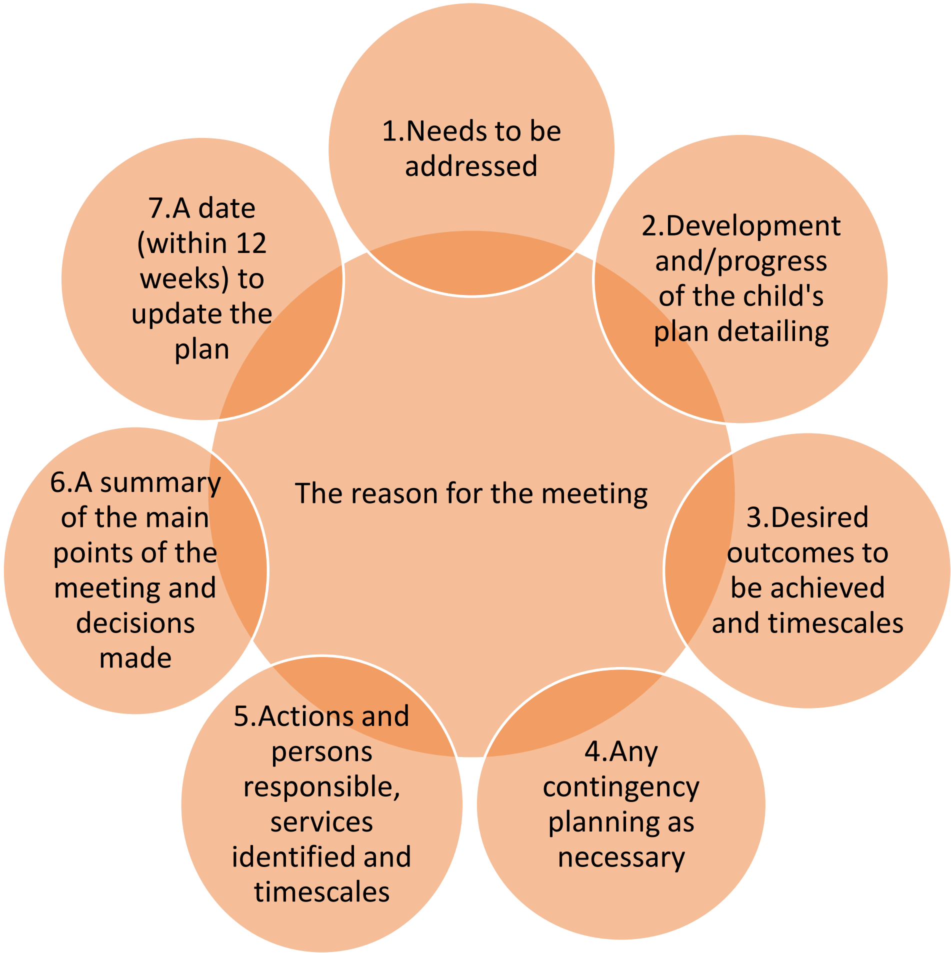
Be clear, open, and honest: All multiagency professionals need to be clear and to the point about their information. Ensure that information is evidence based and if/why they have ongoing worries or concerns. Check if there is any additional information that needs to be shared or acted upon.

Summarise the discussion: Ensure that you clarify with the group who is undertaking what in relation to actions and timescales. Remember this is a shared responsibility.

Set a date: Child's Plans should be reviewed regularly. This links to Practice Standards. The multiagency group may decide that more frequent or less frequent reviews are required. The timescale for the Meetings needs to be endorsed by the group, and by the lead professional's manager within Case Supervision. If there are significant changes in the family circumstances, there needs to be clear consideration of whether an early review should take place**.** Practitioners should ensure that a date is set for the next meeting and a copy of the draft Child's Plan is given to all participants at the end of the meeting. The actions and notes from the meeting are sent to everyone involved within 5 working days.

Longer term considerations: *Children who have been subject to a Child in Need Plan for more than 9 months will be reviewed by a Service Delivery Manager with responsibility for the team. Management oversight will be recorded with regards to whether the plan remains appropriate to meet the child's needs and any remedial actions required on the case.*

Meeting Minutes should include



About the Document			
Title	Practitioner Guide to Reviewing a Child's Plan		
Purpose	To assist in practice for practitioners undertaking a meeting when reviewing a child's plan		
Replaces	Child in Need example 1&2		
Author & Role	Hannah Dumphy (Practice Improvement and Development Manager)		
Approved by	Donna Williams	Date approved	March 2024
Frequency of Review	Annual		