

**VISITS TO CHILDREN**  
**“SEEN ALONE” GUIDANCE**

Following a meeting to explore the low reporting figures on reports of children seen alone, managers are issuing guidance that must be followed in regards to seeing children alone and the recording guidance.

It is essential, in terms of safeguarding children and evidencing that they are safe, that they are seen alone and that this is recorded correctly.

There will be regular auditing to ensure that this guidance is being followed.

**Children on Child In Need (CIN) plans**

- All children aged 4 and over who are on CIN plans need to be seen alone a minimum of once every 6 weeks. With many cases a higher frequency of visits will be required; the visiting pattern should be discussed in supervision and clearly recorded. Statutory visits should be written up as “Statutory Visit (Child In Need)” from the drop down box. If the children have not been seen alone, then it is not a Statutory CIN Visit and should not be recorded as one.
- This includes No Recourse cases; the children have been assessed as being CIN and should be visited as such.
- If one of a sibling group is the main focus of our involvement but the other children on CIN plans, they still need to be seen alone.

- Any other visits, for instance to the parents, or unannounced visits where children aren't home are to be recorded as "Home Visits or Unannounced Visit"
- The requirement of children seen alone is that the main carers are not present. If it is appropriate to see a sibling group together then the box should still be ticked for "seen alone".
- Children under 4 years should be observed with their parents (noting their attachment to the main carer) and social workers should attempt to talk to toddlers to observe their communication and engagement. These observations should be noted.
- Where the child/young person is not seen alone and the social worker has concerns this should be reported to the team manager. Non-engagement from parents should be clearly recorded in the case file and discussed in supervision, to decide the next steps e.g. implementing the hard to engage policy.

## **Child Protection Plans**

- All children over the age of 4, who are on CP plans need to be seen alone at every Statutory Visit, if any of the children are not present then further visits need to be made to ensure that all of the children on plans have been seen alone, within the visiting timescales.
- Visiting should take place at the frequency agreed at the Conference or Core Group Meeting.
- If unsuccessful visits take place these should be recorded as home visits and not Statutory Child Protection visits.

- This can include some visits where children are seen at school or out of the home but at least every other visit should be at home and the bedrooms must be seen. These visiting arrangements should be discussed in supervision.
- Children under 4 years should be observed with their parents (noting their attachment to the main carer) and social workers should attempt to talk to toddlers to observe their communication and engagement. These observations should be noted

### **Children on CP Plans that become Child Looked After (CLA)**

- When children on CP plans become CLA the requirement for CP visits remains until the first review, which will take place within 28 days of their move.
- The first visit after the child becomes Looked After is a Statutory CLA visit, there will not be another requirement for a CLA visit for a further 6 weeks (unless Reg 24 status – see below) therefore, whilst still on CP plans children should continue to be visited in accordance with the CP visiting schedule and these should be recorded as “Statutory Child Protection” visits.
- Visits for Regulation 24 placements are weekly until the 1st Child Care Review (CCR) review and 4 weekly until Fostering Panel. This will result at times in a need for 2 case notes to be created to show the CP and CLA statutory visits. You can record one case note in full with either status and then create another case note referring the reader to the full recording. This will allow both statutory visits to be shown.
- Both CP and CLA visits need to be recorded while the CP plan is in place.