



Meeting the Needs of Looked After Children: an Aide-memoire

Remember a looked after child is YOUR child and the Council is their corporate parent, with the same responsibilities as any parent to keep their children safe and well, with a good start in life!

Links to LAC and Care Leavers Strategy 2014-2017	Statutory requirement	Frequency
<p>Improve placement stability and permanence</p>	<p>Statutory assessments and visits – <i>any visit at which the child is spoken to on their own may be considered a statutory visit, there must be regular visits to the placement and the child's room seen</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An assessment should be completed prior to any child coming into care, and repeated when there is any significant change in the child's needs or circumstances (<i>including changes of placement / needs etc.</i>) - All requests for accommodation need to be presented at a planning meeting chaired by Service Manager. Service manager/s will make recommendations and a decision will be made by Head of Service (in emergency)/Integrated Placement and Education Panel (IPEP). - Where placement has been made in emergency a planning meeting must be held within 48 hrs to consider child's needs and plans. If the placement made is external then this needs to be presented to IPEP with a copy of minutes. - Statutory visit on day one of the placement - Visit within 1 week of placement - No more than 6 weekly intervals for the first year of the placement - After 1 year in the placement visits should be 6 weekly or every 3 months if the placement is a long-term placement (expected to last until the child is 18) <p>*It should be noted that visiting requirements differ according to the type of placement;</p> <p>Connected Persons or a child living with parents on interim care order</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pending approval at least weekly until the first review then no more than 4 weekly until the carer is approved - Post approval as with all other placements <p>Placement with Parents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Within 1 week of placement and then weekly until first LAC review - Intervals of no more than 6 weekly <p>Placement with Parents (under Reg. 19-emergency placement before assessment completed)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Weekly visits until first review - Subsequently not more than 6 weekly or completion of the assessment
	<p>LAC reviews</p>	<p>A LAC review should be booked as soon as the child comes in to care and the IRO must be kept informed and consulted with regard to any significant event between reviews.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1st Review (for new LAC) – Within 20 working days - 2nd Review – Within 3 months (90 days) - 3rd Review and after – Every 6-months (183 days)



		<p>It should be noted that the statutory guidance for different placements can vary...</p> <p>Placement with Parents (under Reg. 19)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - First review within 10 working days of move
	Placements Out of Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Service manager/s will make recommendations and a decision will be made by Head of Service (in emergency)/Integrated Placement and Education Panel (IPEP). Papers to the Integrated Placement and Education Panel 5 working days before Panel date - Head of Service to agree placement 'out of area' to meet the child's needs - Director of Children's Services (Delegated to Head of Service) to agree any 'distant placements' i.e. any placement not within the area of any adjoining local authority. - Assessment of appropriateness to be completed within 5 days prior to the placement of children out of area or at a distance to the authority setting out why the placement is considered to meet the child's needs. If emergency assessment of appropriateness to be completed within 5 days. - Completion of a movement form within 24 hours to initiate notification of the 'host authority' and professionals (i.e. health and education colleagues)
	Children placed for adoption	<p>When placed for adoption the child remains in care until an Adoption Order is made and the visit and review schedule changes</p> <p>Statutory visits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Visit one to be completed within the first week of placement - Visits every week until the first LAC review - Visit schedule to be determined by the LAC review OR at least 6 weekly for the first year and 3 monthly after <p>LAC reviews</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1st visit – 20 working days after placement - 2nd visit – within 3 months - 3rd visit and after – 6 monthly
	Ceasing to be looked after	<p>Where a child (not eligible) ceases to be looked after because they return home, the child will be a 'child in need' and a plan must be drawn up to identify the supports and services which will be needed by the child and family to ensure that the return home is successful. Where possible and appropriate, a review should be held in order to ensure that the plan to be drawn up will be appropriate and that all agencies concerned appreciate and act on their roles and responsibilities when the child is no longer looked after. (<i>Note: Where an Eligible child ceases to be looked after this needs to be agreed by DCS and the child will have a care leaver status dependent on their duration in care</i>)</p>
Promote safeguarding and reduce risk factors	Children subject to harm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A Strategy discussion must be held where there are concerns a child has been harmed, and S47 enquiries made by Stockport or the LA where the child is living; where there is an allegation against a carer/ professional there must be a referral to the LA Designated Officer (LADO)
	Children missing (looked after children)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consider if child is "absent" or "missing" (no unauthorised absence should exceed 24 hours and if it exceeds 6 hours it should be reconsidered) - Parent/Carer to report to the police immediately - Safe and well check within 24 hours and Risk assessment completed - Independent Return Interview within 72 hours
	Child sexual exploitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Any child considered to be at risk of CSE should have a risk assessment completed and a strategy put in place; those at medium or high risk should be referred to MASE/ CSE meeting



	Offending	- Remands to local authority accommodation or youth detention accommodation should be treated as 'new s20 looked after cases' and both statutory visits and LAC reviews be completed in accordance with this
Good education and support to improve educational attainment	Personal Education Plans (PEPs)	- The PEP should be initiated as part of the care plan before the child becomes looked after. In the case of an emergency placement the PEP should have been initiated within ten working days . The PEP should be developed and available for the first statutory review meeting of the care plan (28 days after entry to care or accommodation). - Reviewed and updated each term
Improved physical health and emotional well-being	Annual health assessments	-The Initial health assessment should take place and the written report be completed before the child is first placed by the local authority. If this is not reasonably practicable, then the assessment and the Health Plan should be complete before the first review of the child's case (within 28 days of becoming looked after) - Children aged under 5 years should then have two health assessments in a 12-month period - Children aged 5 years and over should then have one health assessment every 12-months
	Immunisations	All immunisations should be up to date (in line with health requirements) and are checked via a child's LAC review
	Dental checks	Children should have regular dental checks and this means seeing the Dentist once every 6 months and this is checked via the child's LAC review
	Emotional health and well-being	Children aged 4 to 16 years (inclusive) should have an up to date 'Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire' (SDQs) that is completed by carer to inform the annual health assessment each year
Engagement, participation and information for looked after children	Participation of children and young people in LAC reviews	- Children must be consulted about their care plan/ pathway plan and supported to participate by various means in their review - The IRO must see and/or speak with the child around every review meeting - Children should be informed about their rights to complain and given information about advocacy and the Children's Rights Service
Leaving care and transition to adulthood	Rights and entitlements	- Options for a child to leave care and return to family or become legally secured with their carers should always be considered. This should be discussed before and at their LAC review. - looked after children will be allocated a personal adviser from 16 years to work alongside the social worker in preparing for adulthood - When looked after children leave care usually at 18yrs and become Former Relevant they will transfer to Leaving Care Team and receive on-going support / or services from a personal adviser (refer to procedures)

For further information please refer to policies and procedures