



Leeds
CITY COUNCIL

Children and Young People's Social Care

FOSTERING SERVICE

GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE TO ENDING PLACEMENTS

- There is a recognition that children / young people placed with Level 4 carers, may have complex needs and behaviours. Many children and young people will have already experienced multiple unplanned placement moves often in a sudden abrupt way,
- Level 4 foster carers accept that with training and support they are required to manage difficult and challenging behaviours.
- Foster carers should share with their supervising fostering officer (SFO) and the child's social worker at an early stage difficulties / problems as they arise. This will then enable supports to be put into placement before breakdown point.
- It is only after considerable efforts have failed to resolve problems or a high risk of personal injury and emotional trauma to self or other members of the household that a scheme foster care should request to end a placement early.
- At this time it should be recognised that the foster carers' energy and resource levels will have already been stretched to the utmost limits and the foster carer will have very low personal reserves.
- In these circumstances if the placement is not working and the foster care and / or C&YPSC feels the placement must end then an emergency planning meeting should be called.
- The emergency planning meeting should involve the foster carer, social worker and team manager, and SFO and fostering team manager (all parties need to work together).
- This planning meeting will formalise the placement ending, accept the need for an alternative placement for the child and seek to clearly identify the appropriate type of resource needed, ie foster carer or residential place.
- A copy of the notes of this emergency planning meeting will need to be sent promptly to the Placement Desk and Resources Team Manager.

In order to achieve a planned ending and a planned move on in the best interests of the child / young person, C&YPSC needs to accept the responsibility in providing an alternative placement as a matter of priority after receiving a copy of the notes of the emergency planning meeting.

- It is vital to then look at an intensive child care package of support to maintain the current placement and enable the child / young person to move on in a planned way.
- It has to be recognised and accepted that this will be an extremely difficult and stressful time for the foster carer to continue to live with the child and manage the difficulties within their own family home.

- At this stage also the child / young person will be living within a difficult and stressful situation and will also need extra help and support.
- A survival strategy for both the foster carer and the child / young person with compensating support systems will need to be agreed for the remainder of the duration of the placement until another appropriate placement is identified and available.

This may include:

Support for Foster Carers

Assistance from social workers, SFO's, other foster carers.
Therapeutic consultation.
Regular agreed planned respite breaks.
Day care support.

It should be recognised that other foster carers' family members may need help at this time.

Support for the Child / Young Person

Extra social worker visits, time-tabled and agreed.
Building on the child's / young person's own networks and contacts, ie people already known to the child, family, friends, school contacts, previous foster carers, IV etc.
Resource centres: time out for the child.
Individual support workers: time out for the child.

It should also be recognised that other children in placement will need help at this time and their social workers should be made aware of the situation in order that this may be given.

- The specialist schemes do share similarities but also significant differences which will effect the planning for children moving on.
- For remand scheme placements, where a young person has been absent from placement for seven days, a decision to end the placement will be made according to the agreed criteria.
- To move a child there needs to be a specific resource available. The Fostering Service will endeavour wherever appropriate to identify an appropriate alternative carer to provide the move on placement.
- Where an appropriate move or resource has been identified, that resources should be ring fenced and protected against other emergency placement needs.
- There will be occasions when no suitable alternative placement is identified and therefore access to another placement will need the approval of the Resource Team Manager, or Head of Service (Resources).
- It will be the responsibility of the social worker and SFO to be proactive in tracking progress of the request for an alternative placement so that timescales can be identified. The foster carer needs to be kept fully informed and should meet again with the social worker and principal SFO no later than two weeks to review the progress of the planning move and intensive child care package of support.
- A disruption meeting chaired by a non line managing Children's Service Manager may be required following the ending of the placement.

(Updated Nov 2008)