

Children's Social Care

Practice and
management standards



Contents

4 Introduction	5 Why do we need practice standards?	7 Key messages
8 Electronic case records	10 The child and family assessment	15 Child Protection Enquiry (S47)
18 Initial Child Protection Conference (ICP)	21 Child Protection Plan	24 Child in Need
27 Child Looked After	34 Leaving care	38 Reviewing Officers
42 Fostering	44 Connected Persons and Special Guardians	46 Adoption
48 Youth Offending Service	50 Good Practice in Case Recording	

Please note:

All references to 'child' or 'children' means 'children and young people' and 'parent' means 'parent or carer'.

52

Management standards

55

Supervision

56

Quality assurance:
recording of practice

58

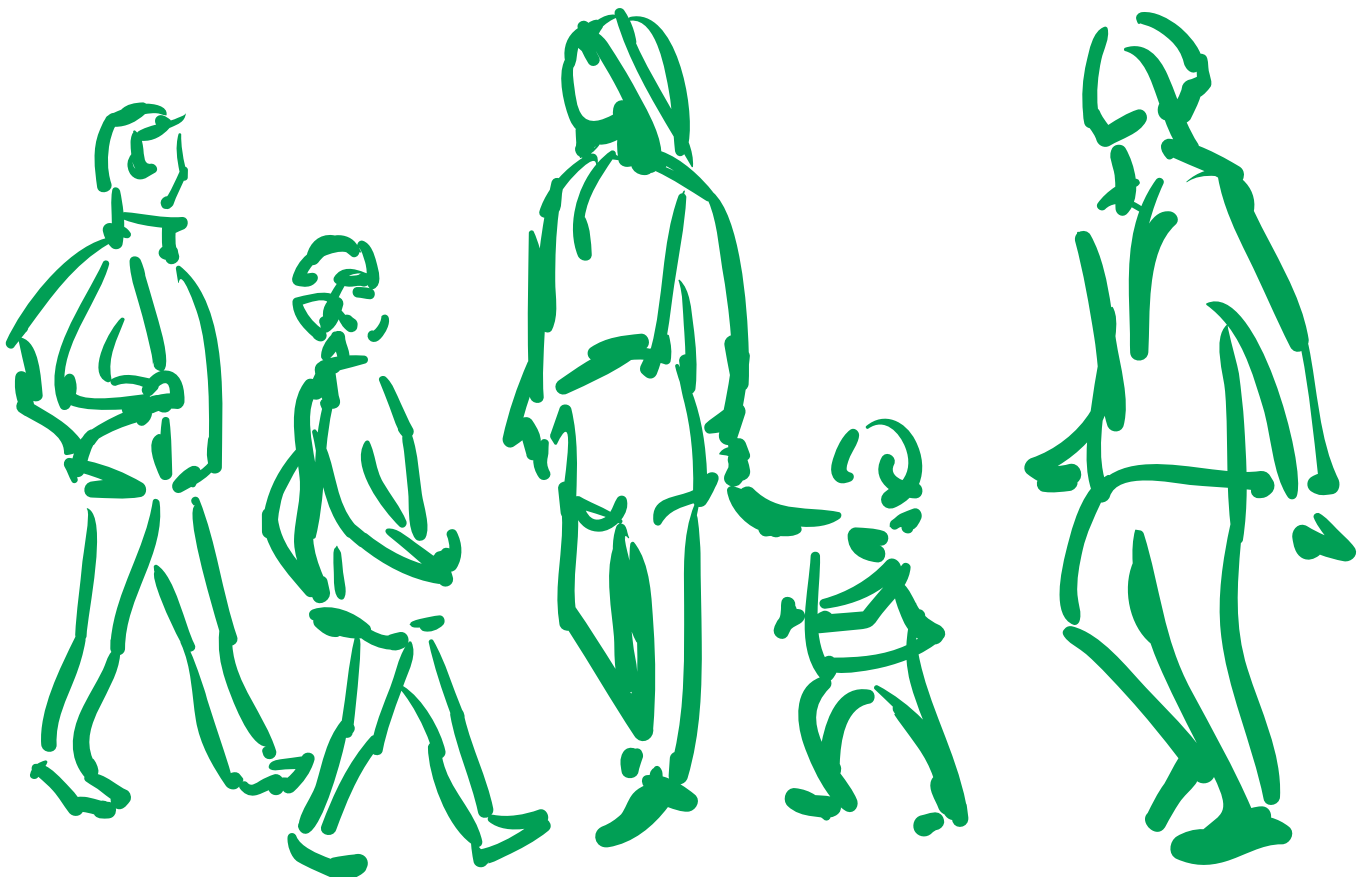
Continuous professional development

59

Continuous service improvement

60

Acronyms



Introduction

I am very proud of the standard of social work in Bromley and our continued ambition for excellence.

Our practice standards are the lynch pin to understand what is expected of us and what our children and families can expect from us. They give clarity, guidance and ambition to ensure that Bromley delivers excellent services and professionalism to the children and families we serve.

It ensures a line of sight for Social Workers, managers and senior leaders and is something we all embrace and understand.

- Director of Children Education and Families

Practice standards are essential to help practitioners and managers know the standards we expect when serving the children and families of Bromley. I believe when we as practitioners and managers know what we are expected to deliver and how, this creates clarity, understanding and a commitment to providing high quality services.

My conversations with many of you demonstrate your commitment as practitioners and managers to deliver on the Bromley Excellence. We will do so by embedding the Bromley Relationship Model, which helps us to show children and their families we care by being respectful with our language, in our approach and in what and how we record why we are involved in their lives.

These practice standards will provide clear guidance to help you practice safely and confidently and as you do so, I encourage you to continue to have ambitious outcomes for children and their families.

- Principal Social Worker

Why do we need practice standards?



All practitioners and managers have clear guidance on their roles and responsibilities.



Consistent approach to the way we work with children and their families.



Clear understanding of what is expected of practitioners and managers that is reflected in the Knowledge and Skills Statement and the Professional Capabilities Framework.



Confident professional service that is respected by families and other professionals that can champion the needs of children through their work and challenge others, where necessary to promote the welfare of the child.



A set of standards that quality assurance work can measure against and address quality practice.

The following resources support these Children's Social Care Practice and Management Standards:

REAL Values and Behaviour Competencies

Children's Social Care Supervision Standards

DISCUSS appraisal scheme

Children's performance framework

Children's social care procedures manual (Tri-X)

Children's procedures, in addition to Tri-X

Bromley Relationship Model Framework

Assessment and direct work tools

Social Work England professional standards

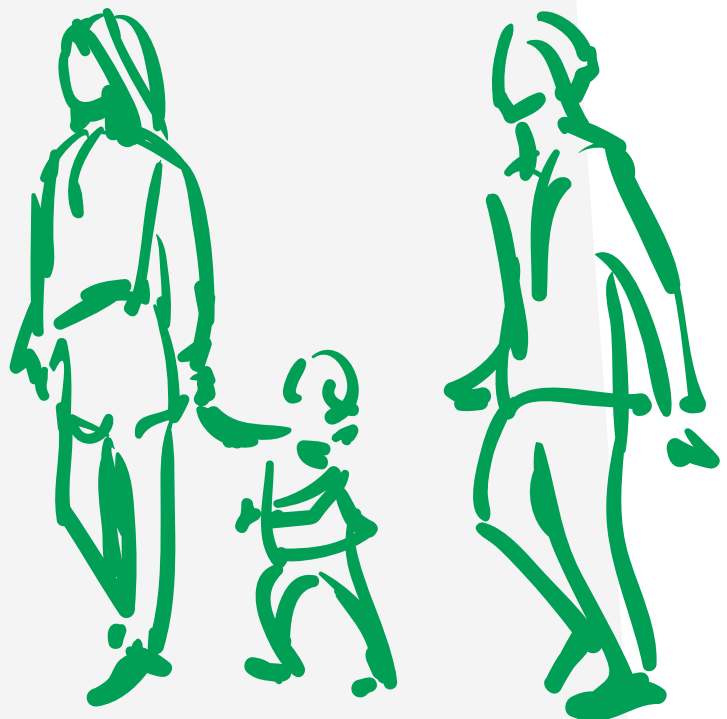
Every social worker should know the answer to:

How does the child feel?

What does it feel like living in the family?

How is our intervention impacting on improving the child's circumstances?

How do we know this?



Key messages



We have an ambition that all children and families who access Children's Social Care Services receive the right level of support at the right time.



We provide high quality social work and support services from the earliest opportunity and throughout their journey, from early intervention through to leaving care.



We focus on the safeguarding and welfare of children and their families in everything that we do as practitioners.



We focus on developing strong relationships with our families and we work in a partnership based on equality, invest in our relationships, operate in an honest and open way, and encourage high challenge and high support.



We will work with the whole family network to identify the strengths and areas where there is a need for improvement, working with the family and partners to manage and reduce the identified risks, doing all we can to keep children safe.



We undertake work with children and their families with identifiable outcomes to make sure that we can measure progress and keep the children at the centre of our work.



We use the management standards in this document to make sure that consistency in practice continues across the service and the quality of the service provided is of an excellent standard.



Our Early Intervention and Family Support Service (EIFS) operates within the spirit of these Practice Standards but operationally there are differences. The full EIFS Practice Standards are in Tri-X:

<https://bromleychildcare.proceduresonline.com>

Electronic case records

Children and their families should expect the following to be on their electronic case record:

Allocation decision

The team manager's record of the following at the point of allocation:

- what is happening for the child
- the desired outcomes
- the actions to be carried out by the allocated practitioner with clear timescales

Assessments

- An assessment on each child which is up to date and regularly reviewed.
- This must be authorised by the Team Manager.

Impact

- The Team Manager's observations of the progress made, the outcomes and impact achieved, and the difference we have made.

Chronology

- A chronology of significant events that includes risk and protective factors.
- These must be updated **every 3 (three) months**.

Intervention

The agreed plan of appropriate intervention which could be:

- A Children in Need meeting
- A Child Protection Conference
- A Core Group meeting
- A Child Looked After review
- A Pathway Plan review
- A Team Around the Child meeting

This must be reviewed with the child and their family, the practitioner in supervision and partner agencies.

Management oversight

- A record of supervision and management oversight **every 4 (four) weeks**.
- This should include any changes for the child, analysis, comments and evidence of audit activity.

Case summary

A **3 (three) monthly** case summary by the practitioner outlining:

- a brief description of the child's journey
- the present situation
- any risks and strengths
- progress for the child
- critical analysis and forward planning
- contingency planning

Supervision

- A supervision summary completed by the Team Manager **every 6 (six) months** to ensure a routine analysis of the situation for the child, opportunities to create change, involvement of parents, carers and the network of family and friends.
- This should also include hypothesis, risks, strengths, progress, and outcomes being achieved along with contingency planning.

The voice of the child

Children should be offered a variation of approaches to fully understand their views and lived experience, including direct work that is appropriate to their learning, age and stage of development.

The child and family assessment



The assessment focuses on the child's experience and considers the impact factors.

The assessment will:

- be succinct
- be time managed appropriate to the needs of the child and their family
- have a clear analysis to include various perspectives and contexts
- include planning, incorporating contingency planning

What should be included in assessments?



Consent

The consent of the family must be given to allow for information from the child and family assessment to be shared. This includes for the information to be shared with EIFS, including the plan of support.

The parent must be asked for consent to undertake agency enquiries, unless there is a clear safeguarding issue that makes this inappropriate. The manager will record this decision.



Parental and child involvement

The family must know about, and be actively involved in their assessment.

Children, depending on their age and understanding, will be supported by practitioners to understand reason for involvement and be actively involved in their assessment.

All assessments must be completed in a timely way, in line with our procedures and statutory guidance. These will be recorded on the child's electronic case record.

Parents will be asked for permission for their child to be seen and spoken to alone with their views, wishes and feelings recorded. If the child cannot be seen alone, the professional reason and rationale must be articulated within the assessment and management agreement should be recorded by the Team Manager on the electronic file. All members of the household will be invited to be included in the assessment, including all adults and children:

- living in the home
- that spend significant periods in the home
- who have childcare responsibilities for supporting the family

Parents and partners living away from the family home - such as fathers or mothers not living with their child and extended family - will be identified and their role and involvement in the family understood. This will be included in the assessment in an appropriate way. The analysis of this should be clear along with any reasons as to why they are not included in the assessment.

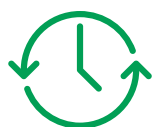


Family characteristics

The assessment will identify the child and family's:

- race
- ethnicity
- gender
- disability
- religion
- communication needs

Any factors that may impact on the child because of the differing needs of the family are to be considered to ensure equality.



Chronology of life events

A chronology of significant events is completed.

This must be continually updated at periods of **every 3 (three) months** or less for all children open to children's services.

Any key developments or significant events in a child's life need to be recorded within 24 hours of the event occurring in their case file and added to the chronology.



Professional input

The personal details for each child should have details of the name, profession, organisation and contact number of all professionals within the family network and those who are in the child's life.

The worries, thoughts and views of other professionals will be listened to and clearly evidenced in the assessment.



Previous involvement

The history of previous involvement must be:

- read and understood
- used to inform the current thinking



Risk and protective factors

Risk and protective factors are identified, analysed and assessed with the rationale for the decisions being made.



Assessment tools

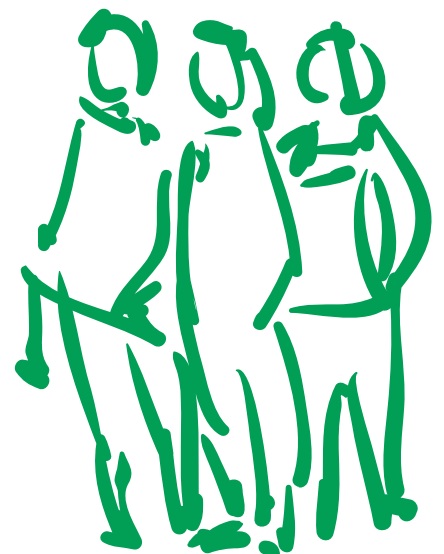
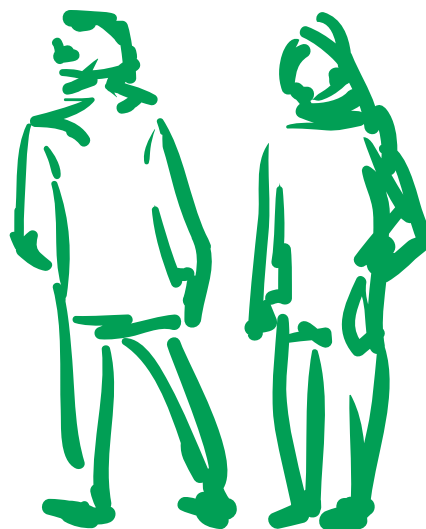
Assessment tools will be used where appropriate. Their use will be identified in recordings and the resultant analysis is used clearly in the assessment.



Decision making

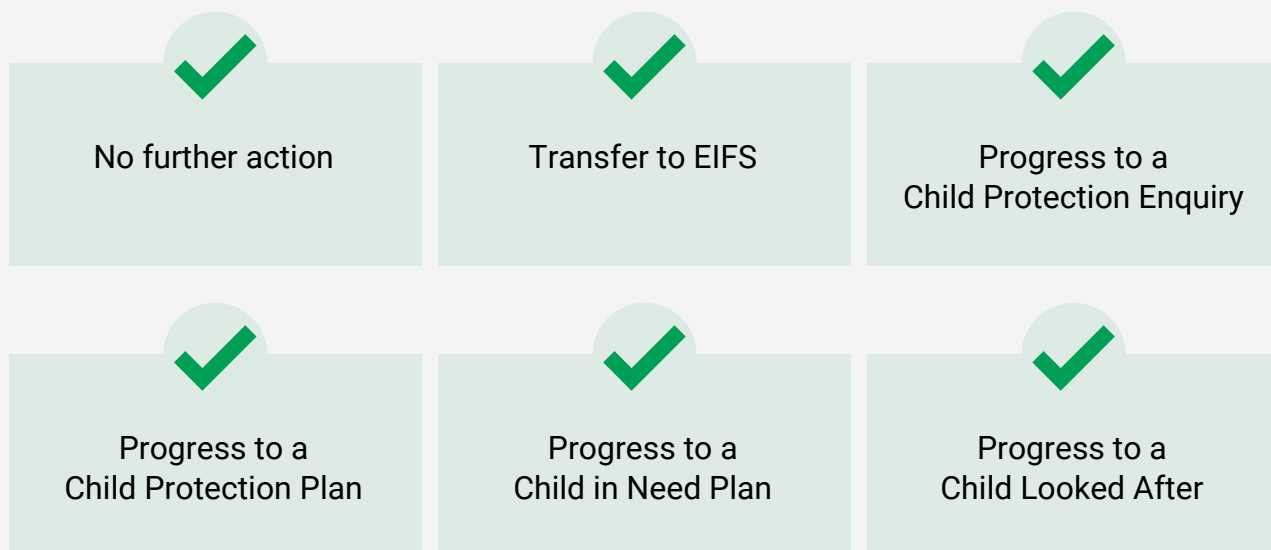
Assessments, safety plans and contingency plans must be shared with the family and their feedback sought and recorded with evidence that the family understand and agree to these.

The assessment will be read and quality assured by the Team Manager and feedback provided as part of the authorisation process.



Assessment outcomes

Child and family assessments are completed to understand the needs of the child and to determine the level of support they may need. The outcomes from an assessment are:



Next steps

Letters should be sent by the professional to the family to inform them of the outcome of assessment. In exceptional circumstances where a letter cannot be sent to a family, this must be authorised by the Team Manager and recorded on the child's file.

If the outcome of the assessment is no further action, consideration should be given to transferring to EIFS. There should be a clear plan of work that is needed along with contingency planning in the event new issues arise or when change is slow. A visit to the family for a handover must be undertaken at the earliest opportunity before the family are formally closed to Children's Social Care.

If the case is to be closed, supported by other agencies or stepped down, the professional must inform the family of the contact details of a lead professional.

A transfer or closing summary should be placed on the file along with any safety plans or contingency planning. This will be authorised by the Team Manager.

Child Protection Enquiry

Section 47



Professionals must follow the practice guidance outlined in the London Child Protection Procedures (updated 2020) and Working Together (2018) to ensure statutory roles and responsibilities are achieved.



London Child Protection Procedures
www.londoncp.co.uk



Working Together
www.workingtogetheronline.co.uk

Concerns of significant harm that indicate a Child Protection Enquiry (Section 47) is required will be clearly recorded and fully discussed with the Team Manager and with clear management oversight.

The Section 47 will be undertaken by a qualified and experienced Social Worker.

Strategy discussion

A strategy discussion will be held **within 24 hours** and must include at a minimum: Children's Social Care, the police, health services, education and the referring agency.

The meeting minutes must be clearly recorded with the reasons for the strategy discussion, brief history and information from other agencies. The record must also include decisions, risks, safety, roles and responsibilities. If an agency is not present, wherever possible, the Chair should include relevant information from missing partner agencies.

Checks with all relevant agencies will be undertaken and recorded on the Section 47 checklist and placed in documents on the electronic system.

Interim safety plan

An interim safety plan will be considered and put in place. It will include the plan for the enquiry and arrangements for the seeing the child. This will be fully recorded.

The history must be considered regarding patterns of behaviour and analysis along with safety planning.

The child

The child will be seen and spoken to alone and their presentation, views, wishes and feelings recorded. All other children within the household will be considered as part of the investigation and their views recorded, along with any risks that they may be experiencing.

Risks

Risks will be identified, analysed and the necessary risk assessment tools will be used.

Completion

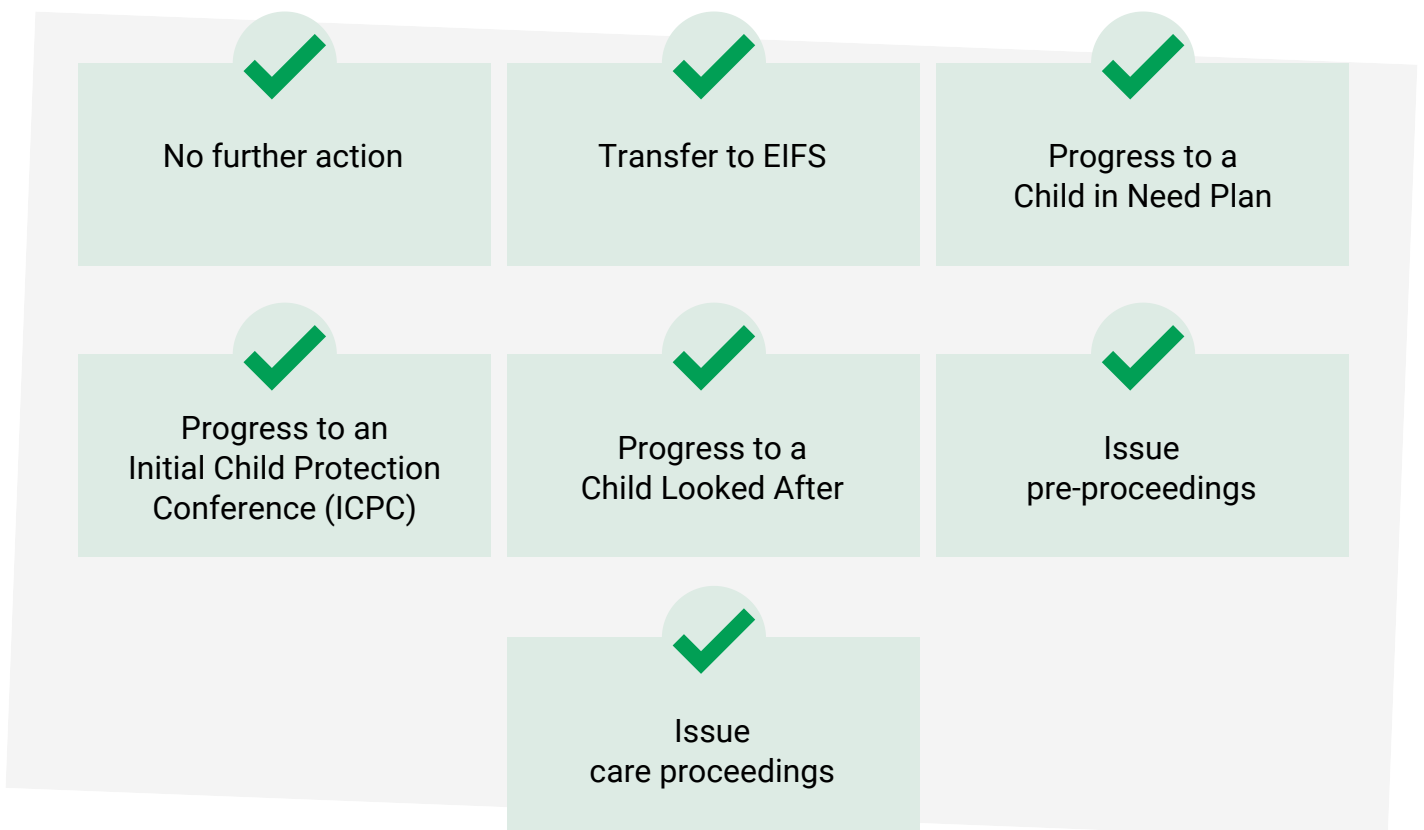
The Child Protection Enquiry will be completed **within 10 (ten) working days**, the final strategy discussion must include the key agencies involved with the child, including Children's Social Care, Police, Health and Education.

This will be clearly recorded and will include any missing information with the reasons as to why, further planning, analysis and contingency planning.

The views along with the strengths of the family will be considered and used to inform any further decisions.

The Section 47 investigation will conclude following completion of evidence-based assessments. A judgement will be made about the level of the risk of harm and whether it is significant. This will determine the action required to safeguard the child.

The outcome will be discussed with the Team Manager. The management decision is recorded in relation to the next stage, such as:



Initial Child Protection Conference

ICPC



The ICPC must be convened **within 15 (fifteen) days** of the initial strategy discussion.

The conference should consider the support the EIFS could offer for unborn children and children under the age of 5 and the service invited to the ICPC if appropriate.

The report will need to be shared with the family **at least 2 (two) days prior** to the child protection conference taking place and their comments will be recorded. In the exceptional circumstance where this may not be achievable, then the manager will need to record the reasons why this did not happen, prior to the child protection conference taking place.

The report will be sent to the Reviewing Officer (RO) chairing the ICPC **at least 2 (two) days before** the conference (unless convened in an emergency) and the report must be signed off by a Team Manager.

The Social Workers report to the ICPC must include:

- Summary of the reason for the referral and information analysed as part of the investigation.
- Chronology of significant events, including risk and protective factors.
- Child's current and past developmental needs.
- Parents capacity to keep child safe from harm and respond to needs.
- Child's views, wishes and feelings, including any other children within the household.
- Analysis of risk and protective factors, the impact on the child and the parents understanding of these factors.

The parent and child's view

The parents will be prepared for attending the ICPC. Dependent on the child's age, their stage of development and level of understanding, consideration will be given to whether the child should attend for at least part of the ICPC. If the child does not attend, they will be encouraged to contribute in an age appropriate way.

The child's views will be recorded in the social work report, if appropriate, providing there are no safeguarding issues that would prevent this from being safe for the child.

The Reviewing Officer (RO) will also seek the child's views independently. The Quality Improvement Service will refer the child for advocacy for an independent voice for the child to be available. On receipt of the referral the advocate will contact the parent and, if consent is not received, the referral process will end.

Outline Child Protection Plan

The outline Child Protection Plan will be devised using the Bromley Relationship Model at the ICPC. It will address:



what needs to change
to protect the child



the outcomes
to be achieved



who will do what
and when

Next steps

At the ICPC, the RO will:

- set the date of the next ICPC
- set the date of the Core Group meeting
- agree the core group members

The RO will be responsible for escalating any non-engagement by partners in the Child Protection process. These will be escalated to the Group Manager in the Quality Improvement Service for tracking and monitoring in accordance with the Dispute Resolution Policy.

The RO will lead a mid-way review after the first review conference and between all future reviews until the decision is made for the Child Protection Plan to end.



London Child Protection Procedures
www.londoncp.co.uk

Child Protection Plan



Following the ICPC, the outline Child Protection Plan and the allocated Social Worker must be recorded immediately on the electronic system.

Core Group

The first Core Group will be held **within 10 days** of the ICPC and it will be used to:

- put details on the outline Child Protection Plan
- agree outcomes to be achieved
- set realistic targets to monitor progress
- ensure that the family and child understand the plan and what it means

Visits

Visits to a child with a Child Protection Plan will take place **every 2 weeks** (10 working days).

The child will be seen at each visit on their own as appropriate and can take place in a range of settings best suited for the child. Their views of what life is like for them will be identified including the use of a range of direct work tools in accordance with their age and stage of development. This will be recorded on the electronic system.

If for any reason a child is not seen alone, or if the parents or carers refuse for a child to be seen alone, the Team Manager must record the reason for this and make an assessment with regard to potential risks and outline the next steps.

Children can, and should, be seen more frequently if this is needed and there should be unannounced visits to the family home to see the child as part of the Child Protection plan.

Visits will be purposeful and will consider the identified risks, safety planning, a review of the child protection plan recommendations along with contingency planning.

Building on progress

Work with parents and carers needs to be collaborative and meaningful, with progress clearly recorded, any discrepancies in the support offered to parents and carers needs to be reflected in the case recordings with the reasons for the discrepancies.

Parents need to be given the opportunity to reflect on progress made during Core Groups and Review Child Protection Conference meetings.

Home conditions

The role of children's fathers separated parents and any partner living in the home will be assessed and understood.

The home conditions will be assessed at visits with the bedrooms, kitchen, toilets, bathroom and the living areas seen as part of the Child Protection Plan.

The Core Group

The multi-agency Core Group will meet regularly. Initially **10 (ten) days** following the ICPC and then **6 (six) weekly** thereafter.

There must evidence that the Child Protection Plan and its recommendations have been openly discussed with the parent and their views recorded.

The record of each Core Group will be shared with the family and all professionals involved in the Child Protection Plan.

Review Child Protection Conference (RCPC)

Reports for a RCPC will be prepared in advance and shared with the parents and the child **at least 5 (five) days** before the RCPC, and their views on the report will be recorded.

The report will be with the RO **5 (five) days** before the RCPC. It will outline the original concerns and the progress against the Child Protection Plan. It will concisely update the RCPC members on the current situation for the child and family.

Progress of the Child Protection Plan will be regularly reviewed in supervision and progress recorded. If progress is not being made, the barrier, contingency and timescales will be considered in supervision and recorded.

A Legal Gateway Panel will be fully considered when a child becomes subject to a Child Protection Plan. If the required changes have not been met by the third RCPC, a Legal Gateway Panel will be considered by the Team Manager and the family will be informed.

Child in Need



A Child in Need plan is the outcome of a child and family assessment which indicates that a child requires a child in need service to promote their safety and wellbeing.

The Child in Need meeting should be held in an environment that ensures that family and the child (dependent on age) can easily attend, such as their family home, school or children and family centre.

Child in Need meetings

The meetings will be chaired by the Social Worker and must:

- be multi-agency
- be focused on improving outcomes for the child
- include working with the strengths in the family

The final Child in Need meeting will be chaired by a Team Manager.

The decisions and minutes from the meeting will be recorded on the electronic system.

Building on strengths

The strengths will be measured to enable the family and professionals working with them to show the progress in achieving outcomes.

They will seek to answer the following question:
how do we know things are improving?

The Child in Need plan

The Child in Need plan will be agreed at the meeting. All participants to the Child in Need plan will sign the plan and the plan will be uploaded to the child's electronic case record.

Everyone involved in the meeting will receive a copy of the Child in Need plan **within 10 working days** of the meeting.

Reviews of the plan

The Child in Need plan should be reviewed at least **every 6 weeks**.

If satisfactory progress is not being made, the practitioner and manager should discuss the next step and identify what the best support is to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the child is prioritised and achieved.

Visiting the child

A child with a Child in Need plan will be seen **every 20 working days**, or as directed by the Team Manager.

The progress of the Child in Need plan should be reviewed through supervision which takes place **every 4 weeks**. A supervision record of progress and barriers to progress will be placed on the file with the contingencies and recommendations by the Team Manager.

Child in Need Panel

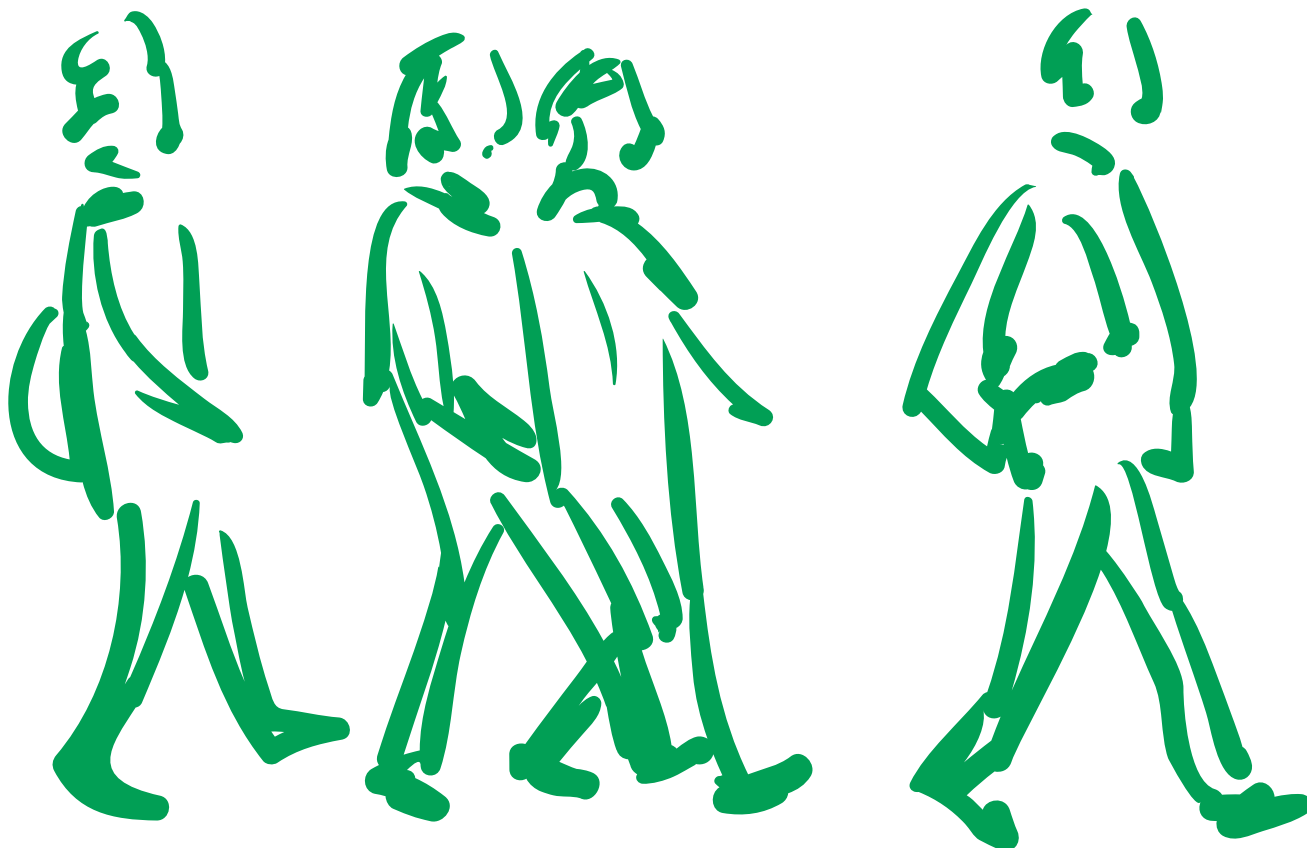
The Child in Need Panel is held once a fortnight.

The Panel will review Child in Need plans to ensure our intervention remains necessary for the child.

Next steps

When it is agreed that enough progress has been made, the case will be considered for transferring to EIFS with the last Child in Need meeting becoming the first Team Around the Child meeting.

Alternatively, it could be decided to end involvement with no further action.



Child Looked After

(CLA or LAC)



When a child becomes Looked After, an up to date assessment of their needs should be in place.

This can be the Child and Family Assessment or Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) age assessment). All children where there is a dispute around age will need to be assessed appropriately.

If it is an emergency or unplanned admission, the assessment will be completed **within 15 (fifteen) working days**.

Informing the child's placement

This assessment will inform the selection of a placement to meet the child's needs. A placement with siblings will be considered when planning.

The placement planning meeting will be held within 5 working days to agree how the placement will meet the child's needs.

When a child needs to come into care, a placement with family and/or friends will be considered and a Connected Persons assessment completed, if appropriate.

Consideration of a Family Group Conference will be part of the assessment and planning. If this does not take place, this must be recorded and agreed by the Team Manager.

When a child is placed, all the information needed to care for the child will be shared with the carer immediately at the point of placement. This will include family history and a view on the vulnerability of the child.

Visits to the child

The child will be visited **within 3 (three) working days** of coming into care or having a change in placement and then **every 4 (four) weeks**.

Visits may need to be more frequent at different points in the child's journey in care and should be based on developing a positive and meaningful relationship with the child.

Where a child is settled and has achieved permanence in their placement consideration can be given to a reduction in social work visiting to a minimum of **not less than 8 weekly**.

Any change to the visiting patterns will be set out in the child's care plan and be discussed at the looked after review with a rationale for the increase or decrease in visiting patterns. This recommendation will be sent to the Head of Service in writing for authorisation which will be subsequently recorded on the file.

Contact

Arrangements for contact with parents and other significant family members will be made at the time of the child coming into care. This will be regularly reviewed.

Contact will always be in the best interest of the child. It will be supported and supervised as necessary. Consideration will be given at each review as to whether the plan remains suitable in terms of frequency and duration, and whether it remains beneficial to the child.

Risk of going missing or child sexual exploitation

Children who are missing from care will be reported to the police by their carers **immediately** if they do not return home to the placement at the agreed time.

For older children, the risk of going missing and child sexual exploitation will be assessed and monitored through regular multi agency strategy meetings. If there are concerns identified, the child sexual exploitation risk assessment should be completed and the child referred to the MEGA panel in consultation with the Atlas team. For children placed outside the borough, the child should be referred to the MASE/MEGA equivalent in the host authority.

A risk assessment and safety plan will be completed and authorised by the Team Manager.

Children who go missing

Multi agency strategy meetings will be put in place as soon as the child has been missing for 24 hours.

Once the child has been missing for 14 days, the strategy meeting will be chaired weekly by the Head of Service with briefings to the Director of Children's Services.

Once the child has been missing for 28 days, the strategy meetings will be chaired by the Assistant Director with briefings to the Director of Children's Services.

Coming into care

Children will be given a 'Coming into Care' pack. This explains why they are in care and the contact details for their Social Worker.

The child will be supported by their Social Worker to access the Linkin Bromley website containing information about being in care and support available.



Linkin Bromley
www.linkinbromley.co.uk

They will also be offered information about the Living in Care Council and the opportunities to become involved in participation projects.

When a child becomes looked after, the business support based within Quality Improvement Service will be informed **immediately** for the allocation of a RO.

All other professionals involved with the child will be informed of the child's legal status **within 5 working days**.

Life Story Book

A 'Life Story Book' will be completed for all children looked after.

The Social Worker will:

- ensure direct work is completed to support children to understand why they have been received into care
- commit to undertaking ongoing life story work to record significant events and achievements and important changes throughout their journey in care

Life Letter

A 'Life Letter' will be written to the child at every transition point - including change of team, change of Social Worker and when a child ceases to become a child looked after.

This will ensure the child:

- receives a summary of significant events in their lives
- has their achievements recognised and challenges acknowledged
- has the rationale for decisions made about them explained in an age and developmentally appropriate manner

Care planning

An up to date care plan will be recorded on the electronic system **within 10 days of placement**. This will include the child's needs.

It will consider the intended outcomes, and the placement and service provision that is needed to meet the child's needs.

For children in our care their aspirations for the future, including their interest, views on careers and how they want their lives to develop, should be included in the care plan from early teens.

Permanency planning

At the point of the second review (if not in care proceedings) the child must have a permanency plan included in their care plan.

All children coming into care will be subject to a Permanency Planning meeting chaired by the Head of Permanence Service.

If a child is subject to care proceedings, the Permanency Planning meeting must be held immediately following the first review to ensure that the court timetable is met.

There will also be a Final Care Planning Meeting held for all children subject to care proceedings to determine our final care plan for the child.

Once the child has become subject to a full care order and the case transfers to the Children Looked After Service, the Permanency Planning Meeting will be chaired by the Head of Children Looked After and Care Leavers.

Team managers will chair Achieving Permanence meetings **every 6 (six) months** on all cases. All agencies supporting the child will be invited to explore the support needed to identify and work towards the Permanence Plan.

The progress of this planning will be tracked and monitored by the Head of Service at the Permanency Planning Meeting.

Health

An initial health assessment will be requested and completed **within 20 (twenty) working days** of coming into care and annually until leaving care.

Education

A Personal Education Plan (PEP) meeting will be completed **within 10 (ten) days** for all children looked after even those who are not in education at the time.

Following the child attending a school or college, a further PEP meeting will be held **within 20 (twenty) days**. This will be subsequently reviewed in each school term for a total of three PEP review meetings every academic year until the child is 18. The PEP record is authorised by the Virtual School Practitioners.

Reviews

Children will be encouraged to participate in the planning of their review. This includes being offered the opportunity to chair their own review if they wish to.

Children will be given the opportunity to speak to their RO on their own. The RO will visit children wherever possible in advance of their review.

Parents will be encouraged to participate in the review process and their views recorded.

The Social Worker and relevant other professionals will provide a written report for the review. This will be with the RO **5 (five) days before** the review. The Social Worker will ensure that the review and care plan has been discussed with the child, family and their carer **20 (twenty) days before** the review.

The RO will be informed of any changes in the child's circumstances at the time they happen. A new child looked after review will be set in accordance with the timescales.

The RO will contact the child between reviews to:

- check on the progress of the plan
- gather their views
- understand what is going well for them
- explore if there are any issues, in line with the RO role and responsibility

Any significant changes to a child's care plan or legal status should not be made without first discussing it at a review and with a RO.

Stability meeting

If a placement is at risk of breaking down, a Stability Meeting will be held and chaired by the Team Manager or Group Manager. This will look at ways of maintaining the placement or seeking an alternative placement that will better meet the needs of the child.

Pathway planning

A pathway plan will be started when the child is **15 years, 6 months**. It will be reviewed by the RO as part of the statutory review.

When a child begins transitions into the care leaving stages, their pathway plan will include:

- Key events chronology
- Copies of -
 - Their birth certificate
 - Their national insurance number (applied for at 15 years old)
 - Their passport (if appropriate)
 - Their immigration status
- Liaison with our Housing service to consider future engagement and housing opportunities
- Consideration of what the child is going to need to successfully transition to adulthood

Staying Put arrangements

Should the child remain in their foster placement, consideration should be given to a Staying Put arrangement.

A Living Together Agreement should be completed to set out expectations within the home. Any child remaining in a fostering household with other children should be subject to a DBS check and a risk assessment.

All Staying Put arrangements will be presented to the Post-18 Panel which is chaired by the Leaving Care Group Manager or the Head of Service for Children Looked After and Care Leavers.

Leaving care

(Care leavers)



Pathway planning

A pathway plan must be created when the child turns **15 years and 6 months** and will be developed with the child. It must be reviewed at **no less than at 6 (six) monthly** intervals.

Eligible children will have their pathway plan reviewed by the RO at the children looked after reviews which will continue until they are 18 years old.

When a child becomes a relevant care leaver, the pathway plan will continue to be reviewed once **every 6 (six) months**, or whenever there are significant changes in their circumstances.

The child's case will transfer when they are 18 from a Social Worker to a Young Person's Advisor (YPA). They will advise, assist and befriend the child and support them to successfully transition to independence.

The pathway plan will address:

- Nature of and level of contact and personal support to be provided
- Health and development needs and how these should be met
- Arrangements to support the child in further education, training or employment
- Arrangements to support the child in sustaining and developing family and social relationships
- Arrangements to ensure the child is properly equipped for taking greater responsibility for their independence
- An assessment of the child's financial needs
- Arrangements to ensure the child is living in suitable accommodation
- The child's identity needs and how these should be met

UASC

Pathway planning for UASC must include Triple Planning to ensure they are prepared for a range of outcomes.

Where possible, the child will be supported to regularise their immigration status prior to their 18th birthday.

If the child has their asylum or immigration case declined by the Home Office and become 'Appeal Rights Exhausted', they will be offered a Human Rights Assessment to determine how their future needs can be met either through repatriation or charitable sector support.

Visits

Visiting will take place **every 8 (eight) weeks** for relevant and former relevant children, unless the frequency is changed in agreement with the child, authorised by the Team Manager and is meeting the child's individual needs. All visits are to be recorded on the Care Leavers Visiting Form.

Post 18 panel

All care leavers will be presented at the Post 18 Accommodation and Placement Panel on a regular basis until they have successfully moved into their own tenancy.

This panel is supported by colleagues in housing and the placement providers to offer challenge around suitability of accommodation, preparation towards becoming tenancy ready and effectiveness of key work support.

Education, employment or training

All care leavers will continue to receive support around education and training.

For children turning 18 and in full time education, they will receive a PEP supported by the Virtual School in the spring term to plan their post 18 education or training plan. The education plan forms part of the pathway plan and will continue to be reviewed by the YPA on a **6 (six) monthly basis**.

For young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) their case will be presented at the NEET panel **within 2 (two) weeks** of becoming NEET. This will give consideration for a multi agency plan to move back to ETE (education, training or employment). This plan will be tracked by the ETE worker in the Leaving Care Team (LCT) in a mid-way meeting with the YPA and the child. The case will return to panel on a **3 (three) monthly basis** until they gain employment or training.

Health

All care leavers will be encouraged to engage with health services and will be supported to access any specialist services, including mental health, substance misuse and counselling.

All children aged 18 will receive a leaving care health summary from the CLA Health Team via email. This will set out any major illness, treatment history, allergies and immunisation history. The summary will also contain electronic links to relevant health services such as smoking cessation, health eating and sexual health.

Transition to adult services

If the child is eligible for adult services, a referral will be made to the adults' team for a Care Act assessment.

Joint visiting will be undertaken to ensure a smooth transition between children and adult services.

Cases of children with complex needs will be presented at the multi-agency transition panel for consideration of the most appropriate resources and services to meet their needs.

Post care support

All care leavers will be given priority places on activities running in the Children and Family Centres that they feel would be of benefit to them.

The leaving care team will continue to offer advice, assistance and befriending until the age of 21, or up to 25 should they request it.

All children will be invited to participate in the Change for Care Leavers Forum who actively contribute to recruitment and training of staff, including attending the corporate parenting forum.

The Leaving Care and Active Involvement team will also continue to offer group work in line with the needs of our children, for example a theraplay group for our young mums, NEET group or a moving to the LCT group.

Every child who has had their case closed will be written to annually to remind them of their entitlement to a service. The Leaving Care service will provide social events throughout the year to encourage them to build social networks and offer social support.

Reviewing Officers



Children with Child Protection Plans

In preparation for the ICPC, the RO will develop insight into what life is like for the child by reading and understanding:

- the strategy discussion minutes
- the final strategy meeting
- the social work assessment
- relevant history from the child's record

Where a child has previously had a Child Protection Plan, the RO will, following the conference, complete a summary analysis of the history of the previous Child Protection Plan compared with the current risks to the child.

The purpose of the conference is to explore:

Is there evidence that this reduction in risk has been and continues to be sustainable?

RO's will have pre-conference meetings with Social Workers for all children with a Child Protection Plan **at least 5 (five) days before** the conference to ensure the child's voice will be represented.

24 hours before the conference, the RO will ensure that the conference will be quorate. If it will not be, they will alert the family and professionals that they have deferred the conference and a new date will be provided.

The RO will meet with the child and their parents **at least half an hour before** the conference.

Child Protection Conferences always start with the RO reading out a confidentiality statement and an equalities statement.

The RO must always ensure that the original risks leading to the ICPC are actively considered during each review conference.

The RO will ensure that all professionals contribute to the conference discussion, and specifically, to the recommendation regarding whether the child needs a Child Protection Plan and, if so, under what category. The RO will ensure that the Child Protection Plan is developed with the family and professionals during the conference. This will be recorded and distributed to all invitees to the conference **within 24 hours**.

Where there is a difference of opinion regarding whether the child should be or continue to have a Child Protection Plan, these will be recorded on the conference record. The RO has the final decision.

The Group Manager will review any professional dissent and give a formal response in writing to that professional **within 7 (seven) days** of the conference.

A contingency plan, specific to the child's circumstances, will always be included.

A summary will then be sent to the relevant Team Manager and Head of Service to assist in further decision making regarding the child and whether a referral should be made to the Legal Gateway Panel.

ROs will pro-actively follow the progress of a Child Protection Plan. They will ensure that midway reviews take place so that any problems in the effectiveness of the plan can be considered with the Social Worker and Team Manager.

The midway review can also identify if:

- any drift or delay in progressing the Child Protection Plan
- the RO should raise a practice alert about this using the Dispute Resolution Protocol (DRP)

All overview and interventions by the RO must be recorded on children's electronic case record.

Should a child with a Child Protection Plan become looked after, the RO will maintain responsibility and continuity for that child to support and promote their needs and how their best interests can be met.

The Social Worker will complete an updated Child and Family Assessment for each conference and identify one of the following outcomes based on the assessed needs of the child:



A child is no longer subject to a Child Protection Plan and requires a Child in Need Plan to continue the work to promote the child's safety and well-being and ensure sustainability in the future



If the decision is made to end the Child Protection Plan at the conference, the RO chairing the conference will ensure that there is an outline Child in Need Plan in place and set the first Child in Need meeting at 10 (ten) days and identify the professionals involved and their roles and responsibilities



A child continues to have a Child Protection Plan as they remain likely to be at risk of or continue to be at risk of significant harm.

Children Looked After

The RO will:

- ensure the child is the focus of all they do and that the child's wishes, views and feelings are given full consideration
- be satisfied that each placement is meeting the needs of the child
- ensure that each child knows who their RO is and how to contact them between reviews, which will be clearly recorded in the record of the review
- ensure there is a pre-meeting with the child before each review and that a pre review meeting is held with the allocated Social Worker **at least 15 (fifteen) working days** before each review, which will be recorded on the child's file
- ensure that each child understands their care plan, their rights and entitlements
- ensure the child understands how an advocate can help them at each review, which will be recorded in the child's My Review record
- consider each child's eligibility for referral for an Independent Visitor and alert the Team Manager where a referral for an Independent Visitor could be considered

Care plans

Each review process will have the necessary information available and people attending, to ensure clear, robust and informed recommendations are made about the progress of the care plan. The RO will ensure all care plans and decisions will have a timescale attached that meets the child's needs and a named person to implement them. The RO will ensure recommendations of reviews are shared to Team Managers within **5 (five) working days** of the review and the Team Manager will respond to confirm whether they agree **within 72 hours**.

If these recommendations are not agreed by the Team Manager, they become binding decisions to be updated in the child's care plan **within 10 working days** of the review. In the absence of a Team Manager the Head of Service is responsible for responding to the recommendations as outlined above within 72 hours.

The RO will challenge when there is drift in care planning or if in their professional view the care plan is not consistent with the best interests of the child. The RO will raise a practice alert using the Dispute Resolution Protocol and will ensure this and the outcome are recorded on the child's file.

The RO will complete mid-way reviews after the second review until the child is no longer looked after. For children aged 5 and under mid-way reviews will not be held, as there will be **3 monthly reviews** to ensure permanency plans are achieved.

Fostering



The Council will only place children in placements that have a 'Good' or 'Outstanding' Ofsted rating.

The Commissioning Manager will review all the fostering agencies on a **12-monthly basis**.

The Commissioning Service will convene monitoring meetings at quarterly intervals to ensure that the agencies who are commissioned fully comply with Fostering Regulations.

The Council foster carers will be visited at least **once every four weeks** and a record of this visit is sent to them **within 3 working days**.

All Council foster carers will:

- have an up to date annual review, visit, and medical and DBS checks
- be supported with a comprehensive training programme based upon individual development plans which are updated annually as part of the annual review

Private Fostering

The Private Fostering practice standards are contained within the Private Fostering procedures.



Private Fostering procedures

https://bromleychildcare.proceduresonline.com/p_private_fost.html

Connected Persons and Special Guardians



Children will have an allocated Social Worker from the Children Looked After Service and monthly visits.

Children will be supported in school through the Virtual School with a PEP.

Children will have on-going health medicals, annually and more regular where needed.

Children will have access to support through Care Leavers services.

Foster carers will have an allocated Social Worker and monthly supervision with a Supervising Social Worker.

Foster carers are required to attend regular training.

Foster carers have access to support groups.

Foster carers are required to have annual reviews and attend fostering panel to further regulate them as foster carers.

Foster carers will receive fostering allowances for children in their care.

The Council will have Parental Responsibility. The foster carer will have some delegated authority, which will be explained and any significant decisions will need to be approved by the Head of Service.

Special Guardians

The Practice Standards for Special Guardians are contained in the Special Guardianship Policy and Procedure.



Private Fostering procedures

https://bromleychildcare.proceduresonline.com/p_fam_frien_care_pol.html?zoom_highlight=financial+support#provision

Adoption

Regional Adoption Agency



Coram Ambitious for Adoption is the first port of call for adoption enquiries on behalf of the Council and provides access to adoption support for all its adoptive families.



In addition to Bromley Council, Coram Ambitious for Adoption also provides adoption services for Hillingdon, Waltham Forest, Harrow, Redbridge, Bi-Borough, and the City of London.

The services provided through the Regional Adoption Agency include:

- recruitment and assessment of prospective adopters
- management of adoption panels, which take place in the 'hub' at Coram main office in Brunswick Square, London
- family finding for children
- adoption and post adoption support, which are provided by Coram staff in the 'spokes' situated in each of the local authorities

The Coram Ambitious for Adoption team provides a duty service for adopters and offers consultancy on adoption matters to social workers from the Referral and Assessment, Safeguarding, Children in Care and Court Teams.

The team also provide post placement and post adoption support, and a range of services for adopted adults and descendants.



Coram Ambitious for Adoption

www.coramadoption.org.uk/who-can-adopt/why-adopters-choose-coram

Intercountry adoption applicants

The function of assessment of intercountry adoption applicants is subcontracted to the Intercountry-Adoption Centre.



IAC – The Centre for Adoption

www.icacentre.org.uk

Youth Offending Service

(YOS)



A strong link between Children's Social Care and the Youth Offending Service is necessary to ensure an effective response to reducing offending by children who are of joint concern to the agencies.

The two services are within the same division which:

- allows for interventions to be considered by both service in relation to gangs or serious youth violence
- creates an expectation around practice sharing
- supports a strong interface between services to achieve good outcomes



Practice Standards

<https://bromleychildcare.proceduresonline.com/index.html>

Good Practice in Case Recording



- As part of our planning with children and families, adequate time to record the work with them must be catered for. Any event or contact will be recorded **within 48 hours**.
- Records will clearly show when a child has been seen, spoken to and their wishes and feelings included.
- Any direct work or assessment tools used will be identified and analysed.
- If interpreters, specialist workers or communication tools are needed, this will be clearly recorded.
- The records will tell the story of the child's journey. The purpose and outcome of any contact will be clear and analysed.
- Facts and opinions will be separated in the recording. Any relevant research or tools used will be identified with appropriate references.
- All records are respectful of the child and their family including education, communication, language, cultural, gender, sexuality, disability and diversity is celebrated.
- If information is provided by family/friends or other professionals, the records will include the person's name, contact details and their relationship to the child.
- Management oversight will be recorded on the electronic system including case discussions, supervision, management decisions and authorisations, together with the rationale for the decision made.
- Practice reviews carried out will be placed on the file with the required actions. The Head of Service and Team Manager will use supervision to ensure that any actions are completed and recorded. This will make sure that the case is of the highest standard.
- Section 47 agency checklists will be completed on the template and placed on the electronic system in documents.
- **Updating/addendum assessments at 6 monthly intervals** will be completed on all cases covering progress, outcomes, impact achieved and what difference we made.
- **Supervision summary at 6 monthly intervals** with a management analysis of the case and outcomes achieved.
- There will be evidence gathered and recorded in supervision of the Child Protection, Child in Need plan and/or Team Around the Child plan being addressed.
- Chronologies need to be continually updated monthly.
- Any key developments, such as significant events in a child's life need to be recorded within **24 hours** of the event occurring and should be reflected in case notes and as a chronology entry.
- The electronic record front sheet should have details of the name, profession, organisation and contact number of all Professionals, within the family network and those who are in the child's life. All children placed out of the borough will have a copy of the letter to the other local authority uploaded on the electronic system in documents.
- A closing/transfer summary will be completed on all cases and authorised by the Team Manager.

Management standards



Effective leadership sets the direction of an organisation, its culture and value system, and ultimately drives the quality and effectiveness of the services provided

Laming 2009: 2:1

The core values of the Council are:



These management practice standards will help managers build respectful and secure supervisory relationships, empowering practitioners to deliver on the Bromley Excellence through provision of reflective and robust supervision and management oversight.

Managers will be committed to create a culture of learning, where practitioners will be engaged in their continuous professional development to ensure we achieve ambitious outcomes for our children.

Managers are expected to support our practitioners to work closely and respectfully with children and their families to understand what may be happening in their lives. Managers are expected to use skilful questioning, professional curiosity, appreciative enquiry and hypothesis to help our practitioners make evidence-based and informed recommendations and decisions on how we should work with children and their families.

We know that when Children's Social Care start working with children, young adults and their families that their lives have reached a difficult place. Our experience and skills should help to make their lives better and, where possible, safer. Managers must make sure they make evidenced-based recommendations and decisions that aim to achieve improved outcomes for children and young adults.

All managers in Bromley (Team Manager, Group Manager, Head of Service, Assistant Director and Director of Children's Services) are responsible for ensuring that Children's Social Care consistently provides a highly skilled workforce and a high-quality service to children, young adults and their families.

To achieve this, the Council expects all managers to:

- Present and conduct themselves as professionals supporting and promoting good social work practice
- Always communicate clearly, respectfully and professionally which includes making sure our practitioners are aware of updates to service policy and procedures and quality assuring to ensure these are implemented into practice
- Ensure practitioners are working within an environment with a strong, supportive team culture, which understands the importance of a strong quality assurance framework and uses the expertise within the service/team to provide high-quality services
- Ensure our practitioners have manageable workloads in accordance with our caseload promise
- Regularly review Business Support systems and information sharing arrangements to ensure they effectively and efficiently support our practitioners professional practice
- Outline to our practitioners that only information relevant to the child and their family is to be recorded under their relevant section of the case management system
- Ensure all recordings are compliant with legal requirements namely General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2018
- Provide clear guidance on the information to be stored in the 'confidential' section of the case management recording system.
- Demonstrate effective and meaningful multi-agency collaboration and working to improve outcomes for children and their family
- Record all decisions made relating to children and their families.
- Review all assessments, reports, plans, visits and all records for children and their families to ensure they are of a high quality and are completed in a timely manner
- Complete supervision practice assurance stock takes to ensure our practitioners are receiving good quality supervision
- Responsible for ensuring that there are systems in place to monitor and review the performance of staff and provide protection, support and professional development for practitioners, so they can deliver the best possible service, as well as comply with service procedures and legal requirements

Managers across the service, including senior managers, Group Managers and Team Managers, have overall responsibility for ensuring that a good quality service is provided.

This should include:

- Ensuring a professional response from the initial referral to the closure of the case
- Overseeing good quality decisions about the type of response or investigation to be undertaken
- Ensuring the practitioner has the skills, competences and capacities to provide a high quality service
- Providing clear direction and setting priorities in the service
- Ensuring children's voices are heard and fully considered when implementing their plans

Supervision

Managers will evidence that regular quality supervision is taking place with all staff within the supervision policy standards.

Management advice and decisions are well evidenced and professionally sound in accordance with the supervision policy.

Recording of supervision demonstrates reflective practice in accordance with the supervision policy.

A supervision contract is in place and updated if the supervisor changes at the first new supervision session.



Quality assurance: recording of practice

Children and their families deserve and should expect to receive a high-quality service. By keeping records updated it ensures:

- that records can be accessed
- the needs of the children and their families are understood
- managers are able to help our practitioners consider the best way to provide help and support

Managers are responsible for ensuring:

- all children are allocated to a practitioner with a management oversight recorded **within 24 hours** of a referral agreeing that a child and family assessment is to be completed or **within 24 hours** of transfer to a new service area/team
- the exception is Early Help where all allocations are to take place **within 10 working days** of a transfer being agreed

Allocation of management oversight includes, but is not limited to:

- a reflective view of the child and their family's experiences resulting in Bromley Children's Social Care becoming involved in their lives.
- the outcomes we would want/need to see for the child and their families to be safer or have improved outcomes
- the next steps for the practitioner with timescales and when these will be reviewed

Ongoing management oversight includes, but is not limited to:

- reviewing previous next steps and the impact on the child and their family
- a reflective view of what life is like for the child and their family
- the views of the child, their family and their professional network

All personal details for the child and their families are updated on the case management system.

Chronologies must be updated **every 3 (three) months** and include significant events. Any new significant events are to be recorded **within 24 hours** of happening with a management oversight providing guidance/direction to the practitioner on next steps.

All professional agencies involved with the child and their family are to be recorded with full contact details to include name, role, organisation, contact number, email and address.

Cultural genograms must be recorded for each child and their family.

The wider family are included in assessments and plans, including members of the naturally connected network. Safety plans are developed with each child.

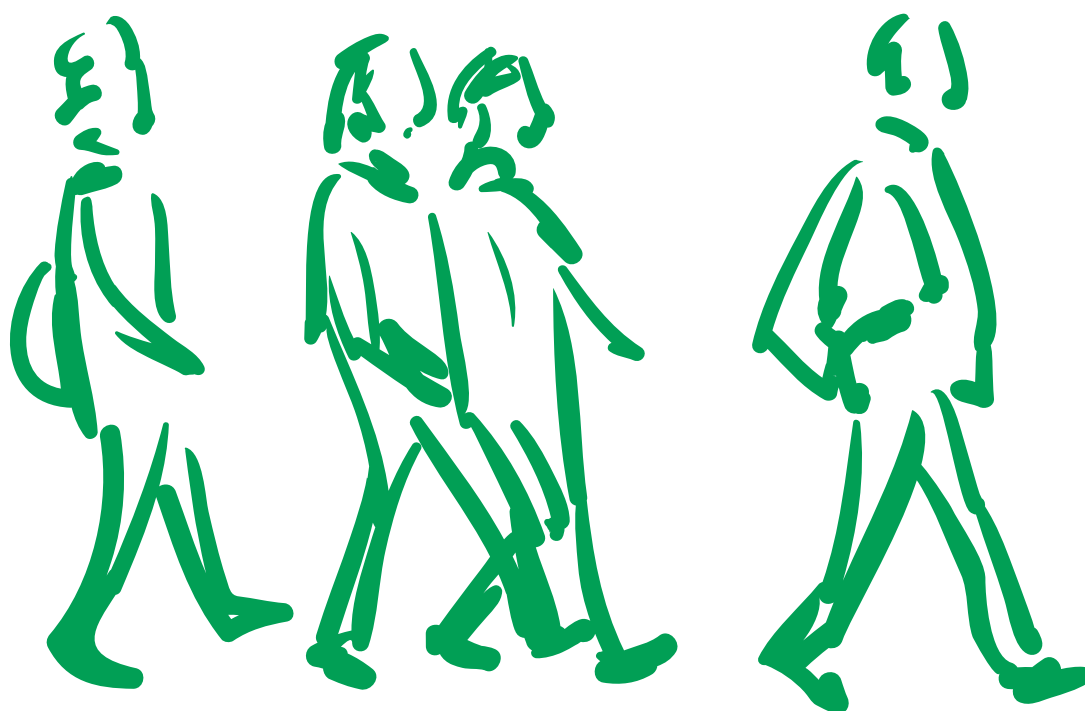
The views of the child, their family and the professional network is recorded in assessments, reports, plans and visits.

Records are up to date, recorded clearly, accurately and fully completed. All statutory visits must meet the requirements set out in the Practice Standards for Practitioners, where incomplete or not satisfactory, the Team Manager is expected to work with the practitioner to improve the quality of the recording.

All children have a case summary updated **every 3 months**. This is to include reason for involvement, current intervention, synopsis of the plan, areas of strengths, areas of ongoing worry and what should happen in an emergency. Team Managers are responsible for ensuring that practitioners complete case summaries for all children they are working with prior to annual leave or training exceeding 5 (five) working days.

Management oversight is recorded following completion of all assessments, reports, updating plans and following significant events.

All assessments, reports, plans, records of meetings (minutes), court directions and court orders are recorded on children's electronic record.



Continuous professional development

Managers will ensure:

- All practitioners remain registered with Social Work England and adhere to the Practice Standards, Professional Capabilities Framework and Knowledge and Skills Statement as outlined by BASW and Social Work England
- All practitioners have an active supervision contract, this will be updated if there is a change of manager and supervision will be of a high quality
- Supervision will be recorded in accordance with the supervision template to include:
 - a. Wellbeing check-in (including and not limited to annual leave, time in lieu), conversation on learning and development needs (including training opportunities), reflective discussion on each child, young person, young adult working with, with clear actions and timescales and review of previous actions from previous supervision
 - b. Written reflective discussions and next steps relating to children, young people, young adults and their families to be placed on the case management system **within 24 hours** (1 working day) of supervision session
 - c. Written copy of supervision record to be provided **within 72 hours** (3 working days) of supervision session
- All practitioners have an annual DISCUSS, which is reviewed in line with HR guidance, and monthly service/team meetings
- They remain updated on legislation, policy, procedure, research, theory and evidenced-based practice frameworks relevant to their work with children and their families
- Managers agree to share this knowledge within their service areas in one-to-one supervision, group supervision, team meetings, service meetings, practice development workshops and other relevant forums
- Practitioners through a supportive and learning supervision environment are supported to recognise practice strengths and areas of development, with supportive development plans developed with timescales and review dates to consider progress
- Group supervision is facilitated within the service/team **every 4 (four) weeks** to provide space for reflective practice discussions

Continuous service improvement

Managers are responsible for ensuring there are systems in place to monitor and review the performance of our practitioners whilst providing protection, support and professional development opportunities for practitioners to deliver a highly skilled intervention and service.

All of which must be in accordance with the legal framework, policies, and procedures relevant to the practitioner's area of work.

Creating a culture of quality assurance provides opportunities for practitioner's to receive regular feedback to support ongoing professional development.

Children and their families deserve and should expect to always receive the best service from Children's Social Care. This will be achieved by Managers:

- Having updated service plans setting out clearly how we will meet the assessed needs of children and their families
- Celebrating good practice and identifying how areas for development will be improved with clear timescales and review dates
- Developing the experience, knowledge, and skills within the service/team to provide a highly skilled intervention and service
- Providing clear and focused directions based on assessed needs and analysis
- Quality assuring the recording of practice (supervision, transfers between service areas/teams, case closures, practice assurance stock takes and moderations) and each Practitioner will have one practice observation completed per year during March or April) - and if learning needs are identified Team Managers will support through development plans in supervision and through DISCUSS
- Ensuring all children are allocated a named buddy practitioner when their allocated practitioner is on annual leave, sick leave or special leave
- Meeting with the buddy practitioner to provide an update on actions to be completed and this will be recorded as a management oversight to make sure agreed timeframes are understood and interventions not disrupted to impact on the progression of plans
- Ensuring a named buddy Manager is identified when the allocated Manager is on annual leave, sick leave, or special leave with the Service/Team informed about who who will be responsible for all management responsibilities until the allocated Manager returns

Acronyms

Acronym	Definition
ADM	Agency Decision Maker
ASF	Adoption Support Fund
CAF	Common Assessment Framework
CIN	Children in Need
CLA	Child Looked After
CP	Child Protection
DBS	Disclosure and Barring Service
EHCP	Education, Health and Care Plans
EIFS	Early Intervention and Family Support Services
ETE	Education, Training or Employment
FSPP	Family Support and Parenting Practitioner
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulations
I&O	Intelligence and Operations
IASS	Information, Advice and Support Service
ICPC	Initial Child Protection Conferences
LCT	Leaving Care Team
NFA	No further action
PEP	Personal Education Plan
RO	Reviewing Officer (fulfils CP Conference Chairing and duties of the Independent Reviewing Officer)
S.47	Section 47 of the Children Act 1989, Child Protection Enquiry.
SFSP	Senior Family Support and Parenting Practitioner
SGO	Special Guardianship Order
SWE	Social Work England.
TAC	Team Around the Child
UASC	Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children
VIPP-SD	Video-feedback Intervention to Promote Positive Parenting and Sensitive Discipline
YOS	Youth Offending Service

