

# PROTOCOL FOR MULTI AGENCY CHILD IN NEED PLANNING

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*Keeping children safe is everyone's responsibility*

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# 1 PROCESS:

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- 1.1 A referral via the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) that is deemed to meet threshold for a Single Assessment once completed will be shared with the family.
- 1.2 Should the Single assessment identify unmet needs that require a multi-agency response, children's services will be responsible for identifying the professionals and agencies who might contribute towards developing a plan and /or providing a service to respond to those unmet needs. The Single assessment should be completed within 20 or 45 working days from the referral.

## 2 INFORMATION SHARING

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- 2.1 Once a child has been assessed and deemed to be a child in need, the sharing of information between all agencies will be covered by the usual information sharing protocols. This means that every parent and the child, where appropriate, will have signed a 'Consent to Share' form at the point when the assessment began.

## 3 THE MULTI AGENCY CHILD IN NEED MEETING AND THE CHILD IN NEED PLAN

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- 3.1 The purpose of the meeting is to develop a multi-agency plan, and subsequently to review the progress of that plan.
- 3.2 The plan should be SMART, clear about the outcomes that are expected and the timescales by which those outcomes will be achieved.
- 3.3 The multi-agency Child in Need plan will take precedence over any other 'lower level' plan, though other plans may exist and continue to be worked on (e.g. via Youth Offending Team, Supporting families, CAMHS etc. )
- 3.4 Where another agency is already delivering a service at Tier 4 they will continue to deliver against that plan and the Child in Need plan will be complementary. Any reduction of service should be discussed at the Child in need meetings.

- 3.5 Children's services will invite agencies or individuals to a Multi-agency planning meeting. In Children's services the lead team is likely to be within the Single assessment service, Children with Disabilities Team or Safeguarding and supporting families' service.
- 3.6 When the child is to transfer from Safeguarding Assessment Team to the Safeguarding and Supporting Families Team for the plan to be progressed, the CIN planning meeting will be the handover point. The first meeting should be held within 10 working days from the completion of the Single assessment.
- 3.7 Children's Services will also invite the child (where the child of an age or understanding to participate in all or part of the meeting) and family to the meeting. It is acknowledged that a child or young person may require support to attend /participate in the meeting to enable them to help them express their views.
- 3.8 Where the child is not able or does not wish to attend the meeting, all agencies who are already in contact with the child should attend the meeting with an ability to express the wishes and feelings of the child in order to assist the planning and delivery of services.
- 3.9 In addition, the expectation is that individual agency representatives will attend with knowledge of and information about the child and the family e.g. attendance at and attainment in pre-school, school or college, relevant health information including information on mental health and emotional well-being, substance misuse, housing and accommodation arrangements etc.
- 3.10 Agency representatives will also be required to be clear about the services and other resources that they or their agency can contribute in order for the outcomes for the child to be achieved.
- 3.11 The meeting will be chaired by a suitably experienced worker from children's services
- 3.12 The allocated worker from Children's services will be the lead professional i.e. will take responsibility for coordinating services and act as recipient of key information between meetings. The Children's services worker will not necessarily be the best person to work directly with the child - the planning meeting should agree and identify who that person is.

## 4 REVIEWING THE PLAN

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- 4.1 Children's Services will be responsible for ensuring that a copy of the agreed plan is distributed to the family and to members of the multi-agency planning meeting following the sign off by the Team manager within 10 working days of the meeting taking place.

- 4.2 The plan must be reviewed 6 weekly for the first 6 months. A Team manager should attend and review the plan at the 3 month review in order to determine that the plan is effective. Should a child continue to be a child in need beyond that time, the reviewing frequency can reduce to 3 monthly with the agreement of the Team manager. Dates for the next meeting should be set at the end of the last meeting. Where this is not possible there will be at least 10 working days' notice of the next meeting.
- 4.3 The visiting frequency of each individual professional should be agreed and specified within the plan. Where the plan is in place for less than 6 months, the social worker will visit at a minimum of 4 weekly. Visits should be planned and unplanned and the frequency will be dependent upon the needs identified. Where the plan lasts for 6 months or longer the visiting frequency may be reduced if endorsed by the Head of Service.
- 4.4 It is expected that agencies should continue to attend review planning meetings throughout the lifetime of the plan unless it is agreed by the person chairing the meeting that the role of that agency has ended. Where an individual or agency decides that their involvement is no longer required they should notify the chair of the multi-agency planning meeting in writing.
- 4.5 It is recognised that core membership of the multi-agency planning meeting will potentially change as the plan progresses.
- 4.6 Additional information or specialist assessments maybe required at some point along the way and these will be sought by way of a referral. The individual or agency responsible for making that referral will be identified at the multi-agency planning meeting.
- 4.7 Where another agency is approached for services or further specialist assessments (e.g. CAMHS, Adult Services, Education etc.) and do not feel the request is appropriate or relevant, or are unable to provide the service, they should respond in writing, giving reasons or explaining why their service is unable to make the contribution requested.

## 5 ENDING THE CHILD IN NEED PLAN

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- 5.1 The plan may end in one of the following ways:

### CLOSURE

- 5.2 The case is closed to Children's services when the outcomes are achieved. This will either be confirmed at the Child in Need Multi agency meeting or agreed at such a meeting in advance, where some specific task once completed will result in the outcomes being achieved.
- 5.3 Case closure to Children's services will be advised in writing to all agencies who are still part of the multi-agency planning process at the time of the final CIN multi-agency meeting.

- 5.4 The family will also receive confirmation in writing from Children's services that the case is closed.

### STEP DOWN

- 5.5 The case is 'stepped down' via referral to the Targeted Help Panel to either be allocated to the Family intervention team at level 3 or for a 'single agency' response using the Team around the Child model within early help.

### STEP UP

- 5.6 Where risks or needs become greater and the child requires consideration under S47 or the child becomes looked after or subject to Public Law proceedings.