

## **DISRUPTION PROCESS**

### **BACKGROUND**

Sometimes placements just do not work out, leading to placement breakdown or disruption.

Disruption is a term used to describe placements which have ended earlier than planned, particularly long-term or Permanent placements.

Many placements end prematurely for good reasons, but others end suddenly and unexpectedly causing much pain, guilt and feelings of failure on the part of all those involved in the placement.

Disruption of placement should not necessarily be seen as a sign of failure. The match between the child and carers may not have been right. The carers may have been asked to deal with more children or with more difficult children than they were prepared for.

The research into disruption suggests that it is the more experienced carers, who tend to take on more children and children with behavioural difficulties, run an increased risk of placement disruption.

This can be seen to be a result of a carer overload. Carers should be protected against overload by careful planning for placements and realistic appraisal of the carers' capacity to offer adequate care to a number of children.

It is important that social workers, link workers and carers themselves are aware of early signs of stress in the placement in order to consider what extra support may be necessary for high risk placements.

### **Children in Permanent and Long Term Placements**

It is departmental practice to hold a disruption meeting after any long term or permanent placement ends earlier than planned. The purpose of such a meeting is to examine all relevant issues relating to the placement. Learning from such an exercise enables workers to make better plans for the child's future and the service as a whole. It is expected that Carers, Link Workers, Placing Social Workers and other relevant people contribute to the disruption meetings, although it is acknowledged that this may be a difficult thing for carers to do.

## **When is a Disruption Meeting Required?**

A disruption meeting is required when a long term or permanent foster placement comes to an immediate or planned end outwith the formal Child Care Review process. In these circumstances the following procedures apply:

1. The Link Worker should immediately notify the Secretary to Placement Services Manager that the placement has ended and that a disruption meeting is required.
2. The Secretary to the Placement Services Manager will set a time, date and venue for the meeting to take place within four weeks of the placement ending. She will then send out paper work to all relevant people for completion at least two weeks before the meeting is due. The Secretary will circulate all information to those participating ahead of the meeting.
3. The Placement Services Manager will chair Disruption Meetings and minute the outcome.
4. The Placement Services Manager will be responsible for ensuring that matters arising from the meeting are appropriately actioned.
5. The Placement Services Manager will be responsible for monitoring and evaluating the overall outcome of the disruption meetings.

## **Reports Required**

The reports should follow the agreed set format and be completed by:

- a) Placing Social Worker
- b) Foster Carer
- c) Link Worker
- d) Child/Young Person and/or Parent (supported by Placing Social Worker if required).
- e) Other relevant agency

## **Support to Foster Carer**

The Link Worker should offer an appropriate level of support to the carers at times of disruption, and help them prepare for the Disruption Meeting, including completion of their report if necessary.

## **What happens when a long-term or permanent placement comes to a planned end through the formal Child Care Review process?**

In such cases all relevant End of Placement Reports should be completed within two weeks of the placement ending. The Foster Carers Link Worker will be responsible for co-ordination. Once the reports have been gathered the Link Worker should forward copies to the Placement Services Manager. She will decide if there is a

need for any further action e.g. Disruption Meeting, Carer Review, Management Meeting etc.

**What happens when a temporary foster placement comes to a sudden or unplanned end?**

The procedure to be followed should be the same as above.