

What Makes The Difference? TOOLS and RESOURCES

NAME OF TOOL/RESOURCE:

Placement Stability Plan

NAME AND REGION OF AGENCY/ORGANISATION THAT DEVELOPED THIS TOOL/RESOURCE:

Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council

Purpose and Brief Description of Tool/Resource:

Document to assist in planning for placement stability. Sections are included on placement support services and how to access them and review of placement stability plans.

Publication Date: Not known.

**Contact details
for further
information
about this
tool/resource**

Name and title: Rachel Williamson/Sharon McBride
Tel: 01642 488433
E: mail: Rachel_Williamson@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

Evidence for the effectiveness/ impact of this tool/resource

**Positive impact of
this tool/resource:**

Not known.

REDCAR AND CLEVELAND BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLACEMENT STABILITY PLAN

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Performance Assessment Framework (PAF) A1, BV49. “Percentage of children looked after with three or more placements during one year”.

This performance indicator supports the Government’s drive to improve the life chances of looked after children by ensuring that they experience the stability of home life that is a prerequisite for enabling them to achieve their potential.

This measure of physical stability is a reasonable proxy for the emotional security that children and young people need.

On the whole stability is associated with better outcomes.

2. Aim

- 2.1 The aim of Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council is to ensure that children and young people are securely attached to carers, capable of providing safe and effective care for the duration of their childhood.
- 2.2 Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council Fostering Service shall operate a service that is non-discriminatory and which provides equal opportunities for all.

The service shall be open, honest and approach each situation on an individual basis, taking into account the needs and best interests of the child.

3. Objectives

1. To secure the provision of support, with and for children, young people and their carers to promote placement stability.
2. To ensure that the individual child or young person is the focus of the decision making.
3. To ensure that the child’s interests are placed first and that he/she is listened to in accordance with age and maturity.

4. To support effective partnerships with children, young people, carers and other organisations to promote placement stability.
5. To work within the Principles of the Children Act 1989 and to meet the requirements of the National Minimum Standards which have been introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000.

4. Data Base Information

- 4.1 In order to maintain the profile on the important issue of placement stability the Authority's Corporate Performance Team provides the operational managers with regular relevant data reports.

This Database information provides a robust and consistent measure of progress towards meeting national and local targets. This data source also has the advantage that it is used to manage performance within our own local authority's Children's Services.

- 4.2 All Managers who have the lead on performance indicators meet regularly at the Performance Management Meetings to monitor all Performance Indicators and identify "areas for action".
- 4.3 The Looked After Children Statistics Meeting is convened every six weeks and is attended by both the Business Manager Accommodation and Support and the Business Manager Protection and Support along with Team Managers responsible for placements and an Independent Reviewing Officer.

A complete report of the current looked after population of Redcar and Cleveland Council is scrutinised and children's plans and placements are discussed.

5. Placement Support Services

- 5.1 Redcar and Cleveland Social Services Department recognises the task that foster carers now undertake has become increasingly demanding.

Efforts to maintain children within their families for as long as possible now mean that children placed in foster care tend to be older, with more complex problems and behaviour difficulties. Our foster carers are valued as a positive member of a team supporting a child in placement. To enable them to undertake this

role successfully, placement support is a key requirement. As a result, Redcar & Cleveland has built up a range of key support services, these include:-

- Payment for skills model is operated to acknowledge the skills and experience of carers.
- A fee is paid to foster carers when a child or young person is deemed to have special needs.
- A complete programme of training is provided which will encourage both new and experienced foster carers to participate actively and appropriately.
- Training is offered to NVQ Level 3 with appropriate support from both within the Fostering Team and from a local college.
- Crèche facilities or day care is provided to carers in order that they can attend training events.
- Celebration events are held when achievements of foster carers, children and young people are recognised.
- Foster carers receive thank-you cards and flowers at appropriate times.
- There is a quarterly Newsletter to which foster carers and children can contribute.
- There is pro-active, meaningful and robust communication between the foster carer, the Supervising Social Worker and the child or young person's Social Worker.
- There is ongoing support from a Supervising Social Worker who maintains regular contact with carers both through telephone calls and home visits.
- Each carer receives formal supervision every three months when there have an opportunity to discuss any issues regarding their role with the Supervising Social Worker.
- There is twenty four hour, three hundred and sixty five days a year support for all foster carers from a team of Support Workers who are all experienced foster carers themselves.
- There is mentoring from experienced carers to new carers who are also encouraged to come together in a group to support each other.
- There are regular Reviews of foster carers from an Independent Reviewing Officer.
- There are monthly rota visits to foster carers from the Head of Children's Social Care and an Elected Member.

- There is a CAMHS Clinician who deals exclusively with looked after children and young people and who offers a drop-in facility for consultation and advice.
- There is a dedicated Nurse for looked after children and young people who assesses their health needs and advises appropriately.
- There is an IT Support Technician for looked after children and young people who will visit foster homes and offer appropriate advice and support.
- There is a Nominated Officer who is responsible for the development and implementation of strategic approaches for the education of children and young people looked after and she will promote their educational progress, attendance and well being.
- There is a Manager responsible for the development of services for looked after children and young people.

6. Access to Support Services

- 6.1 Each carer is allocated a named Supervising Social Worker, who will visit carers at least monthly and will provide formal supervision on a three monthly basis.
- 6.2 It is the responsibility of the Supervising Social Worker to promote the importance of placement stability with the carer through the supervision and training and development processes.
- 6.3 It is the role of the Supervising Social Worker to ensure that the carer is able to provide a placement to meet the needs of the child/young person.
- 6.4 The Supervising Social Worker will obtain all relevant and up to date information, including a risk assessment, on the child / young person prior to the placement from the Social Worker.
- 6.5 The Foster Care Review process will focus attention on the carers' capacity. The annual Review will make recommendations on specific criteria for both the foster carer and the placement.

Foster Carer Reviews will be routinely considered by Fostering Panel following their first review one year after approval.

- 6.6 The Supervising Social Worker will be aware of the carer's skills, abilities and competencies prior to the placement, and will in discussion with colleagues "match" the child's needs with the carer's capacity.
- 6.7 It may be evident that prior to the placement an additional support package will be required to ensure a positive transition for the child/young person, such as the continuation of a day nursery placement or the attendance at an after school club. The supervising social worker will inform the responsible manager of that specific service of the requirement and the change in the child's circumstances.
- 6.8 Support packages can be arranged prior to placement in negotiation with the carer, and through discussion with line management holding the responsibility for the resources required.
- 6.9 The Placement Information Record will be completed within seven days of the placement being made, and will offer the opportunity for both the child/young person and the carer to identify any additional support mechanisms required.
- 6.10 As the child/young person settles into their placement, issues may arise that the carer feels unable to deal with in isolation. It is the responsibility of the carer to notify their Supervising Social Worker and the child/young person's Social Worker of any such issues. The workers in consultation will identify the most appropriate support.

The Supervising Social Worker will then negotiate the requirements with the responsible manager.

All foster carers will be expected to attend at least six training events per year and these will be identified by their Supervising Social Worker.

- 6.11 Carers are expected to inform their workers of any issues that are causing them concern and jeopardising the placement before a complete placement breakdown happens.
- 6.12 In a situation where a breakdown of placement is imminent, it is the collective responsibility of all professionals involved to ensure that every support mechanism has been explored, and that

management are satisfied that the placement is no longer a viable option for the child/young person.

6.13 In such cases, professionals need to reassess the child's/young person's needs to inform the future placement.

6.14 A Placement Disruption Meeting will be undertaken by the Supervising Social Worker to ascertain the views of the carer and reflect on the situation.

The child/young person's views will be sought by their Social Worker on their experience of the placement.

6.14 This collective information will inform the future training and development needs of the carer, and the scope of placement the carer is able to offer.

7. Review of Placement Stability Plan

7.1 The Placement Stability Plan will be revised at a minimum of once per year by the Fostering Team Manager, in consultation with foster carers and Social Workers, and the Business Manager Accommodation and Support and the Children's Management Team, in accordance with the business planning process.

JUDITH ALLAN
Fostering Team Manager