

CIN Procedures revised November 2015

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1. The Assessment and Allocation of Children in Need at tier 4

1.1 The role of MASH - Multi-agency safeguarding hub

Allocation as a Child in Need will come through MASH and will follow a thorough multi-agency decision process. The lead MASH worker will begin the information gathering process, each multi-agency worker will consecutively add their own information before the lead worker makes a recommendation for the safeguarding pathway; this recommendation will then pass to a Senior Social Worker for a further decision. At this point the decision is likely to be either Early Help support, a Section 47 enquiry, or Section 17 support via the Locality (CIN) Teams.

Following an initial investigation, cases held by the MASH social work team will either receive an assessment or will transfer to the most appropriate locality team. Where the assessment concludes that the case requires being heard at an Initial Child Protection Conference (ICPC), the case will remain with the MASH team until heard at ICPC. For cases where there is no significant harm, the case will either be managed at CIN level or stepped down to a TAC. If transferred within 48 hours from the initial contact to a locality team the single assessment will be completed by the locality team social worker, if over 48 hours the MASH social worker will be responsible for completion of the single assessment. At this point there will again be a decision as to whether the family continue to require a service Children's Social Care and a transfer to the locality teams will take place or whether the case can be stepped down to the most appropriate TAC lead.

1.2 The role of the Child In Need Social Worker in the Locality Teams

Children open to the Locality Teams requiring a service under Section 17 will receive a good quality Single Assessment which will contain sufficient contextual information to provide an informed evaluation of need. The assessment will either conclude that the child's needs will be better met by a community response (early help) or that a package of support is required from Children's Social Care and Safeguarding Services.

Examples of specific areas of concern or issues that indicate child in need planning at Tier 4 will best meet the child's needs are:

- A child has been the subject of child protection enquiries following which the Assessment has indicated that the family have acknowledged the risk and cause of harm, are co-operating to reduce any further risk and the child has been identified as a child in need of services and support;
- A child has been the subject of child protection enquiries, which have not been substantiated, but the child has been identified as in need of services and support;
- A child has been the subject of an Initial Child Protection Conference and has been identified as a child who does not need a protection plan but is in need of services and support;
- A child is at risk of becoming looked after;
- A child is disabled and has significant needs; see [Children with Disability Procedures](#).
- Complex needs/family dynamics have been identified.

2. Child in Need Planning

Planning Meetings will follow where the assessment has concluded that the child's needs are within the definitions given above and that a package of support is therefore required.

2.1 Interim Plan

An interim plan will be developed within 25 working days of opening to the Locality Teams, in some cases this will be in advance of completion of the SAF (45 day assessments for more complex cases). The interim plan will be formulated between

the allocated social worker and the family, it will involve the child where the child is aged 5 years and over.

2.2 Initial multi-agency planning meetings

An initial multi-agency planning meeting will be convened within 5 weeks of this interim plan (in total a 45 day intervention), so as to agree the relevant services required to support any change work recommended following completion of the Single Assessment.

Planning meetings are an opportunity for a child and his or her parents/carers, together with key agencies, to identify and agree the package of services. All Planning Meetings should be attended by the parents, other significant family members, the child (depending on age and understanding) and by those agencies whose potential/actual contribution has been indicated within the assessment.

It is important that those agencies and individuals invited to attend are the ones that the parents and/or the child consider are able to help, support or assist them and/or those who can best promote the wellbeing of the child.

The assessing children's social worker should discuss potential attendees for the Planning Meeting with the parents/carers and/or the child prior to arrangements being made for the meeting.

It will be important that appropriate venues suitable for the child and his or her family are used for the meeting. Consideration must be given to location, timing and any child care issues. The Social Worker should consider the use of meeting rooms close to the family's location such as schools and Children's Centres.

The allocated worker is responsible for convening the meeting and arranging for invitations to be sent.

For families who require a service from CSCS of 9 weeks (45 days) or longer the Child in Need Plan will be consolidated within a multi-agency Child in Need Planning Meeting. The multi-agency meeting should be chaired by a Practice Leader or a Team Manager.

For cases closing within 20 days the Social Worker will be responsible for setting up the first TAC with the family and relevant services prior to step-down. Step-down meetings/TACs for cases open for more than 20 days but less than 45 days should be chaired by the Social Worker.

The Child in Need Plan will identify the allocated worker as Lead Professional, and must identify the resources or services that will be needed to achieve the planned outcomes within the agreed timescales and who is responsible for which action and the time-scale involved.

For a child subject to Education Health and Care Plan process, the Child in Need Plan will address the child and family's social care needs as part of the EHC process.

It is good practice to align the Child in Need reviews to the subsequent annual reviews of the EHC plan.

2.3 Child in Need Plans

The Child in Need Plan should:

- Describe the identified developmental needs of the child, and any services required;
- Include specific, achievable and measurable child-focused outcomes intended to promote and safeguard the welfare of the child;
- Include realistic strategies and specific actions to achieve the planned outcomes;
- Include a contingency plan to be followed if circumstances change significantly and require prompt action;
- Included timescales that are not too short or unachievable;
- Not be dependent on resources which are known to be scarce or unavailable;
- Clearly identify the roles and responsibilities of professionals and family members, including the nature and frequency of contact by professionals with children and family members;
- Lay down points at which progress will be reviewed and the means by which it will be judged;
- Clearly identify strategies in cases where:
 - There are concerns that the child may not be receiving consistent care that is "good enough" and
 - If progress is not made and sustained and it is likely that Child Protection Procedures will be implemented.

The CCM Plan will be copied to all those involved, including the child and parent/s, who will need to sign their agreement. The signed copy will be scanned into ESCR by the allocated worker into CCM.

The Chair of the Child in Need Planning Meeting is responsible for the distribution of the Child in Need Plan. Within five working days a copy of the Child in Need Plan should be provided to the parents, child (if appropriate to their age and

understanding) and the agencies or other professionals involved in the provision of services under the Plan.

The allocated worker (as Lead Professional) will be responsible for implementing the plan including making referrals to appropriate agencies for services as described in the plan.

Any child protection or safeguarding issues which arise during the course of a Child in Need Plan must be responded to in line with Safeguarding Board Procedures.

Where it becomes necessary to make minor adjustments to the plan and services provided, any changes to the plan must be made in consultation with the parents and the child (where appropriate) and key professionals from other agencies.

Most Child in Need Plans will envisage that Specialist Services intervention will end within twelve months. However, some children and families may require longer term support, for example families where the main carer has significant long term needs.

2.4 Home visits to children in need

To determine the appropriate frequency of visiting children in need, agreement should initially be reached with the Supervising Manager. In reaching this decision consideration will be given to the specific issues relating to the child/ren concerned. The frequency of visits and timescales for review should be recorded on the Child's Plan and reviewed through case supervision and planning meetings.

It is good practice to visit at a minimum of 2 weeks, visits should be sooner if there is cause for concern, for example: if there is a change in circumstance, a CYP is received and if the family is resistant or does not engage with the allocated worker. However, there should be no more than 4 weeks between visits. The circumstances and frequency between visits should be discussed, agreed and reviewed monthly during supervision with the Supervising Practice Leader and multi-agency planning meetings.

The exception to this may be those children who have complex needs arising from their disability/health needs where the need is met through the provision of long term practical support and there are no other additional needs/concerns. In such cases, the Team Leader will agree and record the appropriate visiting frequency. The visiting frequency should not be less than once every 6 months for any case. This decision will be kept under review in supervision.

3. Review of Child in Need Plans

The Plan will be reviewed within 12 weeks of the initial multi-agency planning meeting, subsequent reviews will be held every three months; however there may be some circumstances where it is appropriate to review the package of support at six monthly intervals, such as Private Fostering and for children who have complex needs arising from their disability/health needs and where there are no additional needs.. The child/young person, family and key professionals will be invited to contribute to and attend the review. Where there are changes to a family's circumstance or there are new concerns an Emergency Planning meeting may take place to review the plan.

Within 5 working days of the date of the review, the allocated worker (as Lead Professional) will provide a copy of the report for the review to the chairperson and all those involved, including the child/young person and family.

Key professionals, the parent/carer and the child/young person will be involved in the review process and in constructing the revised plan. Consideration and support must be given to ensure children and young people with disabilities can contribute to their plan and review.

The review Planning Meetings should be chaired by a Team Leader, Service Leader or an experienced Practitioner, or in the case of Step-Down from Child Protection, The Chair of the Child Protection Conference.

The purpose of the Review is to ensure that the services provided contribute to achieving the agreed outcomes within the time-scales set in the plan.

Where it is proposed that a complex package of support being provided under a Child in Need Plan should continue beyond 12 months consideration should be given to a specific review chaired by the Service Leader. Exceptions to this will be those cases where the plan acknowledges the need for longer term support, for example in relation to children who meet the criteria for the Children with Disabilities Team, see [Children with Disability Procedures](#).

The child/young person, parent/carer and key professionals will be invited to contribute to the review either by attendance at the meeting or by providing written information that gives an update of their involvement and planned outcomes since the last review.

The Child/Young Person must be seen and spoken to alone by the allocated worker prior to the review in order for their views to be sought and recorded.

The child/young person's wishes, feelings and views will be sought and taken into consideration in the review. Where the child/young person does not agree to being

seen on their own a report from their teacher or other relevant professional will be sought to confirm that a further assessment under Section 17 is not required.

At the review meeting the chairperson will:

- Ensure that the plan is working effectively;
- Review the services against the planned outcome;
- Review the child's needs against the planned outcomes;
- Confirm that the planned outcomes have been met;
- End services when the planned outcomes are met;
- Add any identified needs, the services and planned outcomes that do not require an assessment;
- Agree the date of the next review;
- Ensure that the services are providing value for money;
- Ensure services are being provided within a reasonable timescale.

All decisions made should be recorded by the allocated worker on the child's electronic record, together with reasons, and dated.

The outcome of a Review will be:

1. The child is no longer a Child in Need requiring intervention by the Children's Social Care and Safeguarding Service, which will result in a recommendation to the team manager that the case be closed and Step-down arrangements will be agreed between parents/carers, the child/young person and partner agencies;
2. The child continues to be a Child in Need requiring the same level of services, resulting in the continuing provision of services and amendment, as necessary, of the Child in Need Plan;
3. The child's needs are sufficiently complex and/or s/he requires additional services to safeguard and promote his or her welfare which may require an updated Assessment to be undertaken;
4. The child appears to be at risk of Significant Harm, resulting in a Section 47 enquiry and the need for a Strategy Discussion/Meeting and updated Assessment.

Where the outcome of the Review is either a new or an amended Child in Need Plan, the child and parent/s, will need to sign their agreement. This will be recorded in CCM by the allocated worker who will also upload the plan. Within five working days a copy of the amended Child in Need Plan should be provided to the parents, child (if appropriate to their age and understanding) and the agencies or other professionals involved in the provision of services under the Plan.

4. Step-down

Where it becomes clear that services at Tier 4 are no longer needed and for cases open longer than 9 weeks, closure will be agreed at the review planning meeting, or a multi-agency step-down meeting will be arranged. It will be agreed at the meeting which agency will take on the role of Lead Professional; this will be the person who is best placed to meet the needs of the child/ren and their family. The Step-down meeting or Team Around the Child (TAC) will be made up of one or more existing or alternative sources of support (e.g. Children's Centre, school/family liaison, HomeStart) and a new lead professional from outside Children's Social Care and Safeguarding will progress the plan to address any outstanding issues.

When a case is closed the work undertaken and the areas addressed will be recorded within the closing summary. This should include the views, wishes and feelings of the child/young person and their parent/s and views of the professionals involved, the new lead professional and the Team Around the Child identified at the review meeting, along with outstanding work for completion by the new lead professional and TAC.

A formal notification of case closure along with the plan must be sent by the allocated worker to the family and agencies working with the family within 10 working days, this will include the name of the new Lead Professional, their team and date of the subsequent TAC review. This letter must be uploaded into ESCR by the Social Worker. A copy of the step-down SAF and plan will also be provided to the Lead Professional.

When the TAC subsequently reviews progress, where the most recent assessment by Children's Social Care and Safeguarding Services is over 6 months' old, the new lead professional should undertake a new SAF to underpin the TAC plan and identify a new set of outcomes.

5. Children's Social Care and Safeguarding Service Provision for Children in Need

The underpinning principles for the Children in Need service provided by Children's Social Care and Safeguarding are:

- Children and young people are best brought up in their families, and agencies should work to support this;
- Services should be provided to meet the identified needs of children and young people;
- Agencies have a duty to co-operate to promote the well-being of children (section 10 Children Act 2004);
- Children, young people and their families and carers should receive a consistent, fair and seamless service, and should feel as though they are dealing with one organisation, even if more than one is involved;
- Children, young people and their families and carers have the right to have their views taken into account;
- When following procedures and processes, positive outcomes for children and young people should be kept in sight;
- The earlier needs are identified and addressed, the less likely it is that children and young people will need intensive, high cost interventions, many of which have been shown to have marginally beneficial outcomes;
- Resources should be most effectively used by maximising the skills, knowledge and expertise of professionals and practitioners;
- Working in partnership with children, young people and their families and carers is most likely to improve life chances for families;
- Whilst processes set out a standardised way of working, all agencies must work to ensure that they respond to the diversity of the particular needs of children including young people from black and other ethnic minority backgrounds and disabled children and young people;
- Where children may be in need of protection action will be taken swiftly to ensure safety.

6. Children's Social Care and Safeguarding Specialist Children in Need Teams

There are specialist teams of Local Authority Social Workers which provide services exclusively to children in need; these are the Locality Teams in the North, South and Central and the Children with Disabilities Team, located in the inclusion service.

The teams' practice, underpinning assessment, planning, intervention and review:

- Is child centred, giving each child a voice and asking the question "how does this child experience their daily life?";
- Is rooted in child development;
- Is holistic in its approach;
- Ensures equality of opportunity;
- Involves engaging with children and their families;
- Invites user consultation and feedback as a routine activity in order to quality assure and improve practice;
- Builds on strengths as well as identifying difficulties;
- Is interagency in its approach;
- Is a continuing process not an event;
- Involves planned interventions and services being provided in parallel with assessment;
- Is informed by evidence; and
- Is timely.

7. Children who no longer require a Child Protection Plan or a LAC Plan or who are the subject of a Supervision Order

Most children and young people will continue to receive services as a CIN from the responsible case holder for up to three months, by which time the case will be reviewed, will continue to receive additional support or will be closed.

Where the young person is Section 20 and open to the Through Care Team (TCT) immediately prior to a return home they will continue to provide support to the young person, continuing support for each young person will be determined through an assessment focusing on vulnerability and level of need. The TCT will continue to work with young people with high needs; if the assessment indicates that a lower

level of support is still needed after three months the young person may step-down to the most appropriate community resource.

7.1 Step-down from a CP Plan

A number of children who no longer require a Child Protection Plan will Step-down to a Child in Need Plan. The exceptions will be children subject to care proceedings, children who are looked after and those children whom conference members agree are safe, settled and where the family's circumstances indicate that no additional support is required.

Where a Child Protection Conference agrees that a child no longer requires a Child Protection Plan, the Chairperson will ensure that an outline Child in Need Plan is agreed, a date and time are set for the first Planning Meeting, which will take place within 15 working days, and participants are identified. This will be reflected in the minutes. The Chairperson will distribute the outline Child in Need Plan within 5 working days.

The allocated social worker will arrange a venue for the first Planning Meeting and send out invitations to all participants. If the child continues to require a Child in Need Plan beyond three months, the case may transfer to the most appropriate Locality Team.

7.2 Step-down when discharging a Care Order (section 31)

Where a LAC review recommends that an application is made to discharge a Care Order, consideration will be given to whether a Step-down to a CIN Plan is required to support the child and family following discharge. The IRO will ensure that an outline CIN Plan is agreed and it will form part of the documentation which is presented to the court.

At the discharge Hearing the outline CIN plan presented to the court will include a date and time for the first CIN Planning Meeting, which will take place within 15 working days of the hearing.

The allocated social worker will arrange a venue and distribute the outline Child in Need Plan with the invitations to the first Planning Meeting. If the child continues to require a Child in Need Plan beyond three months, the case may transfer to the most appropriate Locality Team.

7.3 Step-down for children who return home having been looked after (section 20)

Children who are looked after (Section 20) must have an outline CIN plan agreed at the LAC review prior to a planned return home. The allocated social worker will arrange a venue and distribute the outline Child in Need Plan with the invitations to the first Planning Meeting which will be held within 10 days of a return home.

If the child returns home in an unplanned way, a CIN planning meeting must be convened within 5 working days to agree a CIN Plan to support the return home. If the child continues to require a Child in Need Plan beyond three months, the case may transfer to the most appropriate Locality Team.

7.4 Section 31 Supervision Orders

All children on Supervision Orders (section 31) require a CIN plan.

Where Children's Social Care and Safeguarding Services make an application for a supervision order an outline CIN plan will be agreed at the LAC review prior to the final hearing. This will form part of the documentation which is presented to the court. If a Supervision Order is made the allocated social worker will arrange a CIN Planning meeting within 10 working days arrange a venue and distribute the outline Child in Need Plan with the invitations to the first Planning Meeting.

When a Supervision Order is made in care proceedings and has not been sought, the allocated social worker will arrange a CIN Planning meeting within 10 working days, arrange a venue and issue invitations. The case will continue to be managed by the Locality Team.

8. Quality Assurance

In accordance with the Portsmouth Children's Social Care and Safeguarding Services Quality Assurance Strategy, the delivery of services to Children in Need will be quality assured through:

- Team Score Cards;
- Audit of case records, including assessments, interventions and plans leading to improved outcomes;
- Supervision and observation of practice;
- User feedback;

- Gathering feedback from partner agencies.