Joint Initial LAC Review/ Final Review Child Protection Conference Protocol

1. WORKING TOGETHER TO SAFEGUARD CHILDREN 2013- KEY POINTS

1.1 Working Together 2010 acknowledges that there are different requirements for independence of the IRO function compared to the chair of the child protection conference. In addition, it is important to note that the child protection conference is required to be a multiagency forum while children for the most part want as few external people as possible at a review meeting where they are present.

1.2 In most cases where a child who is the subject of a child protection plan becomes looked after it will no longer be necessary to maintain the child protection plan. Where a looked after child remains the subject of a child protection plan it is expected that there will be a single planning and reviewing process, led by the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO), which meets the requirements of both this guidance and the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010 and accompanying statutory guidance Putting Care into Practice.

2 DECIDING WHETHER TO UNDERTAKE A JOINT INITIAL LAC REVIEW/ FINAL RCPC

2.1 In the interests of balance of priorities between keeping a child's LAC review child focused at the same time as ensuring a robust handover of the child’s safeguarding plan where necessary, the following routes are summarised for straightforward and complex cases and for where continuation of Child Protection Plan necessary:

- **Straightforward cases:** Joint initial LAC/ final RCPC chaired by IRO
  - Final RCPC attended by IRO which constitutes part 1 of the LAC review; part 2 chaired by IRO at the placement
  - Separate LAC Reviews & RCPC

Where continuation of Child Protection Plan necessary:
Joint Initial LAC Review/ Final Review Child Protection Conference Protocol

2.2 The SW/TM will need to contact the FSCPA and IRO and a 3 way discussion needs to take place to agree decision about whether a joint initial LAC Review/ final RCPC should take place.

2.3 The **agenda** for this 3 way discussion will need to include

- What are the safeguarding issues
- What is the Care Plan and does this adequately address the above
- What is the contingency plan as presented to Court
- Whether a joint initial LAC Review / final RCPC or separate meetings are most appropriate
- Timescales and whether it is in the child’s best interests for their final RCPC to be brought forward to take place within 20 working days of becoming LAC
- Who should be invited
- Location for the review.

*See Appendix A for more detailed outline of case examples and expectations in each of the arrangements.*

3 TIMEFRAME & FLOWCHART

3.1 Where a joint initial LAC/ final RCPC is agreed, the timing of the review of the child protection aspects of the plan under the requirements of the London Child Protection Procedures should be the same as the review under the *Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010* and the accompanying statutory guidance *Putting Care into Practice*.

3.2 This will usually mean that a joint initial LAC Review/ final RCPC, or where appropriate separate final RCPC and initial LAC review, is to be arranged to take place within 20 working days of a child becoming looked after.

3.3 In exceptional circumstances a looked after child may remain subject to a CP Plan and key professionals can consider whether bringing forward the date for the RCPC will be beneficial.

3.4 The following flowchart outlines the anticipated steps and timeframe for the decision making, planning, administration and completion of either a joint initial LAC Review/ final RCPC or separate final RCPC and initial LAC review as appropriate:
Joint Initial LAC Review/ Final Review Child Protection Conference Protocol

**Child subject to a CP Plan becomes looked after**

- **Day 1**
  - SW/TM to contact FSCPA & IRO (cc CP Admin)
  - Placement Plan Completed within 2 working days

**3 way discussion regarding decision to hold joint or separate meetings**

- **3 working days**
  - SW/TM & IRO to discuss & agree whether to hold joint or separate meetings (see agenda page 1)
  - LAC Care Plan to be completed within 10 working days if not already completed
  - If lack of agreement, decision to be referred to Heads of Operational Service and PARS

**Reports to be completed and shared with the family**

- **5 days before the LAC Review**
  - SW & relevant agencies to complete reports & share with the family
  - Reports including LAC Review Part 1 and CP Review report to be sent to the chair of the meeting 5 working days before the review
  - CP Admin to send out template letters either requesting a report and/or inviting to attend the meeting as appropriate

**Joint Initial LAC Review / Final RCPC**

- **20 working days**
  - Joint initial LAC Review/finalRCPC takes place within 20 working days child becomes looked after
  - If separate meetings to be held for more complex case, final RCPC to constitute Part 1 of the LAC review & to take place within 20 working days

**Minutes completed**

- **25 working days**
  - Minutes completed by IRO (joint meeting) or CP Admin (separate RCPC)
  - IRO to inform CP Admin of decision where joint meeting has taken place
  - CP Admin to complete ICS CP recording

**CP Admin send out notification**

- **40 working days**
  - CP Admin send out notification to relevant agencies, inc relevant FSCPA of Final RCPC decision
  - SW Circulates minutes of Review Part 2 including Final RCPC discussion & decision
4 WHERE NEW SAFEGUARDING ISSUES RAISED DURING A JOINT INITIAL LAC REVIEW/ FINAL RCPC

4.1 The IRO will make recommendation for continuation of Child Protection Plan if new safeguarding issues are raised and not adequately addressed or where any safeguarding issues cannot be met within the LAC Care Plan.

4.2 Any new safeguarding concerns in respect of any looked after child with continue to be responded to according to London Child Protection Procedures.

5 WHERE CHILDREN SUBJECT TO A CHILD PROTECTION PLAN BECOME LOOKED AFTER AND ARE PLACED OUT OF BOROUGH

5.1 The placing local authority retain responsibility for the Care Plan for the child and as such will retain responsibility for convening a joint or separate initial LAC review/ final RCPC as appropriate. Where a child is to remain subject to a Child Protection Plan the local authority where the child is placed will need to be notified.

6 PREPARATION AND PARTICIPATION FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

- SW to visit child/young person prior to the review to help prepare for the review, discuss purpose of joint meeting, who will be attending, their views, location etc
- SW to support child/ young person to complete Viewpoint consultation
- SW to discuss if young person wishes for advocate to attend with them
- IRO to meet child /young person prior to the review to discuss their views, purpose of the meeting & wishes and feelings about attending all/ part of the meeting

7 REPORTS

- SW to send LAC review Part 1 to the IRO 5 days prior to the meeting
- CP Review report to be sent to IRO where joint LAC/ RCPC to take place or FSCPA where separate LAC Review & RCPC 5 days prior to the meeting

8 RECORDING

- IRO completes LAC review minutes- to include:
  - Discussion re safeguarding issues
  - Recommendations
  - Decision
- IRO to email CP Admin (Nina Lamb) to inform that record of minutes is complete
- CP Admin to transfer above information onto ICS recording for CP
## APPENDIX A

### STRAIGHTFORWARD CASES: Joint Initial LAC Review/final RCPC led by IRO

*(Relevant for the majority of cases)*

- Invitees of previous conference are informed of plan and requested to send written report and give view in advance of meeting.
- Proposal for arrangement of the meeting discussed with child/young person & parents
- Adults invited to meeting kept to minimum to ensure review remains child focused and to maximise participation for child. Additional professionals invited where conducive to the LAC review or series of meetings where this is seen to be in the best interests of the child.
- Agenda to include discussion of safeguarding issues, whether any outstanding and recommendations in LAC Care Plan.
- Local Authority shares PR so can take overriding view.

### Case Examples

- Child becomes subject to ICO or CO obtained and child placed outside of family with contact supervised.
- Child is placed under Section 20 and the long term plan is to remain looked after; the parent is engaging and supportive of the plan and there is a robust contingency plan that addresses safeguarding

### COMPLEX CASES: Final RCPC and separate LAC Review led by FSCPA and IRO respectively

- Significant safeguarding issues are handed over by FSCPA to IRO at a final RCPC.
- Timeframes for final RCPC & initial LAC review synchronised & brought forward to take place within 20 working days of becoming looked after
- Final RCPC chaired by FSCPA to constitute Part 1 of the initial LAC Review and the subsequent meeting led by the IRO with child and relevant key adults at placement to constitute Part 2 LAC Review
- All key network professionals to attend the final RCPC including the IRO. Care Plan to give clarity as to how safeguarding issues will be addressed within Court/ LAC framework.
- Child invited to RCPC according to their age and understanding, but if they do not wish to attend or it is not appropriate for them to attend then the IRO will meet with the child separately at their placement to ascertain their views and ensure these are considered as part of the Care Plan.
- Care Plan to outline i)Frequency of sw visits as per new LAC Regulations April 2011; ii) Requirement of continued network meetings if necessary to address all safeguarding issues

### Case Examples

- ICO obtained but child remains placed with parent in community or in supported placement and parent yet to demonstrate commitment to the plan
- Child placed under Section 20 and long term plan is to remain looked after but if the placement were to disrupt then the plan would be a return home to family (eg from a 52 week residential placement)- therefore final RCPC valuable to bring together key elements of safeguarding plan which will transfer into the LAC Care Plan
WHERE CONTINUATION OF CHILD PROTECTION PLAN NECESSARY: Separate RCPC to be convened & chaired by FSCPA

- Separate RCPC and LAC reviews until such a time that all safeguarding issues can be addressed within the Care Plan.
- IRO to attend and contribute views.

**Case Examples**

Child placed under Section 20 and placement yet to demonstrate stability or inconsistent parental involvement in the plan

Placement yet to prove itself as stable and child/young persons behaviour likely to result in significant harm to themselves or others