



Admissions & Commencement of The Service

Linked to Regulation 14 of The Regulated Services (Service Providers and Responsible Individuals) (Wales) Regulations 2017

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Aim:

Residential care for children is a part of the overall network of services for children.

The admission of a child into care can be a traumatic life event for both the child and their family. It is crucial that the professionals involved in placing children in care consider the impact of the process on the child.

The effect and a child's response to being placed at the home can be dependent on how this process is managed. If the admission is rushed or ad hoc with little or no preparation, the child may respond in a distressed and resistant manner. This may negatively impact on the future stability of the placement and deter the child from building trusting relationships with the carers. It is therefore important that social workers and residential staff dedicate time to plan admissions, involve the child and their family and offer an empathetic and caring manner. This policy aims to support professionals to ensure smooth transition for children into MTCBC residential care.

Legislation

Regulation and Inspection of Social Care in Wales (2016)

The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (Wales) Regulations (2015)

Social Services and Well-being Act (Wales) 2014

Planning

Effective care planning and strong working relationships between the team of the home and the child's social worker are essential to the success of a child's placement.

The registered manager will ensure that they and the team engage proactively with the social worker to shape and contribute fully to the various plans for the child's care on an on-going basis.

The Care and Support Plan will need to demonstrate the aims and outcomes of the placement and how the home will be able to meet these needs. The registered manager will only accept placements for children where they are satisfied that the home can respond effectively to the child's assessed needs.

Admission Criteria:

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council provides residential care for children with a wide range of complex emotional needs. Due to historical instances of emotional neglect, abuse and poor parenting, children often present behaviours that challenge and behaviours that require specialist and intensive support from a highly trained staff team.

Each individual home publishes a detailed set of admission criteria within its Statement of Purpose which defines entry parameters.

The matching process involves deciding whether a child will fit with the dynamic of the home, the current cohort of children and whether or not they will engage and thrive in the therapeutic environment.

Pending the completion of the matching process and the initial exchange of information, the registered manager and a senior member of the relevant home will visit the young person at their current placement. A children's guide will be given to the child and discussed with them.

The child will then be invited to visit their proposed home if appropriate.

Although changing placements is inherently a stressful time for children, the exchange of information and forward planning can minimise this stress.

The placement will be conditional to an assessment and compatibility matrix which will be written by the registered manager before full admission of the young person to the home.

It is essential to formulate the most appropriate personal plan for each young person and to assess the potential risk posed to other young people in the home, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council staff, and the general public.

Planned Placements

Where a decision has been made that a child requires a residential placement, and after approval by the Principle Officer, the child's social worker should contact the Residential Principle officer to discuss the potential planned placement. The Principle Officer will have oversight of all the homes and therefore will be aware of the best placement option. This will then be communicated to the Registered home manager who can consider the compatibility of the children. The registered manager or identified person who covers in their absence must assess any impact on the children currently living at the home and what measures will be put in place to manage any identified impact.

In making this decision the registered manager: takes into account the requirements set out within 14(3);

- Consults with the individual, the social worker, obtains copies of and gives consideration to the Part 6 care and support plan. Works with the social worker in planning the child's placement.
- In the case of a looked after child aged 16 or over, obtains a copy of and considers the young person's pathway plan;
- Considers any risks to the individual or to others using the service and the team.
- Obtains information relating to the individual's specialist needs and requirements in order to confirm these can be met in line with the statement of purpose

If the Compatibility Matrix determines the impact cannot be addressed, the Responsible Individual must inform the Head of Service for Children's Services, providing a copy of the compatibility matrix.

Where the impact is assessed as negligible, the placement can be agreed and the admission process can be planned.

In making a request for placement, the social worker will be asked to provide information about the child; the type of placement needed, the Care Plan the date by which the placement is required, the likely length of time for which the placement is required, any behavioural concerns, the child's placement and family history and the expected level of contact between the child and parents. The placement will be considered and ratified at resource panel.

The social worker should also outline any risks associated with the placement. It is essential that homes understand what will be required of them before they accept responsibility for a child's placement, to avoid disruption and instability for the child in future and for other children in the home. The PIR and Care and Support Plan must be up to date for planned placements.

Placement planning

Before the child is placed, the child's social worker will liaise with the relevant Registered Manager to provide details of the child's immediate care needs and to arrange a Placement Planning Meeting.

Participants will include:

- ☐ The social worker
- ☐ The parent;
- ☐ The child (if appropriate);
- ☐ The identified key worker for the child;
- ☐ Any other relevant professionals, e.g. a representative from the child's school;
- ☐ Anyone else considered appropriate or who will have a role in the placement.

The purpose of the Placement Planning Meeting is to finalise the Placement Plan as recorded in the Placement Information Record, and the details of the child's needs in the placement including the daily routine and discuss the Care Plan. This will involve a discussion of the child's needs, including their personal history, religious identity, cultural and linguistic background and racial origin, their health and education needs and how these are to be met. It will also include the arrangements for registering the child with local health professionals (GP, dentist and optician).

The Placement Plan should cover the following issues;

- ☐ The type of accommodation to be provided and the address;
- ☐ Where the authority has, or is notified of, child protection concerns relating to the child, or the child has gone missing from the placement or from any previous placement, the day to day arrangements put in place by the appropriate person (placement provider) to keep the child safe;
- ☐ The child's personal history, religious identity, cultural and linguistic background and racial origin;
- ☐ Where the child is a Looked After Child, the respective responsibilities of the Local Authority and parents/anyone with parental responsibility; any delegation of responsibility by parents/anyone with Parental Responsibility to the Local Authority for the child's day-to-day care; the expected duration of the arrangements and the steps to bring the arrangements to an end, including arrangements for the child to return to live with parents/anyone with Parental Responsibility; where the child is aged 16 or over and agrees to being provided with accommodation under Section 76 Social Services and Well being Act 2019, that fact.
- ☐ The circumstances in which it is necessary to obtain in advance the approval for the child to take part in school trips or overnight stays;
- ☐ Arrangements for the financial support of the child during the placement.

The meeting also provides an opportunity to ensure that the Registered Manager has a copy of any relevant court order and that full information is shared about any behaviour management issues.

Wherever possible, the Placement Planning Meeting should be used to plan any introductions to the placement, for example whether arrangements should be made for the child, parents and the social worker to visit the home and/or whether it may be appropriate to have an introductory overnight stay. If this is not possible, arrangements may be made for team members to visit the child and parents; or for information about the home to be sent to the child and/or the parents. For example about routines in the home, bedtimes, meals, visitors, pocket money, school, privacy and the overall expectations in relation to the child's behaviour within the home.

If it is not possible to hold a Placement Planning Meeting before the placement, because of the urgency of the placement, it must take place within 72 hours of the placement. The child's social worker will complete and arrange for the circulation of the Care and Support Plan and Placement Plan/Placement Information Record to the child, parents and residential team before or within 72 working hours of the placement.

At the time of the placement, the residential team must also be given any additional information about details of the child's day to day needs which may not be covered by the Placement Information Record but are important to ensure that the home is in the best possible position to help the child settle in. For example, any particular fears at night-time or other emotional needs.

The child's social worker must provide the child with written information about the looked after service, including information on using the authority's complaints procedure. The social worker should ensure that any children's guide and other information about the home that is available for the child is also obtained and given to him/her.

In all cases, the child should be accompanied to the home by the social worker and helped to settle in. Suitable luggage should be used, and a child's belongings should never be transported in bin-bags.

Admission Process-arrangements for confirming that the service can or cannot support the individuals to achieve their personal outcomes;

The social worker must pass all information and other arrangements to the Registered Manager of the home or delegated person in their absence, this must include: -

- ☐ Accurate details of the reason for the referral to residential services and what are seen as the aims of the placement.
- ☐ Information regarding the child's previous history.
- ☐ Clear understanding of future plans for the child.
- ☐ Placement Information Record, Care and Support Plan if available
- ☐ Risk assessment of any known risks

□ Information regarding any involvement with other agencies; is the child open to Outreach, YJS or Health professionals.

A pre-placement meeting must be held to discuss and agree roles and responsibilities, which agencies are completing which tasks so all parties are clear on how the child's needs are to be met and who has responsibility for different tasks. The children's home on its own will not be able to meet all of the child's needs and all planning must identify other agencies involved or to become involved.

The Registered Manager of the home will inform the team of the planned admission and share the information with them. A key worker will be allocated who should arrange with the social worker to meet the child's family to provide information regarding the home, a copy of the Statement of Purpose, welcome pack and general information about the day-to-day activity of the home.

The Registered Manager will advise and prepare the other children for the introduction of the new resident and where possible identify a child who could assist and support the child to settle in.

The child should always be informed of the plan and prepared for the admission, where possible this should include visits to the home to allow the child, their family and team members to become familiar with each other and begin to form working relationships.

A date for admission must be agreed by the Registered Manager, Residential Services Principle Officer and Childcare Team Manager.

The date of the Placement Agreement (72 working hour Planning meeting) must be agreed by the Registered Manager and social worker.

Once a decision has been reached to place a child, the home's manager will co-ordinate the admission with the child's social worker.

Before or on the day of the placement, it will be necessary for the home's manager to obtain the following, which should be taken into account when the child's Personal Plan is completed:

- A copy of the Placement Risk Assessment.
- A copy of the child's Care and Support Plan and Placement Information Record. If these documents are not available, the home's manager must clarify the key objectives of the Care and Support Plan with the social worker and arrange for a completed Care and Support Plan to be forwarded to the home within 24 hours of the child's placement.
- A Chronology should be obtained at the time of the placement or forwarded to the home as soon as practicable after the placement starts.
- The contact arrangements that may be permitted between the child and their parents, siblings, relatives and friends - no contact may be allowed without the approval of the social worker, in writing (or set out in the child's care and support plan).

- A copy of the child's health care plan or, if this isn't available, details of any healthcare or medical needs/requirements that the home should be aware of e.g. medication that the child may require.
- Any other relevant documents such as recent Child Looked After Review reports, Pathway Plan, Personal Education Plan, reports from specialists or therapists. Copies of information relating to any Court Orders that may be required to influence the child's placement e.g. if the child is subject to a DoL.

The documents/information above should be considered when completing the child's Personal Plan. The responsibility for the completion of the Personal Plan rests with the home's manager and keyworker.

The detailed arrangements for admitting the child will depend on the circumstances of the case, these arrangements should be made by the home's manager in consultation with the child's social worker.

All children will receive the following upon admission to a home:

- A Young Person's Handbook (if not previously received).
- A tour of the home and introduction to staff members present.
- Their own room, clean and free of signs of previous habitation.
- Their own room key (if appropriate)
- A lockable box with key to store valuables if they do not wish staff to look after them.
- Their own towel, wash cloth, and toiletry bag.
- A bed with new sheets and duvet.
- A copy of their Personal Plan
- Fire Precautions/Drill
- Details of the Complaints Procedure in an age friendly format
- Details of their designated keyworker

Admission and Pre-admission visits

☐ The team's availability is vital. The Registered Manager will ensure that a nominated person is available to introduce the child to the home, the team and the other children living in the home. A sensitive, caring approach at these times is crucial to the development of good relationships. It is expected that on almost all occasions this nominated person is the registered manager.

☐ Admission to a home can be a very anxious time for a child and their family. It is important to make them feel welcome, offer refreshments. When admitting, make sure the bedroom is warm, clean and tidy.

☐ Efforts should be made to ensure that privacy for a child and their family is upheld.

☐ The child should have some understanding, appropriate to their age and level of development, of the aims of the placement and the future plans for them. Every effort

should be made to communicate with the child to assess their wishes and feelings about the placement, their future and any other significant matters.

- ☐ Information will need to be given, about the day-to-day expectations and workings of the home including, Fire evacuations and tests and any health and safety procedures. The team should not assume these are understood or remembered. It will need to be repeated later. Give information in manageable amounts.
- ☐ The team should try to find out what the child's interests are, what they like to do and enjoy. Leisure activities offer positive experience to children.
- ☐ Personal belongings are important, any items of value must be recorded and security of valuables discussed. Young people and children should be encouraged to bring favourite and cherished possessions with them.
- ☐ A full fire drill demonstration and evacuation should occur prior to bedtime within the first week of admission.
- ☐ On admission a detailed plan of day to day arrangements for the child will be put into place as agreed at the pre admission meeting.
- ☐ The child will be informed of any medical health checks needed and an explanation of what is involved to reassure them.
- ☐ The child will be welcomed into a home which is prepared; their room must be clean and tidy and have toiletries, towels and a welcome box. The menu should include food choices they have made and there should be activities planned that they are looking forward to taking part in.

Emergency Admissions

During office hours, a decision about the need for emergency accommodation should be taken by the Social Worker and the Team Manager. When an emergency placement in a residential children's home is indicated a decision should be made by a Head of Service or Principle Officer in consultation with the Responsible Individual and Registered Manager. The Responsible Individual will need to agree placements and sign the compatibility matrix on their next working day.

If Out of Hours all admissions must go through EDT (Emergency Duty Team). EDT are to contact the On Call Manager prior to any admission. There is a requirement for senior manager to agree placement from Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council's Children's Services.

The Registered Manager must be informed as soon as possible of a potential emergency admission.

The Registered Manager, or on call duty manager/senior in their absence, must undertake a compatibility matrix assessment to assess any impact on the children and young people currently living at the home and what measures will be put in place to manage any identified impact. Any placement decisions out of hours will be

agreed by a Head of Service or on call Principle Officer this will be followed up with the RI on their next working day.

If the Compatibility matrix determines the impact cannot be addressed or managed the placement cannot be made.

EDT social workers must accompany all admissions to a children's home with all relevant signed documents including the Placement Information Record and risk assessment. Only in the most exceptional circumstances will the home allow a child to be admitted without these documents.

Parents / carers and the social worker are to be informed by the following working day.

In all cases the social worker is to arrange to visit the child the next working day.

The social worker and Registered Manager must agree the date for the 72 working hour Planning Meeting. In exceptional circumstances this can be extended up to a week post placement.

The initial Personal Plan (What Matters To Me-WMTM) will be developed prior to admission for non-emergency cases within 24 hours of placement for emergency and then revised within the first week of placement taking into account individual's personal wishes, aspirations and care and support needs. Personal Plans and Risk Assessments will then be reviewed at three-month intervals in consultation with the individual, the Social Worker, the Link Worker and Manager. The Personal Plan will also inform on-going assessment of the child's changing needs as they grow and develop through the placement and into adulthood.

In an emergency basis, every effort should be made to secure relevant assessments prior to placement and to ensure that the service can meet the individual's needs.

Admission Tasks

All relevant documentation and information forwarded to the home prior to admission should be checked. An individual file must be opened to contain this and any other information. If the child has moved from another placement then the risk assessment forms should also be forwarded

The Children and their families should receive a copy of the homes Statement of Purpose, the Complaints and Compliments Guides and the homes Welcome pack.

Team members will enter the child into the Admission Book; remembering to record the child's legal status.

The Child and their family if possible, will be shown around the home pointing out key rooms and ensuring they are made aware of the Fire Exit routes.

Personal belongings are important, any items of value must be recorded and security of valuables discussed.

Ensure any medication is accurately recorded and stored correctly. (Also see Medication Policy).

Check the diary for the date of 72 working hour Planning Meeting; ensure parents are aware of this.

Make arrangements for the social worker or family to bring any forgotten items that the child requests.

Support and Monitoring of Placements

The child's social worker must visit the child in the placement within one week of the placement. Where there are concerns in relation to the progress of the placement, consideration should be given to seeking additional resources to assist the placement.

The Registered Manager of the home will request a Care Planning meeting to consider a review of the child's Care Plan where:

- ☐ The child is, or has been, persistently absent from the placement;
- ☐ The home, parents or Local Authority are concerned that the child is at risk of harm;
- or
- ☐ The child so requests, unless the Independent Reviewing Officer considers that the review is not justified.

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