

### References:

The Fostering Network, [www.thefosteringnetwork.org.uk](http://www.thefosteringnetwork.org.uk)

BAAF, *Dealing with disruption in fostering and adoption placements, Good Practice Guidance*, Hedi Argent and Jeffrey Coleman

## DISRUPTION MEETINGS

Under Fostering Regulations there is no statutory requirement to hold disruption meetings following the unexpected ending of long term or permanent foster homes in the UK. It is therefore good practice for fostering agencies to develop their own policies and procedures to both prevent and support a child's foster home at risk of disruption. This guidance is intended to support the process of disruption meetings in mainstream, disability and kinship foster homes.

For the purposes of this guidance the term “*disruption*” is referred to as the premature ending of a permanent or long-term foster home. There may be occasions where permanency has not been formalised, however in the mind of the child, the carers and the professional teams, their foster home has been managed as if it were to be permanent. This disruption meeting guidance should therefore apply in these cases.

A disruption can have a significant emotional impact on the child, their birth family, the carer, their family and professionals around the child. The way this is managed and how those who are involved are supported, can have future implications for us all. If there are signs that a child's home is becoming unstable and that a disruption could occur, a **placement stability meeting** should be held without delay, to bring foster carers and professionals together and identify the support needed to improve stability in the home and ultimately prevent a disruption.

Disruption meetings are not a place to apportion blame and the Chair has a role in enabling participants to feel safe in sharing their views and feelings in a manner which enhances the outcomes of the meeting. It should provide a sense of closure to the situation, and as best as can be allow those involved to move on.

### Purpose

- To enable participants to share information, feelings and thoughts about the child's home without apportioning any blame.
- To facilitate an increased understanding of everyone's actions and points of view.
- To explore all of the factors that may have contributed to disruption.
- To explore and identify the current needs of the child, the carers and the professional team.

- To formulate future plans for the child, based on what has been learned from disruption.
- To highlight areas of development for policy and practice.

### When?

Everyone needs time to recover from a disruption in order to reflect and retain clear memory on events. To postpone a meeting too long can risk a lack of clarity on key issues or events. Conversely, holding a meeting too soon does not allow time for emotions to be processed, and a meeting would not be productive in these circumstances.

Holding a meeting between 5-10 weeks after disruption is recommended by Coram, however this should be considered on a “case by case” basis. If an allegation, complaint or standards of care investigation is taking place, then it is good practice for these processes to be resolved before a disruption meeting process begins.

Professionals should allow the whole day for a disruption meeting. This is to enable everyone to be able to hear, feel heard, listen, digress, reconsider and recall. This also allows for regular breaks which are key when discussing disruptions. People may become upset and it is important that this is acknowledged by the chair of the meeting to both support and contain the foster carers and young people if present. In order to achieve this it is recommended that Disruption Meetings are held in person at a ‘neutral’ venue (i.e. KCC office building).

### Who?

Consideration should be given to the amount of active participants and whether they need to attend the whole of the disruption meeting. The circumstances surrounding the child will also influence the number of people invited. It is important to consider the disruption meeting as a process. Should particular individuals not wish to attend a disruption meeting, or it is felt inappropriate for them to attend, then the chair needs to think creatively about how to gain their views and feelings.

The following should be invited as appropriate:

- Chairperson – A Fostering Reviewing Officer will be asked to chair in the first instance. If this is not possible a Team Manager from the Fostering & Kinship Service, who does not have line management responsibility for the foster carers, will chair.
- Fostering social worker
- Child's social worker
- Other professionals closely involved
- Foster carers
- The child (where appropriate)
- Parents (where appropriate)
- Independent Reviewing Officer
- Education / VSK

## DISRUPTION MEETING REPORT

<b>Child Name &amp; DOB:</b>		
<b>Child's SW and Team:</b>		
<b>Foster Carer's Name:</b>		
<b>Fostering SW and Team:</b>		
<b>Date of disruption meeting:</b>		
<b>Attendance:</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Attended Yes/No</b>
Chair – Independent team manager from fostering Service		
Foster carer		
Fostering social worker		
Child's social worker		
Parents		
IRO		
Education		
VSK		
<b>Introductions &amp; purpose of meeting</b>		
<b>The child at home</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attachment patterns and behaviour</li> <li>• Quality of parental care</li> <li>• Physical and emotional health and development</li> <li>• Changes and moves, losses and continuity</li> <li>• Nurseries and schools</li> <li>• Role in the family, sibling relationships</li> </ul>		

<b>The child in foster care</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Placements and moves</li> <li>• Relationships and recovery</li> <li>• Coping mechanisms and behaviour</li> <li>• Family time</li> <li>• Education, health &amp; development</li> <li>• Preparation for move to permanence/long term fostering</li> <li>• The child's voice</li> </ul>
<b>Matching with permanent/long term foster carers &amp; introductions</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information and communication</li> <li>• Preparation to meet child's specific needs</li> <li>• Understanding of child's needs</li> <li>• Reflections on permanency support plan</li> </ul>
<b>The child and the permanent/long term foster carers</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family systems, lifestyles and relationships</li> <li>• Ethnicity, culture and religion</li> <li>• Progress and regression, rewards and challenges</li> <li>• Home and school, health and stress</li> <li>• The carer's other children</li> <li>• Family time</li> <li>• Formal and informal support and services</li> <li>• Adjustments and sticking points</li> <li>• The child's voice</li> </ul>
<b>The disruption</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Process leading to disruption, decision to end placement</li> <li>• Preparation for disruption, child's perception of disruption</li> <li>• Impact of disruption on child and family members</li> <li>• Management of disruption</li> <li>• Plans for continuity, support after disruption</li> </ul>
<b>The present and future</b>
<p>The child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current placement, implications for stability and permanence, legal status</li> <li>• Wishes and feelings</li> </ul>

- Further assessments, direct work
- Family time arrangements
- Education and health

The carer's:

- Current situation
- Future fostering and support needs

The birth family:

- Circumstances
- Involvement in future plans for the child

### Summing up & recommendations

- Themes
- Vulnerabilities
- Tensions
- Recommendations

### Lessons learnt from disruption

**Name of Fostering Reviewing Officer/ Team Manager completing this report:**

**Date:**