

0-25 Service Open to Review Protocol

Rationale

The 0-25 Social Care Team provides a specialist social care assessment and care management service to disabled children and young people and those with SEN. A significant number of the children and young people known to the Team live in stable home circumstances and following assessment and the provision of services do not require the active care management provided for under the Local Authority's Children in Need (CIN) protocols. These children and young people are entitled, by virtue of s17 Children Act 1989, to continuing Social Care support from the Team. In order to meet this requirement whilst respecting Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights which provides a right to respect for 'private and family life ...' an 'Open to Review' (O2R) protocol has been devised in which qualifying cases will be allocated to a named Social Worker but which will be reviewed on a six monthly basis with little or no active case management between reviews.

Qualifying Cases

Cases to be considered for O2R **must** comply with the following:

- Cases must be stable, i.e. no need for ongoing Social Care input beyond assessed services, no frequent changes of care package size or providers, health needs are stable and well managed; where a child has a life limiting illness the case can only be held in the OTR cases with agreement from parents/carers; children and young people receiving a significant amount of overnight short breaks within a significant and complex plan of support will not normally be held within OTR but can be if the case is stable and support is clearly working well;
- Clear outcomes must be identified within the care plan.

In addition the following scenarios **will not** be considered for O2R;

- Cases where there are Safeguarding concerns;
- Children and Young People 'Looked After';
- Children and Young People in receipt of a Continuing Care provision;
- Children and Young People with unstable health needs.

There is no requirement for parents/carers to agree to their child's case being held in the OTR system, however they will always be written to and advised of the rationale for this decision, and then be given the opportunity to make representation to the LA if they object.

Process

Following assessment, review or as a result of supervision the Team Manager will consider with the Social Worker (SW) whether a case can move to O2R. Where the qualifying requirements are met and subject to the limitations identified above the family will be written to and informed that their case will move to O2R and that they will be allocated to an identified O2R Social Worker who will be their point of contact and will carry out a 6 monthly review of the care package. The frequency of reviews may vary as indicated below:

- A face to face review will be held at least once every 12 months timed to coincide with any Annual Review of Statement (until 31/3/18) or EHCP at school or college, the nominated OTR SW should attend the annual review;
- In all cases a 6 month telephone review will also be held to check on progress of the care package;
- The child and parents/carers will be seen and views obtained at least once a year;
- In the event of more frequent reviews being required consideration will be given to allocating the case out of the O2R process to a SW.

Reviews will always consider whether O2R status is appropriate to continue. Once agreed families will be advised within the letter establishing the O2R status that they should contact the nominated, designated OTR Social Worker in the first instance if an issue arises or the 0-25 Social Care Duty worker if required and the matter is urgent. If a family wants to change the way to spend their direct payments because they discover a better way of managing their direct payment, they should contact the OTR social worker rather than waiting until their 6month telephone review to discuss.

Following establishment of the O2R status a decision and action note will be made on each case file by the supervising Team Manager identifying their agreement to the decision and the rationale for why O2R is suitable in this instance, this note will also identify the first review date.

O2R Caseload

The O2R caseload will be allocated to (a) specific Social Worker(s) who will not carry cases of any other nature. It is expected that this Social Worker will have a caseload of approx 100 such cases and each case will require 2 reviews per year.

Each review and visit to see a child will be recorded as normal on the child's electronic file and the CIN review/plan will be shared with families within 1 month as a matter of course.

Information from any O2R review will be fed into EHCPs and annual reviews. In the event that a child does not have an EHCP, perhaps in the case of a non-school age child, the review will occur at a Child in need meeting.

The Team Manager will review the O2R caseload on a regular basis and will agree with the Service Manager any changes to O2R Social Worker establishment as required.

Review of Protocol

The O2R protocol will be reviewed by the Service Manager on an annual basis and be reported to the LSCB and SEND Partnership Board as part of oversight of the work of the 0-25 Service.

Approved at 0-25 Improvement board on 7.6.17.