

THE DISRUPTION OF ADOPTION AND PERMANENT FOSTER PLACEMENTS

A Scottish Perspective

PRACTICE BRIEFING 4: KEY MESSAGES FOR CONDUCTING DISRUPTION REVIEWS



DISRUPTION REVIEWS IN SCOTLAND

There was great variety in how local authorities and AFA reported on disruption and drew conclusions. The following points are highlighted for consideration for agencies when facilitating the disruption review process:

- Overall, disruption review meetings were conducted in a sensitive manner and showed awareness of the need to listen to different perspectives. It was evident that the aim of reviews was to learn and avoid future mistakes.
- Linking the disruption event to past experiences seemed to help professionals have a stronger consideration of the child at the centre and where they were coming from. This helped to link recommendations or practice improvements with what had happened earlier on in the life of the child.
- Reviews which included short chronologies of the child's previous journey into and through care, as well as a short chronology of the disruption, were helpful in highlighting timescales that might have been problematic for the child or young person.
- It is important to consider who will have access to the reviews at any point in the future. It is important to reflect on how carers, and particularly the young people themselves, would feel about reading the reviews.
- There were positive examples of involving children and young people in the disruption process and having them present at meetings. This helped to ensure that positive experiences within placements were recognised and documented.
- It would be helpful for professionals to ensure that there is a separate section within disruption reviews, which asks how children and young people were involved and how their views were included. Such a section would help ensure that children and young people are listened to.
- Although most reviews highlighted that the process was not intended to assert blame, many prospective adopters, as well as some foster carers, felt unable to join meetings.
- There were variations in the aims and objectives of reviews. Some focused on the child or young person's future planning, and a number also included considerations of future plans for foster carers or prospective adopters. Others had a strong focus on how learning from the process should help to improve practice within the local authority on a wider scale. Reviews of disruptions if carefully planned and structured have the potential to serve all these functions.
- Local authorities need to consider accountability, including what happens with reviews after they have been written, and how learning from reviews will be implemented. Who is ensuring the child/young person and carer/adopter are adequately and appropriately supported? Who is responsible for implementing recommendations and sharing learning? Who is accountable at the end for ensuring learning is implemented?

KEY MESSAGES FOR CONDUCTING DISRUPTION REVIEWS

- There is a need to ensure that disruption reviews are held in a timely manner. The optimum time would seem to be within three months from the disruption.
- When undertaking a disruption review, there is a need for clarity as to the aims and objectives of the review. There is a need for disruption reviews to clearly distinguish between any recommendations specific to the child or young person and learning for the wider service.
- Disruption reviews should include recommendations in respect of who will ensure that learning is implemented and shared.
- A helpful framework for conducting such reviews is to focus on the journey of the child, seeing the review not just as an administrative task but also as a record that can help children and young people, and those that support them, to understand their life story.
- It is important to ensure that the views of the child or young person are sought, considered, and recorded in the review process.

HOW TO FIND OUT MORE

For more information or a copy of the full study, contact:

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