



Edward Timpson MP

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Children and Families

Sanctuary Buildings 20 Great Smith Street Westminster London SW1P 3BT
tel: 0370 000 2288 www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus

Sheena Ramsey
Chief Executive
Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
PO Box 21
Archway Road
Huyton
Merseyside
L36 9YU

25 April 2013

Dear Sheena,

Direction under section 7A of the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970
Extension of the trial period - flexible assessment processes

Further to the directions made on 1 March 2011, 13 July 2011, 30 November 2011, 26 January 2012, 22 March 2012, 6 July 2012 and 15 April 2013, I make this further direction, on behalf of the Secretary of State, under section 7A of the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970. This direction requires Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council to operate the scheme specified in the Annex to this direction for twelve months from the date of the revised statutory guidance *Working Together to Safeguard Children* coming into force.

This direction is issued on the understanding that Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council will operate the scheme specified in the Annex and that the conditions specified in the direction letter of 1 March 2011 will continue to apply. The Secretary of State has the power to revoke this direction at any time.

I would be grateful if you would continue to work closely with officials throughout the period of this trial.

*Yours ever,
Edward*

Edward Timpson MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Children and Families

Annex

Scheme for undertaking assessments and determining the timing of initial child protection conferences required by Chapter 1 of *Working Together to Safeguard Children*

1. This scheme applies to the timing of assessments of children in need and convening initial child protection conferences (ICPC) as required by Chapter 1 of *Working Together to Safeguard Children (Working Together)*.

Lead social worker

2. In respect of each referral which is dealt with under this scheme, Knowsley will nominate a qualified and experienced social worker to act as the lead social worker for the purposes of this scheme and for the purposes of Chapter 1 of *Working Together*.

Timescales for the assessment

3. Where a decision is taken under paragraph 37 of *Working Together* to undertake an assessment, the assessment should be carried out according to the guidance provided in *Working Together*, with the exception that the lead social worker should determine the timescale to which the assessment should be carried out.

Progress of the case

4. The lead social worker will keep the progress of the assessment under review, and expedite the assessment or move straight to action if it becomes apparent that the child may be suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm.

Timing of the initial child protection conference

5. Where a decision is taken to convene an initial child protection conference in accordance with Flow Chart 4 of *Working Together*, the lead social worker should determine the date on which the initial child protection conference is to be held. The initial child protection conference should be held within 45 working days of the strategy discussion at which it was decided to initiate section 47 enquiries.
6. The lead social worker should use their professional judgement in determining the date, with a view to enabling well-informed and evidence-based decisions to be taken at, or in connection with, that conference. The lead social worker should record the reasons for selecting the date of the initial child protection conference and if the date selected is revised, the lead social worker should record the reasons for revising the date and for the selection of the new date.
7. The date should be reviewed once each week and immediate action taken if required.

Decision-making

8. All decisions will be taken with a view to ensuring the safety and welfare of the child, minimising delays and providing timely interventions and services that can best meet the child's needs.
 9. All decisions relating to timescales and dates should be recorded, with a note made of who made the decision, and the reasons for the decision. These decisions should be reviewed weekly and revised as appropriate; immediate action should be taken if necessary. All decisions will be supported by sufficient supervision and oversight as is necessary to ensure the safety and welfare of the child.
-
-