

Practitioner Guide for Contingency Planning



This guidance has been written to assist in practice when formulating a contingency plan with a family. It is informed by:

- [Leeds Practice Model](#)
- [Restorative Practice](#)

The key aims of the guidance are to ensure that:

- children, families and professionals working with the family are clear about plans in place
- contingency plans are reviewed regularly, kept up to date and reflect the child/young person's needs
- extended family networks are informed and mobilised at the earliest opportunity, and they are offered a [Family Group Conference](#). A Family Group Conference will assist in developing the contingency planning for the family

Best Practice

In all cases, there should be clear discussions about contingency planning. We can't plan for every eventuality; however we can hypothesise what will be the main challenges, and should happen at such times. A contingency plan will help outline who can offer support and what actions need to be taken. A number of Reviews have highlighted the lack of contingency planning, whether this be something that appears simple, or for something more complex. Contingency planning applies to all case types including, Early Help, CIN, Child Protection and Children Looked After. A Contingency Plan should be recorded on each child's file and should be kept up to date to take into account the child's changing needs and circumstances. The child, family and all relevant professionals need to be involved in agreeing and implementing the contingency plan. Ideally this would be part of a multi-agency meeting so as it is clear, and it can be reviewed regularly. It is important that the plan is written in a way so that the child and family understand its purpose.

What is the difference between a contingency plan, safety plan and sustainability plan?

We talk about plans in many different guises. It can be difficult to understand what is needed for each and which is best for the children and family you are supporting, therefore here is a simple guide about the difference types. *Remember, in some cases you will need a combination of these different plans to support involvement. Don't get caught up in the differences between the plans, but focus on what it aims to achieve and how supportive it is.*

| | Contingency Plans | Sustainability Plans | Safety Plans |
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| What is this? | <p>A contingency plan should outline;</p> <p>What if there is a crisis – what is the contingency plan for the family? Who can offer support if needed? What actions should be undertaken? Who needs to be notified?</p> | <p>A sustainability plan explores and outlines how a family can sustain positive outcomes whilst reducing service involvement.</p> <p>This should be discussed when as part of a multi-agency meeting, conversations begin to be had about service support</p> | <p>A safety plan is a strategy which is linked to an identified and assessed risk. It outlines the measures that will be taken to try and mitigate the risk at a given time.</p> <p>We always use an Interim Safety plan when an ICPC is delayed.</p> <p>Practitioners also undertake direct work with a child/young person to outline a safety plan which identifies the protection</p> |

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| | What if the plan is not progressing – what are the contingency actions that will need to be progressed? | looking to reduce or close involvement. | around them, including recognising trusted adults. |
| Where should this be recorded? | <p>The contingency plan and/or sustainability plan should be written clearly in the Child’ Plan. This is the same for if the case type is Early Help, CIN, CP or CLA.</p> <p>In all circumstances it needs to be shared with children, family and professionals. It needs to be easily located, readable and understood on the written file, so that anyone uninformed in the case knows what this is.</p> | | <p>The Interim Safety Plan in relation to a delay in an ICPC is a word document that needs to be agreed by the CSWS Team Manager/Service Delivery Manager and then added in to documents. A case note should then be added highlighting that this has been completed and added to file.</p> <p>A safety plan which has resulted from direct work with a child should be added in to documents and should inform the Child’s Plan.</p> |

What should the Contingency Plan include?

A contingency plan is unique to a child and family’s circumstance. To assist in understanding what could be included, here are some examples below;

- Consider what actions need to be taken should a certain situation arise, for example, what strategies can be put in place to support the child if the parent/carer needs respite – is their another adult that could support them? Are there breakfast/afterschool clubs that could assist?
- Consider how changes in circumstances for a parent/carer and their child will be managed. This should include alternative care arrangements if needed
- In relation to a contingency if a plan is not progressing, outline what will be in place to identify and communicate concerns to family members and/or professionals. Be clear as to what will happen and actions that will be taken to support and/or mitigate any risks – it is not sufficient to say “Legal advice will be sought”
- For children who go missing or at risk of exploitation, consider and agree how long before they are formally reported missing, what actions will be taken by whom before calling the police? Who will be responsible for informing the professional network that the child is missing?

The main aim from any contingency plan is to ensure that the child, family and professionals are working together to bring about the best outcomes.

| About the Document | | | |
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| Title | Practitioner Guide for Contingency Planning | | |
| Author & Role | Amy Walker (SDM Capacity & Change) | | |
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