

Child in Need Meetings – Top Tips for Professionals



Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015) describes effective safeguarding systems as those where:

- The child's needs are paramount and their wishes and feelings are put first
- All professionals who come into contact with children and families are alert to their needs and potential risks
- All professionals share information in a timely way and can discuss concerns with colleagues and children's social care
- All professionals contribute to whatever actions are needed to safeguard and promote a child's welfare and take part in regularly reviewing outcomes against specific plans and outcomes

I am Chairing a Child in Need Meeting – What do I need to Remember?

- Be on time, prepared, and confident of your abilities. Remain focused on the child's needs and keep to timescales
- Consider any learning needs and disabilities and if parents need an advocate to support them
- Have the CiN plan and previous actions/notes with you. Consider what may be the challenges and plan how you need to respond
- You can't chair and take the notes of the meeting at the same time. Therefore, arrange who will take the notes at the start of the meeting if not already agreed. This is a shared responsibility and all professionals involved should take turn to be note takers
- Identify if all required partners are present – if not make sure they attend future meetings and are kept up to date – if necessary escalate
- Ensure everyone is able to participate and give their views, including children if they are attending. Ask for clarification if you need it
- Start by reviewing the plan; go through each point asking for feedback from professionals and parents. This should cover all work undertaken by professionals and the family
- Don't allow parents to divert the attention away from the child, and

- consider how adults' needs impact on the wellbeing of the child
- Challenge and question as you review the plan – be curious as to why there is not enough progress and whether the level of risk for the child has increased as a result. Think about the barriers and what could be put in place. Hold parents and professionals to account
 - Give positive feedback to parents when positive change has been achieved
 - Remind professionals to be clear and to the point about their information. Ensure they can evidence their work and if/why they have ongoing concerns
 - Check if there is any additional information that needs to be shared or acted upon
 - Summarise the discussion, and clarify with the group who is doing what in relation to future actions and their timescales
 - Make sure that a date is set for the next meeting and a copy of the draft plan is given to all participants at the end of the meeting. The actions and notes from the meeting are sent to everyone involved within 5 working days

ISSUES TO CONSIDER

- If plan appears to be drifting ensure that this is raised for discussion within your professional supervision
- Question whether the plan is producing evidence of change – are the timescales realistic, are there consequences for actions/lack of actions
- Is the plan SMART and meeting the child's needs?