



**St Helena  
Government**

# **St Helena Child in Need Policy**

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## Child in Need Plans and Reviews

This chapter outlines the process for working with Children who are in Need, and including Child in Need Meetings and developing the Child in Need Plan. This chapter does not apply to children who are the subject of a Child Protection Plan.

The Welfare of Children Ordinance states that a child in need is:

- A child who is unlikely to achieve or maintain, or to have the opportunity of achieving or maintaining, a reasonable standard of health or development without the provision of services of the St Helenian Government (not just social care);
- A child whose health or development is likely to be significantly impaired, or further impaired, without the provision of such services; or
- Or a child who is disabled.

Universal and Targeted Services will meet the needs of the majority of children and families at this level. It is an expectation that where families need support, their needs should be identified and addressed through an Assessment and support provided through universal services, where possible.

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### 1. Child in Need Planning Meetings

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Child in Need Planning Meetings will follow an Assessment which concludes that a package of family support is required to meet the child's needs under the Welfare of Children Ordinance.

The Planning Meeting provides an opportunity for a child and their parents/carers, together with key agencies, to identify and agree the package of services required and to develop the Child in Need Plan.

All Child in Need Planning Meetings should be attended by the child (depending on age and understanding), parents/carers and those agencies whose potential/actual contribution is recommended as an outcome of an assessment.

The way in which we communicate with children and their families within the Child in Need Meeting process is important; a restorative relationship, one which is open and honest and built on mutual respect and trust, allows both high support and high challenge and provides a foundation to ensure that professionals are working in partnership "with" parents, carers and families to appropriately meet their needs, and that this is taking place in a safe way.

In order to work effectively with children and their families in achieving positive outcomes, all Child in Need Meetings must be a meaningful experience for the child and their family and it must be undertaken with thought and sensitivity.

The relevant social worker should discuss potential attendees for the Planning Meeting with the child and the parents/carers prior to arrangements being made for the meeting.

It will be important that an appropriate venue suitable for the child and their family are used for the meeting. Consideration must be given to transport, timing and any child care issues. Where a child is attending a meeting and is of school age the meeting should be held outside of school time, wherever possible.

The first Planning Meeting will usually be chaired by the Lead Professional.

The Lead Professional is responsible for convening the meeting and arranging invitations.

A note of the meeting will be taken by the Chair, or delegated professional within the meeting, and given to the Chair at the end of the meeting. This record will be copied to those involved, including the child and parent/s, who will need to sign their agreement.

## **2. Child in Need Plans**

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A Child in Need Plan will be developed in a Child in Need Planning Meeting and should then be recorded on the child's record (using the Azeus care template).

Most Child in Need Plans will envisage that Children's Services intervention will end within 12 months. However, some children and families may require longer term support, for example children with disabilities.

The Child in Need Plan must identify any resources or services that will be needed to achieve the planned outcomes within the agreed timescales and who is responsible for which action and the time-scale involved.

A Child in Need Plan will contain the support which is being provided to a child and/or family by Children's Services.

The plan should set out:

- What is working well within the family;
- What support is required and why;
- Which agencies will provide the required services;
- What the child and/or family agree to do;
- What the expected outcomes are;
- What the timeframe of the plan is and when it will be reviewed;
- Include a contingency plan to be followed if circumstances change significantly and require prompt action.

The Child in Need Plan must also consider the following areas:

- Not be dependent on resources which are unrealistic or known to be scarce or unavailable;
- Lay out the frequency of visits to the child (which should be a minimum of 6 weekly, the frequency of these visits should be tailored to the individual needs of that child and will be anticipated to be more frequent than the minimum);
- Clearly identify the roles and responsibilities of other professionals and family members, including the nature and frequency of contact by professionals with children and family members;
- Lay down points at which progress will be reviewed and the means by which it will be judged.

The Chair of the Child in Need Planning Meeting is responsible for the distribution of the Child in Need Plan, although the minutes of the meeting can be undertaken by a

professional from another supporting agency and given the chair at the end of the meeting. A copy of the Child in Need Plan should be provided to the parents, child (if old enough) and the agencies or other professionals involved in the provision of services under the Plan.

The Lead Professional will be responsible for implementing the plan including making referrals to appropriate agencies for services as described in the plan.

Where it becomes necessary to make minor adjustments to the plan and services provided, any changes to the plan must be made in consultation with the parents and the child (where appropriate) and key professionals from other agencies.

### **3. Reviews of Child in Need Plans**

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The purpose of the review Child in Need Meeting is to ensure that the Child in Need Plan is progressing and will consider:

- The progress of the family plan against what was agreed needed to happen and whether the child/young person's needs are being met;
- Whether the level of support and services being offered by professionals and the family and friends network is making a positive difference to the family circumstance;
- Whether the desired timescales (trajectory) are being met and, if not, whether these need to be reconsidered;
- Whether all those involved need to continue to offer support services and share information (including the family and friends safety network);
- Whether or not the Child in Need Plan needs adjusting and, if so, how and who will be responsible for implementing any changes;
- Whether the agreed contingency plan remains appropriate;
- Whether the needs of the child and family warrant a Child in Need Plan or whether a decision should be made to step down to universal or Targeted Intervention services.

**N.B.** Where there have been or where there still remain, issues of a Child Protection nature, consideration will always need to be given to the level of need and whether or not Child Protection procedures would best meet that need.

Reviews will be conducted at intervals agreed with the Lead Professional's line manager, which will be at least every three months, unless there are exceptional

circumstances when timescales can be longer. This can include disabled children whose circumstances remain consistent and the services provided do not require such a regular review.

If there are significant changes in the family circumstances, an early review should take place.

Any child protection or safeguarding issues which arise during the course of a Child in Need Plan must be responded to in line with the St Helena child protection policy. The Review will usually be carried out by the Lead Professional, who should invite or seek the views of the child, parents and any service providers. The responsible team will administer all Child in Need Reviews.

The Review will generally take place within a meeting, unless the manager agrees otherwise. The Lead Professional will usually chair the meeting. If the Lead Professional is not available, the manager of the responsible team must undertake the review or arrange for it to be undertaken on his/her behalf.

The purpose of the Review is to ensure that the services provided are contributing to the achievement of the objectives within the time-scales set.

Where it is proposed that a complex package of support being provided under a Child in Need Plan should continue beyond 12 months there should be a specific review chaired by the manager of the responsible team. Exceptions to this will be those situations where the plan acknowledges the need for longer term support, for example in relation to children who meet the criteria for a service in relation to a disability.

All decisions made should be recorded on the child's electronic record, together with reasons, and dated.

A copy of the record should be sent to the child (if old enough), parent and all other participants in the Review process.

The outcome of a Review will be:

1. That the child is no longer a Child in Need requiring Children's Social Care Services intervention, which will result in a recommendation to the team manager that our involvement ceases, although the child may continue to receive services from a single agency or under a multi-agency plan not involving Children's Social Care;

2. That the child continues to be a Child in Need requiring the same level of services, resulting in the continuing provision of services and minor amendment, as necessary, of the Child in Need Plan;
3. That the child appears to be at risk of Significant Harm, resulting in the need for a Strategy Discussion/Meeting and possible Section 57 Enquiry.

Where the outcome of the Review is an amendment to the Child in Need Plan, the Lead Professional should circulate a copy of the amended Plan to the child, parents, and other agencies/professionals involved in providing the services set out in the amended Plan, including any new services to be provided.

#### **4. Children in Need Moving to Another Jurisdiction - Principles**

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This section deals with children who are subject to Children in Need Plans and who move to another jurisdiction. The principles apply to all government organisations in the circumstances of both transferring out and receiving in Children in Need.

In a number of situations, children and their families moving to another jurisdiction offers a positive option. However, and particularly where children and their families may have moved on more than one occasion in a short space of time, any assessment should consider whether the child is subject to trafficking or modern slavery.

For Our Children:

- When a Child in Need moves from one jurisdiction area to another, the WOCO is clear that the responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child lies with the local authority where the child is to be found;
- Given the child has already been identified as having particular needs or is vulnerable in some way, or urgent consideration / assessment should be given as to the impact of the move for the child in respect of their vulnerability, for example, through changes in the protective factors, increased risk with known perpetrators or whether they might be subject to trafficking or modern slavery;
- Given the circumstances, and in line with the above, a timely response should be made with regard to levels of assessed risk;
- The parent/carer should be made aware of their responsibility to ensure the child receives appropriate education and health support in the area they plan to move to, together with any other specialist service required for the child;

- The social worker should assist and promote the family accessing relevant and appropriate services with regard to meeting the child's needs. Any deficits in services to meet specific needs by the receiving local authority should be noted;
- Children's Social Care Services where the child and family are moving to should be formally notified and all relevant information should be shared:
  - Social work assessment;
  - Child in Need Plan;
  - Minutes of latest Child in Need Review;
  - A summary / case report.
- Parent / carer's permission should be sought to share this information with the receiving jurisdiction.

However, data protection and confidentiality should never be a barrier to 'sharing information where the failure to do so would result in a child or vulnerable adult being placed at risk of harm' or indeed on those occasions where seeking consent might increase the risk of harm.

Otherwise, the social worker or team manager, should consider seeking advice from their their Legal Services;

- The social worker should ensure that other agencies involved in the Child in Need Plan are made aware and prepared to ensure that their relevant information is shared as soon as possible with their respective counterparts in the area the family have moved to, (for example school and GP records, etc.);
- The social workers and team managers of the respective jurisdiction should ensure there is clear and good communication during any transition and any risks are clearly communicated and understood.
- The family should be kept informed of any respective responsibilities during a transition stage and when the receiving jurisdiction, (where the family reside), take full responsibilities;
- Receiving jurisdiction should seek to convene a Child in Need Meeting within 20 working days of the family being resident in their area and include all



relevant agencies and, where possible, the social worker and other specialist staff where the child and family have moved from;

- All actions, decisions and arrangements should be fully recorded on the child's electronic record during this process. This should include management decisions, which should identify the rationale for any decisions made, especially where specific services cannot be provided and/or it is considered the child is no longer a Child in Need.