

CONCURRENT PLANNING: INFORMATION FOR BIRTH PARENTS

Introduction

This information is being given to you because your child has, or maybe placed in the foster care system. You may be feeling angry, sad and confused. This leaflet provides some information about involving you as a parent in planning for your child's future.

What is Concurrent Planning?

Concurrent Planning is a special social work practice that values a child's need for a stable home life from a very early age and a predictable future. Staying in foster care is not always good for young children, especially if they have to move placements during the decision-making. In concurrent planning the Local Authority will be working on two plans for your child at the same time:

1. **Plan A** where they can return to live with you.
2. **Plan B** where should this be unable to happen they can be given a permanent adoptive home in the same family that has been providing the foster care.

Concurrent planning is a process that works towards providing your child with the security of a permanent home in a time frame that is beneficial to your child's physical, social and emotional development.

Who are Concurrent Planning carers?

Concurrent planning carers are families that have been approved to adopt as well as provide foster care. They have been trained to work with the Local Authority in caring for your child and supporting efforts for your child being returned to your care. However, if this is not possible, as they are also approved adopters, they will be able to offer a permanent adoptive home for your child without them experiencing a potentially damaging and upsetting move.

By placing your child with a concurrent planning carer you and the Local Authority are putting your child's welfare first. In such a placement your child is being given greater stability as they are protected from potential multiple moves in care.

What are Family and Friends Foster Placements?

These placements, sometimes known as Kinship foster care, consist of relatives or close friends who are able to provide your child with a good quality permanent home. They must have a close relationship with your child and have to be assessed and approved under fostering regulations – like concurrent planning carers.

If you think someone in your family could offer a suitable permanent home for your child, you should tell your child's social worker immediately. Failure to do so at this

stage could result in your child missing-out on the possibility of staying within their family network.

What is expected of me?

As a parent, you will be asked to complete a case plan which you and your child's social worker will develop together. This plan will outline specific tasks you are to complete within specified time scales in order to be able to provide a safe and secure home for your child. It is important that you work with the social worker on identifying the changes you need to make and the services you may need to help you to do this. Ultimately the court will set the timescales you have to work within before they make a final decision on your child's permanent home.

What if I do not complete the plan?

You and your child's social worker will monitor your progress with the plan. If you do not complete the tasks in the plan this will provide the social worker with an idea about your commitment/capacity to care for your child in the future. They may then decide that your child should not return to your care. In the end though it is the court that will decide where your child should live and under what type of arrangement.

Extended Family and Support

Your child's social worker will encourage you to (where appropriate) seek the help of your family and trusted friends to assist in developing and completing the case plan. They may also be able to

What can I do next?

Take an honest look at the problems that caused your child to be removed from your home, or are concerning the Local Authority so they are planning to do so.

Work with your child's social worker and other professionals to identify services that you need to be able to provide a safe and suitable home for your child.

Work hard on completing the tasks set out in the plan and stick to the Partnership Agreement.

If your child is not living with you make sure you attend contact sessions with your child and take an active role in co-parenting your child with your child's foster carers/concurrent planning carers.

Help your child accept their carers' as people who are helping you to care for them while you are making the changes in your life that are needed to enable you to provide them with a safe and stable home.

Evaluate your ability to provide a safe home for your child in the near future.

Updated: 2/4/14