

Disruption of Adoptive Placements

This policy applies to disruptions of adoptive placements, which occur prior to an Adoption Order having been made. Where a disruption takes place after an Adoption Order has been made, a Disruption Meeting may be held as part of the adoption support provided to the child and adoptive family in which case the same principles as set out in this chapter may be followed.

Where an adoptive placement breaks down for a child looked after by one of the 5 Local Authorities of Tees Valley, prior to the granting of an Adoption Order, the Local Authority responsible for the child must conduct a review of the child's case no earlier than 28 days, and no later than 42 days following the ending of the placement.

The review should consider whether the LA remains satisfied that the child should be placed for adoption; it should consider the child's needs, welfare and development, and whether any changes need to be made to assist his/her development; the existing arrangements for contact should be reviewed; and any further arrangements for assessing the child's education and health needs.

This review is required under the Adoption Agencies Regulations (2005) 36 (10). This is a formal reviewing requirement and is separate from the Disruption Meeting but should be considered alongside planning for the Disruption Meeting.

The adoption social worker should be invited to attend the review, and consideration should be given to the provision of support services to the child, specifically in relation to the disruption.

Adoption Tees Valley is the agency which operates as the Adoption Support Service, under the Adoption Support Services Regulations (2005) and will be responsible for the convening of the Disruption Meeting. Adoption Tees Valley will designate a suitably experienced manager to be the Convenor for the meeting. Adoption Tees Valley (the Convenor) will agree a date for the Disruption Meeting through discussion with the child's social worker, and the adoption social worker, and respective managers. There is no prescribed timescale for the Disruption Meeting, however it will be scheduled to take place following the Review, and within 10 weeks of the placement ending. Adoption Tees Valley will arrange for the meeting to be chaired independently by an experienced practitioner or manager from outside the adoption service, who is/was not involved in the line management of the case social worker, nor in any decision making for the child concerned.

The purpose of the Disruption meeting is:

- To enable participants to share information and feelings about the process, placement, and disruption without assigning blame.

- To understand better the actions and factors that may have contributed to the placement ending.
- To achieve a shared understanding about the current needs of the child, for future planning.
- To identify any current or future needs of the carers, and birth family.
- To consider areas for development in policy and practice, arising from learning and open reflection and review.

Invitations to the Disruption Meeting will be arranged by the Convenor, in conjunction with the child's social worker and the Independent Chair. As a minimum, invitees should include the prospective adoptive parents; their adoption social worker; the current carers; carers from whose home the child was placed for adoption; the child's Independent Reviewing Officer and any other relevant people.

The arrangements should allow for planning and preparation by all who are invited. A full day should be allowed for the meeting. The Convenor will arrange for a minute taker for the meeting.

In most cases, Adoption Tees Valley will be the venue, to allow for space, privacy and support to the meeting.

The child's social worker will also ensure that the child's views and feelings are given to the meeting in the most appropriate way. Where of an age to express a view, children should be helped to understand the purpose of the meeting, and how they can have their say, and understand the outcome. The chair may wish to separately visit the child, in order to help them make a contribution, and ensure their thoughts feelings and views are represented.

The agenda for the day will be provided in advance to all invitees. The BAAF Good practice Guide will be used to set the agenda, which will include:

- The child's life in the birth family
- The child's history in care
- The permanent families progress from application to matching
- Agency practice in the LA and in ATV. Linking, matching and information sharing.
- Birth family and foster carers involvement
- Introductions
- Placement
- Disruption
- The present, including current needs of the child, and any legal issues. The child's wishes.
- Contact
- The future

- Summing up, and any recommendations

Consideration may be given to alternative models to one long meeting, where it is felt that it would be more suitable for the participants, especially where there may still be sensitive feelings. The chair may offer a shorter meeting with one or more parties, to gather their views and feelings, which will be represented into the meeting. It should be recognised that the process of the Disruption meeting will have an impact on all those involved, including carers, the child, and professionals.

The chair will be asked to provide a summary report which will highlight any key areas of policy, practice or development, which should be learned from this.

The chair's report should also highlight any information which directly appertains to planning for the future needs of the child.

The panel manager/adviser will update panel members of the disruption detailing any recommendations made from the summary report and any areas of practice or development pertaining from this.

Where an Adoption Placement Plan is terminated before the adoptive placement takes place (i.e. during introductions), the adoption social worker for an in-house approved family will arrange for an adopter review to take place to consider their ongoing suitability to adopt.

In all cases, the record must show for the child's future information what happened, and the analysis of the disruption. The event of the Disruption will be recorded on the ATV data set, and also on the LA data information.