



Integrated Service for Looked After & Adopted Children

Consultations

What is a Consultation?

The consultation is a meeting that focuses on the needs of children and young people living within the Looked After System, or adoptive homes. It offers Worcestershire carers or adoptive parents, alongside others closely involved with the placement, a time to discuss and reflect on the situation. It can be a time to think about where things are going, to consider how you might do things differently or to understand the child or young person a little better.

Consultations are usually small meetings. Everyone has an opportunity to share their views and concerns about a child or young person and to think together about how to manage the placement.

Making a referral

Anyone closely involved with the child or young person can make a referral for a consultation. This includes the carers, adoptive parents, social workers, fostering social workers, education professionals or health professionals. A referral is made by telephone: 01905 752819

The process

The consultation lasts for two hours and is run by two team members from ISL. The chairperson attends to the process, ensuring that everyone gets a chance to contribute and that the aims are met. The psychologist or therapist helps to further the understanding of the information being shared.

Following introductions, the original aims made at referral are reviewed and amended if necessary. As the consultation progresses, the focus will be on the carer(s) - to share their concerns and to give them an opportunity to talk about how it is day-to-day looking after the child or young person.

Other people will also be asked to comment and to provide their own perspective. It is the process of working together which is the central focus of the consultation. Background

information will also be considered to help make sense of the young person and the behaviour they are displaying.

The ISL team member will then share their thoughts about the child or young person from the information presented. This will include a focus on emotional needs, will offer possibilities for increased understanding and may suggest possible strategies for managing the child or young person.

This will be followed by a discussion during which everyone can reflect upon the information shared and the impressions offered. Ways forward will be reflected upon during this discussion.

During the consultation the chairperson will take notes and will later prepare a confidential report.

Should I tell the young person about the meeting?

If the child or young person is old enough to understand, tell them that you will be attending the meeting and you will be talking to us about their placement. Explain that the meeting is for you to get some support and advice so that you can make sure that you are doing the best you can for them.

Who attends?

The people who are immediately involved with the child or young person are invited to attend the consultation. This will usually include the child's social worker, fostering social worker, and someone from school, alongside the carer or adoptive parent. Where a health professional is involved in supporting the child or family they will also be invited.

We do not invite the child or young person or their biological parents (except when the child is placed with them via the Looked After System) or the Children's Guardians.



Worcestershire

How should I prepare?

You do not need to make any special preparation for the meeting although you might find it helpful if you jot down the issues and concerns you currently have. You will be asked to describe how things have been in the placement from when the child moved in until the current time, so you might want to reflect on this before attending. The meeting is relaxed and informal with opportunities to discuss with the team around you what it is like caring for the child or young person. It has proved very helpful to have a photo of the young people if you would like to bring one along please do so.

Why should I attend the Consultation?

Your contribution can increase the understanding of all those at the meeting, whilst you will have the opportunity to learn from their perspectives. In this way you will contribute to a shared understanding of the young person and their needs.

We hope that through the consultation you will get an opportunity to be part of:

- Thinking about ways to help the child or young person at home, school and within the community
- Thinking about how services, including CAMHS services might usefully be involved
- Informing others about health referral and assessment processes

Adoptive parents, Carers and Residential Support Workers:

This consultation is very much your meeting. It provides an opportunity to reflect upon the child in placement, outside of the statutory systems such as the Review Meetings or Child Protection Conferences. This gives you a chance to 'think about it how it is' with those people who are working closely with you to support the child.

The consultation will help you to:

- Increase your understanding of your child
- Share this understanding with other professionals involved so you can work together well
- Reflect on your day-to-day care, what you would like to achieve, and ways forward to achieve this

We hope that this will give you increased levels of:

- Support
- Advice
- Understanding

Social Care Workers:

We encourage the child's social worker and the fostering social worker to attend the consultation. We welcome team managers and any other interested workers. Your attendance is important for the success of the consultation. You will be able to explain the child's history, current care plan and legal status. You will have an opportunity to outline current concerns for you in supporting the child and placement and to share in the reflection, leading to increased understanding and ideas for ways forward. This will increase your effectiveness in working with others. We will not make specific recommendations at the consultation, but ideas will emerge that can be taken forward. The usual process is for the social worker to take these forward via the review system.

Education Personnel:

We encourage someone from the child's school to attend the consultation. We welcome class teachers, designated teachers, learning support assistants, head teachers or other education workers closely involved with the education of the child. We are also often joined by our colleagues within ISL involved in supporting the child or young person in school. You will be able to inform the consultation about the child's achievements and struggles within school. We are interested in educational achievement, friendship development, behaviour and degree of comfort with school. A care placement is reliant on a stable educational experience for the child, therefore your contribution to the meeting is very important, to work well as part of the team around the child.

Health Personnel:

We encourage health workers to attend the consultation. We welcome those who are currently working with the child and carers and also those who may become involved in the future. This might include health visitors, school nurses, paediatricians, therapists or members of CAMHS teams. This helps to ensure that we are working together to support the child and carers, improving inter-agency collaboration

For further information, support or advice:

If you have any question or would like to access our support please contact us in the following ways:

By telephone:

01905 752819

By post:

ISL Team 2, Worcestershire County Council, The Pines, Bilford Road, Worcester, WR3 8PU

By email:

islenquiries@worcestershire.gov.uk

Online:

www.worcestershire.gov.uk/isl