



What is a Child in Care review meeting?

Review meetings are held to talk about plans for all children who are in the care of Barnet Council's Children's Service. This is where we discuss how things are going for your child and how we can help in the future. These meetings take place within one month of your child coming into care, three months after that and then about every six months.

Who can attend a review meeting?

Parents will usually be invited to reviews. If you are not invited you should be told why and helped to understand the reasons

If you would like any help getting to the meeting or you need an interpreter, please talk to your child's social worker about this.

The focus of the review meeting will be your child. If they are old enough to come to the meeting we will try and involve them as much as we can in the discussions. We will always try to make sure they understand what is being said and that they can tell us what they want.

Other important people in your child's life may also be invited to the review, such as

- their carers
- teacher
- health visitor

Ask your child's social worker who will be invited.

The consultation process

The law says that reviews must be held for all children in care and that all the relevant people in the child's life are consulted. This is so that their views are available and taken into account before decisions are made.



How can I give my views?

You will be sent a form before each meeting to fill out and return to your child's social worker or the review chair. You don't have to fill in the form if you don't want to. If you prefer, you can ring the social worker or chair and ask them to make a note of your views.

Hearing your views about what is best for your child is a very important part of the review process.

What will we talk about at the meeting?

There should be a written agenda at the meeting which will include the following:

- What was decided at any previous meetings.
- What your child would like to happen.
- How things are going in your child's placement.
- Your views about the arrangements and plans for your child's care.
- How long your child will be in care.
- What help your child may need when they leave care.
- Your child's religion, language and cultural needs.
- Arrangements for your child to keep in touch with their family members.
- Collecting photos of your family for your child to keep.
- Your child's health and feelings.
- Arrangements for school and leisure activities.
- Their career ambitions (for older children).
- Other items can be added if they are relevant to the plans being made for your child

If your child is attending the review, we will try to encourage them to do well in life. We may ask them to bring certificates



or schoolwork to show us so they can feel proud of the achievements they are making. It is important for your child that the meeting is a positive experience.

Who will chair the meeting?

The meeting will be chaired by one of Barnet Council's Reviewing Officers. Reviews have to be chaired by someone who is not directly involved in your child's case. It is the role of the Reviewing Officer to provide an independent perspective when plans are made for your child.

As the Reviewing Officer does not manage your child's social worker, they cannot always make final decisions during the meeting. Instead, the chair will recommend a plan based on what is discussed at the review. This will then need to be agreed by the manager for your child's case before it can be carried out. Funding may only be agreed by senior managers.

If there is a dispute between the Reviewing Officer and your child's social worker about what is best for your child, there is a process for resolving this to ensure the right plan is made for your child. The Reviewing Officer has a duty to challenge your child's social worker if they think that your child is not getting the help they need or if there is a delay in arranging this. If things cannot be sorted out the Reviewing Officer can speak to a lawyer about this. If you want to know more about this please ask the Reviewing Officer for more information.

The Care Plan

The main focus of the review will be to talk about and agree the Care Plan for your child. The Care Plan includes the plan for where your child should live, how long they should be in care and other arrangements; for example health, education and keeping in touch with family. This plan should be written down and you should receive a copy. Please ask us if this has not happened.



If your child is 'accommodated' you retain parental responsibility for your child. This means we will need your agreement to all the arrangements made.

If your child is 'looked after' under a Care Order, the Children's Service will share parental responsibility for your child with you. This means on some occasions the Children's Service will be able to override your views if this is in your child's best interests. You should always be told where the Children's Service intend to override your views and why, and helped to understand the reasons for this.

If you are unhappy with any of the decisions being made for your child you can

- talk to your child's social worker or the chairperson
- follow Barnet Council's complaints process
- talk to a solicitor
- contact the Family Rights Group for advice.

Please ask us if you need help with any of the above.

What happens after the meeting?

After the meeting you will receive notes from the meeting or a letter from your child's social worker telling you what was decided.

If you don't agree with the plan made you can raise this with the social worker, their team manager or the chair of the meeting. They will then have to look into the comments you have made and respond to what you have asked.

If you are still not satisfied you can ask the social worker about Barnet Council's complaints process, there is a leaflet available that tells you about your right to complain and how to do this.



Any questions?

If you have any questions please contact your child's social worker or the chairperson

Social worker's name

tel:

Chairperson's name

tel:

Equalities statement

Barnet Council believes all residents should be treated equally regardless of their race, religion, disability, gender, age or sexuality.

If you would like this leaflet translated into another language, please contact your social worker who will arrange this.

Child in Care Reviews

Information for parents



Listening to **children**

