

Back up Plan

Bitesize Briefing

What is it?

Back up plans can also be referred to as Contingency Plans. It is a plan that is agreed with the child, family and partner agencies should a crisis occur.

It enables all parties to understand the actions that we and others will take if required.

A robust back up plan is a way of supporting children and families to increase their safety and to know where they can go for help. It can help to plan in advance for the possibility of violence or abuse.

Who is involved?

Back up Planning is most effective when all relevant people are involved.

It should be written in partnership with the child/family and involve anyone else relevant, such as an extended family member.

Things to Consider

To make the plan effective and unique to the family, we need to think about:

- What are the triggers within this family?
- How will these be identified?
- How may these impact the family?
- What has worked in the past to de-escalate?
- Details of the 'safe people' who are identified within the plan are clear and updated.
- Has the voice of the child been captured?
- Additional needs of anyone within the family and ensuring communication and plan is inclusive of this.
- Previous trauma within the family unit.

What should be included?

Ways in which to help a plan be effective and empowering.

- Consider how the parent's vulnerability could affect the child.
- What strategies can be put in place to support the child.
- Have we identified safe alternative carers?
- Have we consider how changes in circumstances for a parent/carer and their child will be managed.
- The plan should help recognise achievements as well as sharing potential concerns which may be happening within the family.
- Ensure that the strengths are being weighed out against the risks.
- Ensure the plan is realistic and achievable.
- Plans should always be unique and individual to the family.
- Be clear on what action is needed and when, if the situation arises.
- Be solution focused.

Communication is key to ensure the right support is in place at the right time, by the right people.

Why do we need it?

To help keep children and family safe when a crisis or Safeguarding concern occurs.

Professionals and families need to be aware when certain situations will lead to major concerns.

A Back up Plan should be recorded on each child's file and should be kept up to date, taking into account the child's changing needs and circumstances. The child, family and all relevant professionals need to be involved in agreeing and implementing the backup plan. The plan should be specific to each child and their circumstances, the plan should be reviewed and updated if risks escalate/de-escalate or if new risks are identified. It is important that the plan is written in a way so that the child and family understand its purpose.

It should focus on the needs of the child and what actions need to be taken to keep them safe from significant harm.

Remember

The Back up Plan should be:

- Inclusive to everyone involved in the situation.
- Empowering for the child, helping them feel and be safe.
- Empowering to the family .
- Safeguarding children and families.
- Recorded clearly on the child's file and ensure everyone has an updated copy.
- Written in a way which is open transparent, inclusive for all parties.

Other Supportive Material

Other supportive resources to use include:

- [Motivational Interviewing Training](#)
- The SSCP Bitesize workshops
- [Trauma Informed Network](#)
- [Motivational Interviewing Podcast by the SSCP](#)

