

The Local Authority has a duty to protect and promote the welfare of children identified as being 'in need' in its area. To do this, we must work with families to provide support that ensures children's needs are met within their family.

A Child in Need (CiN) is defined under the Children Act 1989 as a child who is unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable level of health or development, or whose health and development is likely to be significantly or further impaired, without the provision of services; or a child who is disabled. Children in need may be assessed under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, in relation to their special educational needs, disabilities, as a carer, or because they have committed a crime.

In Portsmouth we ensure we work 'with' children and families wherever possible. When children are identified as being 'in Need' families work with Children's Social Care on a voluntary basis, which means they must give consent to our involvement at each stage of the work. If a parent no longer consents to our work with the child and family we must consider whether the absence of the support offered would increase the risk of harm to the child and therefore meet the threshold for a Child Protection Enquiry.

### **Why is it important?**

Child In Need Plans provide the opportunity for families and Children's Social Care to work together to reduce any risk of harm to children in the future by providing intervention and resources that addresses any needs identified following assessment.

The process ensures that children with a disability receive the right care, support and funding to meet their potential and have their daily needs met.

Regular reviews ensure that all services are a part of plans for children, share information and where appropriate offer support and resources.

### **How do we do it?**

All children identified as 'In Need' should have a CiN plan, which describes the identified needs of the child and provides Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Timely (SMART) actions. The plan is written by the Case Holder with the family and **is** regularly reviewed within CiN Planning Meetings every three months. Reviews should include those with Parental Responsibility and all professionals working with the family, including those from Health, Education, Housing and any specialist provision to ensure that updates are provided at these meetings. Where possible, children should be enabled to attend their meetings and share their views. Where this is not possible, the case holder must ensure they provide an update from the child's perspective.

Case holders must visit the child no less than four weekly, unless in exceptional circumstances, with agreement from a manager, who will record this on the child electronic file. It is good practice to see children alone where possible to ascertain their views and wishes. This must be undertaken with the parents' consent.

Case holders will work with families by offering challenge and support to address concerns and identify strengths to overcome these. This may require the case holder to make referrals to other services who can support the family, provide advocacy to the family and/or offer specific interventions to address concerns for the child.

### **Restorative Practice**

Portsmouth City Council is committed to working with families using a restorative approach. This means that our planning and intervention is Respectful, Safe, Voluntary, Neutral, Accessible and Restorative, being clear about our concerns for children, whilst supporting the family to identify what will improve the situation and create a plan.



## One Minute Guide Working with Children in Need (Children Act 1989. Section 17)



### For more information:

For the Thresholds Document, visit the Portsmouth Local Safeguarding Partnership [website](#)

The Working Together to Safeguard Children guidance is available [here](#)

You can access the Getting it Right for Every Child Policy [here](#)

Restorative Practice Framework, see the [One Minute Guide](#)