

## **FINAL FAREWELL FAMILY TIME**

This protocol is intended as guidance for professionals, when planning and enabling final farewell family time between children and their birth families.

### **Key Principles**

Reduction in Family Time will commence from the point that the Courts have granted a Care Order and Placement Order.

The plan of reduction will be specific to each child's needs but consideration should be given to combining both virtual video call time and face-to-face family time, until a potential adoptive placement has been found for the child. This will support the child in having some familiarity to their birth family which will support a better final farewell contact (younger children can often be unsettled in their final farewell contact as they are not familiar with their birth family due to longer periods of not seeing them).

The final farewell family time will take place **before** any introductions between the child and a new adoptive family and, with sufficient time to elapse for the child/children to have some time to grieve the 'loss' of this relationship before they are asked to engage and make new relationships with a permanent family. As a guide, for older children there should be at least a one-month gap between their final farewell family time with their birth family and meeting their adoptive family. For younger children/babies, the gap should be no less than two weeks.

Where there has been an agreement that birth parents will meet the prospective adoptive family, the final farewell family time will take place **before** any such meeting.

### **Notice to Birth Parents/Family of reduction to family time**

<b>Action to be taken</b>	<b>Who is Responsible for Actions</b>
<p>Birth Parents/Family to be given adequate notice of the family time reduction plan - at least 4 weeks (when the Final Care Plan is being completed for Court).</p> <p>This notice should be given to Birth Parents/Family <b>in person</b>, followed by <b>written</b> confirmation.</p> <p>There needs to be some planning around how the Birth Parents/Family will be supported when receiving this information i.e. ensure that they have family/friend with them.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Child's Social worker</p>

Family Time Worker to be notified of the reduction plan and information of when the Birth Parents/Family will be informed of the reduction plan, as this could affect the planned family time sessions currently taking place. Family Time Worker can also help Birth Parents/Family in understanding the reduction plan.

**Notice to Birth Parents/Family of Farewell Family Time**

Action to be taken	Who is Responsible for Actions
<p>Birth Parents/Family to be given at least 4 weeks notice of the Final Farewell Family Time date <b>in person</b>, followed by <b>written</b> confirmation. There needs to be some planning around how the Birth Parents/Family will be supported when receiving this information i.e. ensure that they have family/friend or trusted professional with them.</p> <p>Family Time Worker, Child’s Foster Carer, any other relevant professionals, to be notified of the date of the Final Farewell Family Time as soon as this has been confirmed.</p> <p>Communication from the Child’s Social Worker with the allocated Family Time Worker needs to be consistent and regular from the day a final farewell family time date has been agreed.</p>	<p>Child’s Social worker</p>

**Planning for Final Farewell Family Time (3 stages)**

	Action to be taken	Who is Responsible for Actions
<p><b>STAGE ONE</b></p> <p>Planning Meeting with Birth Parents</p>	<p><b>Questions to ask parents:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What activities do they want to do with their child</li> </ul>	<p>Supervised Contact Officer (SCO)</p>

- Who do they want to support them before, during and after the final farewell family time (this can include a particular worker from the Family Time Service, external professional, family/friend)
- Do they wish for the Child's SW to be part of the contact
- Do they have any questions or concerns regarding farewell family time
- Discussion around travel arrangements to and from the contact – where will the Parents go/be staying following the contact
- After family time - do they want the foster carer to collect the child from room or the Supervised Contact Officer (SCO) to take the child out to the car

**Topics for discussion**

- SCO will take photos and send to parent's home address the next day, and to the Child's SW
- SCO not take their laptop to farewell family time so that full support can be offered to the Parents
- Logistics of the day i.e. how the Child will be brought into the building, Parents being able to leave the room at any time if they needed some breathing space, the session can end sooner on the day if they felt it was too much, etc.
- The room will be booked for an extended period so that there is time for the Parents to stay in the room after the Family Time finishes should they need the space

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Following the Farewell Family Time, the SCO will be available for support</li> <li>• SCO will do check-ins with the Parents over the following days</li> </ul>	
<p><b>STAGE ONE</b></p> <p>Planning Meeting with older children</p>	<p><b>Questions to ask older children:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who do they want in farewell family time to support them</li> <li>• What activities do they want to do</li> <li>• How would they like to be brought into the building and leave the building</li> </ul> <p><b>Topics for discussion:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SCO will explain the logistics of the day i.e. Parents will be there when the Child arrives, Parents may leave the room at some points, who might be in the contact (such as SW), etc.</li> </ul>	Supervised Contact Officer (SCO)
<p><b>STAGE TWO</b></p> <p>Planning Meeting with Professionals (Child SW, Foster Carer and any other relevant professional)</p>	<p><b>Topics to discuss:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How the farewell family time will happen (time allocated, venue, who will be present, check covid policies)</li> <li>• Who will be present to support the parents before, during and after family time .(risk assessment required for other members)</li> </ul>	Supervised Contact Officer, Child's SW, Foster Carer and any other relevant professional

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support Plan for Parents after farewell family time – who will do check-ins with Parents in the following days after the final farewell session and when</li> <li>• Wishes of the Parents and Child (as discussed in their planning meeting)</li> <li>• Would it be appropriate for social worker to be present at the farewell family time/ will they be available for support</li> <li>• What activities will be done during the farewell family time</li> <li>• Who will bring child in and out of the family time.</li> </ul> <p><b>NB. If Parents have requested the Child’s SW not be part of the final farewell then the SCO will be responsible for taking photos of the final farewell and sending them to Birth Family and the SW within 5 days following the final goodbye. The SCO will also be expected to write a short letter for the child about their final farewell, which will be placed on the child’s file to read along with their later life letter when they are older. The letter needs to be completed and sent to SW no later than 10 days following the final goodbye.</b></p> <p>SCO will draw up the plan for the Final Farewell Family Time as per discussions from this meeting</p>	
<p><b>STAGE THREE</b></p> <p>Meeting with Parents to finalise agreed arrangements for final farewell family time</p>	<p>Discuss arrangements for final farewell family time with Parents and give them a copy of the plan</p> <p>Copy of the Plan will be sent to Child’s SW and Foster Carer</p>	<p>Supervised Contact Officer (SCO)</p>

## **Post Final Farewell Family Time**

<b>Action to be taken</b>	<b>Who is Responsible for Actions</b>
<p><b>Support for Professionals involved in the final farewell family time:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Child SW and SCO to be given the opportunity to reflect and unload following the final farewell family time with peers/TM</li></ul> <p><b>Support for Birth Parents:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Check-in call to Birth Parent/Family on the evening of the final farewell family time</li><li>• Check-in call to Birth Parent/Family the day after the final farewell family time</li><li>• Check-in call to Birth Parent as agreed/required over the following days</li></ul>	<p>CSW Team Manager/ Family Time Service TM/ identified Team Member</p> <p>Supervised Contact Officer (SCO) or other identified professional (as agreed at planning meeting with professionals)</p>