



Key worker Guidance Policy

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Regulations and Standards:

The Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015:

- Regulation 7 - The children's views, wishes and feelings standard.
- Regulation 10 - The health and well-being standard.
- Regulation 14 - The care planning standard

The term Key worker is used to describe the person with key responsibilities for a child in the home. This guidance sets out the key responsibilities for that person.

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1. HND Children's Care Ltd Management of Key workers:

The home's manager is responsible for ensuring that each child has a key worker who can engage in a positive relationship with the child.

The HND Children's Care Ltd home's manager will ensure that all key workers are suitably trained and fully competent to carry out the duties required. In addition to this each child will also have at least one allocated co-key worker to ensure that there is continuity of care and support.

The home's manager will decide that the key worker for a child should change if:

- The child complains that the relationship is not working.



- The member of staff leaves the employment of the home.
- The member of staff is unable to establish a positive relationship.
- The manager believes that the relationship is not in the best interests of the child or the member of staff.

The HND Children's Care Ltd home's manager will ensure that key workers are appropriately supervised and / or provided with mentors who may offer them support and guidance.

2. The Role of the Key worker – General:

A key worker is a named member of staff who has a central role in respect of a particular child. This will include the overseeing of the placement planning and recording systems.

The key worker should become the main co-ordinator of services for a particular child in the home. They should help other staff follow the agreed approaches and care strategies set out in the placement plan. They should also help to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the services to ensure that the needs of the individual are being met.

The HND Children's Care Ltd home's manager will appoint the key worker preferably before a place has been offered to the child. Where this is not possible, it should be done on the date of admission. Wherever possible, the key worker should be involved in visits prior to admission and during this period, they should strive to become a familiar face who will be present at the time of admission.

During the early stages of placement, the key worker should spend sufficient time with the child to assist with their transition in addition to ensuring that all the child's records are set up and daily recording is taking place.

The key worker is responsible for establishing and maintaining an appropriate relationship with the child, collating information required for the child's placement planning meetings and Looked After Reviews; see the following relevant Policies:

'Placement Planning Meetings Policy'.

'Looked After Reviews Policy'.

The key worker, supported by the staff team, should assist the child to maintain social, recreational, cultural and religious links through daily living activities inside and outside of the home.

Undertaking the role of key worker means supporting the child in meeting social, spiritual, emotional and intellectual needs in a way that promotes dignity, choice and independence.

3. Key worker Guidance:



3.1 Being there for the child:

Developing effective nurturing relationships built on trust is an essential part of the role of key workers. It is imperative that key workers talk to their allocated children regularly to ensure that they have a clear understanding of the following points:

- She / he understands what is planned for the week; issues to concentrate on, how best to deal with potential problems etc.
- Are there meetings or court appearances planned, talk through how these will go, possible issues etc. Raise any risks or concerns with your manager or supervisor.
- Take regular interest in the child's health - dentist, doctors, and opticians. These appointments need booking and ensuring that regular check-ups occur.
- Bedrooms - clean, personalised, in a good state of repair and well equipped, personal belongings and clothes stored and safe.
- Help the child understand how to maintain a good standard of personal hygiene.
- Safety – It is essential to remember that many children that reside in residential care have attachment issues and have created a personal resilience and “barrier” to engaging with adults. Staff members need to pay attention not only to what children say, but also what they do not say and how they behave. Children do not readily talk about their worries or concerns, and we need to remember that looked after children are vulnerable individuals. Developing trusting relationships is important for these individuals to help them build security through attachments.
- The role of key worker is to understand and 'Be There' for the child. Do not wait to be told by your key child that he / she is afraid; assume that it is the case and do all you can to make them feel safe and supported.
- It is essential that key workers know their key child - their file, background and family details; know their interests and hobbies; encourage them to take part, join clubs etc.; what makes them happy, sad and angry; what frightens or worries them. In addition to attempting to ease or reduce their concerns by offering advice, guidance or direction.
- Key worker meetings must take place at least weekly with your key child each as an opportunity for you to talk about how he / she is doing, issues to address, possible ways to behave differently, planning for the short and medium term etc.
- Plan by remembering birthdays and anniversaries and making them special.
- Plan for other dates that may have a relevance to the child such as anniversaries of significant events in their lives.
- Keep all the other staff informed about what is happening in the child's life.
- Advocate on the child's behalf if appropriate
- Ensure that your key child is informed about what changes are happening in their lives, in their home, in their overall plan, with the social worker and with their family.

If issues need to be dealt with when the key worker is off duty the home's manager or colleagues should be informed to ensure that work is undertaken or ongoing support is offered. Planning is essential; NEVER leave a child in uncertainty wondering what is going to happen in your absence. Always plan together and where appropriate ensure that an allocated worker has been identified to complete any outstanding task so that the child has



a named person that they can approach.

3.2 Health Care:

The key worker should ensure that the physical, emotional and health needs of the child are identified. In addition to actively promoting the health and care of each child and enabling them to learn about healthy living and positive life choices. In doing so the key worker should liaise with key health professionals, such as the child's GP, dental practitioner, optician and any other relevant and appropriate health services. For further guidance refer to:

‘Sexual Health and Relationships Policy’

‘Health Care Assessments and Plans Policy’

‘Health Notifications and Access to Services Policy’

3.3 Education Achievement/ building aspirations:

Building children’s own aspirations is an intrinsic part of the role of managers and staff. Recognition that children often have experienced a wide range of disappointments and setbacks in their lives and, therefore, their self-esteem, confidence and hopes for the future are frequently very low. Finding opportunities to celebrate success, both privately and publicly, is a way in which expectations can be raised. Certificates of achievement and rewards such as special outings and pocket money as ways to recognise success should be promoted. However, perhaps the most powerful form of recognition is the praise from the members of staff.

The key worker must be responsible for promoting the educational achievement of the child and liaising with key professionals including the designated teacher and or mentor.

This may include ensuring that the child is:

- provided with facilities conducive to study and to homework and actively encouraged and supported in doing so.
- provided with reading support where needed.
- encouraged to participate in extracurricular activities.
- encouraged to discuss any problems they may have at school in privacy.
- encourage attendance.

This will include attending parent's evenings and other school events in the absence of the child's parents and with the individual’s consent.

3.4 External Contacts:

Key workers need to promote external communication with interested parties outside of the home and encourage the children to do likewise, recognising the importance of socialisation and positive relationships.

Family contact - is the child maintaining contact by telephone or writing to their family? Are



there restrictions on contact; who they call or the frequency of calls? Build a relationship with the family where appropriate.

Home visits - should they be planned / accompanied?

Social Workers – regular contact with social workers is essential as forging positive working relationships is a necessary element of residential childcare. Keeping social workers informed of negative and positive behaviours is important as there needs to be transparency and fluent exchange of information. The key worker is also responsible for ensuring that there is regular contact between the child and their social worker.

Education - even when this facility is provided 'on-site' there should be a professional working relationship that is similar to all external agencies and services. Individuals and services need to be informed of any issues or positive interactions regarding the child and their education.

Specialist / expert support and guidance: If the child requires additional support or guidance from specialists or experts (e.g.: on drug misuse, sexual health), the key worker is expected to approach their manager or the social worker for information on additional services can be sourced and obtained

3.5 Complaints:

The key worker must ensure that the child is aware of how the company complaints procedures works and that he / she has a copy of this and is confident enough to use the procedures if necessary.

In addition, the key worker also has the responsibility of ensuring that the child has an up-to-date copy of the Children's Guide and other information produced by the home for children; ensuring the child is fully conversant with the Fire Precautions and is aware of all fire exits. If there are requirements / needs emanating from the child's care plan or placement plan (e.g.: information on drug misuse, sexual health), make sure this is obtained and provided - in a form which is accessible and understandable to the child.

3.6 Paperwork, Files, Placement Plans and Daily Records:

Ensure that records and the children's files are current and well organised. Although other staff members will have input to the general paperwork overall responsibility lies with the key worker and this will be reviewed at regular intervals.

Daily Summary:

To be completed by staff on duty who have undertaken work or supported the children. Key Worker Sessions:

These must be planned and scheduled into the child's timetables on a weekly basis if this is proportionate to the child's needs. After each session key workers must complete a record



of discussion in addition to attaching any work sheets, drawings etc. that the child has produced. If an individual declines to engage in key work sessions this needs to be recorded. Additional refusals will need to be discussed with the manager and social worker to ensure that the needs of the child are reviewed and that an appropriate strategy is put in place.

Weekly Progress / Monthly Reports:

Regular reviews provide an opportunity to complete an ongoing assessment of the child's needs and progress in the home. The review report / assessment process documents outcomes and informs future objectives and action plans. A copy of this document will be forwarded to the social worker on completion.

Statutory Review Report:

The statutory review report is completed for CLA Review meetings, this should be completed prior to the meeting and if possible, forwarded to the social worker and IRO prior to the review meeting. This document provides an overview of the child's progress during the review period.

Undertaking the role of key worker means supporting the child in achieving a range of social, emotional and educational needs in a way that promotes dignity and independence. In addition to this, the key worker must ensure that the child's file is kept up to date, in particular, that relevant / up to date copies of the following records are contained in it:

- Care plan, pathway plan, health assessments, health plans, PEP's etc.
- Local authority placement plan.
- The home's internal placement plan.
- Essential Information records / chronology logs etc.
- Statement of Special Educational Need, Personal Education Plan and Individual Education Plan.
- Risk Assessment.
- Any specialist health care or educational reports or plans.

4. Planning and Recording a Key worker Session:

Key working sessions provide an opportunity to observe, assess, develop relationships, identify and resolve problems etc.

Key workers must arrange weekly key worker sessions with their allocated child as soon as possible after he / she is placed and then weekly thereafter.

The overall purpose of key worker sessions is to discuss progress, problems and achievements.

There are various ways to do this: formally in a meeting or informally whilst undertaking an activity.



PLAN AHEAD: It is not exhaustive, but this is a list of things you should consider when planning a Key worker session:

- Plan, talk to the child and build time into your week when it will be suitable to conduct a key worker session.
- It is important that the child feels comfortable so consider which is likely to be better: a formal or informal meeting i.e.: during an activity (whilst being aware of confidentiality within the venue)
- Plan the meeting or activity in advance, arrange for petty cash etc.
- Inform the child of the date, time and where you will be having the meeting.
- Ask the child to think about issues he / she wants to talk about
- What is the purpose of the session: progress chasing, dealing with specific issues, behaviours or problems, planning for a review or court appearance, developing ideas for the future, talking about the past etc.
- Utilise supervision (with your supervisor or manager) to discuss what you need to deal with or talk about and how you can make it work. Effective planning is essential and utilising the headings on the session sheets can offer guidance although key workers must accept and be prepared to permit / encourage the child to lead the meeting.

When planning a first session, as soon as possible after the child's placement, make sure all the basics are in place: that the child understands why he / she has been placed, the timescales for the placement, that a placement plan has been completed or a date for completion is set (go through the placement plan with the child, identify any areas of concern), that the child has a copy of the home's children's guide or other information provided for children, that the child is fully aware of the fire precautions, that he / she has necessary toiletries, clothing, bedding, towels etc.

At the first meeting or soon after, agree or set some boundaries or rules about how you will conduct your sessions. For example: That you will meet once a week, that you cannot offer confidentiality, but you will keep information safe, that you will be keeping a record, that you will be on time, what sort of meeting would suit: formal or activity based (if so what activities)

If you need to deal with negative behaviours or issues think carefully about how to present them. Do not forget you need the child to accept the negatives and be prepared to change.

Relationships take time and change is always difficult so do not try to do too much too soon.

The child may try to reject or avoid you. Do not let this get to you; keep at it but talk to your supervisor or manager if you need support or guidance remembering that some children will be testing your resilience in order for them to establish your boundaries prior to committing to a working relationship.

Start small, concentrate on the positives.

If you are unsure about your own or the child's safety talk to your supervisor or manager and ensure you plan to reduce or avoid your concerns



Afterwards talk to your supervisor or manager - Do this immediately if you have any concerns or feel uncomfortable about what has happened.

End.