



Social Worker Visits Policy

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Regulations and Standards:

The Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015:

- Regulation 14 - The care planning standard.
- Regulation 17 - Placement plan for looked after child.

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1. Normal Frequency:

Wherever a looked after child is placed with HND Children's Care LTD, the child's social worker must visit the individual in the placement at the following intervals, subject to the exceptions in Section 2, Exceptions:

- On the day, the child is placed to assist in the placement process.
- Within one week of the start of the child's first placement and within one week of the start of any subsequent placement.
- Then at intervals of no more than six weeks during the first year of any placement.

Thereafter, at intervals of not more than 6 weeks (or 3 months if the placement has been formally agreed as a permanent placement and which is intended to last until the child is 18)



The child's social worker should also visit the child immediately if a complaint is received from the child or from another person relating to the child concerning the standard of care they are receiving. A visit must be made within one week of receiving notification under section 30A of the Care Standards Act 2000 when the children's home in which the child is placed is referred to in that notification.

2. Conditions:

Where the placement is for a series of short-term placements, the child's social worker must visit the child within the first 7 placement days (being days when the child is placed) and thereafter every six months.

Visits should be made more frequently if circumstances require and whenever reasonably requested by the child or the staff.

Some visits should be unannounced. (HND Children's Care LTD home manager should be informed by the child's social worker at the time of placing that there will be occasional unannounced visits and the reason for this explained.)

3. Who Should Be Seen?

The child's social worker must see and speak to the child alone. The exceptions to this are: where the child refuses (and is of sufficient age and understanding to refuse); where the social worker considers it inappropriate to do so (having regard to the child's age and level of understanding), and where social worker is unable to do so, for example if the child is out. The care plan should consider any particular communication needs.

The social worker should, if appropriate take the child out from the home on occasion as this can strengthen the relationship between the child and the social worker and is also in the interests of safeguarding concerns in that the child may feel more able to discuss issues that are of concern to him / her.

4. Purpose:

The purpose of the visit is to ensure the placement continues to promote the child's welfare and in particular:

- To give the child the opportunity to express his or her wishes, feelings and views. - To advise, assist and befriend the child and to ascertain who they would turn to in times of difficulty.
- To promote an effective relationship between the child and social worker with particular reference to the role of the social worker as a link with the child's history and birth family.
- To identify daily routines including getting up and going to bed, mealtimes (including whether the children in the placement all eat together), the arrangements for personal hygiene and whether the child is provided with privacy and support that is relevant to his or her stage of development.



- To identify arrangements for holiday and leisure time including playing games, access to clubs, cultural and sporting activities.
 - To identify what special arrangements are made to meet any needs that arise from their culture, religious or heritage including communication, diet and skin/hair care.
 - To observe the child with the staff /carer / parent and to analyse parenting styles and the promotion of the child's self-esteem.
 - To monitor the standard of care offered by the placement including the physical standards, house rules and behaviour management strategies.
 - To identify whether there are toys or games to play with and the access that the child has to them.
 - To monitor how the contact arrangements with family members and friends are working and to discover whether these are promoted within the home.
 - To consider the child's sleeping arrangements, display of personal belongings and the physical state of the room. Has the child got clean clothes that are stored appropriately?
 - To identify any areas where additional support is required.
 - To evaluate whether the placement is helping to achieve the objectives of the child's care plan, with particular reference to whether the placement is meeting the educational, health and social development needs of the child. Where it is a long-term / permanent placement, the social worker should observe whether there are signs that the child is an integral part of the home such as whether they are included in photographs on display.
 - To carry out specific casework tasks with the child, for example carrying out a programme of life story work.
 - To identify whether older children are encouraged to play an increasing part in their own care such as laundry, food preparation and the purchase of food, clothes and budgeting.
 - To identify the arrangements for the child to get support with schoolwork, do homework (including where appropriate, access to a computer) and visit a library. Do the staff attend parent's evenings?
 - To identify whether the child knows about the complaint's procedure and the availability of advocacy services.
 - To monitor that the child health record is stored safely, is up to date and is accessible to the child as appropriate to the child's age and understanding.
- Social workers visiting children with disabilities and / or complex health needs should also consider the following:
- Whether practices that are being employed are appropriate and do not compromise the child's safety e.g., the method of lifting a disabled child.
 - Does the home have sufficient equipment i.e., bath chair / hoist etc.?
 - Who arranges the child's health appointments and who attends? For children in residential homes in particular, is there consistency of worker?
 - Is there clear written information re the administration of medication?

It may not be possible for a social worker to gain all the information listed in one visit, but



they must try to obtain a holistic view of the placement.

When visiting children in residential settings the social worker should be aware of the child's records, including any incidents, to gain an understanding of recent events and also to identify any themes highlighted in the recording for example, behaviour and staff strategies for managing situations.

Placement planning meetings can be undertaken during social workers visits. See: '[Placement Planning Meetings Policy](#)'.

5. Recording:

HND Children's Care LTD staff should record visits in the visitor's log, daily log and on relevant children's daily records. The social worker will complete a written report on each visit, and this should be requested and be stored in the child's file stating clearly:

- Who was seen?
- Whether the child was seen and if not why not.
- Whether the child was seen alone.
- Whether the child's bedroom was seen.
- Any comments made by the child or the staff / carers / parents.
- Any matters of concern or difficulties.
- Any observations on the child's welfare and the success of the placement. -
- Any requirements for action.

End