



Hampshire
County Council

Fostering Service



Foster Carer Handbook



Hampshire
County Council

hants.gov.uk/fostering

The Complete Guide for Hampshire County Council's Foster Carers

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1. Homepage

Welcome to Hampshire County Council's Fostering Service

Hampshire County Council's Fostering Service is made up of a community of over 450 fostering households and 60 staff members. Based within Children's Services, we find and assess new foster carers for the children of Hampshire as well as support our current foster carers.

Rated outstanding by Ofsted, Hampshire County Council provides ground-breaking support, quality training, and competitive allowances through flexible and robust fostering opportunities for its community. Hampshire County Council is dedicated to making Hampshire an even better place for children and young people. Where all, including those who are vulnerable or disadvantaged, have the best possible start in life and are supported by the whole community to succeed.



“Congratulations on becoming a foster carer with Hampshire County Council's Fostering Service. You are joining a Hampshire community that is home to hundreds of compassionate, kind-hearted, and loving residents from a wide range of backgrounds; each of them providing outstanding support to a foster child and their families. We wish you all the best in joining them to offer this and we are dedicated to providing the training and support you need every single day”.

Stuart Ashley
Director of Children's Services

We aim to provide a high-quality service in all areas of fostering, but we recognise that there is always room for improvement. Your views are very important to us, and we take all feedback we receive very seriously. We appreciate all your comments as they allow us to learn and improve. If you would like to leave a compliment, comment, or complaint please [visit this page](#).

Useful Contacts

Contact	Number	Email
West Fostering Duty	02380 815404	west.family.placement.team@hants.gov.uk
East Fostering Duty	02392 247371	east.fostering@hants.gov.uk
PCT (Placement Team)	01489 587047	sw.family.placement.team@hants.gov.uk
Out of Hours Service	0300 555 1373	
Evening & Weekend Telephone Support Line – Mon – Fri: 5pm – 11pm Weekends: 9am – 11pm	0370 779 7900	
Fostering Recruitment & Assessment Team	01489 587 052	fostering@hants.gov.uk
Foster Care Payment Team		foster.payments@hants.gov.uk
Children's Services Payment Team		cspayments@hants.gov.uk
Foster Carers online claim form		Foster Carers Online Claim
Virtual School	01962 835227	virtualschool@hants.gov.uk
Virtual College		andrew.mulliss@hants.gov.uk
Learning Zone Queries		karen.storey@hants.gov.uk
Foster Carer Training		jack.slaymaker@hants.gov.uk anna.yates@hants.gov.uk
Children in Care Nurses	02382310475	childrenincare@southernhealth.nhs.uk
School Transport	01962 846921	school.transport@hants.gov.uk

The Hampshire Approach

The Hampshire Approach is our way of working, and a shared mindset that guides the way we work with children, young people, their families and with each other in our organisation.

At the centre of the Hampshire Approach is our shared mindset, our practice, and our skills. The Hampshire Approach provides our practitioners with clear guidelines informed by evidence, which supports them in their work with children, young people, and their families.

To support our practitioners in putting the Hampshire Approach mindset into practice, we focus on five key areas:

1. Building relationships
2. Strength based conversations
3. Working collaboratively
4. Understanding wellbeing and resilience
5. Applying to policy, practice, and intervention

You can find out more detailed information on the Hampshire Approach [here](#).

The Hampshire Hives

You won't be on your own when you foster. There are so many other fostering families in Hampshire, just like you, who depend on each other. The Hampshire Hive consists of a small number of fostering families who support one another in their local area, with one foster carer known as the Hive Carer Support Worker acting as the heart of the hive.

The Hive will become a support bubble for the foster families and the children they care for. Over time families within the Hive will develop close relationships, like friends and family. The Hive families will identify any potential challenges and offer support to foster carers in their Hive to ensure the child/ren they care for remains in a stable home.

Hampshire Hives are available to new and current foster carers. If you are applying to become a foster carer, you will be supported by your assessing social worker in applying to join a hive during your prospective foster carer assessment stage two. If you are a current foster carer, please speak to your Supervising Social Worker.

If you are interested in learning more about the Hampshire Hive, you can download a leaflet [here](#) or you can contact hampshire.hive@hants.gov.uk directly.

Foster Carers Charter

The Charter sets out clear principles on how you should be treated and recognises your invaluable contribution to the lives of children and young people. In particular, the Charter is designed to:

- Make it clear that a foster child should be treated as part of your family and their views should be listened to and taken on board.
- Help tackle myths that you cannot let your foster children do everyday activities like sleepovers and holidays without facing restrictions and barriers.
- Set out how you should be supported in your role, so you know what to expect from Hampshire County Council Fostering Service. This includes being provided with full information about the child you are fostering.

The Charter was jointly produced by the Government, fostering organisations, charities, and young children. It was part of the Government's wider programme of reform to improve the care system. The overall aim is to make sure that all children in care have greater stability, less upheaval, and a better chance at a stable family life. You can find more information by reading the following document: [The Foster Carers' Charter](#)

Children's Guide

- Children, their parents, foster carers, staff, and the responsible authority/ placing authority are clear about the aims and objectives of the fostering service and what services and facilities it provides.
- The fostering service's operation meets the aims and objectives in the Statement of Purpose.

16.1 - The fostering service has a clear statement of purpose which is available to, and understood by, foster carers, staff and children and is reflected in any policies, procedures, and guidance. It is available to the responsible authority and any parent or person with parental responsibility.

16.2 - The aims and objectives of the Statement of Purpose are child focused and show how the service will meet outcomes for children.

16.3 - Subject to the child's age and understanding, the fostering service ensures the child receives the Children's Guide at the point of placement and that the foster carer explains the contents of the Children's Guide in a way that is accessible.

16.4 - The Children's Guide includes a summary of what the fostering service sets out to do for children, how they can find out their rights, how a child can contact their [Independent Reviewing Officer](#), [The Children's Commissioner for England](#) or Ofsted if they wish to raise a concern with inspectors, and how to secure access to an independent advocate.

16.5 - Where a child requires it, the guide is available, where appropriate, through suitable alternative methods of communication, e.g., Makaton, pictures, tape recording, translation into another language.

Statement of Purpose

Coming soon

Equality & Diversity

Coming soon

2. About Hampshire County Council's Fostering Service

Guidance

This handbook has been developed to evidence Hampshire County Council's Fostering Service meeting the following National Minimum Standard requirements:

21.10 - On approval, foster carers are given information, either a handbook or electronic resources, which cover policies, procedures (including regarding allegations), guidance, financial information, legal information, and insurance details. This information is updated regularly.

20.1 - All new foster carers receive an induction.

20.7 - The fostering service is clear and transparent with their foster carers about the level of support available to them and how to access such support.

20.9 - Appropriate training on safer caring is provided for all members of the foster household, including young people of sufficient age, and understanding, and ensures that foster carers understand how safer caring principles should be applied in a way which meets the needs of individual children.

Policies and Procedures

Coming Soon - [Current Fostering Docs | Health and social care | Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](#)

Legal Information

Coming Soon

Finances

County Carer Allowances 2023-24

Age of Child	Allowances per week
0-1 years	£171.01
2-4 years	£177.03
5-10 years	£195.02
11-15 years	£237.79
16+ years	£289.17

County Carer Skills Fees 2023-24

Skills Level	Skill fees per week
Level 1	£0.00
Level 2	£113.47
Level 3	£353.43

Main Placement - Placement recorded and payments set up by the child's Social Worker.

Holiday Allowance - two weeks fostering allowance per child (one payment per child for each budget year) can be claimed by carers via the online expense form. Holiday allowance can be claimed in advance. However, when completing the online form, the date of the claim will need to be used as the date of the holiday as dates in the future will not be accepted.

Out Of Hours Service Payments - OOHS periods are Mon 5pm – Fri 8am and Fri 4.30pm – Mon 8am. Carers receive £100 for covering an OOHS period. They also receive £100 plus allowances and skills for any placement they take. The £100 is only paid once if siblings are placed. There are enhanced rates agreed for the Christmas period. Allowances and Fees are paid for the night the child was placed even if this was after midnight. OOHS payments are claimed via the online expense form.

Birthday and Christmas Allowance - Additional weeks of fostering allowance are automatically processed before Christmas and before the child's birthday. If not received, this is usually due to a child being placed after the Christmas allowance has been processed or close to their birthday. Carers should let their Supervising Social Worker know who can follow up with foster care payments. They can also use the email process below to go directly to CS Payments.

Mileage - Mileage is claimed via the online expense form. Child-related mileage (school, contact, CLA's etc) is claimed using the child's details and by selecting the mileage option. Mileage related to other fostering tasks (panel, support group, training) is claimed using the other travel costs option and you do not need to include the child's details in these claims. The only exception is for public transport claims related to a child (e.g., bus pass for school or a train journey to a meeting) which will also need to be claimed under the other travel costs option. You will also need to include the child's details for these claims.

Equipment - Equipment is also claimed via the online expense form under the additional payments (equipment) option. Foster carers need to seek agreement from their Supervising Social Worker before purchasing any equipment they wish to claim for and agree on the amount that can be claimed. Their Supervising Social Worker will provide the cost code number for the online claim form. The name of the manager who authorised the purchase should be added to the Provision Number section of the claim.

Overnight Stays Payments - Overnight stays are paid at 1/7th of the relevant fostering allowance and skills fee per night. Example: 5-year-old placed with a level 2 carers for secondary stay Friday to Sunday:

Fostering Allowance: 1/7 of £185.36 = £25.96; £26.48 x 2 = £52.96

Skills Payment: 1/7 of £110.11 = £15.42; £15.73 x 2 = £31.46

Total for overnight stay: £84.42

The Supervising Social Worker for the primary carer records placement and requests the payment is set up.

Daycare Payments - Daycare is paid at 1/7th of the relevant fostering allowance. No skills fee is payable for daycare. Example: Daycare provided by level 3 carer for 2 siblings aged 4 and 10 for one day:

Fostering Allowance: 1/7 of £162.75 = 23.25 and 1/7 of £185.36 = 26.48

No skills fee payable for daycare

Total for daycare: £49.73

Child's Social Worker team adds provision for daycare. Foster carer is then provided with provision number and cost centre code and claims via the online expense form. The Supervising Social Worker for the primary carer or the carer providing the daycare will usually need to request that the child's Social Work team completes this process.

Caring for a Child in Hospital - To support the financial impact on carers when looking after a child in hospital when this requires foster carers to stay with the child for a significant part of the day. Foster carers can claim expenses up to £15 per day when the request is that they are staying all day with a child in hospital (worked out on the need to purchase basic breakfast, lunch, and dinner). If the request is less than full days for a foster carer to be with a child in hospital, please discuss this on an individual basis with your Supervising Social Worker.

Prom- Foster Carers can claim back up to £100 towards Prom costs e.g., outfits and travel. Foster carers can access this reimbursement of costs providing receipts to their Supporting Social Worker and the cost will be claimed on the on a child related expenses form.

Expenses Claims Timescales - Claims cannot be submitted until the end of the period being claimed for. Online claims are extracted and checked on a Thursday for payment run the following Monday with payment being made the following Friday.

Example:

Claim submitted from Thursday 23 February to Wednesday 1 March

Claims extracted and checked Thursday 2 March

Payment run Monday 6 March

Payment received Friday 10 March

It is essential that the correct cost code and provision number are used (for daycare and equipment) and that the foster carer has approval from the authorising manager – usually confirmed by email from the Supervising Social Worker - before submitting expense claims for equipment.

When There is a Problem - Please email the Childrens Services Payments Team cspayments@hants.gov.uk using the following format:

Email Subject – Carers Initials, ICS number – In-House Foster Carer Query

County/Connected Carer: Mr Joe Bloggs

ICS: 0000000

CLA: JY

ICS: 11111111

Details of placement for example: I provided overnight stays for J from 3rd – 10th May 2000. Payment has not been received, could you investigate this please.

The email should be copied to the Supervising Social Worker and can copy in their Hive Carer Support Worker if they are a member of a Hive.

Agreement for Overnight Stays & Daycare - Daycare and overnight stays are requested and authorised appropriately in advance by the relevant Supervising Social Worker and Children's Social Worker.

- For Overnight Stays - see CIC (Children in Care) Overnight Stays Policy
- For Daycare – see Daycare Guidance

Link to online claim form [Snap Surveys \(welcomesyourfeedback.net\)](https://www.welcomesyourfeedback.net)

[Allowances, Skills Fees and Associated Expenses including Finances for Children in Foster Care Procedure.docx \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

[Care Leavers Practice Manual Chapter Ten 20.04.18.doc \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

Insurance

[Foster Carers Claim for Loss and Damage \(CA49\).docx \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

[Foster Carer Property Insurance Claim Form.doc \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

3. Being a Hampshire Foster Carer

What happens Now I am approved?

Coming soon

The Household Review and Foster Carer Agreement

Coming soon

Induction program

[Foster Carer Induction.docx \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

Support and Supervision

[Record of Foster Carer Supervision.docx \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

Developing a Safer Caring Plan

[Foster Care Agreement \(Oct 22\).doc \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

Support for Other Children in the Household

All children in the home play an important part in the success of fostering, often being the ones who welcome a new foster child into the home and help them to settle in. This can be birth or adopted children; other children being cared for and extended blended family members.

But sharing their home and parents with another child or young person can be hard and all children need support to deal with the daily challenges of growing up in a fostering family. Discussions will need to take place about behaviour for everyone, what is acceptable and what is not.

All children, depending on their age, should be part of developing the Safer Caring Plan so that everyone is clear on the boundaries of everyday life to make sure everybody feels safe.

When children don't get the support they need, this can lead to instability and potentially breakdowns. You may get disagreements between your own children and fostered children but also fun friendships and memories for the whole family.

When you consider taking a child, always think about how this child will fit with your family. You can discuss any questions you may have with your Supervising Social Worker who will want to get to know your children, so they feel that they are listened to and that they have somewhere else to turn to if needed.

Remember it is important for you to spend time with all children. Think about a family planner where you agree times, dates, and activities you will do with your own children and your fostered child. These can be separately and at times together.

Look out for early signs of problems arising and talk to your child and your fostered child, speak to your Supervising Social Worker during your supervision meetings or before that if it won't wait. You may also look for general advice from other foster carers.

If you feel an issue is getting worse and you need some support, don't leave it, and always record any relevant information.

Reviews, Approvals and Appeals

Coming soon

Training and Development

[Skills Pathway Brochure 0523.pdf](#)

Recording, Monitoring and Notifications

Coming soon

Working with Families and Other Professionals

Coming Soon

4. The Fostering Home

Types of Care

Coming soon

- Teens
- Short Term
- Sibling
- Disabled Children (Home from Home)
- Parent & Child
- Long term
- UASC/Refugee – Sanctuary Seeking
- Emergency Same day/Out of Hours
- Step- across
- Overnight

Settling In

Coming soon

Instability

Coming soon

Endings

Coming soon

5. Caring for a Child

Decisions you can make

[Delegated authority decision tool for children's homes.doc \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

Health

Fostering Services National Minimum Standards (England) 2011:

[Standard 1 - The child's wishes and feelings and those significant to them.](#)

[Standard 6 - Promoting Good Health and Wellbeing.](#)

Training, Support and Development Standards for Foster Care:

[Standard 3 - Understand health and safety, and healthy care.](#)

[Standard 4 - Know how to communicate effectively.](#)

[Standard 5 - Understand the development of children and young people.](#)

See also:

- First Aid and Medication
- What Decisions Can I Make?
- DfE and DHSC Statutory Guidance on Promoting the Health and Well-being of Looked After Children (March 2015).
- Children's Attachment: Attachment in Children and Young People who are Adopted from Care, in Care or at High Risk of Going into Care NICE Guidelines [NG26].
- [Dental Health Care for Children.docx \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

You should be provided with a child's basic medical history when they are placed with you. If it is an emergency placement, this should happen as soon as possible. As much information as possible needs to be understood about the child's health especially where the child has health or behavioural needs that potentially pose a risk to themselves, you, and others. Any issues should be fully shared with you, together with an understanding as to what support you will receive as a result.

A child/young person will have a Health Care Assessment which forms the Health Care Plan. If the child/young person does not have one, the Social Worker should arrange an assessment so that a plan can be drawn up and available for the child's first Looked After Review which will take place within 20 working days.

The LAC Medical Assessment happens at particular times. The first assessment must be done before the first placement or, if not possible, before the child's first Looked After Review (unless one has been done within the previous 3 months). For children under five years, further Health Care Assessments should occur at least once every six months. For children aged over five years, further Health Care Assessments should occur at least annually. The child should have a copy of their health plan which is part of the Placement Plan.

You play an important role in looking after and promoting the health needs of children in your care. This means talking to them and providing them with information about doing the things that keep them healthy and well. You should encourage children/young people to follow their interest and leisure activities. You should help the child/young person to identify where they can access activities they are interested in and support them to attend. This may be linked to the educational setting they attend. It could be sporting activities or activities which they enjoy which make them feel good about themselves.

It is important that you keep a record of the child's health and that you take the child for their health assessment and relevant appointments. The information you hold about the child - including their daily routine, likes and dislikes, health issues etc. This may need to be shared with other professionals. You should check whether you need to register a child with a GP, Dentist and Optician and whether you have delegated authority to take the child for any treatment. This will usually have been decided when completing the Placement Plan.

Each time a child is given medication, you must record when, how often and how much was given. All medicines should be stored securely and accessible for those who need it.

You should help children/young people to make informed decisions about their health and their views should be considered when making decisions.

In the event of an accident or incident, you must record the details of what happened and inform your Supervising Social Worker and the child's social worker as soon as possible.

You will receive appropriate training including health promotion, communicable diseases, hygiene and first aid. Social Workers and health practitioners should ensure you have specific contact details and information on how to access relevant services, including CAMHS.

Education

Coming soon

Family Time

Coming soon

Positive Relationships, Behaviour Management, and Physical Intervention

Coming soon

Relationships and Sex

Coming soon

Alcohol, Drugs, Smoking and Vaping

Coming soon

Identity

Fostering Services National Minimum Standards (England) 2011:

[Standard 2 - Promoting a positive identity, potential and valuing diversity through individualised care.](#)

Training, Support and Development Standards for Foster Care:

[Standard 1 - Understand the principles and values essential for fostering children and young people.](#)

[Standard 2 - Understand your role as a foster carer.](#)

[Standard 4 - Know how to communicate effectively.](#)

Also see: [Keeping Memories](#)

To understand other people's identity, we need to understand our own. This helps us to identify whether there are differences between us and the children that we care for and their families and whether there are gaps that can be bridged. You and your family should try and spend some time thinking about this before you start caring.

A person's identity is important particularly for black and minority ethnic children and can be made up of a mixture of the things below:

- How we look including our skin colour
- How we dress
- How we sound and the language that we speak
- Our views
- Our family values and traditions
- Our religious beliefs
- Our family history and background
- How we form relationships, including our sexual orientation

It is important for you to develop and promote a child/young person's identity. It is vital that you uphold and develop the child's identity particularly when they are not living with their own family or else it will weaken their sense of who they are.

Within our own culture we often do this without thinking or meaning to by assuming that what we do is the same as everybody else. The way in which we celebrate Christmas is an example of this. Our understanding is helped by understanding the child/young person's background and should be addressed in the Placement Plan at the start of their placement about how this will be done.

Where children are placed with you from different backgrounds or cultures, the fostering service will provide additional training and support and information. This will make sure that the child/young person receives the best possible care to develop a positive understanding of their background and heritage.

The well-being of individual children must be at the centre of your practice. All children's achievements must be celebrated and appropriately rewarded. The children's day-to-day needs must be met, such as routine, privacy, personal space, and nutritious meals. Children must be treated with dignity and respect. The children must experience care that is sensitive and responsive to their identity and family history, including age, disability, ethnicity, faith or belief, gender, gender identity, language, race, and sexual orientation.

The care of children is reviewed regularly, and it is ensured that the care plan is being met. If any specific type or model of care is required, you will be suitably trained and supervised. Specialist help will be made available according to the individual needs of children, including those who live away from their 'home' authority. This help will be available as soon as it is needed, at the intensity required and for as long as it is required. If specialist services from elsewhere are not available, or children are waiting for a long time for help, the Fostering Service will be proactive in challenging and escalating concerns with the placing authority and/or other partners. All necessary adaptations and equipment will be provided.

Children must be protected, and helped to keep themselves safe, from bullying, homophobic behaviour, racism, sexism, radicalisation, and other forms of discrimination. Any discriminatory behaviours must be challenged and help, and support given to children about how to treat others with respect.

Culture is part of a child's/young person's identity and heritage. All foster carers should respect and value a child's cultural heritage. Culture describes the way people live their lives. Culture is based on many different factors, memories, common experience, background, language, racial identity, class, religion, and family attitudes etc.

Sometimes conflicts arise in foster homes between the way you are used to living and the ways that the child/young person is used to. Dilemmas arise about what is the right thing to do. When a young person doesn't want to follow the way that is expected of them there are rarely easy answers when sorting these problems out. Examples can be as simple as eating at the table, or religious observance. You should talk to the child and their family (where appropriate) to try and understand what their views are and find a way forward. Your Supervising Social Worker and/or the child's social worker can also provide help.

It is possible that a child whose first language is not English may be placed with you. Language is an important part of a child's identity and culture. Every effort should be made to preserve a child's linguistic and communication skills; otherwise, they may lose a large part of their culture. If you need more information or advice about a child's cultural and linguistic needs, contact the child's social worker or your Supervising Social Worker. You should look for ways in which you can promote the child's identity. Discuss this with your Supervising Social Worker and the child's social worker. This information will be important should the child return home or move to another carer.

The religious upbringing of a Looked After Child is very important. The right to determine the child's religion is one of the rights all birth parents retain for whatever reason the child comes to live with you. Some parents may express strong preferences, but when they do this is usually reflected in the choice of a foster family for the child.

A child/young person's disability is a part of who they are and the arrangements that are made to meet their needs are a part of respecting their identity.

Some young people may identify as transgender (i.e., as a different gender from their birth gender) or as non-binary (they may not identify as either male or female). Girls, boys, and transgender/non-binary young people should receive equal opportunities and encouragement to pursue their talents, interests, and hobbies. Sexist stereotypes of behaviour must not be imposed or condoned, for example there should be equal expectations that boys and girls will participate in domestic tasks. Young people who are experiencing gender identity issues should, in general, be given space and support to develop their own gender identity. However, it is important that they are protected from adverse effects such as bullying and discrimination. Some young people may wish to discuss specialist medical intervention or may require specialist support. Discuss this with your Supervising Social Worker and the child's social worker.

It is useful to think about all the things a child or young person encounters. For example, toys books and posters. Do they have positive images of children who are from a different race or who have a disability? This may seem like a small thing, but it can have a big impact on a child if for instance all they see are images of white children and they are black, this is also important for things like birthday cards.

Memories and Life Stories

Coming soon

Transport

Coming soon

Babysitters, Daycare and Overnight Stays

Coming soon

First Aid and Medication

Coming soon

Care Leavers: Preparing for Independence

[Children's Services Directorate - Care Leavers local offer \(online version\).pdf - All Documents \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

Unaccompanied Children

There is a shortage of foster carers in Hampshire who can offer care and stability to an unaccompanied asylum-seeking child (UASC).

These children have often fled war-torn countries, destabilising political developments or disease. They have often travelled hundreds of miles with both their reasons for moving and their journey being traumatic.

Many unaccompanied asylum-seeking children have travelled to Hampshire alone and are unfamiliar with the area and often don't speak English as their first language. Some arrive without proper documentation too.

A UASC foster carer would have a transformative effect on the lives of these vulnerable children. You would be providing support to children who are coming to terms with their new environment and cultural changes and helping them find a secure and safe place to live and begin to grow.

Fostering isn't always easy, there are challenges to overcome and difficult days, but it's also a chance to build new relationships, learn about other cultures and offer stability to a young person at the time it's needed most. The support and training opportunities provided by Hampshire County Council are excellent, and the peer-to-peer support networks are second to none.

Parent and Child Safer Caring Plan

Coming soon

Home from Home

Coming soon

6. Safeguarding

Hampshire County Council Safeguarding Policy

Coming soon

Safeguarding Everyone

Coming soon

Complaints and Allegations

Coming soon

How can I make a complaint?

Coming soon

CSE/CCE

Coming soon

Self-harm

Coming soon

Surveillance and Monitoring

Coming soon

FGM

[Female Genital Mutilation \(FGM\) - Hampshire SCP](#)

Missing

The Definition of 'Missing'

A child (a young person under the age of 18 years) is to be considered "missing" if he/she is absent from his/her place of residence without authority to a degree or in circumstances where the absence causes concern for safety of the child or there is potential danger to the public.

Some children absent themselves for a short period and then return. Often their whereabouts are known. They are not considered at risk and usually they are testing boundaries. Sometimes children stay out longer than agreed either on purpose or unwittingly. This kind of boundary testing activity is well within the range of normal teenage behaviour. It should not come within the definition of 'missing'.

Absences which cause concern are those where staff or carers do not know that:

- a child is likely to return within a short space of time
- there is immediate concern for the child's safety

Children who go missing from Children's Services care can place themselves and others at risk. The reasons for their absence may be varied and complex and cannot be viewed in isolation from their home circumstances and their experiences of care. Every 'missing' episode should be given the proper attention from the professionals involved with the child. Professionals must work together to ensure a consistent response is given to the child on their return.

The Police are frequent partners of Children's Services in managing 'missing' episodes. It is important that staff in both agencies work together. The following protocol should assist in this. It combines aspects of Children's Services and Police procedures in relation to missing persons. Where they overlap or interface, respective actions and responsibilities should be clear.

In responding to and managing a child's absence from care, Social Care and Health and Police staff should not dismiss the potential significance of multiple absences by a young offender. Young people are often immediately labelled as 'the problem'. Insufficient consideration is sometimes given to considering why they are persistently absenting themselves.

In assessing the significance of a child's absence, all staff will apply the above definition and, in addition, take the following into consideration:

- guidance already agreed and incorporated within the child's care plan
- the age of the child
- the legal status of the child in care
- previous behaviour patterns
- state of mind/perceived risk
- group behaviour
- whether the child is perceived as running to someone or running from a situation.

What is the Philomena Protocol?

The Philomena Protocol focuses on the multi-agency response to children who are reported missing by carers. Any child in care who is at risk of going missing for any reason is encompassed within this protocol. The basis of the scheme is for vital information to be collated, recorded, and stored in a document that is easily accessible to assist with enquiries in the event a child in care goes missing. The form is owned and updated by the carer and should be stored safely but be easily accessible in the event it is required.

When should the form be completed?

If a child in your care has a history of going missing or there are any concerns, complete the form and store safely. The form needs to be accessible at all times should the child go missing. Police only need to see the form in the event a child goes missing.

What should be included on the form?

As much detail as possible along with a current photograph. Consider listing places where the child frequents, who they associate with, what medication they take, what previous missing episodes there have been etc. The more detail the better. We all want the child to be returned as quickly and safely as possible.

What happens if the child goes missing?

As the carer you should complete all relevant and reasonable enquiries that you can yourself to try and trace the child/young person referring to the trigger plan and your own knowledge of that child. If you have been unable to locate the child, you should contact the police by calling 101. Officers will then be deployed appropriately. Please note if there is immediate concern for the child call 999 to report. You should continue to make efforts to locate them alongside the Police investigation and continue to liaise with officers in relation to what enquiries you have completed.

Internet

Coming soon

Photographs, Social Media, and Mobile Phones

Coming soon

Extremism and Radicalisation

Coming soon

Pets

Coming soon

Willow Team

Coming soon

7. Resources

Child's File

[Child's File Main Template - Editable Word Doc.docx \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

1. Key Information:

- Referral & Risk Assessment,
- Key Contacts,
- Placement Planning Meeting Minutes
- Individual Safer Caring Strategy
- Delegated Authority & Medical Consent
- My Life, My Future Care Plan & Reviews
- Pathway Plans
- Specific Information e.g., UASC, Care Leaver, Home from Home, P & C, Missing (from resources)
- Childs Details for Overnight Stays

2. Recording:

- Child's Progress (Daily Recording)
- Significant Events, Incidents & Notifications
- Body Maps
- Health & Medication Record
- Pocket Money & Savings Record
- Specific Records e.g., P & C, DLA, and Personal Allowance (from resources)

3. Education:

- Education Information
- Personal Education Plan (PEP)
- Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP)
- School or College Reports & Correspondence

4. Health:

- Health Information
- Individual Health Care Plan
- Medical Correspondence

5. Belongings & Document Inventory

Training & Development

Personal Development Plans

Hampshire Learning Zone

[TSD standards workbook for foster carers - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

[Fostering Guidance - MASTER \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

Glossary and Acronyms

[tri.x Glossary \(proceduresonline.com\)](https://proceduresonline.com)

Additional Information

[A Short Guidance to Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaires and FAQs.doc \(sharepoint.com\)](https://sharepoint.com)

[Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire Form.doc \(sharepoint.com\)](https://sharepoint.com)