

5.1.15 Keyworker Responsibilities

Scope of this Chapter

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

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Regulation and Standards

England

- Regulation 7: The children's wishes and feelings standard
- Guide to the children's wishes and feelings standard
- Regulation 10: The health and well-being standard
- Guide to the health and well-being standard
- Regulation 14: The care planning standard
- Guide to the care planning standard
- Regulation 17: Placement plan for looked after child

Wales

- Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014
 - Regulation 6: Requirements in relation to the provision of a service
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2017/1264/regulation/6/made>
 - Regulation 22: Continuity of care
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2017/1264/regulation/22/made>
 - Regulation 34: Staffing over-arching requirements
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2017/1264/regulation/34/made>
 - Regulation 15: Personal plan
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2017/1264/regulation/15/made>
 - Regulation 33: Access to health and other services
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2017/1264/regulation/33/made>
 - Statutory Guidance on Regulated Services (Service Providers and Responsible Individuals) (Wales) Regulations 2017
<http://gov.wales/docs/dhss/publications/180201statutory-guidanceen.pdf>
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1. Management of Keyworkers

The Home Manager is responsible for ensuring that each child has appointed to them (preferably prior to pre-admission visits or certainly upon admission for the child's introduction to the Home) a dedicated keyworker who is able to engage in a positive and constructive relationship with the child.

The Home Manager should ensure that all keyworkers are suitably trained and fully competent to carry out the duties required of them.

The Keyworker should remain consistent throughout the child's time at the Home; however, the Home Manager may decide that the keyworker for a child should change if:

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

The Home Manager should ensure that keyworkers are properly supervised and/or provided with mentors who may offer them support and guidance.

2. The Role of the Keyworker - General

All staff have a duty to each young person in their care regardless of their role.

A Keyworker is a named member of staff who has a central role in respect of a particular child.

As a Keyworker the areas of responsibility are broad and involve getting to know the young person in an enhanced way including their case history, the details of their file and also it is important to get to know other individuals and service providers that are involved with the care of the Child.

Responsibilities of the Keyworker include:

- Acting as positive role model;
- Assessing the needs of the child;
- Supporting children's links with their families and local community;
- Establishing guidelines for behaviour;
- Giving social, spiritual and emotional support;
- Creating a safe and happy environment in which to live;
- Helping children to access and use community education, health and leisure services;
- Giving advice on independent living to those who are about to leave care;
- The Keyworker will be required to oversee the placement planning and recording systems for the Child;

- The Keyworker is responsible for establishing and maintaining an appropriate relationship with the child, and collating information required for Child's Placement Planning Meetings and Looked After Reviews; see the following relevant Chapters:
 - Placement Planning Meetings Procedure;
 - Looked After Reviews Procedure;
 - Healthcare Assessments and Plans.

The keyworker should become the main co-ordinator of multi-agency services for the child. 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 each of the services.

The keyworker should be appointed by the Home Manager 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 keyworker should be involved in visits prior to admission. 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 keyworker should spend sufficient time with the new child to assist with settling in, making sure the child has a copy of the Children's guide and ensuring that the child understands and is comfortable with the house rules.

The keyworker should ensure that all the child's records and recording systems are adequately set up and that recording is taking place.

The keyworker is responsible for establishing and maintaining an appropriate relationship with the child, and collating information required for Child's **Placement Plan Reviews** and **Looked After Reviews**; see the following relevant Chapters:

Placement Plan Reviews Procedure;

Looked After Reviews Procedure;

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

Being a keyworker means working towards meeting a whole range of social, spiritual, emotional and intellectual needs in a way that promotes dignity, choice and independence, whilst promoting a caring, healthy, stimulating, safe and secure environment for the child

3. Keyworker Guidance

3.1 Being there for the child

Being there each morning (or making sure someone is doing it for you); checking that the bedroom is tidy, that there are clean and properly ironed clothes to wear, that s/he has had a wash, groomed hair and is fully equipped, as required, for the day ahead.

Talking to the child to make sure that s/he understands what is planned for the day; issues to concentrate on, how best to deal with potential problems etc.

If there are meetings or Court appearances planned, talk through how these will go, possible issues etc. Raise any risks or concerns with your Line Manager or supervisor.

Being there during the day by taking a regular interest in the child's health-needs, including - dentist, doctors, and opticians. These need booking and ensuring that regular check-ups occur.

Make sure the child has adequate clothing - bought, cleaned, dried and ironed. Ensure that your child is clean and presentable. It shows that we care and helps improve their self esteem.

Bedrooms - should be kept clean, personalised (the child should have an input into the personalisation of their room), in good state of repair and well equipped, there should be adequate facility for personal belongings and clothes to be stored and kept safe.

Bathroom - should be clean and in good repair, toiletries provided/replaced and child should be taught and encouraged to maintain a good standard of personal hygiene.

Safety - Children often give the impression that they are 'cool', that they are not bothered or that they can cope but the reverse is usually the case. Children can feel vulnerable and frightened. Some are bullied or abused or live in fear of it. Most fear for the future.

Your job is to understand and 'Be There' for them. Don't wait to be told by your Keychild that s/he is afraid; you need to ensure that you are aware that it is the case and do all you can to make them feel safe and supported.

Know your keychild- 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. Then try to ease or reduce their concerns by offering advice, guidance or direction. If necessary get help but don't leave the child alone.

Plan at least one individual session with your Keychild each week, (see **Section 4, Planning and Recording a Keyworker Session**) use this as an opportunity for you to talk about how s/he is doing, issues to address, possible ways to behave differently, planning for the short and medium term etc.

Being there at night: Bed or night times are potentially the worst time for all children. bedtime will be the time where children will reflect and show anxiety about what has happened that day or in the past, or when children may show anxiety about what lies ahead in the morning or in plans for the future You must spend time with your Keychild helping them to identify and come to terms with their feelings and emotions. You must do what you can to ease or reduce fears or worries by talking to the child - in a positive and supportive way; and also by alerting colleagues to the child's feelings, identifying how this might affect the child's behaviour and give advice about how to deal with potential problems.

When settling down for bed it is also useful for doing practical things like making sure s/he has clean clothes for the next day, toiletries and a clean towel, that s/he knows what is going on the next day and any plans that have been put in place for the short term.

Being there day-to-day: Plan for the future by remembering birthdays and anniversaries and making them special for the child.

Help the child to maintain positive links with their family, significant people in their lives and friends by planning ahead for important dates that may have a relevance to the child such as birthdays, anniversaries and other significant events in their lives.

Keep all the other staff informed and up to speed about what is happening in the child's life.

Advocate on your child's behalf.

Get to know the Independent Reviewing Officer who is allocated to the Child

Keep your keychild informed about what changes are happening in their lives, this includes: here at the home, in education, in their overall plan, also, with their social worker and at home with their family.

You are responsible for the child even when you aren't there! If issues need to be dealt with when you are off duty make sure you inform the Home Manager or colleagues. If you are likely to be away on leave plan ahead; don't leave the child alone wondering what is going to happen in your absence.

3.2 Health Care

The key worker must actively promote the health care of each child and enable child to learn about healthy living.

In doing so they should liaise with key health professionals, including the Clinical Nurse specialist, the child's GP and dental practitioner.

The keyworker should ensure that the physical, emotional and health needs of the child are identified and appropriate action is taken to ensure the medical, dental and other health services needed to meet them are in place.

Children should be provided with guidance, advice and support on health and personal care issues appropriate to their age, needs and wishes, e.g. see the following Chapters:

- **Sexual Health and Relationships Procedure;**
- **Drugs and Substance Misuse Procedure.**

The keyworker must ensure that relevant health care procedures in this manual are adhered to, in particular, that the child is registered with a GP and has access to a Dentist; and that the child has an up to date **Health Care Plan**. See the following procedures:

- **Health Care Assessments and Plans Procedure;**
- **General Practitioners, Dentists and Opticians Procedure.**

3.3 Education Achievement

The keyworker must be responsible for promoting the educational achievement of the child and liaising with key professionals including the designated teacher and LAC Education Co-ordinator.

For further detail on Bryn Melyn's education procedures please see **Education Procedure**.

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;
- Given help with homework if they wish;
- Provided with reading support where needed;

- Encouraged to participate in extra-curricular activities;
- Encouraged to discuss any problems they may have at school in privacy;
- Encourage attendance.

This may include attending parent's evenings and other school events with or without the child. The Keyworker should ensure that they are receiving all the necessary information and literature regarding events that effect the child's education. These duties should be carried out with the purpose of strengthening home/school links and improving the child's educational outcomes in the absence of the child's parents.

3.4 External Contacts

You need to keep yourself and your keychild in touch with interested parties outside the home.

Family contact - is the child calling 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 - Are there restrictions? should they be planned/accompanied?

Social Workers - keep them regularly (weekly) informed of good news as well as bad and again build up a working relationship. Ensure social workers visit frequently (see **Social Worker Visits Procedure**).

Education - although on site it should be seen as an external relationship needing your dedicated attention. They need to be informed and aware of issues and you should be equally aware of how the child is getting on at school (Also see **Section 3.3, Educational Achievement**)

Specialist/expert support and guidance: If your keychild needs additional support or guidance from specialists or experts (e.g.: on drug misuse, budgeting, sexual health), talk to your supervisor/manager or the social worker about how it can be obtained. When support has been identified the Keyworker needs to ensure that arrangements are made for the support to be introduced to the child and for the relevant support to be sustained and monitored. It is the Keyworker's role where necessary to ensure a review takes place and to ensure any changes to the child's care are agreed with relevant others and to make the necessary amendments to the child's records.

3.5 Complaints

Make sure the child understands how the complaints procedures work, that s/he has a copy of the placing authority's complaints procedure and is confident enough to use the procedures if necessary.

Also it is the keyworker's responsibility to make sure the keychild has an up to date copy of the Children's Guide and other information produced by the home for children; ensure the child is fully conversant with the Fire Precautions and is aware of fire exits. If there are particular requirements/needs emanating from your keychild's **Care Plan**, Health Care Record or **Placement Plan** (e.g.: information on drug misuse, budgeting, 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 many other people will have input to the paperwork overall responsibility lies with the keyworker.

Make sure the child's **Placement Plan** is kept up to date and relevant to the child's interests and needs; make sure the child has a copy.

The keyworker 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*** and/or Adoption Plan*;
- **Placement Information Record/Placement Plan**;
- The home's internal Placement Plan;
- Essential Information Record**/**Chronology**;
- Health Care Assessment/**Health Care Plan**;
- **Education, Health and Care Plans***, **Personal Education Plan** and **Individual Education Plan**;
- Risk Assessment;
- Any specialist health care or educational reports or plans.

*These records do not apply to all children

**Most local authorities now use the Integrated Children's System (ICS), therefore will have ceased using Essential Information Records, if so, they will now use the Chronology.

4. Planning and Recording a Keyworker Session

Keyworking sessions provide you with a chance to observe, assess, develop your relationship, identify and resolve problems etc.

You must arrange weekly Keyworker sessions with your keychild as soon as possible after s/he is placed and then weekly thereafter.

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

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

PLAN AHEAD: It is not exhaustive, but this is a list of things you should do in planning a Keyworker session:

- Plan ahead, talk to the child and build time into your week when it will be suitable to conduct a keyworker session;
- It is important that the child feels comfortable so consider which likely to be better: formal meeting or during an activity;
- 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 s/he 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;
- Think through (with your supervisor, or Line Manager) what you need to deal with or talk about and how you can make it work;
- If 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 s/he 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 s/he 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 can't 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. Don't forget you need the young person to accept the negatives and be prepared to change;
- Relationships take time and change is always difficult so don't try to do too much too soon;
- The child may try to reject or avoid you. Don't let this get to you; keep at it but talk to your supervisor or Line Manager if you need support or guidance;
- 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 - immediately if you have any concerns or you feel uncomfortable about what has happened.

Revision History

Date last updated: November 2020

Date of next review: November 2021

Date of release: December 2018

End

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