

FAMILY TIME SERVICE



Information for Social Workers

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNCIL

What is the Family Time Service?

We facilitate direct and virtual sessions between children and their birth family in a safe and child friendly environment. There are two centres within Buckinghamshire, Aylesbury, and High Wycombe. Direct sessions will be arranged at the centre, which is closest to the child's placement, ensuring minimum disruption and limiting their journey. We offer community sessions, which can take place over the weekends, on those families assessed as low risk.

We prioritise families that are in Court Proceedings, Long Term Care and Section 20. Dependent on service resources consideration can be given to families open to the Local Authority in another statutory capacity.

Our Process

There is a referral form to complete which is to be sent to the relevant mailboxes (see overleaf) this is determined by where the child is placed. Following receipt of the referral, our Service has up to five working days to respond.

When a referral has been accepted, it is compulsory for a planning meeting to take place. The meeting is attended by the parent/family member attending family time, the child's social worker and a worker from our Service. Within this meeting the information on the referral is discussed, as well as confirming the expectations of family time. An agreement needs to be signed by all parties present. Following this, the sessions will then be arranged.

Reviews

These will be arranged when required and can be requested by either the social worker, parent or by the Family Time Service. The purpose of the reviews is to discuss any concerns or issues relating to Family Time sessions such as, breaches to the agreement, high level of cancellations or punctuality. Family Time sessions will be suspended for a period of seven days pending a review.

Frequency

We offer different levels of frequency, dependent on the age of the child.

Prior to making a referral, we strongly recommend, having a discussion with us to formulate an appropriate Family Time plan, which takes into consideration frequency, family circumstances and service capacity to avoid any difficulties.

It is imperative that social workers inform our service of any significant changes to the child and family's circumstances for example, a placement move or outcome from court hearings. If there are any court dates, assessments, or health appointments, that coincide with family time sessions, these sessions will be cancelled and where possible we will aim to rearrange but this cannot be guaranteed.

Reports/Cancellation Notices

A report will be written after each family time session. These will be upload onto Content Server (01 safeguarding, 02 forms and reports) within 10 days of the session taking place. However, if a report is required urgently please contact the Service.

All cancellations will be recorded onto LCS. You can create a case note report which provides a full list of cancellations.

Additional Services offered by the Family Time Service

Welfare Visits

We will support social work teams to undertake welfare visits where there are safeguarding concerns, but the child remains in the family home. These visits are undertaken out of hours, predominately at weekends. There is a referral form that is required to be completed, which includes risks, expectations, and observations of the visit. Referrals need to be sent to the relevant mailbox (overleaf) alongside notifying Out of Hours in case of emergencies and significant safeguarding concerns

Welfare reports will be uploaded onto Content Server and case noted on LCS by the next working day.

Family and Friends Support Work

We offer time limited interventions to support and train family/friends to supervise family time

Preparation & Supporting Children with Family Time

We offer support to carers and children in attending our centres. This is to ensure they are prepared and provided with an opportunity to incorporate their views to ensure family time is supported to meet the child's needs in a safe and nurturing environment.

Transition Support for 15+year olds

To prepare those children in long term care to have unsupervised family time when they turn 17 years old

Room Only Bookings

Room only bookings is offered at our centres which is dependent on service capacity. A referral form is to be completed and sent to the relevant mailbox (see overleaf)

Contact Us

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