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**Foster Carers’ Guidance for Booking Holidays Abroad with Children in Care**

The local authority has a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children looked after by the local authority.

The local authority should take action to remove barriers which stop children in care from feeling “normal” by developing policies and procedures which minimise risk but which allow children to participate in social and leisure activities in the same way as their peers.

Children in care should be encouraged to maintain and develop friendships and relationships which all children should be able to experience, and to have the opportunities they need to explore and express their interests and talents.

Children in care should as far as possible be granted the same permissions to take part in normal and acceptable age appropriate peer activities, such as staying overnight with friends, going on school trips and taking part in leisure activities as would reasonably be granted by the parents of their peers.

Decisions about children’s social activities should be taken in partnership between the child, parent, carer, and those with parental responsibilities. Written consents, for activities and photographic images should be progressed as quickly as possible, taking into account any safeguarding issues for each child as appropriate, so that children in care do not miss trips and are not singled out.

For any child being taken out of the country for any reason, parental permission is required. Where a child is looked after under an Interim or Full Care order this must be obtained from the child’s Service Manager and Head of Service. This advice should be obtained in a planned way to ensure all information about the proposed trip is gathered and considered.

Foster carers must discuss their plans with their Family Placement Social Worker, the child’s Social Worker and the child’s Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) to gain agreement prior to booking their holiday in order to avoid disappointment.

Once informed, it is the responsibility of these professionals to ensure that the discussion about agreement takes place without delay and a decision is communicated to the foster carers and the child.

Foster carers must check the advice of the Foreign Office in relation to the country they intend to visit.

[**https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice**](https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice)

**Given the current concerns regarding COVID 19 Public Health England PHE must be consulted via – insert**

A risk assessment (see attached) will be completed by the social worker for any request to take a child to a country where there is a heightened security risk. This risk assessment will be submitted to the operational Service Manager for comment and then onto the Head of Service and Assistant Director. When a child is placed in an IFA, the operational Social Worker will be responsible for the risk assessment from the start of the process.

The purpose of the risk assessment is to ensure that careful consideration has been given to the travel arrangements and location of the holiday in order that the local authority can fulfil its corporate parenting responsibilities.

Permission has to be given before holiday plans are made and bookings confirmed and all staff and foster carers need to be mindful that the request could be refused.

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Holiday plans should continue to be monitored and reviewed by foster carers and professionals until the time of departure due to the changing nature of the threats worldwide. Should threat levels significantly change then a new risk assessment will need to be completed. If the risk to a looked after child is subsequently deemed too high for a holiday that has already been agreed and booked by a foster carer, the full cost of the holiday for the looked after child will be reimbursed.

**Risk Assessment - Looked after Children holidaying abroad**

This risk assessment should be submitted to the SM, who will in turn pass to the Head of Service, in ALL cases where plans are being considered or a request being made for a looked after child to go abroad on holiday.

The purpose of the risk assessment is to ensure that careful consideration has been given to the travel arrangements and location of the holiday in order that the local authority can fulfil its corporate parenting responsibilities

Permission has to be given before holiday plans are made and bookings confirmed, the Social Worker will commence the form with all in-house foster carers, this will then be sent to the operational Service Manager for comment and then through the permissions process thereafter. Where a child / young person is in an IFA the child / young person’s social worker will be responsible for the completion of the form.

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| Name of child / ren and ICS number /s | D.O.B | Legal Status |
| Proposed Destination | Proposed date of trip | View of parent/person with PR |
| **Travel plan/purpose** (e.g. school trip/family holiday) | | |
| **Brief details of travel arrangements** (Include are arrangements via a travel agent/company or independently organised. What is foreign office advice to travellers to that country and area? Are travel agencies advising travel to this country and area? Will travel insurance be agreed?): | | |
| Operational Team Manager comments: | | |
| TM recommendation: | | |
| SM comments: | | |
| AD / decision:  Signature: | | Date: |