# Children’s Services

# Supervised Contact Service Offer and Practice Guidance

**Version Final V5.2 Approved by: Jo Rabbitte**

**Date: 16/08/2021**

# About this document

# Title:

# Children’s Services

# Supervised Contact Service Offer and Practice Guidance

# Purpose: This document sets out the practice with regard to the circumstances where children’s contact with family and friends is supervised through the Supervised Contact Service. The principles set out in this document are intended to provide guidance on good practice however it is not prescriptive and flexibility should be applied depending on the assessed needs of an individual child.

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# Approved by: Jo Rabbitte

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#### Intended Audience

This document has been issued to the following people for Review (R) Information (I) and Review and Sign off (S).

The Child in Need procedure is mandatory and must be shared with all staff and partners working with Children in Need and their families.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
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| Jo Moses / Juliette Blake / S Bushby/S Walsh /  L Bursill/Jo Rabbitte | Assistant Directors | S |
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Contents

[**1. Introduction 5**](#_Toc72494362)

[**2. The Law 6**](#_Toc72494363)

[**3. Assessment of Child’s Contact Needs 8**](#_Toc72494364)

[**4. Level of Supervision Required 10**](#_Toc72494365)

[**5. Contact Supervision (incl. Suspension of contact) 11**](#_Toc72494366)

[**6. Cancellations 14**](#_Toc72494367)**4**

[**7. Purpose and Context of Contact (table on levels of contact) 15**](#_Toc72494368)**5**

[**8. Reading List 17**](#_Toc72494369)**7**

[**Appendix 1 – Referral form including RA 18**](#_Toc72494370)**8**

[**Appendix 2 - Contact Agreement 24**](#_Toc72494371)**4**

[**Appendix 3 – Statement of Purpose and Location Risk assessments 26**](#_Toc72494372)**6**

## Introduction

* Surrey County Council recognises that contact is extremely important and beneficial to both the child and their birth families.
* Our Corporate Parenting strategy sets out our promise to children and care leavers, within this we promise our young people that we will do our upmost to “to help you keep in touch safely with the important people in your life”
* We are committed to ensuring that contact is needs led for the child and is a safe and positive experience for both children and families.
* We are committed to ensuring that this process is child first and feels comfortable and natural for our children to ensure they benefit from safe contact with their birth families.
* We acknowledge that contact is not possible or beneficial to all children and we will always work to put the needs and safety of our children first.

**The benefits of contact**

In many cases, time with the child and their birth family is beneficial to both the child and their birth relatives and we will always strive to maintain safe, child-focussed contact where possible.

For **our children** contact can:

* Help to ease the child’s sense of loss and provide reassurance about the wellbeing of birth relatives and significant others.
* Maintain relationships that are important to them.
* **Assess** whether reunification with their birth family is possible.
* **Maintain** relationships so that reunification is possible.

For **children** in long term placements including adoption, contact can:

* Help them to come to terms with the past.
* Provide an opportunity for the young person to gain more knowledge and understanding about their personal and family history.
* Help them to maintain links with their race, religion and culture of origin – which may enhance their self-esteem and identity.
* Link their past and present.
* Enable them to see their birth family’s acceptance of their carers and therefore reducing feelings of potential conflict.

For **birth families** contact can:

* Help to ease their sense of loss.
* Maintain relationships so that reunification remains a possibility.
* Assess and develop parenting skills.
* Promote sibling contact.

In long term placements contact may also help **birth families** through:

* Enabling them to come to terms with the new circumstances including acceptance of the carers.
* Enabling them to give the child a link with the past and reassurance.

For the **carer** contact may assist in:

* Providing reassurance for the child, reducing anxiety, fear of rejection and

improving placement stability.

* Improving the carers’ understanding of the child’s birth family and providing

information from the past which may assist in understanding current and future behaviour of the child.

In long term placements the contact may also assist **carers** in:

* Working with the child’s story throughout the course of childhood rather than closing off the child’s past.
* Encouraging discussion with the child and help them to understand the situation better.
* Allowing birth families to give carers permission to parent the child.
* Helping the carer to give the child a view of relationships which can change over time as circumstances change.

## The Law

As a local authority we are governed by regulations for our Children in Need and those looked after and in the care of the Surrey County Council. Understanding our role as well as the responsibilities of the courts allows us to continue to provide appropriate and safe contact to our children.

Under the 1989 Children Act the Surrey County Council has a duty to promote contact for both Children in Need and those in the Care of and Looked After. It is important to note that when the court is asked to determine any question with respect to the child’s upbringing ‘**the child’s welfare shall be the court’s paramount consideration**’.

In any court proceedings contact must be in the best interests of the child and should not be harmful or detrimental to the child. The child’s own wishes and feelings must be taken into account, having regard to their age and degree of understanding.

The court is **required** to consider the issue of contact prior to making an order.

**For Children in Need,** this duty is detailed in **Schedule 2 Children Act 1989**

**paragraph 10:** ‘Every Local Authority shall take such steps as are reasonably practicable, where any child within their area who is in need and whom they are not looking after is living apart from his family –

(a) to enable him to live with his family; or

(b) **to promote contact between him and his family**,

if, in their opinion, it is necessary to do so in order to safeguard or promote his

welfare.’

**For Looked after Children** this duty is described in **Schedule 2 CA 1989**

**paragraph 15:** ‘Where a child is being looked after by a Local Authority, the authority shall, unless it is not reasonably practicable or consistent with his welfare, endeavour to promote contact between the child and –

(a) his parents

(b) any person who is not a parent of his but who has parental responsibility for

him; and

(c) any relative, friend or other person connected with him.

**Contact with children subject to Care Orders including Interim Care Orders**

**Section 34 of the Act** details the duties of the Local Authority to allow the child to have reasonable contact and the court may make an order under this section if it considers it appropriate. Plans for contact **must** be presented to the court and detailed in the Care Plan. This is irrespective of whether the application is for an Interim or final Care Order. For an Emergency Protection Order, whilst a Care Plan may not have yet been completed, there must be sufficient consideration of possible plans for contact.

Under Section 34(4), when the child is on an Interim or Final Care Order, the Local

Authority may apply to the court for the authority to refuse contact.

Volume 1 of the Children Act Guidance and Regulations came into effect on the 1st April 2008 and has been revised subsequently. Here is a summary of the key points regarding contact with children in care.

1. The local authority, following its duty to promote contact, must allow a child who is the subject of a care order to have reasonable contact with his parents and certain other people, unless directed otherwise by a court order, or unless the local authority temporarily decides to refuse contact in urgent circumstances (Section 34 Children Act 1989).
2. The court must consider contact arrangements before making a care order (see Section 34(11)) and has wide powers to make orders appropriate to the particular circumstances.
3. The underlying principle is that the local authority, the child and other persons concerned should, as far as possible, agree reasonable arrangements for contact before the care order is made, but should be able to seek the court’s assistance if agreement cannot be reached, or the authority considers that contact between the child and a person who would otherwise be entitled to it would not be in the child’s best interests.
4. Contact arrangements for children in care are handled entirely separately by the court from applications for contact orders under Section 8 of the Children Act 1989. A Section 8 contact order cannot be made when a child is the subject of a care order (Section 9(9)), and an existing Section 8 order is automatically discharged by the making of a care order (Section 91(2)).
5. In addition to allowing the child reasonable contact with his parents, the local authority must, under Section 34, also allow reasonable contact with any guardian or special guardian, any person in whose favour a Child Arrangements Order (lives with) was in force with respect to the child immediately before the Care Order was made and also any person who had care of the child under wardship immediately before the Care Order was made.
6. The local authority can also refuse contact that would also be required under Section 34(1) or a court order made under Section 34 for up to seven days without reference to the court (Section 34(6) ) provided certain criteria are satisfied. The local authority must be satisfied that it is necessary to refuse contact to safeguard and promote the child’s welfare, and the refusal should need to be decided on as a matter of urgency because the child’s safety requires it. If the local authority considers it necessary to refuse contact for a longer period, it must apply for an order under Section 34(4) before the expiry of the 7 day period. The authority, the child or other person named in the order may apply at any time for an order to be varied or discharged; and any party to the proceedings (including the local authority) can appeal against the making of, or refusal to make, an order.
7. This decision that a local authority can exercise to refuse contact under Section 34(6) is a serious step which should not be undertaken lightly. The Care Planning, Placement and Review Regulations 2010 (SI 2010/959) set out the steps that the local authority must take when refusing contact under Section 34(6). If the conditions set out in Section 34(6) and the 2010 Regulations are met, the local authority can exercise its parental responsibility in relation to a child subject to a Care Order to permit or refuse contact between the child and any person with whom it is not required to allow contact by virtue of Section 34(1). It should always consult the child and their parents before making such a decision and inform any person denied contact of their right to apply for an order in respect of contact.
8. In relation to all looked after children, not just those who are the subject of care orders, the local authority not only has a general duty to promote contact between the child and his parents (and certain others as set out above), it must also take reasonable steps to keep the parents informed of the child’s whereabouts, such as when another authority takes over the provision of accommodation, unless the child is the subject of a Care Order and there is reasonable cause for believing that giving that information would be prejudicial to the child’s welfare. In no other circumstances may the local authority withhold information on the child’s whereabouts.

**Children with a Plan for Adoption**

Since the implementation of the Adoption & Children Act 2002 (ACA 2002) children can only be placed for adoption if the Local Authority is ‘authorised’ to place the child for adoption. Authorisation may be by

• Consent of each parent etc. witnessed by a CAFCASS officer, or

• A Placement Order granted by a court

**When the Local Authority is authorised to place a child for adoption, the duty to promote contact for a Looked After child under the Children Act 1989 is ‘disapplied’ and Children Act contact orders cease to have effect.** The Local Authority, child, parent, guardian or relative will be able to apply for a new contact order under ACA 2002 Section 26, or the court may make one on its own initiative. However, this has rarely happened in practice.

## Assessment of Child’s Contact Needs

We are committed to ensuring that time with birth relatives is focussed on the child’s needs, wishes and feelings. In order to facilitate this, we aim for every effort to be made to ensure that there is a planned contact arrangement based on the needs of the child and the circumstances of the case. Good quality assessment and plans assist the court and those involved with the child, to formulate a plan based on the child’s needs.

Inevitably, there will be occasions when contact plans need to be drawn up quickly such as when an Emergency Protection Order goes before a court. This however, should be an infrequent exception – and it needs to be stated that it will be subject to early review. Ensuring early assessments and plans can help to reduce the level of discussion immediately prior to the hearing. It will also help to avoid last minute negotiations, which may not have been previously considered, or in the best interests of the child.

**Assessment - The essential areas**

In order to ensure we have good quality assessments in the child’s voice is heard and considered, there are essential factors which will need to be considered. Some of these factors will be more relevant than others depending on the purpose of the contact and the stage of any legal proceedings and care history.

**The following factors will be relevant:**

**A) The child**

* + Their age and level of understanding.
  + Their wishes and feelings regarding contact.
  + Their existing relationships with family members including siblings.
  + Their emotional and developmental functioning and needs including psychological

resilience and ability to form attachments.

* + The level of harm and ensuring their need for safe contact can be met. This may

include issues around the confidentiality of the placement.

* + The numbers and location of siblings and their contact needs.
  + Their physical and educational needs.
  + The likely benefits of contact or adverse effects on them.

**B) The Birth Relatives**:

* + The existing relationship of the birth relatives with their child.
  + Their views about the plan for placement and proposals for contact.
  + Their potential to disrupt placements or undermine the role of the substitute carer.
  + Their previous experience of contact.
  + Their health, emotional well-being and current functioning.
  + Their commitment to contact.
  + Their availability for contact, taking into account both their working life and possible

need to address issues affecting their parenting; such issues may include

substance misuse or domestic violence.

* + The likelihood of them causing harm to the child during contact.

**C) The Carers**:

* + The views, experience and skills of the current or proposed carers in relation to both direct and indirect contact.
  + The likely degree of openness in the placement – both structural and

communicatively, and the acceptance of the child’s birth family and history.

* + The carers existing family and placements and willingness to facilitate and/or

supervise contact.

* + The location of the carers in relation to the birth relative and contact venue.

**D) The Practical Considerations:**

* + Whether the contact needs to be supervised or not.
  + The availability and location of the contact venue in relation to placement and birth

relative.

* + The ability of the birth relative to travel to the contact venue.
  + The availability of suitable people to supervise the contact.
  + The assessed risks which may be presented to the child, carers and staff by the

birth relatives as well as the potential threat to the stability of the placement.

* + The school placement – its location, the effect of contact on the placement and

transport arrangements.

**The plan for contact**

The plan for contact is formulated by the social worker – with the support of their manager alongside the child, their carers and their birth relatives. The supervised contact team also offers support and consultation where required.

If the child is subject to legal proceedings, the proposals will need to be approved by the court as part of the approval of the child’s care plan.

The circumstances of each case and the purpose of contact will determine the detail required in the plan. Both the standard Social Work Evidence Template (SWET) and the S31A Care Plan proforma require contact proposals to be set out in detail together with the rationale for the recommendation. It is necessary that plans are formulated with a great deal of consideration and care and these plans are reviewed and amended as changes in circumstances occur. Once the contact plan has been agreed in court, it is essential that parents/family members sign a written agreement. This ensures that all parties are aware of the expectations of themselves and of the service. Dependent on level of risk, a contact agreement meeting may need to take place between Social Worker, Contact Team Leader and parents before the first contact.

## Level of Supervision Required

The level of supervision for contact can vary depending on the situation and the history involved

The differing levels of supervision may be:

• **Low Risk** – minimal oversight. This could involve partly supervising a

contact, or supervising handovers between parents. This may be the type of

situations that foster carers are directly involved with.

• **Close monitoring and recording of interactions** – part of plan for

reunification or assessment or to manage risk to child and parent. Sessions

of close monitoring to have one supervisor present at all times.

• **High Risk** – For example, using more than one supervisor with the provision

of additional staff who can be called on if necessary

In order to ensure the safety of the child, contact supervisor, carers and other family members, the level of supervision should be clearly stated in both the SWET and the care plan in order to ensure the safety of the child, the contact supervisors and others – including carers/other family members.

The level of supervision is linked to the purpose of the contact and, where relevant, there should be explicit guidance as to the expected levels of intervention which may be required.

When supervision is deemed to be high risk increased levels of supervision may be required and a formal risk assessment may need to be completed. For example where the history indicates that there is a risk of sexually inappropriate contact, stipulations will be agreed regarding acceptable behaviour.

**Venues for Contact**

Surrey County Council acknowledges how important location is in ensuring comfortable and child focussed contact. Venues should always be suitable and child friendly, where possible they should be in a location which avoids lengthy journeys for the child. It is an expectation for birth relatives to make their own way to the venue and this will be considered when picking a location.

As part of our commitment to enable contact, financial assistance may be available where this is necessary.

## Contact Supervision (incl. Suspension of contact)

The supervision of contact ensures the child is safe and happy during their time with their birth relatives. A contact referral form that includes a risk assessment is provided to the Social Worker to complete, this allows the correct level of resource to be provided, contact supervisors to be fully briefed on the circumstances of the case and be aware of issues and the level of supervision required.

As far as possible, we aim for the same small group of contact supervisors to be used in

supervising contacts for a particular child. This reduces disruption for the child and

birth relatives.

Where possible, it is useful for some contact sessions to be supervised by the Social Worker, especially if they are undertaking a parenting assessment and where the child is subject to legal proceedings. The court expects social workers to report information based on first hand observations and so this is an extremely useful exercise to gain this insight. Some contacts may also be observed by expert witnesses and the Child’s Guardian.

If the contact takes place at a carers’ home or a residential home it must be clear as to whether they are facilitating or supervising contact and this should be clear in the agreement referred to below. Facilitating is simply providing the venue for the contact. Supervising implies a much more active monitoring and reporting role. To ensure supervision is safe and positive for all, it is important that it is clear whether the person undertaking the supervision has had sufficient training and experience for the role and whether they are well supported.

**Preparation**

It is important that the social worker prepares the child and birth relatives for contact. This could include visiting the venue prior to the contact, meeting

the contact supervisor as well as preparing the child and birth relative on a practical

and emotional level.

Birth parents may need considerable guidance about expectations regarding their behaviour, especially when the contact forms part of an assessment regarding the possibilities of reunification. A written agreement must be in place before a contact plan is activated which will include the circumstances where contact should be suspended or ceased.

**Refusal or Suspension of Contact**

* The Children Act 1989 Section 34.4 provides for the Local Authority or the child to apply to the Family Court for an order refusing contact with a child who is subject of a care order (including interim care order);
* There is also provision in the Children Act 1989 Section 34.6 for contact with a child subject to a care order (or interim care order) to be suspended for 7 days where this action is urgently required to safeguard or promote the child’s welfare.
* There may be occasions where contacts have to be cancelled at short notice. Social workers have authority to cancel scheduled contact and Surrey Contact Service may cancel a contact following consultation with the allocated social worker/area team. The reason for the cancellation must be clearly documented to the Social Worker. If a contact falls on a bank holiday, this is unlikely to take place.

**Changes to Existing Contact Arrangements**

* The allocated Social Worker/area team will advise Surrey Contact Service via email if there are changes to contact arrangements e.g. pick up points, schedule or change of placement;
* The allocated social worker for the child is responsible for working out revised contact arrangements and informing the parents and seeking managerial agreement, commensurate with the change being instigated.

**Written Reports and Post Contact Support**

All supervised contact visits should be recorded and the reports need to be an accurate record of the event. The reports should be balanced and include both the positive and less helpful aspects of the contact. They should be a record of observation rather than analysis; any significant dialogue needs to be recorded. The record should be shared with the parents within 3 months of the visit.

Good practice also recommends that contact visits are followed up by the child’s

social worker through communication with the carers, supervisor, birth relative and

child. The necessity of this follow up will depend on the purpose of the contact, any

significant events which occurred during contact and the circumstances of the

individual case. It is always helpful to pass on any significant events at contact to

the main carer for the child immediately.

**Updating the Contact Plan**

It is essential that all contact arrangements are reviewed as the circumstances of the

young person, carer and birth relative will change over time. The plan will be considered within the statutory Child Looked After arrangements. There will however, be occasions when the contact will need to be reviewed in the light of significant changes which require a more immediate response. This may be the case even if a plan for contact has been agreed in court proceedings. Where there are serious concerns about existing contact arrangements and these arrangements are detrimental to the welfare of the child, the Local Authority must review and take action if necessary. This may involve seeking legal advice and taking legal action through making an application under Section 34(4) Children Act 1989 – permission to refuse contact with a child in care.

Contact in permanence arrangements, involving adoption and special guardianship, should be formally considered as part of the post order support plan submitted to the court.

## Cancellations

Surrey Contact Service requires **24 hours**’ notice from the allocated Social Worker/area team to cancel a contact arrangement and/or a room booking.

## PURPOSE AND CONTEXT OF CONTACT (table on levels of contact)

The following table offers guidance to Social Workers in determining the appropriate frequency of contact for children for who it owes a responsibility to promote contact. Contact proposals must always be linked to the assessment of the child’s need for contact and so may be more or less frequent or a different duration to that set out below.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **AGE** | **DURING INITIAL**  **ASSESSMENT** | **REUNIFICATION**  **(PROACTIVE & TIME LIMITED)** | **PERMANENCE** |
| **0 – 2** | 3 x per week –  Recommended maximum 2 hours | 5 x per week: 2 hours  Leading to some overnight stays (Regulation 17 Placement with Parents as  applicable), when assessment indicates this is appropriate and  re-unification is likely. | If direct contact agreed:  1 x per annum, 1 hour  (recommended minimum )  2 x per annum, 2 hours (recommended maximum)  (Adoption)  Indirect contact, one or two way  1 x per annum (minimum)  2 x per annum (maximum) |
| **3 - 4**  **(Pre-school)** | 3 x per week –  Recommended maximum 2 hours | 3 x per week: 3 hours  Leading to some overnights (Regulation 17 Placement with Parents as  applicable), when assessment indicates this is appropriate and  re-unification is likely. | If direct contact agreed:  1 x per annum, 1 hour  (recommended minimum)  2 x per annum, 2 hours (recommended maximum)  (Adoption)  Indirect contact, one or two way,  1 x per annum (recommended minimum)  2 x per annum (recommended maximum) |
| **5 - 10**  **(Primary**  **school)** | 2 x per week –  Recommended maximum 1.5 hour  (after school) | 3 x per week:  1 hour – weekday  2 hours - weekend  Leading to some overnights. (Regulation 17 Placement with Parents as applicable), when assessment indicates this is appropriate and  re-unification is likely. | **Adoption**.  If direct contact agreed:  1 x per annum, 2 hours (recommended minimum)  2 x per annum, 4 hours (recommended maximum)  Indirect contact, one or two way,  1 x per annum (recommended minimum)  2 x per annum (recommended maximum)  **Long term fostering**  1 x visit per school holiday up to 2.5 hours plus indirect and phone contact, as agreed. |
| **11 – 16**  **(Senior**  **school)** | 1 x per week –  Recommended maximum 2 hours | 2 x per week:  1.5 hours – weekday  3 hours – weekend  Leading to some overnights (Placement with Parents as applicable.) When assessment indicates this is appropriate and re-unification is likely. | **Adoption**  This will follow a similar pattern as above.  **Long term fostering**  Young people of this age will be much more involved in the contact plan.  Once per school holiday (i.e. 6 times per year) often works well. |

## Reading List

[New research designed to inform contact arrangements between children and birth families post separation | Nuffield Foundation (nuffieldfjo.org.uk)](https://www.nuffieldfjo.org.uk/news/new-research-designed-to-inform-contact-arrangements-between-children-and-birth-families-post-separation) March 2020.

[Making Arrangements for Contact for Children in Care | CoramBAAF](https://corambaaf.org.uk/coronavirus/fostering/making-arrangements-contact-children-care) 18th November 2020

[Why policy on contact with children and birth families needs a rethink (communitycare.co.uk)](https://www.communitycare.co.uk/2018/02/13/policy-contact-children-birth-families-needs-rethink/) 13th February 2018

[Striking the Right Balance - Contact for Infants in Care - pallantchambers.co.ukpallantchambers.co.uk](https://www.pallantchambers.co.uk/blog_post/890/) 26th November 2019

[For Professionals - NACCC](https://naccc.org.uk/for-professionals/)

*Cafcass/ADCS - a good practice guidance note*

[cafcass-practice-guidance-for-relinquished-children.pdf (proceduresonline.com)](https://proceduresonline.com/trixcms1/media/10644/cafcass-practice-guidance-for-relinquished-children.pdf)

***Contact between children in care or adopted and their families: six key messages from research, Briefing paper*** *Nuffield Family Justice Observatory Sept 2020*

[contact-six-key-messages-nuffieldfjo.pdf](https://www.nuffieldfjo.org.uk/app/nuffield/files-module/local/documents/contact-six-key-messages-nuffieldfjo.pdf)

##### Appendix 1 – Referral form including RA

**Shaw Centre, Chobham Road, Woking, GU21 4AS**

**St. Faiths, Cleeve Road, Leatherhead, KT22 7NF**

**Contact Team Tel: 01483 517108**

**Freephone: 0800 085 8321**

**Mobile: 07773 241938**

**Emergency Duty Team: 01483 517898**

**Please answer the below 2 questions before completing this referral form:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Why does the contact need to be supervised?** |  |
| **Have you explored the foster carer or a family member to supervise? If no, please action this.**  **Please state the reason that the carer and/or a family member cannot supervise this contact?** | Foster Carer: Yes/No  Family Member: Yes/No |

**Referrer’s details:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Social Worker Name** |  |
| **Contact number** |  |
| **Email** |  |
| **Team** |  |
| **Line manager** |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Date Referral Completed by SW:** |  |
| **Proposed date of Written Agreement meeting:**  **(SW, Parent. Contact Team Leader to be present).**  **Required before first contact** |  |
| **Date of first contact:**  **(Please note 24 hours notice is required)** |  |

**Legal Status / Court Order:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Please state child/ren’s legal status**  **(i.e. ICO, S20):** |  |
| **Court ordered frequency and amount of contact and date of court order:**  **(i.e 2 x a week for 1.5 hours):** |  |
| **Date of next Court Hearing:** |  |
| **Long term plan for the child/ren:**  **(i.e. foster to adopt, reunification)** |  |

**Child/ren’s details:**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Childs Full Name** | **Legal Status and date when granted** | **DOB** | **LCS number** | **Medical Information** |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |

**Referral Reason**:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **What are the risks to the child/ren that require supervised contact?**  **(E.g. domestic abuse, drug and alcohol use etc.)** |  |
| **Are there any risks to professionals?** |  |
| **Is there a flight risk or risk of abduction:** |  |
| **OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF RISK LEVEL to Child/ren & Contact Supervisor**  **(Low, Medium, High)**  **This will help identify if 2 Contact Supervisors are required.** |  |

**Child’s Views on Contact:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **How does child/ren feel about seeing parents/family members?** |  |
| **How does child/ren feel about having supervised contact with parents/family members?** |  |

**Contact Supervisor Instructions:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Please state the specific expectations and observations required by the Contact Supervisor.**  **(E.g. attachment, emotional responses, basic care, boundaries and identify any strengths or concerns)** |  |
| **How will contact impact the child? Please comment on strengths and areas for positive change?** |  |

**Persons permitted to have contact:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name of person/s permitted to have contact and relationship to child** |  |
| **Contact Details:** |  |
|  |  |
| **Other persons approved to attend contact:**  **(Please detail their relationship to child and if there are any potential risks/safeguarding concerns and if any specific observations are required)** |  |

**Childs placement address details:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Child/rens Name** |  |
| **Carer Name:** |  |
| **Relationship to child** (Please specify, i.e. family member or foster carer) |  |
| **Address:** |  |
| **Telephone number:** |  |
| **Email** |  |
| **The expectation is carer will transport child to and from contact.**  **(Please state the exceptional circumstance if a carer is unable to transport – this will need Contact Service Manager approval)**  **Contact SM approval & date to authorise transport:** |  |

**Contact Arrangements:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Day** | **Time** | **Venue** |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

**Other requirements/arrangements:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Is community contact permitted?**  Please specify where contact can happen |  |
| **We request parents remain in the room at start and end of contact – please confirm this has been discussed with the parent.**  **Please specify only if it is in child’s best interests to be taken out to the car by the parent and confirm carer is in agreement.** |  |
| **Detail any contact activity requested and team budget code this is to be assigned to.** |  |
| **Please detail the requirements in the event of parents not showing up after the 15 minute time allowance.** |  |
| **Are photos/videos/Facetime/Skype calls permitted?** |  |

**Approval:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Service Manager: |  |
| Date: |  |
| Contact Team Leader: |  |
| Date: |  |

**Updates to the contact arrangements:** Any updates to the contact arrangements must be referred back into the contact service. Please updated the referral form and re-send if any of the details change. The contact service will only use the latest referral information.

INPUT THE POLICY AND CONTACT ALLOWANCE WE PROVIDE:

##### Appendix 2 - Contact Agreement

**Supervised Contact Agreement**

This agreement is between ( … ) and Surrey Children’s services.

Children’s Services aim to make contact with families a safe and enjoyable experience.  In order to achieve this we have drawn up this agreement in regard to**.**

We would like parents to phone at least an hour before contact if they know that they are not able to come to contact to avoid unnecessary journeys for their children.

* If parents think they may be late then please call the **Contact Team** on **01483 517108 (Freephone number: 0800 085 8321).**We will also try to call you if we need to change contact times, so please keep us up-to-date with your telephone numbers.
* Because it can be distressing for children to be waiting for their contact to start we would usually cancel contact if parents have not arrived within the first **15** minutes of their contact start time.
* If parents miss **3** consecutive contacts this could result in contacts being placed on hold until parents have attended a meeting with their child’s social worker.  This meeting would give parents and social worker an opportunity to review contact arrangements so contact could be more successful.
* We would like parents and children to enjoy their time together so please do not discuss adult matters like court hearings or disagreements as children could find this distressing.
* It can be tempting to bring friends or family to contact but please remember to speak to your social worker about this because the contact team can only allow authorised people into the contact session.
* We understand that contact can be stressful for parents but we would like parents to remain calm and respectful.  If this is not possible, then contact supervisors may need to end or shorten contact to safeguard the wellbeing of children.
* Please be aware that contact supervisors create reports about the contacts they observe so they will be taking notes.  This may feel uncomfortable but contact supervisors will try to be discreet.  Contact supervisors cannot share their notes with parents so please speak to your solicitor or social worker if access to them is required.
* For confidentiality reasons, we request that parents who are permitted to take photographs or videos, record themselves and their children only.
* We ask that parents come to contact free of alcohol/drugs as the contact team would not be able to proceed with contact under these circumstances.
* Parents often ask if they can have contact with their children at alternative venues/activities.  This would need to be discussed with the child’s social worker as changes must be authorised before the contact team could alter contact arrangements.
* Please be aware that conversations between family members need to be audible to the contact supervisor.
* Contact supervisors may have been asked to open and check children’s gifts.
* Although family rooms have plenty of toys, parents are able to bring items in for their children to do or to eat.
* The end of a contact session can be difficult so we will discuss with you how best to manage this.

**What you can expect from The Surrey Supervised Contact Service:**

* Information about the location of your family contact
* To be treated with respect;
* Safe and secure space for your time together
* Your own contact room to allow privacy from others using the center
* Access to toilets and a small kitchen area
* To be made to feel welcome and comfortable
* The opportunity to provide **us** with feedback about the service you received by contacting the management team

Maria Keeley Team Manager SHAW

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Louise Kiely Crane Team Manager St Faiths

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Debbie Searle Service Manager

[debbie.searle@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:debbie.searle@surreycc.gov.uk)

*I have read, understood, and agreed with the above Contract Agreement*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Parent: |  |  | Date: |  |
| Parent: |  |  | Date: |  |
| Social Worker: |  |  | Date: |  |

##### Appendix 3 – Statement of Purpose and Location Risk assessments

# SUPERVISED CONTACT

**CHILD/PARENT OBSERVATION**

**Please state the specific expectations and observations required by the Contact Supervisor.**

**(E.g. attachment, emotional responses, basic care, boundaries and identify any strengths or concerns)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Date of Contact:** |  |
| **Children’s Full Names:** |  |
| **Attendees Full Names and Relationship to Child/ren:** |  |
| **Contact Venue and Activity:** |  |
| **Name of Contact Supervisor and Author of report:** |  |
| **Social Worker and Team:** |  |
| **Scheduled Contact Start and End Time:** |  |
| **Actual Contact Start and End Time:** |  |

|  |
| --- |
| **Initial greetings:**  *Comment on punctuality, greetings and responses (from parents and children), preparations made for contact, setting up of room by parents, presentation of children and parents. Give examples* |
|  |
| **Family Engagement:**  *Comment on eye contact and body language, physical contact, appropriateness of language and attention, engagement during play, initiation of appropriate play activities, parents expectations, meeting of child’s needs by parent, sibling interaction, cooperative play/rivalry, parental interaction.*  *Interaction with adults (other than parents), appropriate stranger awareness. Give examples* |
|  |
| **Overall Behaviour/Emotional comments:** *(include both positive and negative aspects of behaviour and supervision)*  *Comment on relationship between parent and child, parents’ response to child, mood throughout contact. Any differences before, during and after contact. Record strategies/boundaries used by parents - behaviour and response of children to these and any discipline techniques. Please comment if parent has a good understanding of child’s developmental needs, i.e. age appropriate communication and expectation,*  *Give examples (warmth, sympathy, encouragement, praise, boundaries and consequences to behaviour etc).* |
|  |
| **Basic Care Needs:**  *Comment on whether parents are providing adequate basic care. E.g. food and drinks consumed and who provided this – e.g. parent or carer, toileting, etc. For babies and young children, feeding, nappy changing, dressing. Give examples* |
|  |
| **Ending of contact and goodbyes:**  *Comment on parent’s preparation for the end of contact. Please detail how parents and child/ren say good-bye and their responses to this. Does the parent manage their own emotional responses to remain child focused. Give examples.* |
|  |
| **Additional observations:**  *e.g. parents leaving the room and how long for, did you have to intervene, conditions outside parents control which affected contact, reflections on what went well, conversations with parents after contact, and any additional concerns to be raised with the Social Worker (please ensure any significant concerns are communicated via phone and email to the SW and discuss with your Line Manager immediately).* |
|  |