

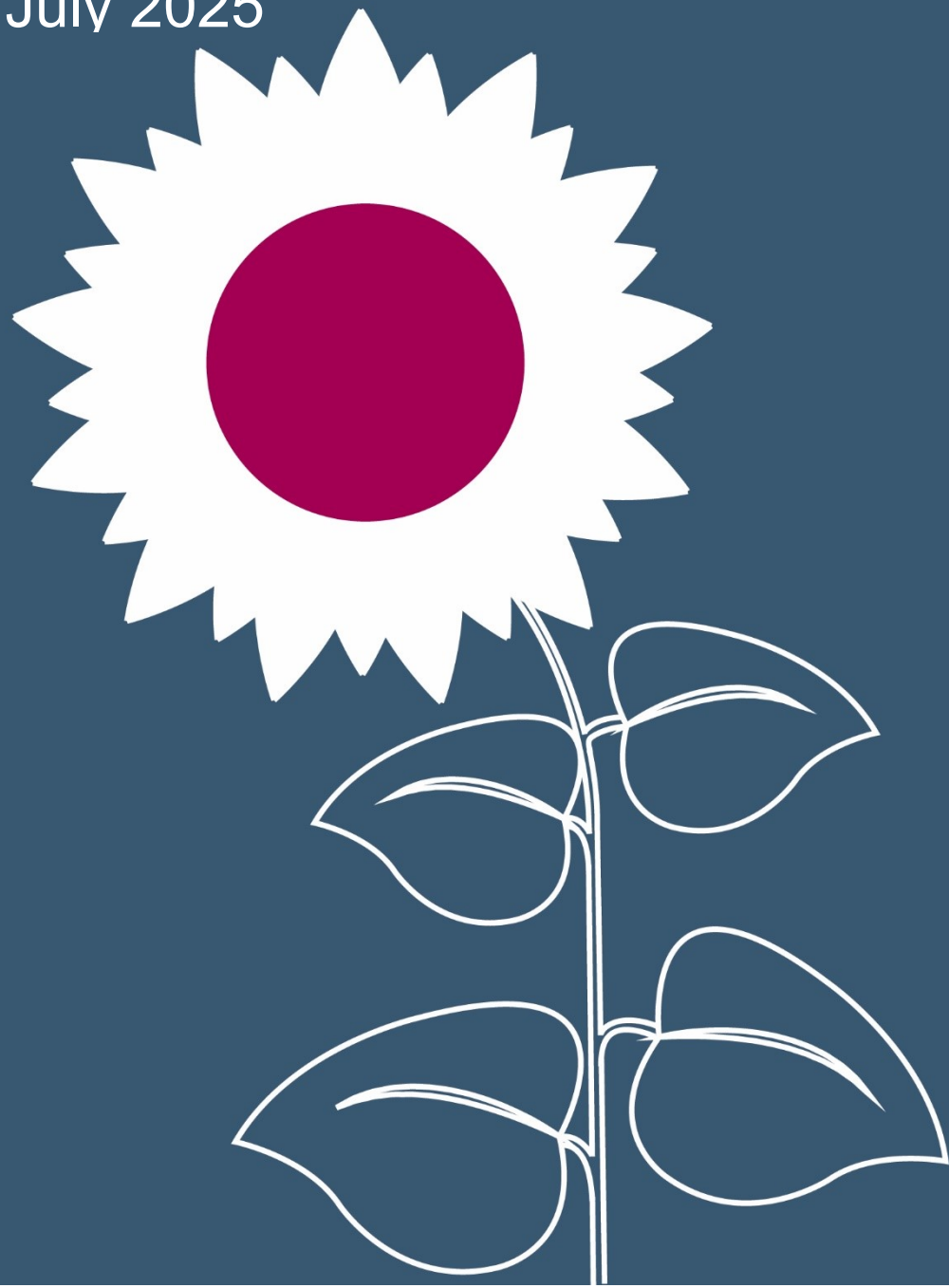


City of  
**Stoke-on-Trent**

# Activities and Risk Assessment Policy

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## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 This procedure provides general advice on the planning and organisation of activities, trips and holidays for children and young people. In the procedure, the generic term 'activity' is used to cover all these situations.
- 1.2 It is acknowledged that there is a wide variation in the type of activities undertaken with children and young people. It is not suggested that it is necessary to fulfil all the arrangements listed below unless they are appropriate to the activity. If in doubt, advice should be sought from the registered manager for children in residential care.

## 2 Planning and Authorisation

- 2.1 The general principle is that activities and trips must be properly planned and authorised, and that staff must conduct Risk Assessments prior to undertaking the activity.
- 2.2 As soon as it is known that an activity or series of activities are likely, the Registered Manager must be consulted and should then oversee and approve all arrangements, or delegate another person to act on their behalf. All arrangements must be recorded and signed off by the appropriate person in consultation with relevant social workers, carer's and parents if records in the home do not give the relevant authorisations.

- 2.3 Appropriate written consents must be obtained. Where parental consent is not given, the social worker may need to seek legal advice/Senior Management advice as to whether the activity can go ahead.
- 2.4 If the child/young person is travelling/staying overnight, a copy of the consent must be carried by staff unless accessible via electronic records.
- 2.5 Where a series or range of activities are undertaken (a series of supervised contacts or the undertaking of regular activities such as swimming), the arrangements should be agreed with the appropriate person in advance, and a date set for the review of the arrangements.
- 2.6 Consideration must be given to children's needs and interests, including any medical or healthcare needs. It is the responsibility of the person completing the plans/risk assessment to consider what arrangements or plans must be made, taking account of:
- Care Plan, Child in Need Plan, Placement Plan, Activity Risk Assessment or other relevant plans;
  - Organisation running the events (such as swimming teachers having relevant qualifications);
  - Recent/relevant events/Incidents;
  - Group dynamics, staff/child relationships;
  - Child Protection Issues;
  - Violent or other offending behaviour;
  - The healthcare or mental health needs of the children
  - Drug/alcohol etc. misuse;
  - Level of disability and associated special needs;
  - Insurance arrangement suitable to the activity.
- 2.7 Unless otherwise agreed with a senior manager, children and young people must be supervised by staff with appropriate levels of experience and qualifications. Best practice would direct that children/young people would be transported by a worker with whom they are already familiar however it is recognised this is not always required and the use of public transportation is encouraged.
- 2.8 Where there is a risk of confrontational or violent behaviour, the plans in place/risk assessment must ensure that staff undertaking the activity are aware of the risk and that staff are suitably trained and are familiar with relevant procedures and guidelines relating to Behaviour Management. [Ref. Residential Procedures Behaviour Management.](#)

- 2.9 It is the responsibility of the residential worker to ascertain whether the child will require medication whilst traveling, and make suitable arrangements for obtaining, storing, administering and recording the medication.
- 2.10 If a child/young person is undertaking any journey during which medication will be required then there should be an appropriate person to accompany them who can administer that medication unless they are able to self-administer and there is a Risk assessment that supports this, which has been agreed upon and signed by parents (where appropriate)/social worker.
- 2.11 All staff must carry ID cards or a means of identity, although would not be required to always be on show while out with young people.

### 3 Insurance

- 3.1 The local authority maintains suitable Public Liability Insurance. It is important that staff take the necessary precautions not to invalidate that insurance.
- 3.2 Normally, children in care's holidays are insured fully under this insurance for any holiday within the United Kingdom, this will cover car insurance, NHS bills etc. However, this will not cover cost of stolen luggage and will need to be considered before taking part in the holiday. Holidays outside of the United Kingdom may require additional insurance for travel, it would be recommended that the travel insurance covers:
- Medical expenses – covering for getting home if you are injured or fall ill.
  - Personal injury, covering for accidents and damage caused to you.
  - Lost or damaged items.
  - Lost or delayed baggage.
  - Cancellation or missed departure.
- 3.3 A European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) or a UK Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC) needs to be applied for prior to the holiday taking place if travelling to an EU country. As the UK has left the European Union it will need to be checked to see if these cards are still in use in said destination. These cards do not replace travel insurance however may reduce the cost of medical treatment.
- 3.4 Where children/young people are undertaking adventurous or hazardous activities provided by a centre or supervised by another company, the Group Leader must ensure they carry suitable insurance cover, and that staff who may have unsupervised contact with children have had Enhanced DBS Checks, staff are to check this information before the activity takes place. This should also be discussed with the EVOLVE supervisor.

## 4 Financial Arrangements and Meals

- 4.1 It is the responsibility of the residential worker to ensure that sufficient funds are available and that suitable arrangements are in place for meals and accommodation.

## 5 Risk Assessment

- 5.1 Formal assessment of the risks that might arise on an activity should have the aim of preventing the risks or reducing them. Children/young people must not be placed in situations which expose them to an unacceptable level of risk. If the risks cannot be contained or managed, the activity must not take place.
- 5.2 When undertaking Risk Assessments, the following factors should be taken into consideration when assessing the risks:
- The type of visit/activity and the level at which it is being undertaken.
  - The location, routes and modes of transport.
  - The competence, experience and qualifications of the staff.
  - Ratios of children to staff.
  - The children/young people's age, competence, fitness, and temperament, in relation to the activity.
  - The healthcare needs of the children.
  - The quality and suitability of available equipment.
  - Seasonal conditions, weather and timing.
  - Emergency procedures.
  - The need to monitor risks throughout the activity.
  - The children's backgrounds i.e. offending, mental health issues, disabilities, risk of self-harming or suicidal behaviour, health, absconding, child protection issues, drug/alcohol use.
  - Nearest emergency service and contact number for these provisions, such as nearest hospital and contact number for them.
  - Making sure that the house mobile is charged, has credit on this and is available.

- 5.3 Activities undertaken by children in residential care as a group must be risk assessed. The person in charge must consult any other staff taking part including children/young people who are capable of making informed decisions. A copy of the completed risk assessment must be placed on the case file of each child/young person taking part.
- 5.4 When there is very short notice of an activity, dialogue must take place with the Home Manager in respect of the Risk Assessment procedure to be applied and the decision recorded on the child/young person's case file.
- 5.5 When approving the Risk Assessment and subsequent plan for the activity, the manager giving the approval should determine:
- What level of flexibility the Group Leader has to change the plan;
  - Backup procedure to provide support, advice or direction to the Group Leader once the activity has started;
  - The "on call" procedure if further advice is required.
- 5.6 A risk assessment for a visit need not be complex but it should be comprehensive. Specialised information for some visits may be necessary and managers must ensure that the person completing the assessment is competent to do so.
- 5.7 Those taking children on activities should check that that the Provider has a suitable health and safety/risk assessment in place, the relevant qualifications and insurance.
- 5.8 Frequent activities/visits to local venues such as swimming baths may not need a risk assessment for each trip; but the manager must ensure that an initial risk assessment is completed for the series/range of activities/visits or for locations used frequently. The Risk Assessment must be updated if there are significant changes to circumstances.
- 5.9 Alternatively, a risk assessment which has been agreed for a series or range of activities/visits must be reviewed immediately after any information comes to light, or any event/incident occurs which compromises the safety of the children/young persons/staff. In such circumstances, the activities/visits must be suspended until a review has taken place and the manager is satisfied that a suitable new risk assessment has been completed.

## 6 Adventurous Activities

- 6.1 There are a number of activities that require qualified instructors. These activities may include: caving, climbing, mountain walking, trekking, water sports etc. If such an activity is to be undertaken the help and support of a qualified instructor should be obtained, ensuring that the instructor has the relevant, documentation – qualifications, risk assessments and insurance. The EVOLVE system should also be considered.

## 7 Group Activities

- 7.1 A Group Activity can be a member(s) of staff taking a number of children/young people or a family to an activity which might be supervised by them or by a third party provider. The children involved in the activity may be from residential care or from foster care or from both.
- 7.2 Where appropriate, a member of staff could be designated as 'in charge' or as the Group Leader. The Group Leader should prepare and produce a route, timetable or schedule for the activity, including dates, times of travel, vehicle(s) to be used, the location of planned breaks, places/locations to be visited and people to be visited. This plan may need to change whilst taking place, e.g. traffic problems. It is the Group Leaders responsibility to ensure that everyone taking part in the activity is aware of the changes and the reasons for this. If this means that the young person/people are going to return late, they are to ensure that their carer's/parents are aware of this and the reasons for this.
- 7.3 Staff should ensure that a mobile 'phone is carried or that arrangements are in place to communicate with the manager.
- 7.4 Staff must ensure the child/staff ratios are adequate to meet the needs of the children/young persons and the risks posed e.g where there is a risk of violence, hazardous activities are undertaken, or remote locations are used.
- 7.5 Staff must ascertain whether any child/young person will require medication and make suitable arrangements for obtaining, storing, administering the medication. Details of the requirement and administration of any medication must be recorded on the child/young person's case file. [Ref: Residential Procedures Medication Policy](#)

## 8 Accommodation

### 8.1 Indoors:

- The immediate accommodation area should be exclusively for the group's use.
- There should be heating and appropriate ventilation.
- The accommodation must be safe i.e. locks on doors.
- The accommodation must have adequate fire precautions and procedures including fire exits and alarms.
- The whole group must be made aware of the layout of the accommodation.
- There must be adequate space for storing clothing.
- There must be adequate lighting (take a torch).

- There should be recreational accommodation/facilities wherever possible.
- The accommodation must be suitable to the gender mix of all parties present, allowing for privacy of toilet/bathing areas.
- There should be adequate first aid facilities.

## 8.2 Outdoors

The above should be taken into consideration. For camping, there are numerous additional considerations to be taken into account, e.g. safety issues, security, cooking safety, fire. All concerns should be part of the risk assessment.

# 9 Sleeping Arrangements

- 9.1 Wherever possible, there should be separate male and female sleeping/bathroom facilities for children and staff. If this is not possible, a rota system must be implemented.
- 9.2 Staff will be on duty at all times with supervisory responsibility (this would include sleep in duties) children/young people will have support at all times where appropriate.
- 9.3 A rota should be devised to enable the maximum supervision possible. The on duty person must not retire until the children/young people have been settled.
- 9.4 Sleeping arrangements must reflect the fact that staff have considered the individual needs of and associated risks to the children/young people. Sleeping arrangements must be detailed in the plan and be approved by the manager.

# 10 Children who go Missing

- 10.1 If a child goes absent without permission, the procedures set out in the relevant Missing Children Procedures should be followed. [Ref: Missing from care Protocol.](#)