



Travel Advice and Travel Document Guidance for Looked After Children and Care Experienced Young People

Version Final v1

Approved by: Corporate Parenting PLT

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About this document

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| Title | Travel Advice and Travel Document Guidance for Looked After Children and Care Experienced Young People |
| Purpose | To provide a procedure and clear process for Looked After Children and Care Experienced Young People wishing to travel abroad |
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| Approved by | Tina Benjamin, Siobhan Walsh, Jo Rabbitte, Anwen Foy, Sarah Foster. |
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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 Transfer protocol is mandatory and must be shared with all managers, personal advisors, and social work staff and with those holding cases in Early Help and Surrey Family Services.

| Name | Position | S/R/I |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------|
| Tina Benjamin | Directors | S / R |
| Anwen Foy /Jo Rabbitte/Siobhan Walsh | Assistant Directors | S |
| All Children's Services Teams | | I |
| | | |

Purpose

The purpose of this protocol is to outline the agreed process and advice for Looked After Children and Care Experienced Young People wishing to travel abroad. This protocol covers both Looked After Children and Care Experienced Young People travelling abroad with their carers or independently.

It is essential that staff and team managers ensure they are clear and informed about this protocol to ensure that Looked After Children and Care Experienced Young People are supported in their travels and that appropriate risk assessment and advice has been given to Looked After Children and Care Experienced Young People prior to their journey.

Due to the different backgrounds of our Looked After Children and Care Experienced Young People population, each section will consider the following categories of status when considering travel abroad.

- British Nationals
- EU and Non-British/Non-EU Nationals who were not previously Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC)
- Persons who were previously UASC but now have status to remain

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1. Documents required and permitted travel areas.
2. Advice to provide to young people.
3. Risk Assessment (if required)
4. Length of time traveling abroad
5. Traveling beyond recommended travel time.
6. Key questions / queries to check with young people.

1. Documents required and permitted travel areas

1.1 British Nationals

1.1.1 For Looked After Children and Care Experienced Young People who are British Citizens, they can travel to most countries on a UK passport. However, some countries have visa rules on persons entering their country and therefore before booking a trip, the visa requirements should be reviewed to ensure smooth travel. A list of visa requirements and general travel advice can be found via the Foreign Travel advice website via - [Foreign travel advice - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

1.1.2 For Care Experienced Young People who are still children (under 18) who are not British Nationals, they can seek British Citizenship for free if they are eligible via - [Get a citizenship application fee waiver if you're under 18 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

1.1.4 All Looked After Children and Care Experienced Young People will have their Passport application paid for them by Surrey Children's Services, however a replacement Passport will not be funded. On receipt of the Passport, this must be recorded on the Looked After Child/ Care Experienced Young Person's ICS record under "Identity".

1.2 EU or Non-British/EU Nationals

1.2.1 In regards to Visas, the same rules apply for EU and non British/non EU nationals (see 1.1.1).

1.2.2 For Looked After Children and Care Experienced Young People who are not British Nationals but are EU nationals, they may be able to travel to another EU country with an identity card. A check on the Government's Foreign Travel Advice Website (see 1.1.1) should be undertaken. Travels outside of the European Union will require a passport from the Looked After Child's or Care Experienced Young Person's country of origin, if British Citizenship has not been sought (see 1.1.2).

1.2.3 For Looked After Children and Care Experienced Young People who are not British Nationals but are Non-EU nationals, they will require a passport from the Looked After Child's or Care Experienced Young Person's country of origin, if British Citizenship has not been sought (see 1.1.2).

1.2.4 All Looked After Children and Care Experienced Young People will have their Passport or Identity Card application paid for them by Surrey Children's Services, however a replacement Passport will not be funded. For EU and Non-British/Non-EU Looked After Children and Care Experienced Young People, consideration for Citizenship should be undertaken before the age of 18. On receipt of the Passport/Identity Card, this must be recorded on the Looked After Child/ Care Experienced Young Persons ICS record under "Identity".

1.3 Formerly UASC

1.3.1 The most common form of status our Looked After Children and Care Experienced Young People receive when the Home Office grants a positive form of status, is Refugee Status. Young people with Refugee Status will have the right to apply for a Travel document which will grant them the right to travel anywhere except:

- The country they are from
- Any country they sought asylum from

Other young people will receive Humanitarian Protection which qualifies them for a Certificate of Travel. This allows people to travel to:

- Most countries with a certificate of travel.
- Noting that if the young person has been given humanitarian protection because it's been accepted that they have a fear of a country's national authorities (usually the person's country of origin), they cannot travel to that country.

1.3.2 If a Looked After Children or Care Experienced Young Person does not have formal status, it is possible for them to seek a travel document from their country of origin's UK based embassy. However, in all circumstances, this should be

discouraged as by entering an embassy a child/young person is no longer on British soil and this could invalidate their claim for asylum.

- 1.3.3** All Looked After Children and Care Experienced Young People who were formally UASC will have their Travel Document paid for them by Surrey Children's Services, however a replacement Travel Document will not be funded. On receipt of the Travel Document, this must be recorded on the Looked After Child/ Care Experienced Young Person's LCS record under "Identity" However, due to risks of Children and Young People travelling to their native country without understanding the risks of this, clear evidence of advice and guidance around travelling must be evidenced on the young person's LCS record prior to the application being completed (see point 2).

2. Advice to provide to the Looked After Child, Care Experienced Young Person

- 2.1.** For all Looked After Children and Care Experienced Young People, going to a foreign country can be an enriching and educational experience. However, travels abroad must be a balance between providing experience vs risk of any travel.
- 2.2** It is recommended that all Looked After Children and Care Experienced Young People are appropriately vaccinated before travelling abroad and some vaccinations must be done in advance of travel and therefore appropriate planning is required. To check whether additional vaccinations above routine immunisations are required, a check should be completed via the NHS Website - [Travel vaccination advice - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk).
- 2.3** For any Looked After Child who is of statutory school age, permission for travel during term time must be sought by the child's registered school in advance of travel and will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances. Generally, the DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance. [Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)
- 2.4** It is paramount that Looked After Children and Care Experienced Young People are informed of risks around travel. It is the expectation of the Social Worker/Personal Advisor (allocated worker) to review any Foreign Travel Advice and/or Country of Origin Reports ([Country policy and information notes - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)) when travelling to countries which have enhanced visa requirements when re-entering the UK.
- 2.5** On receiving a request for travel from the Looked After Child/ Care Experienced Young Person, the allocated worker must review all advice available to them, alongside seeking advice from their line manager prior to applying for any form of Passport/Travel Document. The allocated worker is also responsible for sharing any country relevant risks with the Looked After Child/ Care Experienced Young Person in a manner which is understandable to them depending on their age and ability to understand.
- 2.6** It is important that advice is in line with the UK Government's advice which provides guidance on safe countries to travel to. This guidance is split in to:
- Green – See our travel advice prior to travelling.

- Yellow – Advise against all but essential travel.
- Red – Advise against all travel.

2.7 For Looked After Children and Care Experienced Young People who were formally UASC it is essential that they are informed they must not travel to their country of origin or any country they have claimed asylum from as this breaches their form of status and risk this being revoked, resulting in them being unable to re-enter the UK.

2.8 All Looked After Children and Care Experienced Young People should be informed of the need to purchase travel insurance and share policy information with PA / keyworker so a copy can be stored, prior to their journey.

3. Risk Assessment

3.1 A Risk Assessment (ICS, Forms, Start New Form “Child/Young Person’s Risk Assessment”) should be considered for all Looked After Children/ Care Experienced Young People when travelling abroad. However, a Risk Assessment **must** be completed in the following circumstances

- Travelling to a Yellow or Red Country
- Travelling to a country, which may have had recent instability, including natural disasters, but Governmental advice/guidance has not been updated.
- Where there is an identified risk from family within that country
- Where the Looked After Child/ Care Experienced Young Person is travelling with a person who could pose a risk to them
- Where the Looked After Child/ Care Experienced Young Person is subject to Justice requirements
- Where Looked After Child/ Care Experienced Young Person has additional vulnerabilities
- Where Looked After Child/ Care Experienced Young Person has been given all relevant advice but shows elements of disguised compliance
- If travel plans exceed 4 weeks (see point 4).

This list is not exhaustive and if in doubt, seek the advice from your Team or Service Manager.

3.2 The risk assessment should be supported by the professionals who know the Looked After Child/Care Experienced Young Person best and therefore a professionals meeting may need to be convened to gather the views of all professionals involved to discuss the agreed plan of action. This meeting will be chaired by PA or TM and should include keyworkers / manager of accommodation provision.

4. Length of time travelling abroad

4.1 As part of discussions with the Looked After Child/ Care Experienced Young Person about their travels, the length of time should be clarified before leaving. For extended travels, agreements should be established on when virtual contact will occur between the allocated worker and the Looked After Child/ Care Experienced Young Person.

4.2 All contact between Looked After children and Care Experienced Young Person should not exceed half of their statutory timescale for visit

- Looked After children – Every 3 weeks
- Care Experienced Young People aged 18-20 – Every 4 weeks

- Care Experienced Young People aged 21+ – Every 6 weeks

- 4.3** Any Looked After Children or Care Experienced Young Person subject to a Risk Assessment for the purpose of travel should be contacted weekly.
- 4.4** Variations of contact schedule should be set out in a Risk Assessment and/or Management Oversight prior to the travel starting.
- 4.5** For Care Experienced Young People only, when considering time abroad it is paramount to consider housing and how this is funded. Universal Credit advises anyone travelling abroad to inform their work coach prior to leaving the UK and will only continue to pay for the following periods:
- **1 month** – to be eligible you must be claiming prior to travelling abroad, remain eligible whilst abroad and inform your work coach prior to Travel.
 - **2 months** – if a close family member dies whilst they are abroad, and it is not reasonable to return to the UK.
 - **6 months** – you go abroad for medical treatment which has been approved by a medical professional.

[Claiming benefits if you live, move or travel abroad: Universal Credit - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/claiming-benefits-if-you-live-move-or-travel-abroad)

- 4.6** Ordinarily, it will be appropriate for Care Experienced Young Person to travel abroad for a maximum of a one month period as long as they have informed their work coach in advance. This will safeguard against Universal Credit account closures and young people entering rent arrears.

5. Travelling beyond recommended travel time (Care Experienced Young People only)

- 5.1** If the Care Experienced Young Person clearly indicates they shall be travelling for a period greater than one month, and do not qualify for a longer time period under Universal Credit guidelines, and remain in the Care Leaver's service funded accommodation, notice should be provided to the provider with the Care Experienced Young Person clearly informed they will be responsible for finding their own accommodation upon return. If a referral to Gateway for a new placement is needed, this must be agreed by the Assistant Director.
- 5.2** If the Care Experienced Young Person fails to notify their Allocated Worker of their travels, their Allocated Worker will provide notice to their accommodation, if funded by the Care Leavers Service. Any future searches for accommodation via Gateway must be agreed by the Assistant Director.

6. Key Questions for allocated worker to discuss with Looked After Child/Care Experienced Young Person

- 6.1** Where are they intending to travel? – Complete Foreign Travel Advice and Country and Origin Reports
- 6.2** Do they understand the risks involved?
- 6.3** How are they affording the travel?
- 6.4** Has anyone offered to pay / arrange their travel?
- 6.5** Do they intend to travel to a country they have claimed asylum from?
- 6.6** Has Universal Credit been informed in advance?
- 6.7** Have they ensured they have the correct Visa and does it last for the length of planned stay?
- 6.8** Have they purchased Travel Insurance and if not, been informed of the risks should they have an accident or medical treatment whilst travelling.
- 6.9** Do they have a Travel Document obtained from their country of origin or Embassy, if so, they should be informed of the risks of travelling on this document and that this could invalidate their claim for asylum, status and may impede their ability to return to the UK.