

Key Worker Guidance

REGULATIONS AND STANDARDS

[Regulation 5 – Engaging with the Wider System to Ensure Each Young person’s Needs are Met](#)

[The Young person’s Views, Wishes and Feelings Standard](#)

RELATED CHAPTER

[Young person’s Consultation and Participation Procedure](#)

SCOPE OF THIS CHAPTER

The term Key Worker is used to describe the person who has key responsibility for a young person in the home. This guidance summarises the key responsibilities for that person.

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1. Management of Key Workers

The home's manager is responsible for ensuring that each young person has a dedicated Key Worker who will build a positive and constructive relationship with the young person (preferably the key worker should be appointed prior to admission for pre-admission visits, or certainly upon admission for the young person's introduction to the home).

The home's manager should ensure that all Key Workers are suitably trained and fully competent to carry out the duties required of them.

Ideally, the Key Worker should remain consistent throughout the young person's time at the home; however, the home's manager may decide that the Key Worker for a young person should change if:

- a. The young person complains that the relationship is not working;
- b. The member of staff leaves the employment of the home or is likely to be on a long term absence;
- c. The member of staff is unable to establish a positive relationship;
- d. The manager believes that the relationship is not in the best interests of the young person or the member of staff.

The home's manager should ensure that Key Workers are properly supervised and offered support and guidance.

2. The Role of the Key Worker - General

All staff have a duty to each young person living in the home regardless of their role.

A Key Worker is a named member of staff who has a central role in respect of a particular young person.

A Key Worker's areas of responsibility are broad, and involve getting to know the young person in an enhanced way including their case history and the details of their file. It is also important to get to know other individuals and service providers involved with the wider care of the young person.

Responsibilities of the Key Worker include:

- Acting as a positive role model;
- Assessing the needs of the young person;
- Supporting young person's links with their families and local community, and promoting continued contact;
- Establishing guidelines for behaviour;
- Providing emotional support;
- Creating a safe and happy environment in which to live;
- Helping young person to access education, health and leisure services;
- Providing advice on independent living to young people who are about to leave care;
- Overseeing the placement planning and recording systems for the young person;
- Collating information required for young person's Placement Planning Meetings and Looked After Reviews.
- Acting as an advocate when necessary

The Key Worker should be the main co-ordinator of multi-agency services for the young person. They should help other staff follow the agreed approaches and care strategies set out in the Placement Plan. They should also help to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of each of the services.

Wherever possible, the Key Worker should be involved in visits prior to admission, so as to become a familiar face who will be present at the time of admission.

During the early stages of placement, the Key Worker should help the new young person settle in and make sure they have a copy of the Young person's Guide and understand the house rules.

The Key Worker should ensure that all the young person's records and recording systems are adequately set up and that recording is taking place.

The Key Worker, supported by the rest of the staff team, should assist the young person to maintain social, recreational, cultural and religious links through daily living activities inside and outside the home.

3. Key Worker Guidance

3.1 Being there for the young person

Preparing the young person for the day ahead; offering support and encouragement when needed.

Following morning routines

Talking to the young person to make sure that s/he understands what is planned for the day.

If there are meetings, appointments or court appearances planned, talk through how these will go, possible issues etc. Raise any risks or concerns with a Manager or supervisor.

Being there during the day by taking a regular interest in the young person's health needs, including appointments with the dentist, doctors, and opticians.

Make sure the young person has adequate clothing and this is looked after by the young person and staff.. Ensure that the young person is allowed to make choices about their appearance.

Bedrooms should be, personalised (the young person should have an input into the personalisation of their room), in a good state of repair and be well equipped, there should be adequate facilities for personal belongings and clothes to be stored away and kept safe.

Know your key young person- their file, background and family/professionals details; in consultation with the young person get to know their interests and hobbies and aspirations. Encourage them to take part, join clubs etc; find out what makes them happy, sad and angry; what frightens or worries them. Try to ease or reduce their concerns by offering advice, guidance or direction.

Plan key working sessions with the young person regularly. Use this as an opportunity for you to talk about how s/he is doing, address any issues and plan for the short and medium term etc.

Being there at night:

Bed or night times are potentially the worst time for all young person, not just Looked After Young person, as it is a time when young person will reflect and show anxiety about what has happened that day or in the past, or when young person will show anxiety about what lies ahead in the morning or in plans for the future. You should spend time with the young person helping them to identify and come to terms with their feelings and emotions. You must do what you can to ease or reduce fears or worries by talking to the young person - in a positive and supportive way, and also by alerting colleagues to the young person's feelings, identifying how this might affect the young person's behaviour and give advice about how to deal with potential problems.

Being there day-to-day:

Plan for the future by remembering birthdays and anniversaries or special occasions and make them special for the young person.

Help the young person to maintain positive links with their family, significant people in their lives and friends by planning ahead for important dates that may have a relevance to the young person such as birthdays, anniversaries and other significant events in their lives.

Keep all the other staff informed and up to speed about what is happening in the young person's life.

Advocate on your young person's behalf.

Get to know the Independent Reviewing Officer who is allocated to the young person.

Keep the young person informed about any changes which are happening in their lives, both at the home, in education, in their overall plan, with the social worker and at home with their family.

3.2 Health Care

The Key Worker must actively promote the health care of each young person and enable them to learn about healthy living.

In doing so they should liaise with key health professionals, including the Named Nurse for Looked After Young person, the young person's GP and dental practitioner.

The Key Worker, alongside the larger staff team, should ensure that the physical, emotional and health needs of the young person are identified and appropriate action is taken to ensure the medical, dental and other health services needed to meet them are in place.

Young person should be provided with guidance, advice and support on health and personal care issues appropriate to their age, needs and wishes.

The Key Worker must ensure that relevant health care procedures in this manual are adhered to, in particular, that the young person is registered with a GP and has access to a Dentist; and that the young person has an up to date Health Care Plan. See the following procedures:

- [Health Care Assessments and Plans Procedure](#);
- [Health Notifications and Access to Services Procedure](#).

3.3 Education Achievement

The Key Worker is responsible for promoting the educational achievement of the young person and liaising with education professionals See the following chapter:

- [Education Procedure](#).

This may include ensuring that the young person is:

- Provided with facilities conducive to study / complete homework;
- Given help and encouragement with homework;
- Provided with reading support where needed;
- Encouraged to participate in extra-curricular activities;
- Encouraged to discuss any problems they may have at school in privacy;
- Encouraged to attend.

Key Workers may be required to attend parent's evenings and other school events with or without the young person. The Key Worker should ensure that they are receiving all the necessary information and literature regarding events that effect the young person's education. These duties should be carried out

with the purpose of strengthening home/school links and improving the young person's educational outcomes.

3.4 External Contacts

Key Workers need to keep themselves and their key young person in touch with interested parties outside the home.

Family contact - Are there restrictions on contact? Is the young person calling or writing to their family? Build a relationship with the family where appropriate.

Home visits - Are there restrictions? Should they be planned/accompanied?

Social workers - keep them regularly (weekly) informed of good news as well as bad and build up a working relationship. Ensure social workers visit frequently (see [Social Worker Visits Procedure](#)).

Education - even when this is 'on-site' it should be seen as an external relationship needing your attention. The young person's school need to be informed and aware of issues, and you should be equally aware of how the young person is getting on at school (Also see [Section 3.3, Educational Achievement](#)).

Specialist/expert support and guidance: If the key young person needs additional support or guidance from specialists or experts (e.g. on substance misuse, budgeting, sexual health), talk to your manager or the social worker about how it can be obtained. When support has been identified the Key Worker needs to ensure that arrangements are made for the young person to access this support. It is the Key Worker's role where necessary to ensure a review takes place and to ensure any changes to the young person's care are agreed with relevant others and to make the necessary amendments to the young person's records.

3.5 Complaints

All staff must ensure the young person understands how the Complaints Procedures work, that s/he has a copy of the authority's complaints procedure and is confident enough to use the procedures if necessary.

It is the Key Worker's responsibility to ensure the young person has an up to date copy of the Young person's Guide and other information produced by the home for young person; ensure the young person is fully conversant with the Fire Precautions and is aware of fire exits.

If there are particular requirements/needs emanating from the key young person's [Care Plan](#), Health Care record or [Placement Plan](#) (e.g. information on substance misuse, budgeting, sexual health), make sure this is obtained and provided - in a form which is accessible and understandable to the young person.

3.6 Paperwork, Files, Placement Plans and Daily Records

Ensure that records and the young person's files / electronic record is up to date and well organised.

Make sure the young person's Placement Plan is kept up to date and relevant to the young person's interests and needs; make sure the young person has a copy.

The Key Worker must ensure that the young person's file is kept up to date; in particular, that relevant/up to date copies of the following records are contained in it:

- Care Plan and [Pathway Plan](#);
- The home's internal Placement Plan;
- [Chronology](#);
- Health Care Assessment/[Health Care Plan](#);
- [Education, Health and Care Plan](#), [Personal Education Plan](#) and SEN Support Plans;
- Risk Assessment;
- Any other specialist health care or educational reports or plans.

4. Planning and Recording a Key Worker Session

Key working sessions provide you with a chance to observe the young person, assess their progress, develop your relationship and identify and resolve problems etc. Where a keyworker session takes place should be discussed with the young person. For many young people they prefer a less formal venue and prefer an activity based session. Young people are often more relaxed and open in this arena. The overall purpose of Key Worker sessions is to discuss progress, problems and achievements.

Plan ahead and consider what resources you will need for this session. Refer to RA and Care plans to ensure that young people are as comfortable as possible.