

Looked After Children Policy

**Looked After Children Officer – Karen Johnstone**

**Deputy Looked After Children Officer- Debbie Franklin**

**To be read alongside the Child Protection Policy.**

**Identification.**

A 'Looked after Child' is a child in public care, who is placed with foster carers, in a residential home or with parents or other relatives.

The term ‘looked after child’ denotes a child’s current legal status and is never used to categorise a child as standing out from others. We do not refer to such a child using acronyms such as LAC.

* Places will be offered for funded children who are looked after; where the placement in the setting will normally last a minimum of six weeks,( providing the setting has capacity).
* If a child who attends the setting is taken into care and is cared for by a local carer the place will continue to be made available to the child.

**Procedures**

The Designated safeguarding lead will also be the ‘Looked After Children Officer’.

* Every child is allocated a key person before the child starts. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will ensure that both they and the key person have the information, support and training to meet the looked after child’s needs.
* The designated safeguarding lead and key person will liaise with agencies and professionals involved with the child, the child’s family, and ensure appropriate information is gained and shared.
* The setting recognises the role of the local authority children’s social care department as the child’s ‘corporate parent’ and the key agency in determining what takes place with the child. Changes for the looked after child within the setting will not be made without the prior discussion and agreement of the child’s social worker.
* A meeting of professionals involved with the child is convened by the setting at the start of a placement. A Personal Education Plan (PEP) for children over 3 years old is put in place within 10 days of the child becoming looked after. (This is currently completed using the Virtual School’s Welfare Call).
* Following this meeting, a Care plan for looked after children form is completed. The care plan is reviewed after two weeks, six weeks, three months, and thereafter at three to six monthly intervals.
* Regular contact will be maintained with the social worker through planned meetings, which will include contribution to the PEP which is updated and conducted in a timely manner (usually termly) and reviewed by the Virtual School.
* The care plan will consider issues for the child including, but not exclusive, to the emotional needs of the child and how they are met. How any emotional issues that are affecting behaviour are managed. The child’s sense of self, culture, language(s) and identity and how this will be supported. The child’s need for sociability and friendship. The child’s interests. How any special educational needs will be supported.
* In addition, to consider how information will be shared with the foster carer, local authority (as the corporate parent) as well as what information is shared and with whom.
* The DSL will keep appropriate records and ensure confidentiality as necessary.
* The setting will ensure that the looked after child will be subject to the same policies and procedures as for all other children in the setting.
* The setting will be an advocate for the looked after child and ensure that the looked after child takes as full a part as possible in all the settings activities.
* The DSL will liaise with the child’s keyperson to monitor the child’s progress.
* The DSL will liaise with the SENCo to ensure that any of the looked after child’s additional needs are addressed.

**Private Fostering Arrangements**

Private fostering is an arrangement in which a child under the age of 16 (or 18 if the child has a disability) lives in the care of someone who is not the child’s parent(s), a person with parental responsibility for the child, or a relative of the child for a period of 28 days or more. This is contained in [**S.66 Children Act 1989**](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/section/66).

 If you are looking after a child or young person who is under 16 years of age (or under 18 years old if they are disabled) for more than 28 days in a row, by law you need to notify the Children's Single Point of Access (C-SPA) team. You must tell us about the arrangement, even if you are getting paid to look after the child.

If you are a parent making private fostering arrangements for your child, you need to let C-SPA know in writing at least six weeks before the arrangement begins. If the arrangement is due to start in less than six weeks or the child is already living with the carer you need to let C-SPA know immediately.

*This policy was adopted on..........03/10/2024............................................................*