



TRAFFORD  
COUNCIL

# Services for Children, Young People and Families

Children in care

Children's homes

## Contact

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# Introduction

Most children should be able to sustain or create links with their natural families whilst living in Children's Homes. Contact, however occasionally can be of great value to a child.

## 1) Contact Arrangements

Contact arrangements are to be discussed prior to or upon admission. The agreed arrangements must be clearly detailed on the LAC documents and Care Plan.

The Social Worker must ensure that the residential staff, parents and child are clear what arrangements for contact are, including any restrictions.

All contact should take into account the ascertainable wishes and feelings of the child concerned.

## 2) Promoting Contact

Contact refers to letters, telephone calls and e-mails as well as face to face contact.

Contact with family can be particularly important for children living in Children's Homes and all staff must make every effort to promote and facilitate the agreed contact arrangements.

Each home should provide facilities for any child living there, according to the individual child's Care Plan to meet with:

- His/her parents
- Any person who has parental responsibility for him/her.
- Relatives and friends
- Solicitor
- The child's Social Worker
- The Children's Rights Officer
- Guardian Ad Litem
- Independent visitor appointed for the child
- Any person authorised to conduct an inspection of the Children's Home

The facilities provided should be comfortable and as free from interruption as possible.

Children should be allowed to make and receive phone calls from a phone outside of the staff office. A unit mobile may be available, and children may have their personal mobile to do this.

### 3) Contact

- Children should be provided with practical support for constructive contact with parents, family and other significant people, and should be encouraged to maintain contact.
- Contact arrangements should be discussed prior to or upon admission of the child to the home and detailed on the LAC Documents. **Any restrictions on contact for the protection of the child must be passed on to the residential staff.**
- The agreed contact arrangements written into the child's Care Plan will be encouraged and supported by the residential staff.
- Following any contact the staff should record on the child's Observation Sheet that contact took place and enter a summary of how the contact went. If contact was cancelled this should also be recorded and the reason why recorded.
- For some children contact with their parent's needs to be supervised, this should be clearly documented. The residential staff and manager of the home should be consulted prior to any such arrangements being made
- The staff should be mindful when planning contact times of the other children living at the home; a private room for which the parent and child can hold the visit should be made available.
- Contact can take place through visits, telephone calls and letters and children should be reminded of this.

Often it is difficult to involve parents to take part in the activities within the home due to some children feeling upset if their parent is unable to be invited. Parents can be invited to stay for a meal at the home, if appropriate?