

## Support Services Practice

### 1. What Information do we collect?

So that we can provide the best possible support service to a child and their family or an individual we may ask for:

- Relevant information that will help us get to know the person and identify their support needs.
- Names and contact details of their GP, Consultants or other professionals and services treating or supporting them and their permission to contact these people to discuss their needs.

We recognise the importance of keeping up-to-date and accurate information about children and our contact with them and their family.

We are aware that the following information is very important when there are concerns about a child:

- Names and contact details of persons with whom the child normally lives
- Names and contact details of all persons with parental responsibility
- Emergency contact details
- Any relevant court orders in place including those which affect any person's access to the child (e.g. Residence Order, Contact Order, Care Order, Injunctions etc.)
- Name and contact detail of G.P.
- Any other factors which may impact on the safety and welfare of the child

As we are never the primary support agency and have a very specific focus, we do not routinely collect this information about children and families. However, if we are aware a child is being monitored by Social Services or ourselves report concerns, we will ensure we ask Social Services for this information and pass on any updates we hear of.

### 2. Where and how we record information

- Often, staff are delivering a service to a family / extended family with the child / young person / adult at the heart of the service. Often the main contact is with the parent / carer. Though we are sensitive to the need to see family members as individuals with their own information rights, it is helpful to see the inter-relationships and understand the whole picture. There may be more than one household. Our database is set up to show these inter-relationships.
- So that records of contact with an extended family are kept together the **Day to Day Records** are stored under the household's Primary Contact Person's Action tab.
- So that important information can be easily identified and accessed, **The Descriptor** summarises the key purpose of the contact. If the record is about a contact in which significant information was exchanged, it is organised as follows:

- What the person stated – using exact quotes where this is important
  - What was discussed
  - Comment of the writer (personal / professional opinion including reasons for the statement so that enough information is recorded to enable the reader to interpret it correctly. **Note** that the subject has the right to access, read and use this opinion and that such entries need to be written with great care.)
  - Action / Follow up plan
- We may summarise information we hold or actions we have agreed by sending a letter / email to a family following a visit.
  - We keep in mind that the personal information we hold belongs to the person who may ask to see it at any time. When we write notes, we are aware of this.
  - **Safeguarding concerns** are recorded if they are present. Staff do not record 'no safeguarding concerns'.
  - We do not keep hard copies of correspondence, forms or reports. They are scanned and saved to the person's database record. When emails or their content are an important part of the record of contact and information, these are also saved to the database.
  - We do not set up hard copy files.

### 3. Keeping information accurate and up to date

All support services staff are responsible for ensuring that new information and a record of their contacts with individuals is added accurately and regularly to the person's record. As other members of the team may also be supporting an individual or receive a call from them it is important that this is done as soon as possible after an event. Staff who are going to be absent from the workplace for whatever reason need to be particularly vigilant about keeping records up to date.

### 4. Further contact

Once the necessary follow up has been completed with a new individual / family, staff make sure they know the team is there for the future if they ever have any questions or need any further help to access services or funding. If appropriate this offer of future contact goes to the individual / family in writing making it clear that it is for them to initiate the contact.

If we have had no contact for six months, we have a 'bring up' system. The person's record is reviewed and, if appropriate follow up contact is made. A record of the decision is logged on the 'notes' section of the record.

When mail is returned, the record for the family is checked and, when appropriate, whoever had contact from support services or fundraising is alerted so that they may review if any further follow up is needed.

**Last reviewed Feb 2021**