

The SENAD Group

Section 6 Contact

Issue: January 2017
Reviewed: January 2017
Next Review: January 2019
Version: 4.0
Policy Ref: 604.0
Owner: BL

Policy for Contact

The SENAD group is committed to offering quality services to children, young people and adults accommodated within its portfolio of homes and community services. This policy demonstrates how young people and adult's needs will be met, staff supported and all relevant regulations, national minimum standards (children's settings) and legislation will be addressed.

Outcome

Young People and Adults are able to maintain constructive contact with their families, friends and other people who play a significant role in their lives.

SENAD will promote, encourage and facilitate contact between our young people and adults, their families and others that may have played an important part in their lives. The importance of maintaining and promoting contact with parents, family, friends, community and culture has been increasingly recognised as a crucial aspect of good practice when young people and adults are living away from home.

For children, **The Children Act 1989** places a duty to promote contact between young people and adults being looked after and:

- Parents
- Any person who is not the parent, but has parental responsibility for the young person /adult
- Any relative, friend or other person that is connected with them.

The Essential Standards of Quality and Safety states that people who use the service should experience support that promotes their wellbeing by taking account of all their needs, including personal and social relationships.

Planning

In most cases young people and adults can live a long way from home; they will almost certainly miss their family and friends. The nature of their disability may in turn make it difficult for them to keep in contact with the people who are important to them. SENAD is committed in enabling young people/adults to keep in contact with their family, friends, and other individuals.

To support this contact a young person/adult's wishes and feelings should be taken into account and sought with regard to desired contact arrangements.

It is important parents/guardians/placing authorities etc are fully involved in planning any contact arrangements.

Methods of Contact

Contact will commonly be through meetings or visits and for the majority this will be the most satisfactory method. However, other possible methods of contact may include:

- Telephone calls, including text messaging
- Letter and card writing
- Sending photographs or pictures
- Using e-mail or skype or FaceTime (or equivalent)
- Home visits
- Where possible and appropriate the use of SKYPE (or similar) will be considered to maintain regular meaningful contact.

Care should be taken where electronic media is used to promote or maintain contact as such media has the potential to place individuals at risk of harm. **(See SENAD e Safety Policy – Safeguarding and Protection 510)**

Role of the Key Worker/Link Worker

Effective contact helps to involve parents and significant others in planning and decision-making process for the young person/adult. The Key Worker has the lead role in promoting contact with parents, family and significant others. They should be the first point of contact for the young person/adult's family, friends and significant others, including placing authorities. This is of the utmost importance in the case of young people/adults who may have limited communication skills, as the Key Worker may be the only regular point of contact.

Both the frequency and methods of contact will vary according to the needs and wishes of each young person/adult living at the home. Individual Key Worker's should ascertain contact needs with both the young person/adult and their family to come to an agreement and record this in the young person/adult's Placement or Person Centred Plan.

Restrictions on Contact

There may be instances where contact is not permitted by law. Staff will be informed of any restrictions that apply via information supplied to the home by the young person/adult's placing authority. Information must be recorded into the individual's Placement/care Plan and the staff team made

fully aware of any restrictions to contact in place and the protocols to follow if these restrictions are broken.

There may also be arrangements or requirements made by an authority that any contact should be supervised. Commonly supervised contact may be necessary in order to safeguard a young person/adult's welfare; again such information should be clearly recorded in the individual's Placement/care Plan and followed accordingly.

Recording Contact

Each young person/adult's general written records must contain a contact sheet that records details of each contact made. This should be completed as soon as possible after contact.

It should record:

- The date and time of contact
- The method of contact, for example, telephone, letter, visit
- Who initiated the contact, for example, family, Key Worker, or young person/adult
- Signature of staff member who recorded the contact details
- Impact of contact
- Feedback on contact

Full and clear records are required to ensure the effective management and monitoring of contact. This contact may be recorded in electronic form.