

GUIDANCE FOR SOCIAL WORK TEAMS

MAINTAINING RELATIONSHIPS WITH YOUNG PEOPLE MOVING ON FROM CARE

The aim of this document is to provide Children and Families social work staff with guidance around keeping in touch with care experienced young people, under 26 years, who are eligible for aftercare. Maintaining Relationships is a way to keep important adults in young peoples' lives, complementary to a formal support plan.

Stable, significant relationships are important at times of change, they provide encouragement and guidance, someone to share news with about key life events such as graduation or marriage.

This document is designed by and based on the experiences and views shared by young people and the workforce on maintaining relationships.

Principles:

The building and maintenance of loving and caring relationships are at the heart of The Promise. Moray council recognises the importance of young people moving on from care, to be able to continue relationships with adults who matter to them.

- ✓ It's important that young people can maintain relationships with key adults when they move on from care.
- ✓ Maintaining relationships is a key responsibility of Corporate Parents.

Our approach to maintaining relationships:

- ✓ Both young person and the adult want to keep in touch.
- ✓ Adults maintain the relationship with the young person on a voluntary basis.
- ✓ Open and transparent communication.
- ✓ Agree clear boundaries and expectations together.
- ✓ Maintaining a relationship complements formal support and not for emergencies.
- ✓ The young person can access support and protection.
- ✓ Agree how you will keep in touch and how often.
- ✓ Any risks or worries are discussed and next steps agreed collaboratively.

What is my role when it comes to maintaining a relationship with a young person?

- ✓ Your role is one of a caring adult. This means you are a supportive caring adult who had a caring role with the young person when they were a child. Your role in maintaining a relationship with a young person may be like a familial relationship with an aunt or, uncle.
- ✓ Young people tell us it's the quality of the relationship that's important to them, knowing someone is there for you over years rather frequent contact over a short period of time.

What can keeping in touch look like?

- ✓ Send cards at Christmas, birthdays and special occasions.
- ✓ Meet up in community settings such as cafes, shops, parks.
- ✓ Using your work mobile to text or speak with the young person.

Use your professional judgment and guidance from your line manager when it comes visiting the young person in their home.

To ensure everyone's safety, wellbeing and to avoid conflicts of interest. It is advised the young person is not invited to visit your home.

How do I keep in touch with the young person

- ✓ You can keep in touch with your work mobile or, office number.
- ✓ Your team can set up a closed Facebook group page for young people to share news and send messages.
- ✓ You may choose to set up a work social media profile.

To ensure everyone's safety, wellbeing and to avoid conflicts of interest. It is advised not to share your personal social media or, number. Thanks for your understanding.

Keeping in Touch checklist:

- ✓ The Keeping in Touch checklist may help the young person to feel kept in mind.
- ✓ It offers points for you to consider and to discuss with the young person when maintaining a relationship.
- ✓ It helps both of you to be clear on expectations and boundaries in the relationship.
- ✓ For some young people a conversation may be enough, for others it may be helpful to have an agreement in writing.
- ✓ Use your professional judgement and guidance from your line manager to think about whether a verbal or, written agreement is best.

What do I do when I am worried about the young person?

When appropriate, discuss concerns with the young person and let them know what you plan to do.

- Child Protection Procedures apply up until the age of 18 years.
- Adult Support and Protection procedures apply age 16+
- Where you have welfare concerns, you can contact the allocated throughcare and aftercare worker or the duty throughcare and aftercare service to discuss any concerns.

What should I do if I am worried about the direction of the relationship?

- You can have a discussion with the young person.
- Look again at Keeping in Touch checklist with the young person to revisit boundaries and expectations. Does this need to be in writing?
- You can talk to your line manager for support and guidance.
- Remember this is a mutual relationship. You have the option to bring the relationship to an end. If possible, please let the young person know about your decision and the reasons. Please try to have any difficult conversations with kindness.

Should I tell my manager I'm planning to keep in touch with a young person?

It's good practice to share with your manager you are considering keeping in touch with a young person, this fits with the principle of open and transparent communication.

What kind of support and guidance will my line manager give me?

Your line manager may be a source of advice and guidance regarding the suitability of the relationship or talk about the support you may need to maintain the relationship. If there are worries about this, your line manager may talk to a Service Manager.

At times, there may be a conflict of interest if your team is supporting the young person's family members. This should be discussed with your line manager.

Do I need to record my interactions with the young person?

Again, this can be discussed in supervision with your line manager. Where there are concerns around a young person's safety, supervision notes may record which agency you have shared concerns with and how the agency has recorded this.

Can I maintain the relationship during my working day?

As a member of a social work team, protection of children needs to be priority. You should seek permission from your line manager if it's possible to use time in your working day to meet with the young person. If it fits with the needs of service, flexible working is available for you to use.

Will I get financial support to maintain the relationship?

Moray council views the maintaining of a relationship as additional to formal support, so it's not possible to reimburse costs associated with mileage or, shared activities.