



**No: 026**

**Date: 1 May 2013**

## **One Minute Guide: Statutory Visits to Children Looked After**

### **What are they?**

Redbridge Children's Trust is committed to improving outcomes for children in care and believes that one of the tools to achieving this aim is by promoting a strong positive relationship between the social worker and the child. To promote these relationships social workers will now be expected to see young people at minimum intervals when they are looked after by Redbridge. The general visiting requirements are set out below but these visits will vary according to what stage of permanency the child or young person is at and will be set as part of their care plan, agreed with the head of service and confirmed at a Looked After review up to a maximum of three months if a child is in a permanent placement.

### **Why are we doing it?**

Redbridge Children's Trust is committed to improving outcomes for children in care including their wellbeing and resilience. We believe that one of the means to achieve this aim is by promoting a strong and positive relationship between the social worker and the child.

To promote this relationship social workers are expected to see young people more frequently than the statutory requirement of six weekly visits. There are **many** purposes to a visit and some of which includes the following:

- To build a relationship with the child/young person
- To undertake direct work with the child/young person
- To ensure the placement promotes the child's welfare identity and emotional wellbeing and is meeting his/her care needs
- To give the child/young person the opportunity to express his/her wishes, feelings and views (and promote and support child/young person's access to Viewpoint)
- To advise, assist the child and to ascertain who they would turn to in times of difficulty or make any complaints
- To consider the child's sleeping arrangements, such as room sharing, display of personal belongings and physical state of the room

### **When is it happening?**

Statutory visits to looked after children are a priority in their own right, and the visiting requirements will not be properly met if these visits are combined with other occasions when the child is seen, such as contact with family or transporting the child.

In addition, wherever a Child is placed in care the child's social worker must visit the child in the placement at the following intervals, subject to the conditions below:

- Within one week of the start of a new planned placement
- Prior to each review of the Care Plan
- Frequency of visits should be increased to reflect the child/young person's needs.
- Within one working day if there is an unplanned placement change.
- Once weekly if it is an emergency placement until the Care Plan and Placement Plan are both completed.
- At least once every four weeks if they are settled in a placement.
- At least once every 3 months if they are matched permanently with a foster care either via panel or by agreement of the managing director.
- Prior to each review of the Care Plan
- The child/young person must be seen alone at each statutory visit (in accordance with their age and understanding). If the child/young person is not seen alone this must be recorded with the reasons.

Update Cancel - Update Case Note Individual

Update Case Note Individual: Day, Sun (12 weeks)

Case Note Individual

Individual's Name Day, Sun (12 weeks)

This individual is a Child / Young Person

Please tick if 'Sun Day' was interviewed

Interviewed?

Please tick if 'Sun Day' was seen during the interview

Seen During Interview?

Seen Alone?

Seen Bedroom?

- For very young children who are not being seen alone, observations of their interaction with the carer should be recorded.
- Where the child/young person is not seen alone and the social worker has concerns this should be reported to the team manager.

- Where the child continually refuses to see their social worker, consideration should be given as to how this function can otherwise be performed.
- Consideration should also be given at every review as to whether or not a child could benefit from an Independent Visitor.
- After each visit, and within 2 working days, the social worker must record the visit in the chronology and ensure the 'Statutory Visit' button on Protocol is used. This report must state whether the child was seen alone.

The screenshot shows a software window titled "Create New Case Note" with "Create" and "Cancel" buttons. The main content area is titled "Part 1 - Contact" and "Detailed Notes". It contains several fields: "From Context Of" with the value "Day, Sun (12 weeks)", "Contact Date" with a calendar icon, and "Type of Contact" with a dropdown arrow. Below these is a "Contact Regarding" section with a list of options. The option "Statutory Visit (Child Looked After)" is highlighted in blue.

- Should a social worker be on long term sick or leave, a member of the team will be allocated to undertake visits on their case load by the manager.
- At the looked after review the IRO will review “whether the child is being visited by the social worker at the minimum statutory intervals and when the child requests a visit”.
- Visit frequency can only be changed and extended if a child is permanently placed with their carer via a panel decision or via approval from the Managing Director/Deputy Managing Director.
- Agreed frequency of visits should be confirmed in case summary

### Who are the key players?

You are! Everyone has a role to play.

The correct procedure should be followed on Protocol to record statutory visits. Managers are expected to look at the monthly report from Protocol to ensure it is correct for their Team.

**How do I get more information?**

If you have specific issues or concerns regarding visiting a child please do discuss with your manager.

If you have specific issues or need assistance regarding Protocol please contact the Protocol helpdesk on [ics.helpdesk@redbridge.gov.uk](mailto:ics.helpdesk@redbridge.gov.uk)

Information on Independent Visitors can be found [here](#).