



Social Work Children & Families Residential Services

If Your Child
is Looked After
Away From
Home

Ref: SWCRLAH 1
March 2008



Why are Social Work involved with my family?

The local authority has a legal duty, given to it by the Children(Scotland) Act 1995 to safeguard and promote the welfare of children wherever possible in their home and community.

However there are times when a child's interests are best met by being cared for outwith the family home. The Children's Panel and the Sheriff Court can make legal orders that require the local authority to look after and accommodate children. Parents, in partnership with Social Work, can also agree that it would be in a child's interests for them to be cared for in a children's unit or in a foster placement for a period of time.

How will Social Work go about this?

The Children (Scotland) Act 1995 directs the local authority to do all that is reasonable to put your child's best interests before any other consideration. Therefore, any decision we make about your child will be taken on this basis. While your child is being looked after and accommodated, the law also requires social workers to listen to you and your child's views at all times. They must also ensure that these views are taken into account when decisions are being made about your child.

What does looked after and accommodated mean?

Your child may be experiencing difficulties which your family needs additional help with at this time. We will provide support to you and your family to help 'look after' your child. This might be assistance with relationships, health or addiction problems within the family which affect your child or perhaps the problem is with your child's education or friends. Whatever the reason, we will help with managing the problem.

At the moment it is felt to be in your child's best interests to be looked after out-with the family home until the problems are dealt with. Social Work are involved in making arrangements to look after and 'accommodate' your child. 'Accommodated' can mean staying with a family (such as foster carers), a relative (not parents/guardians), other suitable people, living in a residential unit or school.

What happens next?

A few days after your child is accommodated a meeting will take place to talk about why this has happened and to make plans to ensure that your child's best interests are being promoted.

Social Work staff will then hold regular review meetings to discuss the plans and decisions made about your child. The first review will take place within six weeks of your child being accommodated and then every 3 to 6 months approximately for as long as they are being cared for away from home. You and your child are invited to these meetings and it is very important that you attend so that you are fully involved in making important decisions about your child. If it would be helpful, a friend or family member can accompany you to these review meetings.

Each review meeting will look at the progress your child is making and talk about whether the problems, which the family is dealing with, have been sorted out. We will only continue to look after and accommodate your child as long as it is absolutely necessary. It is our aim that your child returns to your care as soon as possible.

Keeping in contact

As a parent you have legal responsibilities towards your child. One of these responsibilities is to keep in regular contact with your child while he/she is being looked after and accommodated by the Council. We will help you wherever possible to maintain regular contact with your child. Financial help may be available for family members, for example, if you cannot afford transport costs. Your social worker can tell you more about this. Keeping in contact is important for you and your child whether it be by visit, letter or telephone. You are required by law to let us know if you change your address. Contact with your child will only be limited or prevented if it is not felt to be in your child's best interests. If you are prevented from having direct contact with your child you will be informed of this, and you will be told how to appeal against this decision.



Who can tell me more about what this means?

While your child is being looked after or accommodated by East Dunbartonshire Social Work Department you will have a social worker allocated to work with you. We will spend time discussing with you why your child is being looked after and accommodated and how we can help. This may be a difficult time for you and your child and any questions or worries you have are important, so do not hesitate to talk to your social worker about them.

Your social worker will try to work in partnership with you and your child to ensure that the Council takes all reasonable steps to help you and your child to work through the difficult issues, which have resulted in them being looked after and accommodated by the Council. If you are unsure or do not understand any of the information in this leaflet please contact your social worker and ask them to explain any details. This leaflet can only give brief information - your social worker will be able to explain things in more detail.



What if I don't agree with the decisions that are being made about my child?

If you do not agree or are unhappy with any of the decisions affecting your child, please speak to your social worker. If it is not possible to resolve issues in this way and you feel that you have been treated unfairly you may then wish to speak to a senior member of staff. If you are dissatisfied you may wish to make a complaint to this member of staff.

Your social worker is:

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Address:

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Telephone Number:

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If your social worker is not available, please ask for:

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Your child is staying at:

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Address:

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Telephone number:

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Emergency - outwith office hours

If you need help in an emergency outwith office hours or over a weekend please contact Social Work Standby on

Freephone 0800 811505



Regulated Services

If your complaint is about the Regulated Care Service, you can also contact the Scottish Care Commission. Regulated Care Services include Residential Care Homes for Children and Young People or Adults, a Support or Day Care Service, a Home Care Service, a Housing Support Service or a Fostering or Adoption Service. Please note the Care Commission will generally advise you to have attempted to resolve your complaint locally before making contact with them. For East Dunbartonshire Council area, the contact address and telephone number is:

**Care Commission
Central West Region
4th Floor
1 Smithhills Street
Paisley, PA1 1EB
Tel: 0141 843 4230**

Would you like to comment on the service you get?

If you would like to make a suggestion, comment or complaint about the service you have received from us please speak to a member of staff at your local area office. Any comments we receive help us plan our future services. You could also pick up a leaflet called 'Comments, suggestions & complaints about Social Work' at your local office, which explains how to comment in writing or by phone.

If we are unable to resolve your complaint to your satisfaction, you will then have the right to refer the matter by writing to:

**The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman
4 Melville Street
Edinburgh, EH3 7NS
Tel: 0800 377 7330
Email: ask@spsso.org.uk**

You must do this within 12 months of first being notified of the matters you are complaining about.

Is this leaflet useful?

We would like you to tell us if this leaflet was useful. Please complete the tear off slip overleaf and return it to us (no stamp required).

List of useful Social Work addresses

Advice & Response

126 Cowgate

Kirkintilloch

G66 1HF

Tel: 0141 775 1311

Fax: 0141 578 0051

Kirkintilloch Area Team

2 Luggiebank Road

Kirkintilloch

G66 1HF

Tel: 0141 775 2110

Fax: 0141 777 6450

Milngavie & Bearsden Area Team

38 Stewart Street

Milngavie

G62 2BW

Tel: 0141 570 2400

Fax: 0141 955 0197

Bishopbriggs Area Team

1 Balmuildy Road

Bishopbriggs

G64 3BS

Tel: 0141 772 6384

Fax: 0141 762 4677

Social Work Headquarters

William Patrick Library

2/4 West High Street

Kirkintilloch

G66 1AD

Tel: 0141 775 9000

Fax: 0141 777 6203

Is this leaflet useful?

Does it answer your questions? If you think we can improve this leaflet, why not complete the tear off strip and return it to us.

Name:

Address:
.....
.....
.....

When and where did you get this leaflet/booklet from?

.....

If you took it from a reception point, were the staff helpful?

Yes No

Was the leaflet/booklet easy to obtain?

Yes No

Was the layout of the leaflet/booklet easy to follow?

Yes No

Was the information:

Understandable? Yes No

Useful? Yes No

Please detach the form along the perforated line

Other formats

This document can be provided in large print, Braille or on audio cassette and can be translated into different community languages.

Contact the Public Affairs Unit at: East Dunbartonshire Council,
Tom Johnston House, Civic Way, Kirkintilloch G66 4TJ, tel 0141578 8000

本文件可按要求翻譯成中文，如有此需要，請電 0141 578 8152。

Gabhadh an sgrìobhainn seo cur gu Gàidhlig ma tha sin a dhìth oirbh. Cuiribh fòin gu 0141 578 8152

अनुरोध करने पर यह दस्तावेज हिन्दी में भाषांतरित किया जा सकता है। कृपया 0141 578 8152 पर फ़ोन कीजिए।

ਇਸ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਦਾ ਮੰਗ ਕਰਨ ਤੇ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਅਨੁਵਾਦ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ। ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ 0141578 8152 ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।

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Social Work Headquarters
East Dunbartonshire Council
2/4 West High Street
Kirkintilloch
G66 1AD