

Record Keeping

Essential information for foster parents

Data protection

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) was implemented in the UK in May 2018 and governs how personal data is managed within foster care. ISP is the responsible “data controller”, and responsible for ensuring that personal data which is collected and processed by the agency is done so fairly and lawfully, that it is accurate and relevant, stored securely (for no longer than necessary) and that, when it is shared, this is done appropriately and lawfully. Foster parents have a responsibility to create, store and share information in ways that protect it from misuse and loss. Please see our Record Keeping policy for further information.

a. Creating information

- You create information about a child when you write your carer log; take photos of a child; write an account of an incident; and when you add ‘progress’ items to a child’s CHARMS record.
- When creating information, make the records as soon as possible after the event to improve the accuracy of the report.
- GDPR rules require that the information held about the child is accurate, relevant, adequate and not excessive.
- Records may be requested by the court in court proceedings. Please ensure that your records are factual and avoid including opinions. Where opinions are given, these must be clearly stated to be opinions.
- Children have a right to access their records. Please bear this in mind when writing. Records should be factual, legible and non-stigmatising.

b. Storing information

- You might be required to store paper records about the children in your care, e.g. review minutes, Health Plan.
- You might save electronic copies of documents you receive via email.
- You might have photos you have taken of children on your phone, or a digital camera.
- GDPR rules require that information is stored securely. Paper records should be stored in a locked file/cupboard; electronic records should be stored with password protection, and all documents stored by you during the child’s placement must be returned to ISP when the child leaves your care. As a foster parent, you have no legal right to retain the information. Use CHARMS wherever possible to store information about the child as this is secure and complies with GDPR.

c. Sharing information

- You share information in a number of ways: by telephone call, email, completion of forms and on CHARMS.
- Information should only be shared with those who have a right to have that information. If you are unsure, check with your supervising social worker.
- Don't upload photos of the child to websites/apps where those photos would not be secure. Any electronic sharing of photographs should be with the approval of the child's local authority social worker and any other person with parental responsibility.
- Use secure email for sending confidential information about the child, e.g. Egress.

CHARMS

Carer log

For each child in placement, you will be asked to complete a 'carer log' on CHARMS which should outline the day's activities and events. This log becomes part of the child's record of their time in foster care, and it is important that it is accurate and as detailed as possible.

The log might include:

- What they did
- Where they went
- Who they spent time with
- Any problems or incidents
- Any successes or achievements
- Any injuries or illness.

Your supervising social worker will read your carer logs, and they will give you feedback so that you know if you are writing enough and giving sufficient detail.

A separate record needs to be made for each child, even if they are siblings.

'Progress items'

You can record some of the child's daily activities and events as 'progress items' on CHARMS, including medical appointments, contact with birth family and visits from their social worker. Adding these events to the CHARMS record helps ISP to share essential information within the child's network.

If the same progress item applies to more than one sibling, the item can be copied across to the other children. Only do this if the progress item is a shared experience.

For guidance in relation to making records on CHARMS, view the CHARMS guide for foster parents which is available within the 'policies, guidance and handbooks' section of I-SPACE www.i-space.org.uk

For guidance in relation to recording medication given on CHARMS, view "Medicines in the foster home: essential information for foster parents"