

**Outcomes
First
Group.**

Referrals and Admissions Policy

**Policy Folder:
Kinsale Service**

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This policy sets out the arrangements regarding how referrals are managed and followed up by Options Kinsale.

The **purpose of this policy** is to recognise the importance of having a robust and clear referrals and admission procedure that sets out the processes that will be followed in managing and responding to referrals in a timely manner in order that we can demonstrate how we can or cannot meet an individual's needs.

Implementation: It is the responsibility of line managers to ensure that all staff members are aware of and understand this policy and any subsequent revisions.

Compliance: This policy complies with all relevant regulations and other legislation as detailed in the *Compliance with Regulations & Legislation Statement*.

The manner in which enquiries and referrals are handled is of key importance to the organisation as this may be the first time a referrer has come into contact with any Options Services. It is essential that all referrals are handled with the utmost courtesy and professionalism as this has an impact on the public perception of the service and our reputation with local commissioners and purchasers.

It is important that all referrals are treated in confidence and the same processes apply to all referrals for consistency of service and service delivery.

2.0 REFERRALS

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All Options services accept referrals from Local Authorities, CCG's, families and advocates for prospective children and adults with a diagnosis of Autism who would benefit from specialist education and/or care services.

Referrals may come directly to the service or via Central Office and all referrals are managed through a process centrally, which is coordinated by the Referrals Coordinator.

Options Kinsale school is able to support children and young people with a diagnosis of ASC, learning disabilities and special educational needs, including comorbid diagnoses such as ADHD, Dyspraxia and sensory processing difficulties.

3.0 RESPONDING TO REFERRALS

When a referring agency or agencies approaches an Options School/Service they will be dealt with promptly, courteously and effectively.

The school/service will seek to establish the status of the enquiry, distinguishing between:

- requests for information about referrals, fees and the availability of places;
- a request to ascertain in principle if the school/service would be able to consider a referral regarding a specific child/person;
- formal referral for a place in a school or service
- a referral for an emergency placement;
- a request from a Special Education Needs/Additional Learning Needs Tribunal to establish if the school could provide a place that would meet a young person's needs.
- Parent/family visits are welcomed after a referral has been made, however a formal assessment process cannot commence without the support of the Local Authority/CCG

Where the enquiry is for information or to ascertain whether in principle the school/service could consider a referral, the school/service will provide relevant information to the person making the enquiry.

Where a formal referral is being made, the school/service will commence to gather the initial information using the referral form.

The referral co-ordinator will ensure that the referring agency or agencies has up-to-date information about the school/service and check that they are aware of the referral process.

Once all the required referral information has been provided to the Head of Service, Head of Care and Headteacher, they will consider the information gathered and make a decision if an assessment can be undertaken to assess suitability and risks associated with a planned placement. A decision will be made within 72 hours of the information being received. This is because further advice may be required from the Lead Clinician and SLT. The decision whether to move onto a formal assessment, request more information or decline the referral will be made by the Headteacher and Head of Care in discussion with the SLT and Head of Service.

Where services have a dedicated clinical team, the clinical lead should be involved in the decision making process in relation to the acceptance and admission of a person into the service. The final decision to accept a referral will be the responsibility of the Head of Care and Headteacher.

Key documents including the completed *Initial Assessment* and the *Impact Assessment* should be shared with the clinical lead to inform the decision making process.

4.0 ASSESSING SUITABILITY FOR A PLACEMENT

When an enquiry has been received, the assessment lead may invite the referrer to meet the identified service to discuss the initial needs of the individual requiring a placement. This meeting may take place virtually dependent on geographical distance of the referring authority. This discussion should include completion of the *Initial Assessment Tool*, and identify specific areas for the *Impact Assessment* to be completed. The meeting should also include when the placement is required from, and future assessment planning dates.

The Headteacher/Head of Care will arrange for an assessment visit to be undertaken to meet the child/person. This may be in their school or at their current placement or home. Where possible the assessment visit will be arranged as soon as possible according to the needs of the child/person and their current placement ideally within 5-10 days of the initial referral being received.

All assessment visits will attempt to involve staff from placing school/placement and Options managers, teaching and clinical staff as required. Parents/Guardians will be invited to attend or be part of an assessment visit. Staff currently providing support to the child/person will also be involved in this assessment visit.

Assessments will clearly establish if there are any legal frameworks that are currently in place for the child/ person and seek to provide clarity on what amendments will be required should the referral be accepted and a placement offered. This will include any legal orders relating to the restriction/ deprivation of liberty for children i.e. Inherent Jurisdiction Orders, and Deprivations of Liberty Safeguards. This is so that all appropriate measures can be implemented to ensure the future support operates within the applicable legal frameworks. This may require reassessment of the person's needs, to ensure their safety and that of others, and may result in the application to the relevant bodies, for consent to apply restrictions to the person's liberty in the course of their daily care and support. Any restrictions applied will be in line with the least

restrictive practice and will remain under regular review within the services, through the PCP review and MDT meeting processes.

Even if there are no current legal frameworks in place, the staff undertaking the assessment must consider if the placement will result in the person being deprived of their liberty. This could occur if:

- a) *The individual is unable to consent to the deprivation, (restriction),*
- b) *If the person is subject to continuous supervision and control; and*
- c) *If the person is not free to leave.*

If the person is unable to consent to any restrictions, then we must ensure that legal authority is obtained to render the deprivation of liberty lawful. In order to assist staff in this process, a flowchart has been developed, which is linked to this policy.

A local authority has a duty imposed upon it, to consider whether any child in need, or looked-after child, especially those in foster care or in a residential placement, is subject to restrictions amounting to a deprivation of liberty¹. However, a local authority cannot itself consent to the deprivation of liberty on behalf of the child.

A person's placement must be kept under review and if upon review, as well as upon admission, deprivation of liberty is identified then appropriate action must be taken by the home or service manager to obtain lawful authority to render the deprivation lawful.

If in any doubt, please contact the Company's legal services department for advice.

The following documentation will be completed in order to assess all individual needs and assess the risks for the child/person being referred and the risks to other children/people currently supported in the school/service.

- Referral Forms (as applicable)
- Initial Assessments Tool
- Admission Assessment Forms
- Risk Impact Assessment Forms

The Options assessment team will consider the following areas when assessing a child/person for a place in our schools/services:

- Child/person's primary needs
- Risks presented by the child/person's behaviours
- Sensory Needs
- Communication Needs
- Health and Wellbeing
- Physical and Emotional Needs
- Environmental requirements
- Information included in the child's EHCP, IDP or SSEN
- Any legal frameworks that apply, or could apply, to the child/ person; Inherent Jurisdiction Order/ Deprivation of Liberty Safeguard.
- Mental Capacity Assessments in line with the Mental Capacity Act and any Best Interest Decisions
- Current placement support plan and risk assessments
- Placement history and important life events.

Placement fees should be agreed with the placing authority and confirmed in writing before admission. The Company reserves the right to terminate a placement if a placing authority fails to provide relevant and accurate information relating to a young person.

Once the assessment is completed the Head of Care/Headteacher will consider all the information gathered and in discussion with the SLT decide if a suitable offer can be made. This process should be completed and a decision made within 3 working days of the assessment being completed. This process may take longer, because further advice may be required from the Lead Clinician and Head of Service.

In certain circumstances more information may be required such as more clinical assessments or clinical advice before a decision can be made. Every effort will be made to seek this information as quickly as possible in order to make a decision.

¹ (A local authority – V- D & other [2015] EWHC 3125 Fam.)

5.0 SUPPORTING THE ADMISSIONS PROCESS

Once the placement of a child/person has been agreed, then the admission planning process begins. This is a flexible process that is designed to support the following principles:

- The transition plan is led by the needs and wishes of the child/person, enabling them to have the familiarity they require about their new school/placement to reduce any anxiety and to help to provide a smooth transition process.
- Admission Planning Meetings will be arranged involving the key people, as appropriate, which may be identified as part of the person's circle of support.
- To allow the school/service to make the necessary environmental arrangements to meet the needs of the child/person and allow them to become familiar with their new environment.
- To support the family or guardians to develop the trust and confidence required for them to support and promote the new placement and help to develop a smooth transition into the new school/service reducing anxiety and distress.
- To ensure that all administration details are completed, fees agreed and the relevant legal frameworks are put in place to manage the transition to the new school/placement.

The timing of each admission will be individually tailored to the needs for the child / person, but the management team will actively work to promote timely placements and will seek to ensure that the admissions process is not unduly extended.

The admissions process will always require staff to visit the young person where they are currently living; it will normally also involve the young person visiting the Options site unless it is agreed that this would not be in the best interests of the prospective child/person.

Where the admission is a transition between two Options services, the Head of Care/Headteacher of the receiving placement will be responsible for ensuring this policy is adhered to, and the relevant documentation and supporting information is received from the previous placement. Any concerns relating to this process are to be escalated to the Head of Service to ensure appropriate action can be taken to facilitate a successful transition for the person supported.

The Admission/ Discharge checklist is to be completed to demonstrate the handover of all the relevant documents from the previous placement to the new placement. This should be signed by the manager / registered person from both placements to evidence specific listed information has been handed over and received. This includes the transfer of any safeguarding concerns or paperwork, which must be delivered by recorded delivery and signed for by the DSL or an identified member of the Senior Leadership Team.

For all new admissions managers should ensure that the following forms are completed:

- Pre-placement checklist recording all documents received from the placing authority regarding the new admission.
- Pre-placement information / risk assessment of the young person (to be completed by the placing social worker). The home must ensure that any risks identified are subsequently addressed in the young person's company risk assessment, developed in the first two weeks following admission.
- Impact assessment must be completed by the home manager as a part of considering the appropriateness of the placement and always prior to admission. This serves to identify the potential impact on the young person of being placed in the home, together with the impact they may have on the established group and each individual within it.

6.0 CONTACT ARRANGEMENTS

Arrangements for contact between the child and their family/friends should be clarified during the referral process. Maintaining contact with significant others is of considerable importance to looked after children/young people and a planned move should not be a reason for disruption to agreed plans. It is important that all parties to contact are clear about the practical arrangements and legal underpinning for all contacts, including:

- The level/frequency of contact;
- Method of contact;
- If supervised, by whom;
- If reports are required;
- The venue;
- The travel arrangements;

- Risk assessments;
- The working arrangements between the family members and/or significant others regarding the young person's progress or issues which may occur within the home or at school

7.0 ACTIONS FOLLOWING ADMISSION

The young person's bedroom should have been prepared in advance, be clean, tidy, warm and homely, and provided with appropriate toiletries.

Other children and young people should be updated about anyone about to move into the home and encouraged to be part of the welcome.

On admission or as soon as possible thereafter, the child should have an informal meeting with their key worker.

Children and young people should be provided with the following information:

- A copy of the Children's Guide
- The layout of the home and school, bathrooms toilets etc
- Fire precautions
- Daily routines
- House rules
- Arrangements for education

The young person must be given the opportunity to ask questions, meet other resident young people, and staff.

The induction checklist should be completed with the child / young person. An inventory must be made of all clothes and personal possessions bought in with the young person.

The staff member responsible for the admission must ensure that the young person has secure lockable facilities for storage of valuables and / or important personal possessions. They must be offered the opportunity to pass items of financial or personal value to the home for safe keeping. A record of all such items must be maintained, signed by the staff member and the young person.

Care must be taken to ensure that young people's health care/medication needs are not disrupted by the process of moving to a new home. The young person must be registered with local primary health care providers (G.P., dentist, optician) and initial appointments made. If not already received, consent forms e.g. for medication and medical treatment, must be obtained.

Within 7 days of the placement starting there should be a placement planning meeting involving the home, young person, their family (where appropriate), and the placing authority. The purpose of the placement planning meeting is:

- To formally reiterate the importance of the young person having a voice in the process of planning for their future;
- To ensure no vital information has been missed in the matching and subsequent placement;
- To clearly set out from the start the specific expectations of the placement;
- To be precise about the level of support/interaction expected of the Social Worker and placing authority;
- To summarise for the young person, the expectations of group living and school attainments at the home.

This process is particularly important for emergency placements, when a meeting should take place within 72 hours of the young person's admission to the home.

For education only placements, a planning meeting will be arranged within 3 months of the placement commencing. In some cases this may coincide with an annual education review, dependent on the date of the last annual review taking place. In some instances, the planning meeting may occur after the 3 month period, for example if there have been ongoing meetings between professionals and parents since the commencement of the placement, or if the placement initially commenced on a part-time basis.

8.0 ONGOING PLANNING

As part of ongoing planning, placement review meetings must take place within statutory timescales, in accordance with the Care Planning Standard. The date of the first statutory review in placement should be agreed between the placing authority and the home and school at the time of admission. Whilst it is the responsibility of the placing authority to initiate statutory reviews, the home should be proactive in advocating on a young person's behalf where there is any delay.

9.0 NOTIFICATIONS

The host authority must be notified without delay of the admission and discharge of all young people (including those who are subject of an internal transfer) who are from out of borough. The only exception to this is where the placing authority is also the host authority. The information the host authority needs can be found within the Children's Homes Regulations 2015. Depending on local arrangements, the police may also wish to be informed of all new admissions. The manager will also need to consider whether local YOS/CAMHS/health services need to be contacted

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