

SECTION 10.7: ACCESSING INFORMATION CONCERNING VULNERABLE CHILDREN, WHICH MAY BE HELD IN OTHER COUNTRIES

These procedures should be used in all circumstances in respect of all children who have lived abroad for a period of time and/or their parents.

10.7.1 Single agency response

- a) Initial information collated in respect of any child in need should include inquiries by all agencies as to whether the child and/or his/her parents/carer have lived abroad for any period of time. Where this is the case, details and dates of movements should be gained and the following checks made:

10.7.2 Social Care

a) For any referral

- The ethnicity of the child in need must be obtained the place of birth must be obtained
- All the countries the child and/or parents/carers have lived in, if this is longer than a holiday.

b) For any child in need

- If the child /parent/carer was born or has lived in another country for any significant length of time, then all relevant information that may be held abroad must be sought via the relevant agency, i.e. Health, Education, Police and Probation.

10.7.3 Health

- Health professionals will consult with:

Senior Nurse Advisor, Child Protection
Redwood Unit,
2nd Floor, Treehouse,
Stepping Hill Hospital,
Stockport.

Tel: 0161 419 2020
Fax: 0161 419 2025

10.7.4 Police

International enquiries (including Republic of Ireland(R.O.I))

- a) All enquiries need to be made in writing to Interpol, which is accordance with current G.M.P. procedures via the International Liaison Officers at the Force Intelligence Bureau.
- b) Her Majesty's Immigration Service (H.M.I.S) can assist in establishing a person's immigration status where that is relevant, i.e. potential custody/abduction cases.

10.7.5 Probation

- a) At any time when a member of staff assesses that a child who has recently lived overseas is in need of protection, he/she should immediately consult his/her team manager and follow the guidelines set out in Stockport Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures handbook for Probation, and the relevant section in the Greater Manchester Probation Service Procedures. The following information should be obtained from the carer if possible, and passed onto the referral and assessment team at Children's Social Care.
 - Establish if the carer or the child has lived abroad for any period of time. If this is the case obtain details and dates of movements.
 - Establish all the countries the child and/or parents/carers have lived in if the family have lived in more than one country.
 - Establish the ethnicity and date of birth of the child in need.

10.7.6 Education

- a) If a member of school staff has any child in need concerns regarding any child who has recently arrived on their school roll from abroad, they must consult with their designated teacher for child protection and follow the Stockport Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures.

If the cause of concern also relates to poor school attendance, then the Head Teacher or Head of Year for the school shall refer the child to the Education Welfare Service for a home visit to be completed.

- b) In all cases, if in doubt, then the designated teacher or head should consult and seek advice from the Principal EWO.
- c) In all cases, pupil admissions will notify the Education Welfare Service (EWS) if they become aware of a child from another country has requested a school place.
- f) The Education Welfare Service liaise with Asylum Seekers and the Ethnic and Diversity Service, in order to establish a child's legal status within the UK, i.e. refugee status etc.

10.7.7 Social Care

- a) Information may be sought by Social Care from a variety of sources:

Via the Foreign and Commonwealth Office 020 7008 1500

- The appropriate Embassy or Consulate- numbers available on the FCO website www.fco.gov.uk

Checks via the Asylum Team, who are based at Regal House in Stockport Tel: 477 3700

Enquiries via the International Social Services of Great Britain Tel: 02077 358941 (This can only be accessed via agreement from the team manager)

10.7.8 Obtaining information as part of a S47 child protection enquiry

- a) If there are significant concerns and a strategy meeting is called, the meeting will determine if further enquiries are needed. Consideration must then be made as to whether to access assistance via other agencies for information from abroad.

- b) The strategy meeting should ensure that:
 - The meeting must be child-centred
 - Further information from overseas must be sought if a joint investigation is felt necessary.
 - The Police will invoke their own procedures via Interpol and also check the immigration status of the individuals (as above).
 - Every other agency involved must follow its own enquiries to provide any relevant information to the enquiry to safeguard the child.

- c) The strategy meeting must also agree:
 - Whether parents need to be informed of the enquiry by Children's Social Care if the child is with a guardian and the parents are resident or staying in another country/and how this should be done and by whom.
 - If overseas social services checks via International Social Services are required, the Team Manager should seek permission via their Service Manager
 - All decisions must be clearly recorded.