

Outlook Spring Newsletter



Welcome to the Spring Newsletter!

We hope that this finds all our Carers and young people well and looking forward to longer days and brighter, warmer weather.

The last few months have been particularly busy ones for many of our Carers, with a number of young people being placed with our Carers.

Thankfully, most of the young people have really enjoyed and benefited from the high level of warmth and Safe Care provided by our Carers, and have therefore made great progress. So many thanks to all concerned.



Thank you to our Carers
for your continued care
and support!

*This Newsletter
includes
attachments/detail
on:*

- *Outlook's
Organisational Chart*
- *2009 Draft Training
Programme*
- *Please inform if you
are interested in any
external training - See
Page 5*

*"Don't forget to
submit your
expenses by the 15th
of each month."*

Every Child Matters

- **Be Healthy**
- **Stay Safe**
- **Enjoy and Achieve**
- **Make a Positive
Contribution**
- **Achieve Economic
Well-being**

Staff changes/updates!



Hi All,

I am pleased to be joining Outlook's Social Work Team. I have been a Supervising Social Worker since 2002, working with two independent fostering agencies.

I very much enjoy working with foster families and look forward to meeting and working with you all.

I first qualified as a Social Worker in 1979, working initially as a Probation Officer in South London. In those days Probation Officers were trained alongside Local Authority Social Workers. I also worked in Children's Homes and as a teacher in a number of Secondary Schools. The common thread in my working career has been working with children and young people and I am glad to be able to continue this with Outlook.

Tim O'Donnell



Hello Everyone,

My name is Christine Bonnici and I have recently joined Outlook's Admin team, prior to that I have worked in the IT/Administration sector in Malta.

I am enjoying my new job and this wonderful opportunity to work with such a friendly and professional team and would like to thank everyone for the warm welcome that I have received since joining.

Whilst I look forward to meeting you all, I wish you all a Happy Easter!!!

Best Wishes, Christine Bonnici

Happy Easter from everyone at Outlook!!



Communication

with the Outlook Team!

We are always keen to improve the way that we communicate with our Carers and we are very aware that many Carers now make great use of the Internet. Therefore, for those of you who have Internet access, please see the text box below, which we hope you will find useful.

See attached organisation Chart.

Name

Email

Ashe, Kay
Carter, Carole
Grainger, Joanna
James, Sarah
Kearns, Mike
O'Donnell, Tim
Marchant, Pam
Pankhurst, Phil
Richardson, Kevin
Robins, Denise
Sage, Ginny
Simpson, Natalie
Sousa, Pam
Van Bosch, Karen
Rand, Gayle
Bonnici, Christine

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Unannounced Visits



Over the last few weeks, and in line with our statutory requirements, the Team have undertaken a good number of Unannounced Visits to our Carers. Without exception, both Carers and young people have responded to these in a most positive way.

We fully understand that it can be very inconvenient to have someone come a knocking on your door when you least expect it, and so we try to undertake these visits with due respect and courtesy.

However, we have found all our Carers and young people to be most open and welcoming of these visits. Indeed, a number of young people have taken the time to show us their bedrooms, and to say to us how much they enjoy being looked after and kept safe by their Carers.

Of course with the Easter, and summer school holidays coming up, we will be undertaking even more Unannounced Visits to our Carers, so can we thank you in advance for help with these.

Parent and Child Placements



We would also like to thank the many Carers who have provided “parent and child” placements over the last few months. It would seem that Local Authorities have begun to recognise that our Carers have a sound understanding of Safe Care, and therefore are able to provide the appropriate support / advice / encouragement / monitoring / supervision to enable parents to have the best opportunity to prove their ability to meet the needs of their own child, or children.

Given that we think that we are likely to be asked to provide more Carers able to provide these types of placements, the Social Work Team will be undertaking a 2 day course, on the 27th and 28th April, which is specifically about parent and child placements.

This training should give us all more understanding of the issues involved, and we hope this will enable us to provide better support / Supervision / advice to our Carers.

Following this training, the Team will, over the next few months or so, lead training sessions with our Carers, so that we can all continue to learn together about how best to make these placements work.

Dates for the 2009 Diary – Carers Team Meeting!

Kent Team Meetings – Foster Carer Training Programme

Wednesday 22nd April 09
Wednesday 13th May 09
Wednesday 10th June 09
Wednesday 8th July 09
Wednesday 9th September 09

Sussex Team Meetings – Foster Carer Training Programme

Tuesday 21st April 09 (Uckfield Office)
Tuesday 26th May 09 (Uckfield Office)
Tuesday 30th June 09 (Uckfield Office)
Tuesday 21st July 09 (Slindon)
Thursday 24th Sept 09 (Uckfield Office)

Essex Team Meetings – Foster Carer Training Programme

Thursday 7th May 09
Thursday 4th June 09
Thursday 2nd July 09
Thursday 10th Sept 09

A message from Denise – Carers Team Meeting and Training

In the last few months, training workshops have been run within the Carers Team Meetings and appear to have been well received. In addition some full workshops have been planned. It is hoped that Carers are finding these interesting and useful for their practice. If there are any suggestions for training subjects please bring them to my attention. Keith from Kent has suggested an update in legislation, and Carl from Essex has requested a 'Men in Foster Care' Course. For the latter, I have contacted a trainer and am awaiting his response, and regarding the legislation; this will be carried out as a workshop in a CTM towards the end of the year. Many thanks, to both Keith and Carl, for their suggestions.

Please make every effort to attend the Carers Team Meetings and Workshops. It's so disappointing when attendance is low, though thankfully this isn't too often.

Carers Workforce Development Council (CWDC) is a name you are going to be hearing a lot about in the next year or so, as they have developed new Training, Support and Development Standards for Foster Care. Currently the workbooks are being distributed amongst carers so that they can become familiar.

Outlook did commence a pilot scheme of some experienced Carers mentoring new Carers and carrying out the CWDC standards with them. This hasn't proved to be successful, mainly due to the pressures of work for everyone. Therefore we need to find a way to work through these Standards together. Once the books are distributed, I would suggest that they come to each team and training session, and parts can be identified that have been covered. Your Supervising Social Worker will be responsible for identifying how the learning is impacting on your role as a Foster Carer. They will support you in completing the Standards, but if you need any extra guidance or advice please don't hesitate to contact Mike, Carole or myself.

The aim is to start this programme with a vengeance after the Easter Holidays, to ensure that we all continue to comply with the Standards set down by the Government for Foster Care!!!

I have just completed a stringent Training for Trainer's course on 'Crisis Prevention and Non Violent Intervention' and will be running specific workshops in all areas in June. These will be separate from the CTMs as there is such a lot of content. I will distribute the details nearer the time and look forward to seeing you on those days.

A number of Carers have attended or are about to attend, some specific courses run by external trainers. Can I ask those carers to remember to send Ginny copies of the certificates if they are sent directly to you (obviously if they come via us we will have taken copies). This ensures your training record is kept up to date. Should you see a course you are interested in or have a request for a particular subject matter, please give me a ring or drop me an email denise.robins@outlookltd.com.

Activity Holidays!

Hello Everyone,

Not long until the Easter Activity holiday in Pulborough!!! I hope the young people are looking forward to it. It's going to be great fun!!

I thought it would be right for a few lines about Outlook's activity holiday in France this summer. The young people will be joining a group of Outlook Social Work Staff, at the Chateau du Tertre in the pretty village of Ambrieres les Valles near the market town of Mayenne. A beautiful, rural and historic region of France. Please take a look at the website on www.pgl.co.uk and you will find this under Schools.



The trip takes place from Sunday 23rd to Saturday 29th August 2009. We will be travelling by coach via Eurotunnel. There is a good selection of activities like Abseiling, Archery, Zip Wire and hopefully we will be able to enjoy some of the water sports – Raft Building and Canoeing.

The young people that we take abroad need to be able to prove to Outlook that they can be trusted in a holiday environment where, although structured, there is plenty of free time for the children to interact and enjoy themselves.



The coach journey is 6 hours from Calais so this needs to be thought about, can your Looked After Child or Young Person cope with this?? Being so far away, we need to know that there is a very low likelihood of a young person being 'red carded' and asked to leave the holiday, however this can and will happen if need be.

Outlook hope to take a large group on this holiday as it is such an opportunity for the children to have a range of different experiences.

If you feel that this holiday could be suitable for the young person you are looking after, then please e mail me on kay.ashe@outlookltd.com, so their names can be added to the 'potential ' list. This will then go to the Social Work Meeting for discussion and selection. Please don't forget to ensure Passports are in date.

Take care everyone!!!

Kay

For your information, Denise and Ryan (a Social Work Student) will be running workshops with the Children on the Activity Holiday. Two prospective carers will be joining in with this group.

It is hoped that the children and young people will be able to directly influence the Recruitment Strategy of the Agency.

They will feedback the outcomes in the next newsletter.



Pocket Money, Savings & Clothing!!

Recently a number of Local Authorities have contacted us to ask us about the amount of money provided by our Carers to the young people placed with our Carers. In response, we have said that this is an issue that is usually discussed / clarified / agreed with the responsible Local Authority, early on in a placement, within the context of the Placement Agreement Meeting.



However, as a Team we are very aware that we work with a wide range of Local Authorities, who all have differing views about the amounts that they would expect a Carer to provide to a young person. We also know that individual Social Workers have differing views about the amounts that they wish our Carers to provide, so it is very difficult to come up with a standard amount that can apply to all the young people placed within the Agency.

We are aware of a recent situation, where the Local Authority initially insisted that our Carers were not to provide any pocket money to the young person placed with them, as the Local Authority had concerns about what the young person might do with this money.

We know that this was a highly unusual situation and one that is likely to apply to very few young people, and so we ensured that this decision was clearly recorded to ensure that our Carers were supported in this matter.

Many of our placements are long term, and therefore, the Placement Agreement may now be out of date, or these issues may never have been formally discussed / agreed at the time that the young person was placed.

So in order to support our Carers and safeguard, we have agreed this issue that will be discussed with all our Carers within Foster Carers Supervision. We will then take responsibility to ensure that the amount of Pocket Money, Savings and clothing money provided by our Carers, will be recorded by the Team within the Foster Carers Supervision Record, so that our Carers have a clear record that this issue has been discussed and agreed with Outlook.

We will also ensure that this information is also provided to Local Authorities within the context of the Foster Carers LAC Review Report, which will further ensure that the Local Authority is clearly provided with this information.

The Outlook Team are confident that our Carers provide a very high standard of warmth / nurturing / fun / Safe Care / stimulation to the young people placed with them, and want to support our Carers in continuing to do so.

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Suggestions for Newsletter

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Web Site:
www.outlookfostering.co.uk

Smoking

As was reported in a number of papers, the London Borough of Redbridge has apparently decided that it will no longer accept applications to foster from people who smoke. We know that this decision raised a deal of controversy and also prompted a number of 'phone in' radio discussions about whether this was indeed "political correctness gone mad!!" [As one commentator put it]

So it would seem that smoking is once more in the news. We have also noticed that when talking to us about a suitable Foster Carer for one of their young people, some Local Authorities are asking us directly about whether or not Carers smoke before deciding whether or not to place a child.

Within the "Every Child Matters" legislation, it also clearly states that we all [ie all Local Authorities, Social Workers, Foster Carers, Fostering Agencies etc etc] have a statutory duty to actively promote the health of the young people placed within our Carers.

Although very few of our Carers do smoke, this is likely to be an issue that we will continue to have to give some thought to. We would therefore want to encourage all our Carers who do smoke to give serious consideration to this issue, and whether now might be a good time to give up smoking. **Please note it is Outlook's Policy not to place children under 5 years of age with Carers that smoke.**

Unfortunately we know that, despite the best efforts of our Carers, some of our young people do smoke, and so to support our Carers with this, as an Agency, we take the clear position that no young people placed with our Carers are allowed to smoke within the Carers home. We hope that this is helpful to Carers, and also clear to young people, and also to Local Authorities.



**Thank you to our
Carers** for your
continued care and
support!