

## Chapter 16 - Documentation

### SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS – see rest of chapter below for full details

- **It is recommended good practice for managers (for example, in schools, this might be the Head of Department, EVC, and/or Headteacher) to sometimes inspect the background information and supporting documents for a visit to ensure that there has been adequate planning and preparation for the visit.**
- **Managers should decide how much of the supporting documentation to inspect, depending upon the nature of the visit and activities involved, and the experience/competence of the visit leaders.**
- **The Local Authority might occasionally request to inspect supporting documentation for selected visits as part of the LA's quality assurance procedures.** This information might be requested before a visit is approved, or during a visit as part of an on-site assessment.
- **The EVOLVE online database will store securely and indefinitely all visit records that have been inputted.**
- **Any additional supporting documentation (risk assessments, parents letters etc.) should be stored and retained internally (for example, in the school/establishment office) until such time that Visit Organisers and managers are fully confident that any issues/incidents arising from the visit have been dealt with fully and are unlikely to be required for future reference or investigation.** It should be noted that Ofsted or other Officers occasionally ask to inspect supporting documentation for previous visits.
- **If it is clear that no incidents occurred during a visit, it should be reasonable and acceptable to dispose of any supporting documentation after 12 months.** If some minor incidents occurred during a visit, it is recommended that supporting documentation for the visit is stored for a period of 6 years before disposal. However, a degree of common sense needs to be applied in such circumstances, and a realistic assessment needs to be made of the likelihood of a future claim, and the practicality of storing quantities of paperwork.
- **If a significant incident occurred during a visit that could well be investigated at a later date, it is recommended that all relevant details are retained for a longer period of time** (in more serious cases, it would be sensible to retain information until the young person becomes 21 years old). However, in order to save space, it is reasonable and acceptable to scan and store all relevant visit records electronically so that bulky paperwork can then be destroyed.

### 16.1 Which documents need to be checked and assessed by internal managers?

- It is recommended good practice for Managers (for example, in schools, this might be the Head of Department, EVC, and/or Headteacher) to sometimes inspect the background information and supporting documents for a visit to ensure that there has been adequate planning and preparation for the visit. Managers should decide how much of the supporting documentation to inspect, depending upon the nature of the visit and activities involved, the experience/competence of the visit leaders, and the school/establishment's own Visits Policy.
- Relevant documentation to inspect might include:
  - Generic risk assessments (normally, managers will only need confirmation that relevant Generic Risk Assessments have been agreed, completed, and signed by all the visit leaders, and that they are readily accessible for reference);
  - Specific visit risk assessments;
  - Parent/guardian letters;
  - Insurance policy documents;
  - List of group member names;
  - List of leaders' names;
  - Programme/itinerary;
  - Emergency procedures.
- For some visits, additional information may also be requested for inspection regarding:
  - the visit financial arrangements (including expenditure receipts);
  - information packs sent out to parents;
  - brochures regarding accommodation or specific places that will be visited;
  - leaflets and information regarding specific activities to be undertaken;
  - copies of specific leadership qualifications or logbook experience.

### 16.2 Why is documentation necessary?

- Documentation provides clear written evidence of the planning and preparation for a visit.
- This may be helpful for the assessment and approval of a visit. It may also be required in the event of an investigation into an incident/accident.

### 16.3 Does any documentation (e.g. copies of risk assessments) need to be sent to the Local Authority?

- The EVOLVE online system is a robust means of inspecting and approving visits. As a consequence, the Local Authority does not normally require supporting documentation (such as copies of risk assessments or parental letters) to be submitted or attached to EVOLVE forms;
- However, as part of the Local Authority's spot check/monitoring process, the documentation for selected visits may be requested – either by post or email before a visit is approved, or during a visit as part of an on-site assessment.

### 16.4 Where should documentation or visit records be stored, and for how long after a visit?

- The EVOLVE online database will store securely and indefinitely all visit records that have been inputted.
- Any additional supporting documentation (risk assessments, parents letters etc.) should be stored and retained internally (for example, in the school/establishment office) until such time that Visit Organisers and managers are fully confident that any issues/incidents arising from the visit have been dealt with fully and are unlikely to be required for future reference or investigation. It should be noted that Ofsted or other Officers occasionally ask to inspect supporting documentation for previous visits.
- If it is clear that no incidents occurred during a visit, it should be reasonable and acceptable to dispose of any supporting documentation after 12 months.
- If some minor incidents occurred during a visit, it is recommended that supporting documentation for the visit is stored for a period of 6 years before disposal. However, a degree of common sense needs to be applied in such circumstances, and a realistic assessment

needs to made of the likelihood of a future claim, and the practicality of storing quantities of paperwork.

- If a significant incident occurred during a visit that could well be investigated at a later date, it is recommended that all relevant details are retained for a longer period of time (in more serious cases, it would be sensible to retain information until the young person becomes 21 years old). However, in order to save space, it is reasonable and acceptable to scan and store all relevant visit records electronically so that bulky paperwork can then be destroyed.