



Guidance for Contact Risk Assessment Tool

Acting lawfully and ethically under the Coronavirus Act 2020 remains a critical component in decision making during the pandemic. All decision making including face to face contact with children and families will require staff and Management to consider and analyse the facts to assess risk and consider the options to do so remotely where this can be achieved. Throughout the pandemic all staff have a responsibility to protect themselves, colleagues and families from harm.

The attached assessment tool is designed to achieve a consistent approach to considering and determining the requirement /necessity to undertake face to face contact with children and young people. It is important to highlight that face to face contact will be by exception with the expectation remaining that alternative means of communication and engagement will continue to be used (e.g. Whatsapp, Zoom)

The assessment tool must be completed in every case where direct contact is being considered and in line with updated guidance from the NI Executive, Public Health Agency and the HSC Board, <https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/>. The Agency has a Corporate responsibility to ensure the safety of staff and minimise risks by evidencing compliance with social distancing and infection control measures.

Decision making in respect of face to face contact requires collaboration and information sharing between the Guardian and Trust to ensure a comprehensive analysis of the case specific circumstances. The basic question which needs to be addressed is the proposed visit necessary and justified? It is essential that the Guardian has sight of the Trust risk assessment as part of this exercise. In situations where a risk assessment has not been undertaken, the reasons for this have to be referenced in the attached form.

The completed assessment must be shared with and approved by the AD's. This will provide an additional support for Guardian's in the face of challenge in respect of why a visit was not assessed as being necessary/viable. It also provides assurance that appropriate safeguards are in place to approve the visit.



Progress to undertaking a visit is contingent upon

1. Completion of the NISCC e-learning infection control module.
2. Use of Agency supplied PPE-mask, gloves and hand sanitiser.
3. Access and Review of Trust Risk Assessment.
4. Permission of carer's/parents to Guardian undertaking a visit.

The risk assessment tool must be kept updated to reflect the changes to easements and the particular circumstances of the child and family.

NIGALA will correspond with the Courts to communicate the framework we are operating within during this stage of the Covid 19 pandemic.



Risk Assessment for Guardians Requesting to carry out face to face meeting with child/young person

1. Date of Assessment

2. Case Specific Details

Case ID

Name of Child/ren

Date of Birth

Where is/are the child/ren/yp living.

3. Visits to children and young people to be carried out by exception.

What is the exceptional circumstance which mitigates against use of technology for this proposed meeting?

What are the specific circumstances of this particular child which necessitates face to face contact?



Uniqueness of child/young person, challenges re learning, hearing, sight, access to technology, capacity to use technology/ competency (for example)

4. Location / Venue.

Please specify

5. Consultation Process

As a Guardian, no family visits should be carried out at any time without prior arrangement and without consent. All visits should be by appointment only. It is essential that you have access to the Trust Risk Assessment to inform your assessment.

Confirm access to Trust Risk Assessment.

Yes

No

Date

If your answer is no, please specify the reason.



Who has been consulted with and when

- Trust **YES** **NO** **DATE**
- Parents/Carers **YES** **NO** **DATE**
- Child/Young Person **YES** **NO** **DATE**
- Date of proposed Visit **DATE**

Consent Obtained

- Trust **YES** **NO** **DATE**
- Parents /Carers **YES** **NO** **DATE**
- Child young person **YES** **NO** **DATE**

Guardian

Can you confirm that you as Guardian do not present with -

- Underlying Health Issues **YES** **NO**
 - Covid 19 symptoms **YES** **NO**
 - Have you been in contact with anyone with Covid 19 symptoms
- YES** **NO**

If yes please detail –



Can you confirm that those intending to be present at the meeting do not present with -

- Underlying Health Issues **YES** **NO**
- Covid 19 symptoms **YES** **NO**
- Have they been in contact with anyone with Covid 19 symptoms
 YES **NO**

If yes please detail –

6. Is it possible to adhere to Social Distancing Guidelines?

Yes **No**

7. PPE

No visit should be conducted without use of PPE.

PPE Used for Visit - please tick

- Mask**
- Gloves**
- Sanitiser**



8. Decision

Can a face to face visit proceed? YES NO

If a face to face visit can/cannot proceed, please outline rationale for decision using analysis of information in risk assessment.

Signed by

GUARDIAN:

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR:

Date

[Click here to enter a date.](#)



Criteria

- All remote/ technological options have been tried.
- Technological options are not suitable in this case.
- There is a pressing time factor involved in the need to engage with the young person.
- Court proceedings to finalise arrangements /address a specific issue are imminent.
- The face to face contact with the young person is essential for the guardian to make a recommendation to the Court.
- The outcome of the Court hearing will have a significant/immediate impact on decision making re; placement /planning.
- The age of the young person.
- The young person can give a cogent view as to their understanding, wishes and feelings.
- There is limited or absence of family support in the life of the child/young person.
- Child has no other person representing their interests.
- The child/young person presents with vulnerabilities including hearing/sight impairment, challenges re learning needs/ mental health issues, English is not the first language.
- The visit is to take place in a regulated environment /Trust facility.
- If the visit is to take place at the home social distancing measures can be assured.
- If the visit is to take place outside, confidentiality can be assured.