

Family tracing

Procedure for staff in Children and Families



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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Family tracing is the process of searching for family members or primary legal or customary care-givers. The term also refers to the search for children whose parents are looking for them. The objective of tracing is reunification with parents or other close relatives.
- 1.2 Every child has a community and a right, enshrined in law, to family life. Sometimes locating family members for children can require some investigatory skills. Practitioners should turn over every stone for children and refer to the word cloud on the front page of this guidance to help their investigations.
- 1.3 There are lots of options that can be deployed: making sure all past assessments and records are thoroughly re-checked, checking what was known earlier in a child's life and being creative with the spellings of names can all help. Speaking to every known member of the network can sometimes show up unknown other members of the family.
- 1.4 To achieve best practice, a genogram completed early in the intervention can be of use much later in proceedings. It can be a treasure trove of information and practitioners will be surprised by how that information can be used. Practitioners must strive to know the children they work with as best they can, and this shows when that knowledge comes into its own.
- 1.5 Sometimes practitioners can locate people through agency partners and use of the internet, fathers for example have been found through surname searches. Legal services have produced a guide on what steps can be taken to find family members.
- 1.6 If practitioners have got to the stage of needing to locate someone and informal measures are not working, then they can speak to their operations manager and use the family tracing service, which can be used on a "no trace, no fee" basis. If practitioners can provide the name, DOB and last known address the family tracing service can seek out missing family members.
- 1.7 This procedure is intended to offer support to staff working across Children and Families who need to trace a family member.

2. Tracing parents and family members

- 2.1 Collate as much information as possible:
- Full name;
 - DOB;
 - Place of birth (also for the children);
 - Last known addresses;
 - Telephone number;
 - Name of any family members and details;
 - Current or previous place of work;
 - NI number;
 - Names of partners /previous partners with details (helps with social media enquiries);
- 2.2 Check social media – i.e. Facebook
- It may not be immediately obvious but DOB, family members, place of work, phone number, and lots of details can be found if the profile is public.
 - Some caution is to be applied when obtaining information through social media (see [Checking Facebook – social workers and social media](#) for further information).
- 2.3 Contact other agencies who may be involved i.e. probation, health, Recovery Partnership, etc. They may have more accurate and up to date details.
- 2.4 Send a letter by recorded delivery to last known address – keep the content of the letter very vague, requesting the recipient to make contact.
- 2.5 Use a process serving company to send a letter to the last known address (cost involved) approx. £120.00. [Warwickshire legal services](#) can provide details of regulated process serving companies.
- If recipient is no longer at the last known address, the process serving agency to make enquiries with neighbours, current tenants, etc.
 - Process serve the person at their place of work, if one has been identified.
- 2.6 Employ the services of an agency to trace the person – approximate cost £75 (on a “no find – no fee” basis). Contact legal services for details of the regulated agency.
- 2.7 The prisoner.location.service@noms.gsi.gov.uk can be used if the person is in prison:
- The police may be able to assist if the conviction is recent.
 - If a prison is identified, contact should be made with the prison that can assist in serving documents.

- 2.8 Request a police PNC/PVP check if possible - this usually contains the person's last known address. The template can be obtained from MASH.
- 2.9 Apply for a court order for DWP disclosure. Legal services would make a request to the court.
- 2.10 Apply for an order for disclosure from HMRC tax credit office (form to be sent) (Legal services to do – only in proceedings)

3. Further information

- [Family tracing - Guidance on regulation 6 of the Asylum Seekers \(Reception Conditions\) Regulations](#)
- [Human rights – Article 8](#)