Safe Families for Children

FAMILY COACH HANDBOOK
Chapter 1
Family Coach Handbook

1.1 Thank you for becoming a Family Coach

Welcome to Safe Families for Children team. The Family Coach role is critical to the success of Safe families for Children. We are therefore particularly grateful to you for stepping forward and being willing to give your time and talents to this role.

As you will know by now, Safe Families for Children offers a unique opportunity to bring much-needed support to struggling families. The role of the Family Coach is key to ensuring that support provided is appropriately tailored, consistent in quality, and responsive to changes in the situation.

This handbook is designed to give clarity to the elements of the role. It outlines core principles and guidance, as well as important systems and procedures. Whilst covering most of the essentials of the role this handbook isn’t exhaustive in detail. Therefore please do be assured that the SFFC staff team are committed to supporting you in this role. If there’s anything that’s unclear to you or you need further advice and guidance about please do ask.

We wish you every blessing and trust that you will find the role very fulfilling.

1.2 What does a Family Coach do?

Summary of the role:
A field-based role overseeing specific SFFC family assignments (generally 1—3 cases) and being the primary link between families receiving SFFC assistance, the SFFC volunteers offering that assistance, and the SFFC office.

General duties and responsibilities:
- Enabling good communication and smooth arrangements, especially at the beginning and the end of SFFC volunteers’ involvement with a family in need
- Monitoring that the help provided by volunteers is both safe and effective
- Provide regular updates to the SFFC Regional Families Manager regarding how child stays and Family Friend support is going
- Facilitating the development of the volunteers in fulfilling their role well
- Personally model, and help volunteers to understand, the importance of maintaining the highest standards in the area of Safeguarding
- Encourage prayer for children and families being supported, and for the volunteers that are on the front line of providing that assistance.
- Participation in the wider life of Safe Families for Children within the region, such as volunteer events etc.
- Basic administration, form-filling and record-keeping connected to the role, with appropriate sensitivity given to issues of confidentiality

The full Family Coach role description can be viewed at: www.safefamiliesforchildren.com/manual
When we agree to provide support to a family it is always in the belief that we can help them towards a better outcome than they would have arrived at without our help. At the beginning of the support arrangement there should be discussion between all involved about what this outcome might be. Examples might be:

- to alleviate family tensions and improve relationships between parent and child, or between siblings
- to develop the confidence of a parent to make the most of facilities available in their local community
- to ensure that the effects of a parental illness do not begin to impact negatively on the child’s development
- …and many, many more.

**Good communication** is key to the Family Coach role. In relational terms there is no substitute for face-to-face communication. Therefore think about how often you should visit referred families you are overseeing, and also how often you ought to see the volunteers involved in helping them.

**Your availability.** Beyond meeting face to face, consider how easy it is for the referred family to contact you if they have any questions or issues. Remember, many people may say that they will contact you if they need help or advice, but in practice they may not do it. Later, you may discover that there were a number of things that they wished to ask or say – so be proactive in checking in with people.

**Host Families** and **Family Friends** will undoubtedly need to call you at some point for advice and guidance. They may feel that things are not going well, or wish to discuss an issue that they cannot discuss with the parents. Please do your best to be accessible and responsive. If you receive texts, emails or voicemails from volunteers please always respond promptly.

### 1.3 Achieving goals and outcomes for families in need

When we agree to provide support to a family it is always in the belief that we can help them towards a better outcome than they would have arrived at without our help. At the beginning of the support arrangement there should be discussion between all involved about what this outcome might be. Examples might be:
**Staying on track**

A key aspect of the Family Coach role is to ensure that volunteer involvement is tailored to the needs of the child and family, remaining focused on providing support as agreed, rather than straying in numerous other aspects of a family’s life. We must honour the dignity and integrity of the family unit and be careful not to create unhealthy dependencies and open-ended support relationships. The key is to keep the end in mind.

To this end the Family Coach should be fully aware of the extent of the support being given, and the goals that have been agreed, for example:

**Family Friend plan:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support to be given</th>
<th>SFFC Family Friend will visit struggling single mother who has a 3 year old, a 2 year old and a 3 month old.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of support</td>
<td>Weekly, on Wednesday mornings at 10 am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration of support</td>
<td>6 months then review</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Goals of support | Encourage relationships and bonding in the family unit  
Encourage healthy feeding and hygiene routines  
Help mum get out to the park with the kids fortnightly  
Help mum plan for 3 year old starting local school nursery half days from September |

**Host Family plan:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support to be given</th>
<th>SFFC Host Family Friend will offer respite for 3 year old girl and 2 year old boy.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of support</td>
<td>Weekends, Friday evening through Sunday afternoon, generally second weekend of the month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration of support</td>
<td>6 months then review</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Goals of support | Encourage bonding between the brother and sister  
Encourage healthy feeding and hygiene routines  
Take kids out for fun activities and new experiences  
Help children to develop in speech and communication |

If it is your opinion that the SFFC support arrangements are not satisfactory, or are going off track – either in terms of safety or effectiveness, then you should discuss this with the Family Support Manager as soon as possible, so that together, you can agree what changes can be made and then bring these to the attention of the volunteers and the family being supported.
Good questions to refer to on a regular basis might include:

- Does everyone involved understand how the part they are playing is contributing towards the overall aim of helping the family to ‘get back on their feet’?
- Are the needs of the child/children being properly considered? Do they have any other needs that are not being met? If so, can they be met and how?
- Whose voice needs to be heard? For example, are the child’s wishes and feelings being recognised and appropriately taken into account, or are there other relatives that it might be good to include in future planning?
- Do the assisted family (the adults and the children) know who to talk to and how if any issues arise for them?
- Do the assisted parents appear to be developing a good relationship with the Family Friends and/or Host Family?
- Are decisions about ending SFFC involvement being made in the child’s interests? What is the likelihood of problems re-emerging within the next 6-12 months?

1.4 The importance of safeguarding children

SFFC is absolutely committed to safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults. All of our staff and volunteers, whatever role they may serve in, carry a duty of care towards those being assisted by our programmes and services. Our Safeguarding policy and associated procedures are applicable to all children, young people and vulnerable adults served through our work, regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or religion.

Please carefully read the ‘Safeguarding Policies and Guidance for Volunteers’ insert, it is 6 pages long but very helpful and very important.

- The guidance includes: Safeguarding Policy: Headline Statements, Definitions of Terms, The challenge of recognising abusers, Signs and symptoms of abuse, Acting upon concerns of potential abuse, Action flow chart for disclosures, Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults, Dealing with an allegation of abuse against SFFC team members

The SFFC approach to safeguarding is one of never do nothing.

Volunteers are expected to report all concerns, however minor, to their supervisor, which will generally be you as their Family Coach. In turn you may seek advice from the Safeguarding lead (see below).

Please note that you are authorised to act unilaterally by calling the police or duty social work team if you ever feel that a child is at immediate risk of significant harm.

Safeguarding Officers

Wherever SFFC operates a lead Safeguarding Officer is appointed. This responsibility will generally be carried by either the Programme Director or the Family Support Manager. As a Family Coach you will have a direct reporting relationship to this person and you sit in a very important position in terms of identifying concerns within families and raising them with the
Safeguarding Officer as and when you feel the need to do so.

1.5 The first meeting with the family needing support

As soon as possible upon acceptance of the referral an initial meeting with the family will be undertaken by a Family Coach or by a Family Support Manager. There will have been prior communication between the SFFC office and the family, most likely via telephone. Ideally this first meeting should happen in the home of the family needing help. There may also be occasions when the meeting will be held in another convenient location e.g. a coffee shop, local church, community centre.

- Family Friends or Host Family who have volunteered to support the family may also accompany the Family Coach at this meeting.

At this point the items covered by the Family Coach (or Family Support Manager) to include:

- Spend a little time getting to know the family, sharing some of your own story and generally ensuring that you have a proper grasp of the situation and that the family are clear about how SFFC can help.
- Go through the brochure that explains SFFC to the referred family: check that they understand the nature of SFFC and that they are in agreement with SFFC involvement.
- Ask the parents to sign a Consent Form. (at www.safefamiliesforchildren.com/manual)
- Remember: SFFC operates a principle of no pressure or coercion; so you need to be sure that the parent is genuinely welcoming of SFFC’s help. If you are in doubt you may need to ask some questions to establish is any pressure is being applied by another party. If so, you may need to pause arrangements until this can be resolved.
- Consider the views of the children themselves at this stage and act accordingly in helping children to understand how SFFC works. (If the Host Family have children then their views should also be considered).
- Give the family your SFFC phone number and let them know when you will be available to be contacted. Also make sure they have the SFFC office number and email address.
- (Hosting arrangements only) Give the referred parents a copy of the Host Family Profile (a short description of the family who have offered to do the hosting). Give them chance to read the profile and offer feedback. You can help them read it if they are not a good reader / do not have English as a first language.
- (Hosting arrangements only) The referred family should complete a Child Information Form (at www.safefamiliesforchildren.com/manual) to support the child’s stay.
- If you have time, you may go through with the referred parents how much the children know of the situation and difficulties and how the parents wish to tell the story of requesting SFFC involvement.
- Seek to ascertain information that will be relevant for the Risk Assessment process. There is one form (RC) for risks relating a child and another (RA) for risks relating to adult family members. Be sensitive in the use of the forms and do not complete them in front of the family. Discreetly find out what you need to know and complete the Risk Assessment form afterwards.

1.6 Supervising hostings

The extent to which you need to be involved in a hosting will depend upon the length of the stay/s involved, the level of assessed risk, and the experience of the Host Family. For example,
if a child being hosted has known behavioural issues then you should monitor more closely, and likewise if a Host Family is hosting for the first time, you should also plan to give extra encouragement and support.

Important items to check prior to the first Hosting:

- Does the Host Family have the Child Information Form?
- Does the Child Information Form include the parent/carers emergency contact details
- Does the Host Family know who to call at SFFC if you should not be available?
- Does the Host Family have a signed copy of the parent/carer Consent Form, and have they signed it too?

1.6.1 Short hostings (1-3 nights)

It is anticipated that the majority of hostings will be short. However, short hostings may be repeated, for instance one weekend per month for 6 months. Therefore the relationship between the Host Family and the referred family is still a very important one, and you have an important role both practically and emotionally in facilitating this relationship.

- You may need to arrange an appropriate place for introducing the Host Family and the referred family. Generally speaking it is appropriate to bring the Host Family to the home of the family requiring help rather than bringing the family requiring help to the home of the Host Family.
- On occasion meetings may need to take place in a neutral setting such as the supporting church, or a coffee shop.
- Talk about:
  - what to pack
  - what the child likes to do for fun
  - sleeping arrangements (i.e. single or shared rooms)
  - food, allergies, medicines
  - behaviour and discipline
  - clarify arrangements for contact, eg phonecalls etc

Post-hosting the Family Coach should visit the Host Family for a de-briefing meeting, using the Host Family debrief guide. (available at www.safefamiliesforchildren.com/manual)

1.6.2 Longer hostings (4-27 nights)

With longer hostings there are additional considerations beyond those already discussed.

Visiting the Host Family

After a few days the Family Coach should pay a visit to the Host Family with the objective of building your rapport with the family, finding out how they are coping, assessing how the child has settled in, and checking whether any unforeseen issues need to be talked through.

- Prior to the visit read any journal notes added to the SFFC database by the Host Family. If the Hosts are not journaling then you should underline why this is important when you visit. You may also check that the Hosts know how to login and use the system.
- Use the benefit of your objective perspective to identify any emerging risks or additional needs relating to the child’s stay. Tactfully raise any potential ‘blind spots’ with the Host
Family if there are issues you see that they have not self-identified. As Family Coach, you will provide supportive listening.

- Discuss whether there have been any issues around the Host Family’s “rules” for the child, whether there have been any behavioural issues requiring discipline, and, if the Host Family also has children living at home, how they are getting along with the placed child.
- You should double-check the plans for length of stay, in case of the emergence of any circumstances that may either extend or curtail the stay.
- Remember to make a case note from your visit on the SFFC database.
- You may call the Family Support Manager to offer a verbal update following the visit. This call should supplement rather than substitute your note-keeping on the SFFC database.
- Keep an eye out for any safety concerns relating to the child’s stay. Ask the Host Family to confirm that they have removed any hazards, both in the house and the garden. If you notice anything that you judge to be unsafe do mention it and ask for it to be dealt with.

Again, Post-hosting the Family Coach should visit the Host Family for a de-briefing meeting, using the Host Family debrief guide (at www.safefamiliesforchildren.com/manual)

1.6.3 +28 days: The rules around Private Fostering

Private fostering is a private arrangement made between a child’s parents and someone who is not a close relative (i.e. aunt, uncle, brother, sister or grandparent) through which a child starts to live with the new carer for 28 days or more (consecutively). There are a number of legal factors that need to be considered if a hosting extends beyond 28 days and becomes private fostering. Such as:

- As Host Families do not qualify as close relatives SFFC has a duty to tell the Local Authority of a hosting that extends beyond 28 days as soon as possible.
- The Local Authority has a duty to assess any situation in which a child aged 0-16 years (0-18 for children with a disability) stays with someone who is not a close relative for 28 days or more.

It is worth noting that SFFC in the UK has never facilitated a hosting for more than 28 days.
- A more detailed info sheet about Private Fostering is included in section 11.10

1.6.4 Final hostings

The aim of Safe Families for Children is that we support parents to get back on their feet and that a child’s stay with a Host Family is a very short-term arrangement. Nevertheless, the process of saying goodbye to the child at the end of a stay, or series of stays, can be emotionally difficult for all involved. Therefore:

- Help the child, parent and Host Family prepare for the end of the stay from the outset.
- Always be open and honest with child and Host Family.
- Create a schedule or calendar to help the child understand the timing.
- Support the Host Family to plan appropriate ‘endings’, to achieve a healthy balance between remaining ‘low-key’ emotionally whilst marking the goodbye process.
- Where appropriate, support the Host Family in completing a ‘memory book’ of the stay for the child (see 8.7.6).
- Plan your final visits to the Host Family and to the placing parents according to the planned ending in order to offer appropriate support prior to, during and/or after the end of the hosting.
- Plan a de-briefing with the Host Family. Use the Host Family de-brief guide (7.11) for this.

**1.7 Ensuring contact between the child and their parent/carer(s)**

**1.7.1 Why regular contact is important**

The placing parent retains full responsibility for their child during the time of the stay. Our desire is that Host Families will be able to develop a positive, supportive relationship with them. In some cases the relationship goes so well that it blooms into a genuine friendship that continues beyond the child’s stay.

It is usually in the best interests of the child to maintain regular contact with their parent during their stay. It is also likely that the placing parent will have some anxiety about their child being away from home. A simple phonecall can do wonders in alleviating any worries. There may also be other people that it will be good for the child to be in contact with during their stay, such as siblings, grandparents or friends.

Regular contact between the parent and child therefore achieves several purposes:

- The parent’s anxiety about the hosting is reduced as they continue to feel connected to their child, even though the child is spending time with another family.
- The child is comforted in knowing that their parent is still very much concerned about them and looking forward to their return. They may also sense progress their parent is making towards addressing any difficulties.
- The Host Family is reminded them of the aims to supplement rather than substitute the natural care provided by the parent. Also by observing the interaction they can often better understand the child’s behaviour.

**1.7.2 Methods of contact**

In working out how and when contact with the parent and the child will happen, the aim should be to make the process as clear, straightforward, and manageable for everyone, in order to avoid potential disappointment and misunderstanding. Generally a combination of phone calls, text messaging and perhaps even good old fashioned letter will present minimal fuss. Face to face meetings will involve more by way of planning and can be more sensitive emotionally.

- More on this in the next section.

It is appropriate for the Family Coach to ask the placing parent, the Host Family and the child (if age appropriate) about the plans for contact to ensure that they are happy with the method and frequency planned.

The most common means of contact is to talk together over the telephone (if age-appropriate). The first telephone contact ought to occur within 24 hours of a child’s stay.

- It is helpful for the call to happen at a regular time of day – e.g. 6 pm, rather than the calls being by ad hoc arrangement.

---

**Important note:**

There may be individuals within the relational sphere of the child with whom contact is not allowed. Host Families and Family Coaches will be informed if this is the case.
• The Host Family and placing parent will need to be clear about who calls who, as this has cost implications i.e. the placing parent may not have sufficient phone credit to be able to make an outgoing call but may be able to accept an incoming call.

1.7.3 Arranging direct face to face contact

In longer hostings it is likely that there will need to be direct contact between the parent and the child during the period of the stay, in order to ensure that the parent—child relationship is not adversely affected. The Family Coach should ensure that this contact is part of the initial hosting plan rather than being arranged as an afterthought.

Decisions around direct contact will depend upon the nature of the parents’ issues and also the age of the child. For example there may be limitations around hospital visits and if the parent is to spend a spell in prison or residential rehab face to face contact may be neither helpful nor permissible.

The location of the contact

Generally the contact will:

• take place in a neutral location such as a café, park, play centre, church or community centre.
• if the parent is in hospital the child/children may be taken to visit during visiting hours
• not involve returning the child to their family home, because of the possibility of the child deciding that they want to stay there and not continue with the full duration of the hosting.
• not happen in the Host Family home, unless the Family Coach and the Host Family have discussed this and it is clear that the Host Family feel comfortable about the referred parent coming to their home.

1.8 Coaching the Host Family

As a Family Coach you also carry a remit that is in part developmental, facilitating the growth of the volunteers as they undertake their role. Coaching conversations may be held during a hosting but are more often more helpful between hostings – especially when a Host Family is involved in offering regular support to the same child.

Through a simple down-to-earth chat over a cup of tea you can help the Host Family to reflect on what they are doing well, identify areas of challenge, and consider ways in which they might improve the care they offer during the next stay.

Coaching questions should be open-ended and follow a simple pattern, such as the questions shown on the right.

A coaching chat doesn't necessarily need to be face to face, a phonecall or Skype call could be scheduled. If this is the way that you and the Host Family would like to talk then just ensure that enough time has been given for the call and that there will not be unhelpful interruptions.
As a rule of thumb during a child’s stay with a Host Family:

- Speak to the parent(s) every 3-4 days for the first two weeks.
- Visit the parent(s) every 1-2 weeks for the first 4 weeks.

### 1.9 Supervising and coaching Family Friends

#### 1.9.1 Introducing the Family Friend to the family in need

Facilitating the relationship between a referred family and a Family Friend should be reasonably straightforward.

- You will introduce the Family Friend to the referred family at an agreed location, which may be the home of the referred family, or a neutral venue such as a local cafe.
- A member of staff from the SFFC office may get involved in helping with co-ordinating diary arrangements.
- Be prepared to kickstart the conversation between the referred parent and the Family Friend, share some of your own story and then ask them both to do the same.
- Make sure that by the time the first meeting is over everyone is clear about the expectations of the Family Friend involvement. (Refer to the templates in section 7.3)

#### 1.9.2 Coaching the Family Friend

Given that the purpose of the Family Friend role is to get alongside the referred parents directly, further ‘facilitation’ of the relationship should not be necessary, although through support of both, there may be a role to help each understand the other better.

- Speak to the referred parent, or drop them a text, at least once every two weeks.
- Visit periodically, perhaps with the Family Friend, once a month
- Have a ‘Coaching Call’ or ‘Coaching Coffee’ with the Family Friend every couple of weeks, asking open questions such as:
  - How would you describe the state of your relationship with the parent?
  - What signs are you seeing that indicate that the parent is serious about addressing their issues?
  - What specific progress has been made in the last week or two?
  - Have any new challenges arisen?
  - Is the relationship introducing any new stresses into your own life?

**Note:** The Family Coach is not there to fulfil the role of the Family Friend for them – they need sufficient space to build their own relationship with the parent. The Family Friend will be able to answer many of the referred families’ questions, as well as helping them to directly address their needs. The Family Coach role is to look out for any gaps and signpost to other support services in the locality as and when appropriate. The Family Friend may then help the referred family to take the steps to accessing this additional support – e.g. providing transport to get a local service, or accompanying on a first visit to a local group.
1.10 How to support the child / children

The perspectives of the Family Coach are vital in considering how the child / children of the family being assisted are responding to the changes in their family. This is even more important if the child is being hosted, whether a single extended stay or short multiple stays. Do they understand why new people have appeared in their life? Do they need reassurance about how their parents are? If so, how should this best be done?

If you are going to talk directly with a child during their stay with a Host Family, which is advised, especially during longer stays, then you ought to make space to chat with them on their own. You could for example have a walk around the garden together away from the Host Family so that they have opportunity to tell you whether or not they are really enjoying their stay, and whether any problems may need attending to. Depending on their age and developmental stage most children who can communicate verbally, will find that the chance to express their opinion is an empowering experience.

If there is only Family Friend involvement, then consideration about how to support the child(ren) is likely to be more general. In this instance you are more likely to be asking yourself to what extent the SFFC intervention is improving outcomes for the child? Have you seen or heard anything that suggests that the Family Friend involvement is helping to enhance family relationships – or does the child actually find it all a bit awkward? Moreover, can you be sure that there is not any negative effect on the children?

During the course of being involved with a family you may discover that one or more of the children have more complex needs that are not being met. If so, you should discuss these needs with the Family Support Manager, with a view to stepping up SFFC support, signposting to another service, or, in the case of health or developmental concerns, referring to a statutory service.

1.11 Involving Resource Friends

If, during the course of support it comes to light that the referred family would benefit from specific resources, commonly – household items, children’s clothing etc. then the Family Coach may use the SFFC Database to ‘post a need’ to the network of Resource Friends. Alternatively you may alert the SFFC office to these needs, so that a member of the office team can post the request on your behalf. Similarly, if a Host Family require an item, for example a child’s booster seat for the car, or a baby cot for their home, then the you may initiate a needs request in the same fashion.

- If the help required if a service rather than goods, i.e. gardening or decorating, then the Family Coach may need to be involved in arrangements to ensure that the work is done at a convenient time, by an appropriate person and to a good standard.
- Consideration may need to be given to the appropriateness of children being in the family home whilst such work is taking place.

1.12 Outline for a Host Family de-brief

RECAP: Prior to Hosting
What inspired you to become a Host Family?
What parts of the training and assessment did you find most useful?

DURING: About the stay
- Were you well informed and supported throughout your placement?
- Who did you turn to for support during your placement?
- Did your Family Coach give you enough support and resources?
- Were there other agencies involved with this child and family? If so, tell us more about the level of information-sharing and working together. How well was your role understood by the other agencies?
- What level of support did you have from your church network?
- Did you need/use additional resource sharing?
- Was there also a SFFC Family Friend allocated?
- Were you involved as a Family Friend for the parent as well as hosting their child?
- How could SFFC have made the child’s stay a better experience?

AFTER: How you feel about your experience overall:
- Did you feel well informed/prepared?
- Did you have realistic expectations?
- How did this impact your family, both emotionally and spiritually?
- How did you see God at work in this experience?
- Would you say you grew through this and if so, how?
- How did you feel about returning the child/children?
- What would you change before doing this again?
- What have you learned from doing this placement?
- Any other insights or experiences you would like to share with us?

1.13 Communication with other agencies and professionals

SFFC enjoys excellent working relationships with the Local Authority professionals responsible for Children’s Social Care, Safeguarding and the wellbeing of families. Generally these relationships are managed by the Programme Director and the Family Support Managers. On occasion however you may be asked to:

- Have a phonecall with a member of staff from the Local Authority, such as a social worker or equivalent
- Attend a multi-agency meeting to discuss a particular family that you have involvement with
- Look into complementary or additional services in the local area that might be available to the family that is being assisted

Also, in many cases, for example when the referral has come to SFFC via a social worker or a health visitor, we will need to provide feedback to them on how the family is progressing, and whether we see evidence of the situation improving. The SFFC office will generally handle this feedback, but much of it will be based on case notes that you as the Family Coach have been recording on the SFFC database against the family’s record.

- You should therefore be diligent throughout the duration of the support in regularly updating the case notes about the family’s progress, and ensuring that other volunteers involved, such as Host Family or Family Friends, are doing the same.
1.14 Recording regular case notes about your assignments

SFFC has a system for recording case notes about the families we are helping. All Family Support Managers and Family Coaches are expected to use this facility on a regular basis to record interactions, incidents and information that comes to light in their work.

The case notes facility is also made available to volunteers in Host Family and Family Friend roles for the purpose of journaling their involvement with an adult and/or child. Host Families in particular are expected to make a brief daily journal note during a hosting, even if the day has been pretty uneventful, for continuity purposes.

- Creating cases note is not technically difficult process, the system is very easy to use

Journal notes created by volunteers are retained on a timeline alongside case notes left by the Family Support Manager and Family coach, and together they build up a picture over time of the impact the support is having.

In general notes should:

- be clear, honest, non-judgmental, non-emotive, avoiding jargon and obscure abbreviations
- be in line with the code of conduct, demonstrating respect for all others

and should include:

- Basic narrative i.e. what happened, when; what information was received, from whom etc.
- Relevant, accurate and up to date facts, as distinct from opinion (see below)
- Personal perspective and opinions, always labelled as such, with justification e.g. when noting a ‘gut feeling’ regarding a potentially emerging risk
- Additional information gained. If this is not firsthand then the source of the information must be noted

A more detailed guide to making case notes can be found in section 11.4

1.15 Support for you as a Family Coach

As a Family Coach you are highly valued within SFFC and as you have seen in this handbook yours is a very important role in ensuring the safety, effectiveness and smooth running of the support we give to families in need. Therefore, we wish to ensure that you feel well supported in this role.

Support for Family Coaches can be summarised as

- Periodic one-to-one supervision with the Family Support Manager. This conversation ought to cover:
  - A review of the volunteers you are supporting and their needs
  - A review of your capacity and the workload requirements
  - A review of your training and development needs
  - A review of any concerns or queries relating to policies and procedures.
- The Family Support Manager will also be available to you on an ad hoc basis to discuss with you any aspect of the cases that you are supervising. If you cannot get hold of your Family Support Manager on their mobile phone speak to a member of the office team who will try to get a message to them for you.
- Regular Family Coach get-togethers, typically held bi-monthly in an evening over a meal. These get-togethers present an excellent opportunity for discussion, peer support, learning and encouragement.
- Further Training. There are many avenues of opportunity for training.
- SFFC has its own training plan with events scheduled through the year
- Local Safeguarding Boards offer training in which we can participate.
- Other partner agencies within the locality offer training opportunities. This includes the statutory sector, the voluntary sector and Christian organisations.

**Out of hours support**
If a need is urgent, a Family Support Manager should be available on their mobile phone to give you out-of-hours support and advice should you need it. However, in emergencies other avenues for help can also be used, depending on the nature of your concern. For example, the local Social Care Emergency Duty Team will give advice and should be familiar with SFFC; in addition, the Police