

MOBILE FAMILIES



TEA-BREAK GUIDE



What Are Mobile Families?

Mobile families are families that move frequently between Local Authority areas, these are most frequently but not limited to:

- Homeless families;
- Asylum seekers and refugees;
- Gypsy and traveller families;
- Looked After Children;
- Children in the criminal justice system;
- Families experiencing Domestic Violence;
- Those families who move to the coastal area for the summer;
- Families the move within the private rented sector;
- Military families.

It is important to note that some families move deliberately in order to avoid professionals from discovering abuse within the family and will access multiple services in order to avoid one professional building a picture of the family. It is however, equally important to note that not all families that move frequently are doing so to avoid professional scrutiny and in fact some families just like to move or have to move due to employment, for example military families. Nevertheless, this does not mean that frequent moves do not have a detrimental effect on children and young people, particularly in relation to feelings of social isolation and lack of educational consistency.

It is vital that services working with children maintain an awareness of how easily information and networks can be lost in moves. Effective systems must be put in place and robust action taken to ensure that as soon as such highly mobile, vulnerable children and unborn babies are identified that appropriate multi-agency planning is put in place.

Children at Risk

When families move frequently, it is more difficult for agencies to identify risks and monitor a child's welfare. Professionals in all agencies should be alert to the possibility that a child or family who has moved may not be in receipt of universal services. Any professional who comes into contact with a family should proactively engage with the family in order to link them into local universal services.

A number of Serious Case Reviews from around the Country identify that a risk factor to children is them missing from universal services.

The following circumstances associated with children and families moving across district authority boundaries are a cause for concern:

- A child and family, or pregnant woman, not being registered with a GP;
- A child not having a school place or whose attendance is irregular and who isn't being electively home educated;
- A child or family having no fixed abode (e.g. living temporarily with friends or relatives);
- Several agencies holding information about the child and family, which is not co-ordinated and / or which has not followed the child or family, (i.e. information which is missing or has gaps).

Professionals should adopt a mind-set of professional curiosity to proactively challenge and question rather than making assumptions or using professional optimism not based on assessment of history and current circumstances. Never be frightened to ask the obvious question and share concerns with colleagues or your supervisor.

[Read the full Mobile Families Guidance](#)