

Portage Policy

Published: June 2016

Reviewed: June 2022

Next Review Date: June 2024



As a registered service the National Portage Association Code of Practice 2019 has been adhered to throughout the policy.

It is to be read in conjunction with the other relevant policy documents of Grantham Additional Needs Fellowship (GANF): Safeguarding, Lone Working, Complaints/Grievance Policies, Equal Opportunities, Continuing Professional Development, Bereavement, Health and Safety and Data Protection Policies.

GANF provides Portage from a qualified Home Visitor for families in Grantham, Sleaford and the surrounding areas. Portage is a home visiting educational service for pre-school children with additional needs. These may be learning difficulties, developmental delay or physical difficulties. The Portage Team aims to help families and children learn together, play together and be included in the wider community. To help minimise the barriers confronting the families, set achievable goals and empower families.

There are eight Portage Teams Countywide, each comprising of a Portage Team Coordinator and Portage Home Visitor. The Portage Home Visitors may come from different professional backgrounds such as Health, Social Services or Education. They and the Portage Coordinator are all trained to National Portage Association standards. The Lincolnshire Portage Teams are affiliated to the National Portage Association.

The Portage Home Visitor regularly meets with other professionals working with pre-school children to share ideas and review progress. These people may include Physiotherapists, Speech & Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Nursery Settings, Health Visitors, Family Support Workers, Paediatricians, ESCO, SENCO's and Educational Psychologists. General discussions take place but direct referrals to these services only occur with parental permission.

The Aims of the Portage and Pre-School Home Teaching Service

- To provide effective early years structured teaching for children who have additional support needs.
- To support parents/carers in promoting their child's learning and development.
- To work with others to provide a holistic service to parents/carers and children.
- To facilitate the successful transition from one phase of Early Learning opportunities/education to the next.
- To share information regarding any Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) etc. as part of the process of meeting a child's additional support needs in agreement with signed consent from parents/carers.

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**Principles**

The National Portage Association is committed to promoting services that are:

- Family Centred
- Well co-ordinated
- Accessible
- Competent
- Accountable
- In partnership with other agencies.

All Portage Home Visitors should be familiar with the NPA guidelines on confidentiality and adhere to the general rule that no information is to be disclosed to another agency without parental consent, except in the case of issues of Child Protection. Information about individual children will be kept under the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998.

Hours of Operation

The service shall be available during term time. However, where possible the Service should endeavour to operate all year round.

Service Evaluation

Feedback is kept on file for monitoring purposes. KPI's are submitted to Lincolnshire County Council 3 times a year for evidence that the service has a positive impact on the families that are visited. Report writing as requested but at least annually. Information will be shared with Governors on a yearly basis.

Supervision

The Portage Co-ordinator and the Portage worker may be involved with families who have children with debilitating or life-threatening illness. It is therefore imperative that they have supervision at least once per term; that is 6 times per year.

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**Volunteering**

The Provider may have a volunteering programme that offers diverse opportunities; there are several different ways in which volunteers could support the Provider and users. The Provider is expected to be innovative to attract volunteers to help to remove the barriers to volunteering. The result of this is that the volunteer should be visible and valued and benefiting from diverse volunteering opportunities.

The Provider should have in place policies and procedures to support and safeguard volunteers and have a structure for their supervision and development.

The Provider should look, where possible, to secure funding and support for volunteering projects.

GDPR

The Portage Service adheres to current GDPR regulations and as such, records are kept securely as per Grantham Additional Needs Fellowship policies.

Professional Judgement

All members of the team will:

- Understand the responsibilities which are part of their role and be aware that there may be sanctions if these are breached.
- All adults will act and be seen to act in the child's best interests.
- Avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions or question their suitability to work with children.
- Take responsibility for their own actions and behaviour.
- Always discuss any misunderstanding, accidents or threats with their supervisor.
- Record discussions and actions taken with justifications.

Portage workers will **NEVER** use their position to gain access to information for their own advantage and/or a child's or family's detriment.