

Learning journal

What is a Learning Journal?

Your learning journal is not a mandatory requirement for carer training, but it can be a tool for you to use on your carer journey. For your journal to be effective, take regular opportunities to reflect on situations that have occurred in the course of caring. To assist you to structure your thoughts a framework is provided. You do not have to respond to every topic in the learning journal, only those that are relevant to you. There may be other information that you wish to reflect on, which you can include at the end of the journal.

Should you want to use and provide your learning journal as part of your carer journey, please advise your foster and kinship care support worker.

How do I complete the Learning Journal?

Establish a regular time for completing the journal, which you can do either by yourself, with your partner or with your support worker (*if you have agreed to share your journal as part of your carer journey*). You can complete a handwritten journal of your own choice or electronic journal using the template below. You will need to ensure that your journal is kept secure.

How do I 'Reflect'?

Sometimes it is difficult to take time out and spend time reflecting on how what things have gone well and also in some situations what things could have been handled differently, however this is the most important aspect of any form of learning. The 'Reflection' section of the journal allows you to think about how you handled a situation. Was this the best way? Often, when we are not expecting issues, or we may be distracted or busy, our reaction is not the one we would have liked. With consideration, we may have done things differently. The 'Reflection' section of the journal is the most important part of the learning journal as it allows you an opportunity to learn. Do not judge yourself but look at it as an opportunity to learn from your own personal experiences. In this section record:

- your feelings about the events and issues.
- what you did well and would do again; and
- what you could have done differently.
- what you think would have happened if you had done things differently; and
- any support or information you need.

How detailed should I make the Journal?

Think about how the child or young person you are caring for would react to the information you are recording. Be sensitive to their feelings and use non-judgmental language. Please be conscious of confidentiality, for example, do not include any identifying information such as the child's surname.

Depending on the child's age, you may wish to discuss the journal with the child, explaining that it is a reflection of your role as a carer. You could suggest that the child or young person keep their own journal, with a similar format that allows them an opportunity to reflect on their experiences and feelings.

How will the Journal be used?

Your learning journal, if you choose to complete one, can assist you in demonstrating the practical applications, knowledge, and skills you have gained from the carer training modules and through your experiences in caring for children and young people.

The Journal may be used in a number of ways:

- 1) You can use your Journal to discuss your role as a carer with your support worker to enable shared learning and discussion. You can also use the Journal as a reminder of key areas/topics you wish to discuss with the support worker.
- 2) You may use your journal as part of your carer renewal process as a tool to provide examples for some of the questions you will be asked as part of the re-approval process and share content from your journal with persons conducting the assessment.
- 3) Finally, if you or the support worker have any concerns about your response to a situation, you can use your Journal as an opportunity to discuss them together. This should allow for an open discussion about what could be done differently next time and any supports or opportunities for further learning or skill development to be identified.

Opportunity for learning: Starting a new care arrangement

Date	Situation	Actions / Thoughts / Feelings	Reflection

Opportunity for learning: Providing daily care to children and young people

Date	Situation	Actions / Thoughts / Feelings	Reflection

Opportunity for learning: Contact arrangements

Date	Situation	Actions / Thoughts / Feelings	Reflection

Opportunity for learning: Working in a team and developing supports

Date	Situation	Actions / Thoughts / Feelings	Reflection

Opportunity for learning: The charter of rights for a child in care

Date	Situation	Actions / Thoughts / Feelings	Reflection

Opportunity for learning: Ending a care arrangement

Date	Situation	Actions / Thoughts / Feelings	Reflection