

User guide

For placement providers

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Link Maker Systems

support@linkmaker.co.uk

www.linkmaker.co.uk

0843 886 0040



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Introduction

Link Maker helps care placements to be identified for children by giving the right information, and the right tools, to the right people. It provides a platform to manage discussions, exchange sensitive information, and share access to cases, on one secure platform. Those most directly involved with a child can work together to find an appropriate placement quickly, including children's social workers and foster carers.

This guide is aimed at staff from independent fostering providers and children's homes. It gives a quick overview of what you can do, and how Link Maker can support your placement practice.

As a fostering provider or children's home, you can use Link Maker to find placement requests from all authorities, including those you may not previously have worked with. Link Maker's placement request template captures comprehensive information about a child's needs so that you can filter and set-up alerts, with great control.

Authorities might use Link Maker to send placement requests to you specifically, perhaps within a framework. If only a small number of authorities do this, using portals such as Link Maker, the process of providing placements could be streamlined.

For the best chance of identifying suitable placements, you can also list vacancies for authorities to search. You can decide who can see these placements and change the availability at any time.

You can connect your foster carers to cases and work in tandem with them to identify possible placements. Optionally, you can give connected foster carers the ability to edit their own profile or to carry out their own searches for placement referrals.

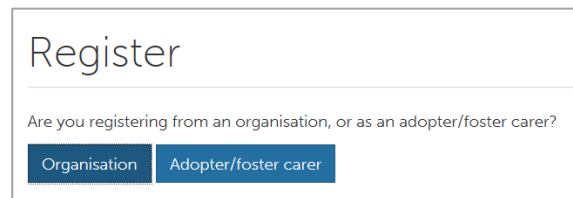
You can use Link Maker's community features to give advice and support to families, and to manage agency events and resources and share these with appropriate staff and carers.

For further help and support, view our step-by-step tutorials at www.linkmaker.co.uk/pages/view/75 or call our support team on 0843 886 0040.

Please note that all names shown in this user guide are purely fictional and are used for training purposes only. Any resemblance to actual persons, is purely coincidental.

Registering for a Link Maker account

To create your own user account, click the 'Register' button on the Link Maker homepage. On the resulting page, choose the 'Organisation' option and enter the required details.



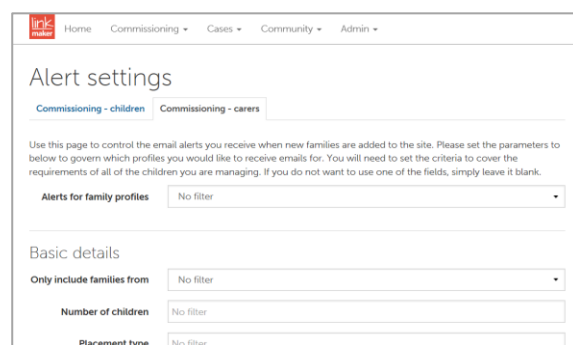
The screenshot shows a 'Register' form with the title 'Register'. Below the title is a question: 'Are you registering from an organisation, or as an adopter/foster carer?'. There are two buttons: 'Organisation' and 'Adopter/foster carer'.

You will receive a confirmation email confirming you have entered the correct email address with a link that will activate your account. Your account will then need to be verified by your organisation before you can begin using Link Maker's commissioning features.

All staff who are involved in placement finding should create their own individual user account on Link Maker. This improves security, allows an open flow of communication and provides a record of activity.

Receiving alerts for new referrals

Once your account has been set up, you can begin receiving email alerts for new referrals. Each user can individually set, through their own account, what kind of referrals they want to be alerted to, according to the type of placement, who the authority is, and other factors. This means your alerts are personal to you and specific to your needs.



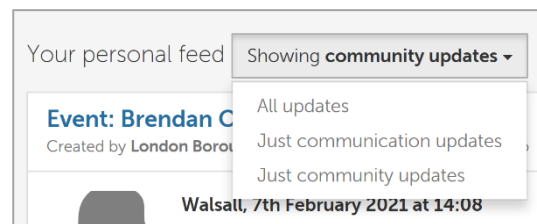
The screenshot shows the 'Alert settings' page in the Link Maker system. The page has a navigation bar with 'Home', 'Commissioning', 'Cases', 'Community', and 'Admin'. The main heading is 'Alert settings'. Below the heading are two tabs: 'Commissioning - children' and 'Commissioning - carers'. A paragraph of instructions follows: 'Use this page to control the email alerts you receive when new families are added to the site. Please set the parameters to below to govern which profiles you would like to receive emails for. You will need to set the criteria to cover the requirements of all of the children you are managing. If you do not want to use one of the fields, simply leave it blank.' There are four dropdown menus, each with 'No filter' selected: 'Alerts for family profiles', 'Basic details', 'Only include families from', 'Number of children', and 'Placement type'.

By clicking the link in the alert email, any member of staff will be able to securely view the relevant referral by logging into their own account on Link Maker.

To view and manage new referral alerts, go to your username menu and choose 'Manage alert settings'. You can use this page to control the email alerts you receive when new child profiles are added to the site. Set the parameters to govern which profiles you would like to receive emails for. If you do not want to use one of the fields, simply leave it blank.

About your homepage

You have access to a number of features and quick links from your homepage, as well as your personal feed. Your personal feed provides up-to-date information on community and communication updates, as well as any Link Maker announcements that may concern you.

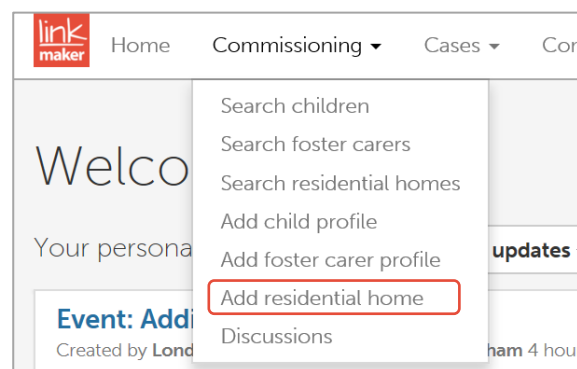


Use the personal feed filter to determine what information you would like to see. Communication updates show recent activity for your cases. You can also find recent news and updates from Link Maker here. To return to this page from any other pages, simply click the 'Home' item in the top menu.

Creating a residential home profile

For the best chance of identifying suitable placements, you can list vacancies on Link Maker in the form of profiles. Authorities can search these profiles and begin enquiries with you directly (see later section).

To create a residential home profile, go to the 'Commissioning' menu and choose 'Add residential home'. Fill in the required fields, detailing the basic details, vacancy information and child needs that the home meets. Attach all the necessary documentation and any other supporting documentation. Local authorities can then view all this information in one place.

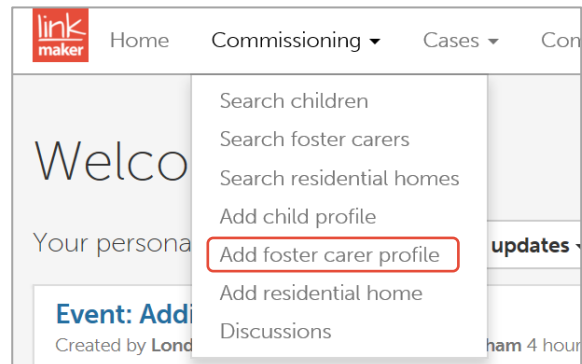


Finally, attach any photos or videos and choose which users on Link Maker can see the profile by setting the availability (see later section).

Creating a foster carer profile

For the best chance of identifying suitable placements, you can list vacancies on Link Maker in the form of profiles. Authorities can search these profiles and express their interest to you directly (see later section).

To create a foster carer profile, go to the 'Commissioning' menu and choose 'Add foster carer profile'.



You can then choose to create a profile with an existing case or create a new case. When creating a new case, you can add your own internal reference for your records, helping you to identify your cases easily.

Foster carers can be connected to your case, enabling you to communicate with the family about potential placements. Optionally, you can grant a connected foster carer permission to view and contribute to their commissioning profile or search referrals themselves.

You can choose to connect an existing foster carer from the drop-down menu or invite a new foster carer to create an account. For more information about involving foster carers in the commissioning process, see our user guide on the topic. Once you have created a profile, you can choose which users on Link Maker can see it by setting the profile availability (see later section).

Making a placement available

Once a placement profile has been created, you have a variety of options when choosing to make it available to others.

You can keep the profile hidden, allowing you to make your own outgoing enquires only, or limit the profile availability to your own LA/agency or any agency groups that you have created (see later section). Alternately, advertise the profile to all of the UK, allowing you to accept incoming enquiries from practitioners across the country.

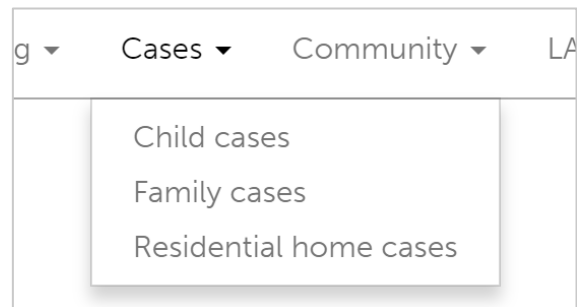
Accessing cases

At Link Maker, we aim to make it easy to keep detail of your vacancies up-to-date. To access your cases, go to the 'Cases' menu and select either 'Family cases' or 'Residential home cases'.

The 'Cases' page will, by default, be filtered to cases that you are connected to. You can, however, filter for any case from your organisation, including cases managed by specific practitioners.

On the 'Cases' page, you'll find an overview of your cases, including any linked profiles, the number of discussions, incoming and outgoing interest, the last activity recorded against the case, the availability of any profiles, and the number of discussions that require your attention.

Click on a case name to navigate to the 'Case management' page for that case. You can connect yourself to any case from your organisation, by clicking on the case name and choosing 'Connect account' from the 'Case management' page. Or, click on a profile name to navigate to the 'Profile settings' page for a specific profile.



Your cases Active cases Commissioning cases

Children Families Residential homes

Name	Profile(s)	Current discussions	Outgoing interest	Incoming interest	Time on system	Linked practitioners	Last activity	Availability status
Beryl Blaggs	No profiles	0	0	0	8 months 6 days	0	22 Oct 2018 10:41 Profile cancelled	
Claire Knight	Commissioning profiles	0	0	0	7 days	1	18 Oct 2018 10:07 Profile cancelled	Available for use
Elise Collins and Megan Miller	Available profiles	0	0	0	1 year 11 months 28 days	1	16 Oct 2018 10:06 Profile cancelled	All of use
Fruity Hally and Helle Lewis	No profiles	0	0	0	1 year 10 months 6 days	0	22 Oct 2018 07:01 Profile cancelled	
Foster Care	Commissioning profiles	1	1	0	7 days	1	18 Oct 2018 10:11 Profile cancelled	All of use
Penny Trout and Jacob Mitchell	Commissioning profiles	0	0	0	12 days	4	12 Oct 2018 14:41 Profile cancelled	Availability not set
Lobby Williams	No profiles	-	-	-	7 months 11 days	0	11 May 2018 13:50 Profile cancelled	
Lathana Brockland	No profiles	-	-	-	7 months 11 days	0	14 May 2018 14:10 Profile cancelled	

Managing your vacancies

Go to the 'Cases' page ([see previous section](#)) and click the name of the case you wish to manage. This will bring you to the 'Case management' page for your chosen case. Here, you can manage every aspect of the case, such as viewing discussions, documents and reports or adding/managing profiles.

To connect to a case, click the 'Connect account' button. You will then be linked to the case, meaning you can edit profiles and participate in placement finding for the child(ren). To disconnect yourself from a case, click the 'Disconnect account' button. You will no longer be listed as a linked practitioner and your permissions will be removed.

In the 'Case management' tab, you can share the case with other practitioner, connect or disconnect yourself from the case or set the case as inactive. Inactive cases are not subject to activity chasing and will not appear in your active case listing on the 'Cases' page. You may also choose to delete the case. Please note that if you intend to delete the case, you must first delete all profiles. This is an irreversible action; it cannot be undone.

In the 'Profiles' tab of the 'Case management' interface, you can view/edit any profile and change their availability. With foster carer cases, you can also connect or disconnect foster carers from the case and manage connected foster carer permissions from the 'Profiles' tab.

You can find all the collected contact information for the carers in the 'Contact information' tab. In the 'Documents' tab, you will find all documents linked to the case.

The screenshot shows the 'Case management' page for a case named 'John'. At the top, there are two buttons: 'View discussions' and 'Add new profile'. Below this is a navigation bar with three tabs: 'Management' (selected), 'Foster carer profile', and 'Documents'. The main content area is titled 'Case management' and contains four action items:

- Connect foster carers**: A blue button.
- Share case**: A blue button with the description 'Share the case with other members of your team'.
- Edit address**: A blue button with the description 'Edit the address of this family'.
- Delete case**: A red button with the description 'You must delete all profiles before you can delete the case.'

The screenshot shows the 'Case management' page for a case named 'Richfield home settings'. At the top, there is a 'View discussions' button. Below this is a navigation bar with three tabs: 'Management' (selected), 'Profile', and 'Documents'. The main content area is titled 'Case management' and contains three action items:

- Share case**: A blue button with the description 'Share the case with other members of your team'.
- Edit address**: A blue button with the description 'Edit the address of this home'.
- Delete case**: A red button.

Creating and managing agency groups

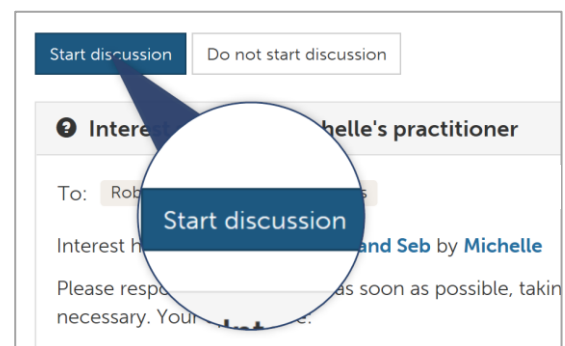
Creating agency groups gives you more options when choosing the availability for placements or when choosing to receive new referral alerts (see later section). Agency groups can be personal to your individual account or available for all practitioners within your LA/Agency to use.



To manage existing agency groups, go to the 'Admin' menu and choose 'Manage agency groups'. Here you can see all personal agency groups and any agency groups that have been made available to you by others in your LA/agency. To create a new agency group, click 'New agency group' and fill in the required fields.

Managing incoming enquiries

If you have listed a placement and made it available to others (see previous section), then you might begin to receive incoming enquiries as practitioners. Once you have received an incoming expression of interest, you can view the referral and choose whether or not to start a discussion by choosing 'Start discussion' or 'Do not start discussion'.



If you choose not to start a discussion, you will be asked to provide some feedback as to why. If you choose to start a discussion, you can then exchange messages and documents with the other party.

Searching and reviewing referrals

You can search any current referrals that have been made available to you. Referrals may have been targeted at you because you are on a framework or preferred list, or they may have been made available widely to any provider.

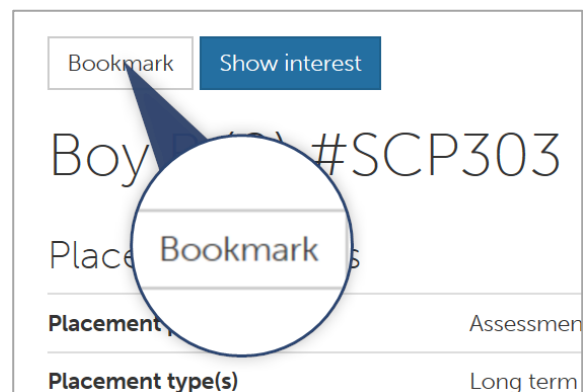
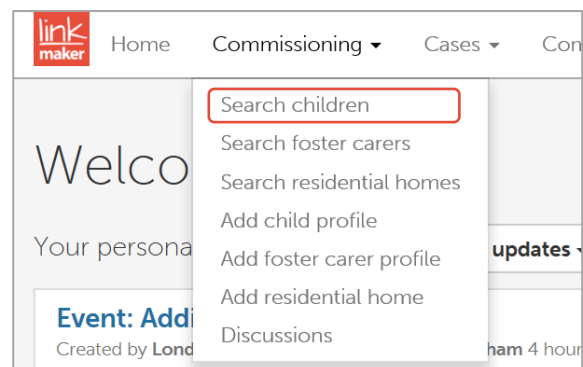
You can use a range of filters to help you find specific types of referrals. You will find the details of each referral either in an authority's own placement request format, or Link Maker's universal format.

To access the search page, go to the 'Commissioning' menu and choose 'Search children'. You will find a list of the profiles you have not yet reviewed in the 'Pending' tab.

When searching referrals, you may find profiles that you wish to bookmark and return to later. Simply click the 'Bookmark' button associated with the profile you wish to save, and the profile will be saved to the 'Bookmarked' tab. To remove a bookmark, click 'Remove bookmark'. These bookmarks are personal to your own individual account.

After you have considered a profile, you might realise that you cannot offer a placement. You can indicate this by clicking the 'Cannot offer placement' button, moving the profile to the 'Reviewed' tab. This action does not notify the child practitioner and is for internal use.

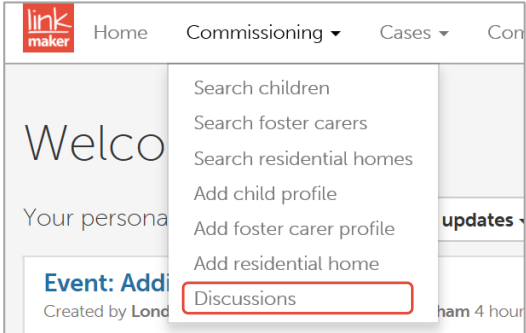
Once you have found a potential placement, you can start enquiries by showing interest (see later section).



Using the interest and discussions page

The 'Interest & discussions' page is a dashboard for all discussions. You can view discussions relating to cases you are connected to, or view discussions relating to any case in your organisation.

To access the interest and discussions page, choose 'Discussions' in the 'Commissioning' menu. Alternatively, simply click the envelope icon shown in the right-hand corner, next to your username. This icon may appear with a number, indicating that you have discussions that require your attention. You have a number of filters on this page, enabling you to flexibly manage all cases from one page.



The screenshot shows the top navigation bar with 'link maker' logo, 'Home', 'Commissioning', 'Cases', and 'Con'. A dropdown menu is open under 'Commissioning', listing options: 'Search children', 'Search foster carers', 'Search residential homes', 'Add child profile', 'Add foster carer profile', 'Add residential home', and 'Discussions' (highlighted with a red box). Below this, the 'Interest & discussions' page is shown with a table of discussions.

Discussions	Regarding	On behalf of	Last activity
View	Ella and Leo	Oliwia, Tonya, Ken and Owen	25th October 2018 11:13
View	Charlie	Ella and Leo	25th October 2018 11:13
View	Boy B (20) #SCP376	Foster	24th October 2018 11:43
View	Boy B (20) #SCP350	Exchange House 2	11th May 2018 11:29
View	Exemplar House	Boy B (20) #SCP358	10th May 2018 11:13
View	Tara and Lily	Ella and Leo	10th April 2018 11:13
View	Adam and Paddy	Ella and Leo	04th April 2018 13:27
View	Guy	Boy B (8) #SCP376	05th March 2018 11:47
View	Riley	Luke	05th August 2017 13:32

The page is separated into four sections: needs attention (for those discussions that require an action); discussions (for active conversations); outgoing (for outgoing expressions of interest that have not yet received a response) and incoming (for expressions of interest in the profiles you manage to which you have not yet responded). You can find all your previous closed discussions in the 'Past' tab.

You are automatically subscribed to discussions relating to cases you are connected to. This means you will receive updates via email. You can choose to subscribe or unsubscribe from discussions whenever you like; just click the 'Subscribe' or 'Unsubscribe' buttons from within the discussion.

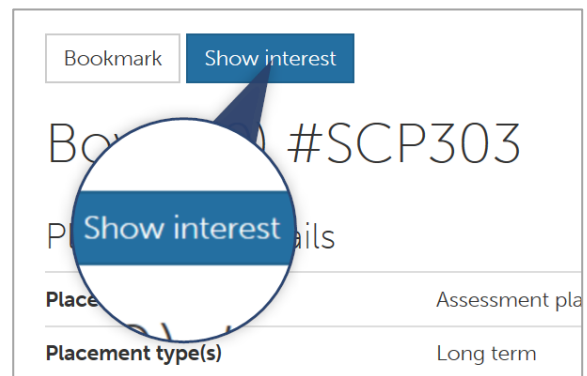
Generating an incoming referrals report

Link Maker offers various reports to help you in finding placements and keeping records. For placement providers, Link Maker provides an incoming referrals report, allowing you to generate a summary report of all referrals made available to your organisation through Link Maker. You can filter referrals by specific agencies, or agency groups that you've created ([see previous section](#)).

Offering a placement

Once you have searched referrals (see previous section) or have received a new referral alert (see previous section), you may want to begin enquiries.

To offer a placement in response to a referral, go to the full child profile page and click 'Show interest'. You will then be asked to briefly describe your placement offer or select a specific carer or home you have created on Link Maker. If requested by the authority, you may need to indicate the weekly cost of the placement.

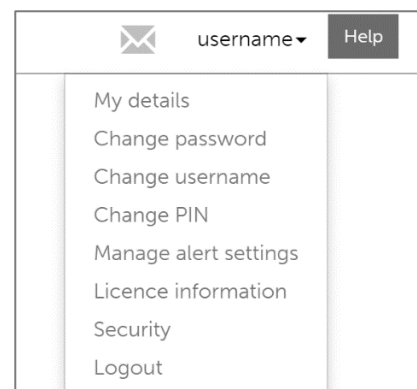


This will alert relevant placement staff that a placement is being offered and will invite them to review your information and respond.

Managing account settings

All settings relating to your account, can be found in your username drop-down menu.

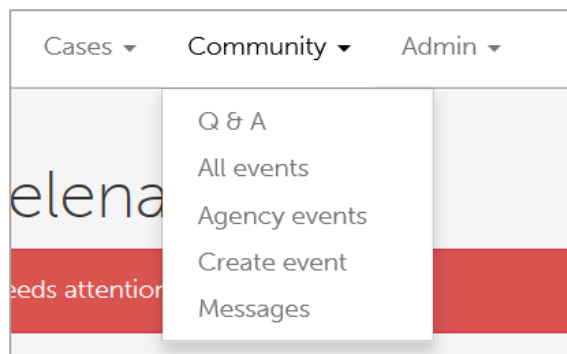
You can change details relating to your account, change your password, username or PIN, manage your alert settings ([see previous section](#)), view your licence information, view our security information or logout of your account.



Using community features

With a Link Maker account, you can access community features. You can create a community profile and interact with others in all stages of the commissioning process, offering advice and guidance. You can create agency events and advertise these to your foster carers or to other families.

All community features can be accessed in the 'Community' drop-down menu.



Finding further help

For further help and support, simply click the 'Help' button in the top menu, next to your username. Alternatively, view our step-by-step tutorials at www.linkmaker.co.uk/pages/view/75 or call our support team on 0843 886 0040.