

# CHAPERONE HANDBOOK:

GUIDANCE & RESOURCES  
FOR CHILD CHAPERONES



 RESET

 RESHAPE

 RESTART

# Introduction

This guidance provides you with information, paperwork and resources to help you fulfil your role and respond to different situations.

It includes:

- details about your role and responsibilities
- safeguarding information
- forms and checklists
- tips for your first day
- courses and resources

The information is guidance only and should be used alongside the Child performance and activities licensing legislation in England (PDF, 310 KB) on GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk/government/publications/child-performance-and-activities-licensing-legislation](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/child-performance-and-activities-licensing-legislation)).

## Understanding what is mandatory and what is best practice

In 2015 the Department for Education published industry guidance that provides best practice examples for child chaperones.

Download the best practice guidance from the National Network for Children in Employment and Entertainment (NNCEE) website (PDF, 425 KB) ([www.nncee.org.uk/downloads/4030/industry-best-practice-guidance-feb-2015](http://www.nncee.org.uk/downloads/4030/industry-best-practice-guidance-feb-2015)).

## Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge and thank the following chaperones for their time and invaluable insights when creating this guidance:

- Anna Williams
- Barbara Bryan
- Beverley McIntosh
- Janice Brisband
- Lindy Jones
- Liz Light
- Paula Jarrett
- Teresa Herbert

# Chaperone conduct and DBS checks

All licensed chaperones must agree to our code of conduct ([birmingham.gov.uk/downloads/file/29286/chaperone\\_code\\_of\\_conduct\\_agreement\\_form](https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/downloads/file/29286/chaperone_code_of_conduct_agreement_form)).

## Renewing your Enhanced DBS

Your chaperone licence is valid for 3 years.

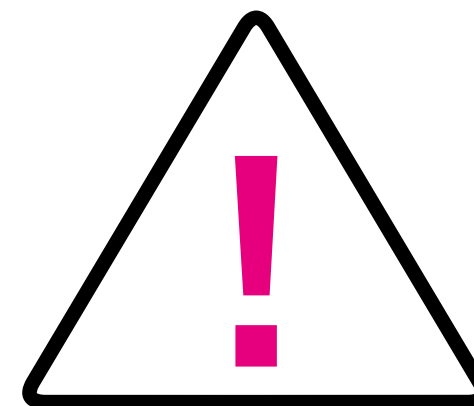
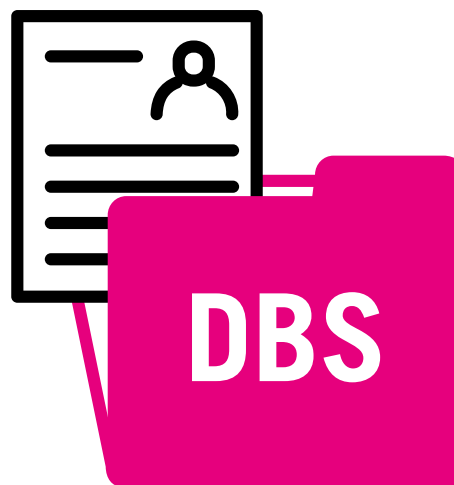
We will check your Enhanced DBS each year on the DBS Update Service. Providing you pass these checks, we will post you a new chaperone ID card each year and your licence will remain valid.

To ensure your Enhanced DBS remains current and valid, you must register with the DBS Update Service. Subscription is annual and you can pay by Direct Debit for automatic renewal. There is no annual subscription cost if you use your DBS to do voluntary (unpaid) chaperone work.

## If you change your details, become seriously ill, or are arrested

You should tell the council in writing within 7 days of:

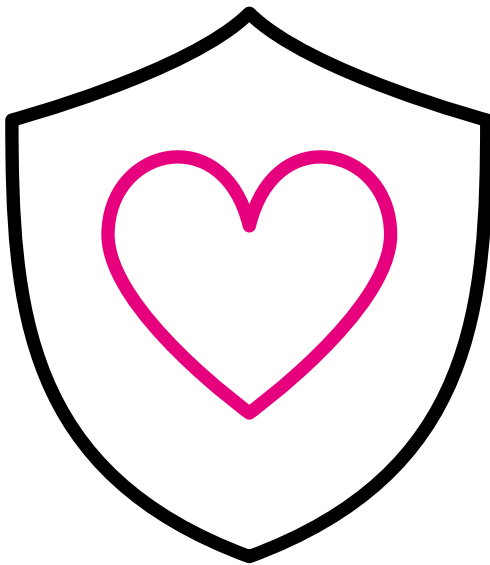
- your arrest for any offence, or of any conviction in a Court of Law whether in the United Kingdom or not
- any serious or noticeable illness or debility
- any change of address, name or telephone number



# Welfare and safeguarding responsibilities

As a chaperone, you are the key person who the children in your care look to for guidance, protection, clarification and support.

Your first responsibility is always to the children in your care. You are acting “in loco parentis” (in place of the parent) and should take the same level of care that a good parent or guardian would.



## Welfare and safeguarding

You are responsible for the welfare of the children in your care at all times, except when they are in the care of their own parent, legal guardian or approved tutor. This responsibility starts with the first performance and ends with the last performance to which the child performance licence relates.

While a child is under your supervision, you must:

- take proper care of them, including their health, comfort, kind treatment and moral welfare
- be aware of health and safety issues, fire safety and evacuation procedures
- ensure they have sufficient access to food and drink, and be aware of any allergies
- consider their age and experience, concentration span and exposure to adult conversation and expectations
- ensure they do not experience discrimination for their race, gender, colour, nationality, ethnicity or national origin
- If taking part in a performance, children should not:
- be employed in any other job on the day of the performance or the following day

- take part in a performance without a child performance licence, unless the Secretary of State or licensing authority has granted an exemption

You need to be aware of and understand the conditions of the performance licence for each child in your care. Tell the child employment team if you have concerns or know about a contravention of the licence.

## How many children you can have in your care

If you are acting as a chaperone, you must only have a maximum of 12 children in your care.

If you are acting as a private tutor as well as a chaperone, you must only have a maximum of 3 children in your care.

If you believe you cannot safely look after the number of young people in your care, advise the person in charge of the production to change the arrangement.

### Dangerous performances

Only children aged 16 or over can take part in dangerous performances, such as acrobatics or contortion.

However, children aged 12 and over can be trained in dangerous performance skills, as long as the local authority grants a licence.

You are expected to maintain extra vigilance throughout any dangerous performances or rehearsals.



### What to do if a parent or guardian does not turn up

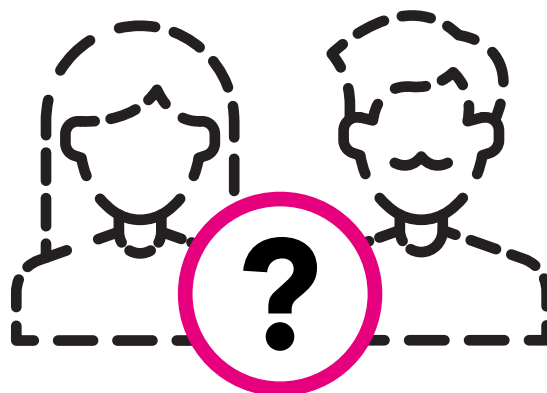
If a parent or guardian does not turn up to collect a child, you should follow the employer or organisation's absent parent procedure.

If you are unsure of what to do, contact the Children's Advice and Support Service (CASS) by phoning 0121 303 1888.

The CASS phone line is open:

- Monday to Thursday: 8:45am to 5:15pm
- Friday: 8:45am to 4:15pm

Outside of these hours, use the CASS emergency line by phoning 0121 675 4806.



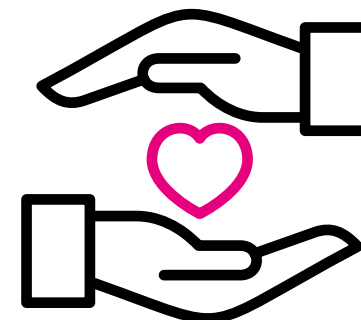
### If you're concerned about a child

If you're concerned about the safety or welfare of a child, you should:

1. Contact the Children's Advice and Support Service (CASS) by phoning 0121 303 1888 (out-of-hours emergency line: 0121 675 4806)
2. Tell our child employment team within 48 hours

The Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership website ([iscpbirmingham.org.uk](https://www.iscpbirmingham.org.uk)) provides further safeguarding information and advice, including:

- details of the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
- child protection and safeguarding procedures
- learning resources



### Common situations and how to resolve them

Situation	Possible response
A child does not understand your role as a chaperone and keeps going off with their parents or the production staff.	Ask the company to make children aware of your presence and role before you arrive. When you first meet the children, introduce yourself and explain your role to them and their parents or guardians.
An older child seems to resent being under your care and keeps trying to evade you during the production.	Try to get them to understand that you are there to keep them safe and that the production cannot carry on without chaperone support. To help engage with them, try giving the child a degree of responsibility or asking them questions about the show or performance.
Some of the children are not getting on well together and are misbehaving.	Children who work together do not necessarily get along. You should aim to find a resolution quickly, before tensions escalate. Do not single out a specific child. Instead, highlight the team nature of performances and encourage the children to work together.
A child wants you to take a photo of them and their friends in costume during the dress rehearsal.	Check that the parents or guardians have agreed to allow photos to be taken. Ensure any photos are taken outside of the toilets or changing rooms.

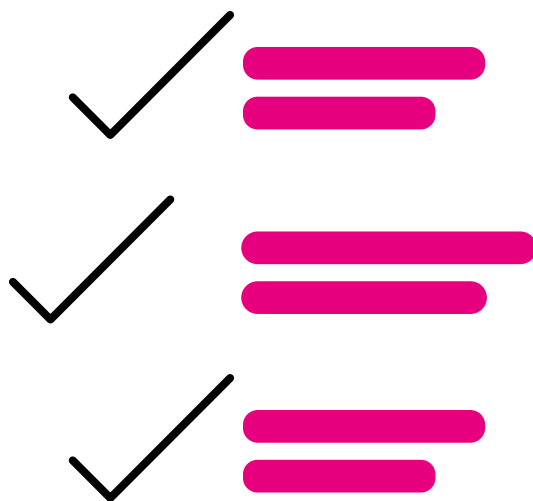


# Registers, recordkeeping and checklists

As a chaperone, you will often be asked to keep records in relation to children. You must keep these records for 6 months from the date of the last performance or activity.

You should keep children's personal information confidential. Do not disclose it to any unauthorised people.

You can download copies of all record sheets, forms and checklists from our website ([birmingham.gov.uk/downloads/download/6660/chaperone\\_forms\\_and\\_checklists](https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/downloads/download/6660/chaperone_forms_and_checklists)).



## Registers

Make sure a register is always kept and available. Head counts alone are not acceptable.

The register must include children's personal records and emergency contact numbers.

## Record sheets and when to complete them

### Personal record sheet

The parent or guardian should complete a personal record sheet to provide:

- the child's personal details
- the child's medical and dietary information
- next of kin or emergency contact details
- consent for you to chaperone their child

### Daily record sheet

You should complete a daily record sheet for each day or night that a child is at the place of performance or rehearsal. It should include the:

- date
- times of arrival and departure
- times of each period when the child took part in performance or rehearsal

- times of each rest interval and meal interval
- times of any night work (if agreed with the council)
- duration and subject of any tutoring
- amount of money earned
- child's name and signature

## Illness or injury record sheet

If a child is ill or suffers an injury, you should tell a parent or guardian and complete a record sheet to show:

- the date when the injury happened or the child became ill
- whether or not the injury or illness stopped the child continuing the performance or rehearsal
- the name of the parent and the time you notified them
- the name of the council officer you told (if applicable)
- the date of any medical examinations (following each period of four weeks)

# Chaperone checklist

Question	Yes/No	Comments
1. Have you checked that the child has a licence to perform		
2. Does the child seem well enough to perform?		
3. Have you got next of kin contact details for the child?		
4. Has the child got any medical conditions you need to be aware of?		
5. Has the child got any dietary needs you need to be aware of?		
6. Have refreshments been made available for the child?		
7. Is the dressing room suitable for the child?		
8. Are the toileting facilities suitable for the child?		
9. Are you aware of the location of fire exits and fire procedure?		
10. Is the child aware of the fire procedure and the location of the fire exits?		
11. If the child is required to work outside, are they protected from inclement weather?		
12. Are you aware of who the nominated fire officer is?		
13. Are you aware of who the nominated first aider is?		
14. If parents are not collecting their own children, have you got written confirmation of who the child/ren is to go home with?		
15. Are your record sheets up to date?		



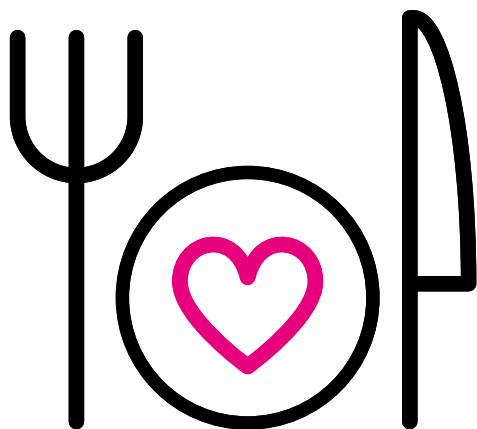
# Child working hours, breaks and meal provision

Children should not be at a place of performance any later than:

- 10pm for children aged 4 and under
- 11pm for children aged 5 and over

Ensure that children have suitable opportunities for recreation and the right breaks for rest and meals. Any special dietary requirements must be provided, whether for medical reasons or on religious grounds.

View the full list of working hours and break time restrictions for each age group.



## Broadcast and recorded performances

You may allow children to take part in a broadcast or recorded performance for 30 minutes beyond the allotted time, if either:

- you are satisfied that their welfare will not suffer
- the circumstances are outside the control of the licence holder (such as serious issues with film production schedules)

Do not allow children to take part if it means their total work hours would exceed the maximum for a child of that age.

## Night work

The local authority may allow children to work beyond the latest permitted time (if outside scenes are essential) or after midnight if they believe it is not practical to complete the work before then.

You should ensure the child:

- has a break of at least 16 hours before they return to the place of performance after night work
- does not do any further night work for at least a week if they've done night work on 2 consecutive nights

Any performance taking place after midnight counts as part of the performing time allowed on the previous day.

Night work must be agreed in advance with the local authority. They can stop the child doing night work if they believe it may cause the child harm, even if their appearance is necessary.

## If a child is living away from home for work

If you are chaperoning a child who is living away from home for work purposes, you should ensure:

- they have the opportunity for rest, recreation and exercise during their non-working time
- there are suitable meal arrangements
- food is provided at the accommodation, if possible

# Facilities, transport and accommodation

The organisation you're working for is responsible for carrying out risk assessments. However, as a chaperone you must be satisfied with the safety of the venue and facilities.

Check for hazards in any areas that children will have access to, including the:

- dressing rooms
- toilets
- school room, if children will be tutored
- stage, set or location where children will be performing or waiting
- 'quick change' areas, like the side of the stage
- green room or rest areas
- eating areas or canteens

## Changing rooms, showers and toilets

Children must have appropriate supervision during changing, showering and toilet arrangements and should be given separate facilities to adults where possible.

Changing rooms must be:

- private
- separate for boys and girls over the age of 5 years
- the right temperature - not too hot or cold
- a suitable size for the number of children using them

If a child does not want to use the changing rooms, showers or toilets designated for their biological sex, you may want to consider offering them the use of an alternative facility that:

- can be secured from the inside
- is for use by 1 child at a time
- is not accessed through a changing room used by the other sex

Any alternative arrangements should not compromise the safety, comfort, privacy or dignity of the child.

Tell the child employment team if you have concerns about the safety of the venue or facilities, so we can carry out a venue check and share your concerns with other local authorities.

## Arranging safe transport

Ensure that transport arrangements from a child's home and back again are safe. They should be dropped off and collected by the pre-agreed person.

Do not allow young people under statutory school age (last Friday in June in the school year in which they are 16) to leave the performance or rehearsal venue unescorted.

If a parent or guardian does not turn up to collect a child, you should follow the employer or organisation's absent parent procedure. For further guidance, see the 'Welfare and safeguarding responsibilities' section.

### Living away from home for work

If children are required to live away from home whilst working, such as whilst on a tour, you are responsible for them during the whole of that period.

Children living away from home require more supervision.

Make sure that:

- you accompany them at all times
- accommodation is suitable, comfortable and clean, and approved by the local authority
- you sleep in the same accommodation as the children, in a room close to theirs
- there are suitable meal arrangements and food is provided at the accommodation if possible
- there is transport to and from the place of entertainment, if necessary
- the journey to and from the place of entertainment is no more than 3 hours
- they have the opportunity for rest, recreation and exercise during their non-working time

Situation	Possible response
The toilet facilities are not suitable or there are not enough toilets for the number of children.	Find an alternative toilet facility or let children use the disabled toilet. If multiple children want to use the toilets, ensure the number of children in the toilets at any one time does not exceed the number of available cubicles.
You arrive to find the company or production has no venue safety or systems in place.	Make sure the company understands the terms of the child performance licence or exemption. They must be familiar and compliant with the licence or the performance cannot go ahead.
A parent wants to supervise their child in the changing room but there are other children present.	They can help their own child but this should be in a separate room to where other children are changing, even if the parent or guardian has a valid DBS. Consider offering the parent and child a separate space to change in.

# What to do if a child is ill or injured

Children should not perform if they are ill or injured. If a child falls ill or is injured while in your charge, get medical assistance and immediately tell a parent or guardian and the licensing authority. Do not ignore the signs in order to meet the production schedule.

You should also be aware that not all children present illness in an obvious way and symptoms may be hard to spot.

If a child is too ill to perform, arrange for them to be sent home with a parent or guardian.

## In cases of serious illness or accident

If a child is seriously injured or ill, send them to hospital and immediately tell a parent or guardian and the licensing authority.

How you respond to a case of serious illness or accident will depend on how many chaperones are on duty that day.

Below are some possible situations and how you might respond to resolve them. In all these situations, a parent or guardian may be able to meet you at the hospital and take charge of the child. This would allow you to return to your duties back at the venue or site.

Situation	Possible response
There is another chaperone available who can legally take charge of the children in your care.	Leave the children with the other chaperone while you escort the injured or ill child to hospital.
You are the only chaperone available and have other children who need chaperoning.	Check if there is anybody else on the production team who has a chaperone licence and ask if they can step in to cover you whilst you escort the injured or ill child to hospital.
You are the only chaperone, have other children who need chaperoning, and nobody on the production team is licensed to cover you.	If the children are being tutored by a tutor with DBS, you can leave the children with them whilst you escort the injured or ill child to hospital.
You are the only chaperone, have other children who need chaperoning, but there is nobody available to cover you.	In this situation, you would need to take the children in your care with you whilst you escort the injured or ill child to hospital. Children must be in your sight at all times unless another licensed chaperone is available to cover you.

# Guidance for your first day at a venue or site

## Before you arrive

Before the date of the performance or rehearsal, you should check:

- the address of the venue
- what time you should arrive
- who you should report to
- the details of the children you'll be chaperoning, including their age, gender, and arrival and departure times

You may need to contact your agent or organiser to get this information.

If you are concerned you will not be able to chaperone children safely, raise this with your agent or the organiser before you arrive.

## What to wear

We suggest clothing and footwear that is:

- comfortable, practical and appropriate for working with children, such as flat shoes
- appropriate for the location and weather, such as a raincoat and umbrella for an outdoor event
- dark or black in colour, if working on a stage production

For indoor events, consider wearing layers as the space can become warm when rehearsals or performances begin.

You should avoid wearing loose jewellery or accessories, as they could get caught.

## What to take with you

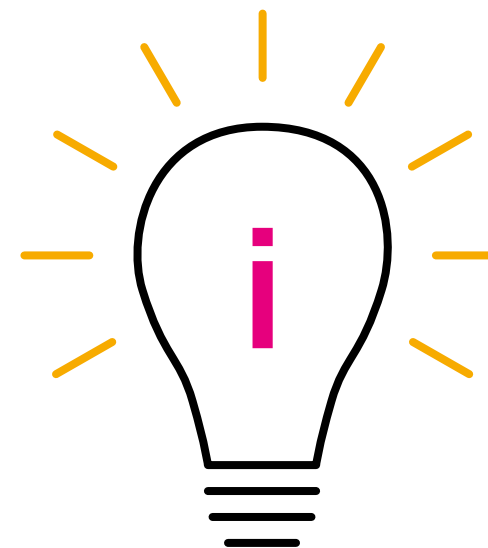
- Your chaperone ID card.
- Contact details for the company, in case you are unsure about anything on the day.
- Contact details for the local authority.
- Daily record sheets (or a notebook to keep records in).
- A care pack, including water, wet wipes, and some activities or games (age appropriate for the children you'll be chaperoning).
- Money for emergencies.

## When you arrive

On arrival, you should:

- check in with reception or security
- make yourself known to the person you need to report to – this could be a head chaperone, stage manager, producer or assistant director

- familiarise yourself with the venue or site layout and check for hazards
- check the location of fire exits and alarms
- familiarise yourself with the evacuation procedures and meeting points
- find out who is the designated person for child protection and safeguarding concerns



## Checking information and documents

You should ask to see:

- the children's licences or any exemption evidence if you are told licences are not required
- the names of the children you'll be chaperoning
- a list of the children's home and emergency contact numbers
- details of any medical conditions or requirements
- details of who will administer medication, including times, dosage, and safe storage
- the organisation's child protection policy
- the daily schedule or call sheet

If applicable, you may also ask to see a copy of the script so you can ensure children aren't present during scenes containing adult themes.

## Checking the venue or site

On arrival, familiarise yourself with the venue or site layout, including entrances, exits and all fire exits. You should also check for hazards in any areas that children will have access to.

## Meeting the children

On the day you first meet the children, introduce yourself to each child and their parent or guardian if present. This should be arranged between you and the organisation you're working for.

Explain to the children:

- that they must stay with a chaperone at all times, for their own safety
- what your role is and that you are the person they can speak to if they have any problems or concerns
- the schedule for the day, including times for performance or rehearsal, breaks and mealtimes, and tutoring
- the layout of the venue
- what will happen in the case of a fire or emergency

You can also introduce the children to the cast and crew and explain what their jobs are.

## Working with other chaperones

If applicable, we recommend introducing yourself to any other chaperones working at the venue or site.

What to do in an emergency

Follow the emergency procedure of the organisation you are working for.

You should be aware of the:

- health and safety protocol
- name of the registered first aider
- location of the emergency exits

## First aid training

It is not mandatory for chaperones to be trained in first aid. However, it may be good practice.

For suggested first-aid courses, see the 'Courses and resources' section.

# Courses and resources

You need a range of skills, knowledge and experience to be an effective chaperone and keep children safe.

As part of your chaperone licence application, you will have completed 2 online training courses:

- 'Right Help Right Time' (RHRT E-Learning) hosted by the Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP) ([lscpbirmingham.org.uk](https://lscpbirmingham.org.uk)) – no cost
- 'Protecting children in entertainment training for chaperones' hosted by NSPCC Learning ([learning.nspcc.org.uk/training](https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/training)) – currently £25

You must complete this mandatory training every 3 years. It's your responsibility to keep up to date with your training.

## First-aid training

You are not required to be first-aid trained. However, many chaperones find the skills gained from completing a first-aid course useful.

John First runs online first-aid courses and provides useful information that's regularly updated. For more information visit the First Aid for Free website ([firstaidforfree.com](https://firstaidforfree.com)).

You may also wish to seek out paediatric first-aid training opportunities, as these are especially relevant to the age groups you will work with as a chaperone.

## Working with neurodiverse children

Birmingham's SEND team provides guidance for professionals who support neurodivergent children and young people.

For more information, visit the Local Offer Birmingham website ([localofferbirmingham.co.uk/home/professionals](https://localofferbirmingham.co.uk/home/professionals)).

## Helpful websites

As well as free training, the Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP) provides:

- resources for chaperones
- guidance on child protection
- safeguarding procedures and best practice

Visit the Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP) website ([lscpbirmingham.org.uk](https://lscpbirmingham.org.uk)).

The National Network for Children in Employment & Entertainment (NNCEE) also provides guidance for chaperones ([nncee.org.uk/page/37/chaperones](https://nncee.org.uk/page/37/chaperones)).

## Shadowing other chaperones

If you're new to chaperoning, you may want to speak to other chaperones about shadowing opportunities or resource sharing, so you can learn from their experience.

Birmingham City Council does not provide or arrange shadowing opportunities.

