

KIRKLEES COUNCIL

Foster Carer's Handbook

Graphics Being Developed For Front Cover
To be Inserted Prior to Launch

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Section A

Kirklees Equality and Diversity Statement

We believe in treating everyone fairly and see the diversity of our community and workforce as a real strength. We want to build strong communities with a sense of togetherness, and we want to tackle disadvantage. We want everyone to be able to realise their potential and to benefit from the cultural, social, economic and civic vitality of our district. We want to meet people's needs as best we can, and we realise that treating people fairly does not necessarily mean treating everyone as if they are the same.

This commitment applies to our work as an employer, a service deliverer, a contractor and funding body and in our community leadership role.

Kirklees-Our Pledge

The government says that every council should make a pledge or promise to the children and young people in their care. Our Pledge outlines all we promise to do for children and young people in our care who are aged from 0-18. Foster carers should have a copy of this, if you require a copy please ask your Supervising Social Worker.

The Foster Carers' Charter

In 2011, the then Children's Minister, Tim Loughton introduced the 'Foster carers' Charter'. He hoped that the Charter 'can be used to unite foster carers, local authorities and fostering services around a shared understanding'. Mr Loughton stated: 'I hope that it will give people the confidence to question and make demands when the 'spirit' of the Charter is not being met. I want you to build on the foundations of the Charter and make it work for you locally. This means being confident enough to come forward and talk about where things are working well and not so well, and share experiences and ideas on how to make things better and how ultimately we can achieve a better experience for those children and young people in the care system.

Please see link below to the Foster Carer Charter:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/175444/Foster_carers_charter.pdf





Every child deserves a family



Kirklees foster carers are currently members of the Fostering Network (December 2018). Should this provider change foster carers would be notified. Please find below the link to their foster carer charter:

<https://www.thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/policy-practice/policies/foster-carers-charter>

Fostering Regulatory Framework

The Fostering Services Regulations 2011 and National Minimum Standards as amended provide a clear framework for Fostering Service Providers, Foster Carers and associated staff with regard to how fostering services should be delivered, how foster carers should be assessed and what foster carers can expect to receive by way of support. The Regulations and Standards are used by OFSTED when inspecting fostering service providers.

Fostering Regulations

For further information on Fostering Regulations a foster carer can follow the link below:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2011/581/contents/made>

National Minimum Standards

The National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services are an integral part of the legal framework in which the fostering provision is regulated and conducted under the Care Standards Act 2000.

The National Minimum Standards are mandatory and as a Fostering Service Provider we must comply with them. If as a Local Authority we are found to have substantially failed to meet these Standards, then OFSTED has a duty to inform the Secretary of State for Health, who will take the necessary steps to ensure the requirements are met.

The Minimum Standards represent the 'basic' requirements rather than 'best' possible practice and are designed to be applicable to a wide variety of Fostering Providers rather than a standardisation of service. As well as providing a measure by which services are regulated, the Minimum Standards act as a basis for the induction and training of staff and a guide for families as to what they should expect from a Fostering Service.

The National Minimum Standards are split into two sections of child focused standards and standards of fostering service. A foster carer needs to know and understand these, please see link below for reference:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/192705/NMS_Fostering_Services.pdf

The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review and Fostering Services (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2013

This significantly changed the process for assessing foster carers by introducing a new, two-stage process and introduced a shortened process for revising a foster

carers terms of approval subject to his/her consent.

The process for assessing a person's suitability to foster consists of two parts, which can be carried out concurrently, but the information required in stage 1 must be obtained as soon as possible and the decision made about their suitability at stage 1 made within 10 working days of all the information required at that stage being received. If the fostering service's decision maker decides that the applicant is unsuitable to foster at stage 1, he/she must write to the applicant to inform him/her of the reasons for their decision. The applicant does not have the right of appeal to the Independent Review Mechanism at stage 1, but may make a complaint to the fostering service if they are unhappy about the way in which their application has been handled.

At Stage 2 of the process, if following a brief or full report being presented to the fostering panel and agency decision maker, the applicant is considered not suitable to foster, he or she should be informed in writing of the reasons and that they may, within 28 days, seek a review of this determination either by the Independent Review Mechanism or the fostering service.

The Children Act, 1989

The Children Act, 1989 allocates duties to local authorities, courts, parents and other agencies in the United Kingdom, to ensure children are safeguarded and their welfare is promoted.

A foster carer also needs to be familiar with the Children Act 1989. For further information on this a foster carer can follow the link below:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents>

The Care Planning and Fostering (Miscellaneous Amendments) (England) Regulations 2015

These amend the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010 which make provision about care planning for Looked After Children. They create a statutory concept of permanency for a child through long term fostering. To read these a foster carer can follow the link below:

http://www.familylaw.co.uk/system/redactor_assets/documents/2735/uksi_20150495_en.pdf

Fostering Competencies

A foster carer is expected to achieve and maintain the following competencies.

1 *Caring for children*

- 1.1 An ability to provide a good standard of care to children. Good care promotes healthy emotional, physical, sexual and intellectual development.
- 1.2 An ability to accept the individual child as he/she is.
- 1.3 An ability to work closely with children's families. This might mean not only biological family, but others who are important to the child.
- 01.4 An ability to set appropriate boundaries and to manage children's behaviour within these. You must do this without the use of physical or other inappropriate punishment.
- 1.5 A knowledge of normal child development. This means you'll have an ability to listen to and communicate with children appropriate to their emotional age and understanding.
- 1.6 An ability to promote a young person's development towards adult status.

2 *Providing a safe and caring environment*

- 2.1 *An ability to ensure that children are cared for in a home where they're safe from harm or abuse.*
- 2.2 An ability to help children keep themselves safe from harm or abuse. This also means that you'll know how to seek help if their safety is threatened.
- 2.3 An ability to recognise the particular vulnerability of disabled children to abuse and to discrimination.

3 *Working as part of a team*

- 3.1 An ability to collaborate with other professional workers and to contribute to the department's planning for the child/young person.
- 3.2 An ability to communicate effectively.
- 3.3 An ability to keep information confidential.
- 3.4 An ability to promote equality, diversity and the rights of individuals and groups within society.

4 *Own development*

- 4.1 An ability to appreciate how personal experiences have affected themselves and their families. This means you'll consider the impact that fostering is likely to have on them all.
- 4.2 An ability to use people and links within the community to provide support.
- 4.3 An ability to use training opportunities and improve skills.
- 4.4 An ability to sustain positive relationships and maintain effective functioning through periods of stress.

Kirklees will offer the foster carer support and training to help achieve and maintain these competencies. Any questions about these should be raised with the supervising social worker.

Foster Carer Agreement

When a foster carer is approved they are required to enter into a written agreement with the Local Authority. The agreement constitutes a statement of responsibilities, requirements and expectations of the partnership between Kirklees Council and the foster carer. The foster carer needs to read, sign and return the agreement so it can be kept on the file. A new agreement is issued following each annual foster carer review.

Ofsted

Ofsted is the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills. They inspect and regulate services that care for children and young people, and services providing education and skills for learners of all ages.

This is the single body with responsibility for inspecting fostering services. Ofsted inspects and evaluates fostering and other services for "Looked After" children against the National Minimum Standards and fostering regulations detailed previously. Ofsted can be contacted in the following ways:

By email

enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

By telephone

0300 123 4234 - about education or adult skills

0300 123 1231 - about children's services or any other aspect of our work

0161 618 8524 - for textphone/Minicom users

Section B

Guide to using this section of the handbook:

This section of the Handbook is divided into an alphabetical list of subjects and areas that are often referred to in the foster carer role.

We have include links to other documents, policies or procedures that give more detail on particular subjects.

The handbook should be read in conjunction with the Kirklees procedures below:

<http://kirkleeschildcare.proceduresonline.com/>

This Handbook is designed to be annually updated with new information and links. If a foster carer has any suggestions of content to be included this can be discussed with the supervising social worker.

A

Abuse

Children placed in foster care may have suffered abuse (physical, emotional, psychological, sexual), neglect or other adverse experiences. All abuse is damaging to children. The foster carer will be offered training and support to enable them to care for these children.

It is important that a foster carer is able to recognise the signs of abuse, please refer to the links below:

<http://www.kirkleessafeguardingchildren.co.uk/procedures-guidance.html>

<http://www.kirkleessafeguardingchildren.co.uk/signs-of-abuse.html>

What to do if a child discloses abuse or ill treatment

A Looked After Child needs a confidant like any other child. If information a child shares with the foster carer is likely to have an impact on their future the foster carer needs to encourage for this information to be shared with the child's social worker. If a child will not do this it is essential that the foster carer tells the child they will have to tell their social worker. Some information cannot be kept confidential such as if a child disclosed that they had been abused or ill-treated a foster carer has to inform the child's social worker. If a child discloses abuse or ill-treatment a foster carer should:

- Stay calm
- Listen
- Avoid asking questions as these could be seen as leading and impact on a prosecution
- Write down what has been said
- Notify the child's social worker as soon as possible
- Reassure the child that they have not done anything wrong

Also see Child Sexual Exploitation

Accidents and illness

Unfortunately accidents will happen. The foster carer will need to record any accident involving a child in their care on record sheets and on an accident form. This recording needs to include how the accident occurred and what action has been taken. It can sometimes be difficult to remember or explain the signs of an injury

weeks after. Any accident needs to be reported to the child's social worker as soon as possible so that birth parents with Parental Responsibility can be informed.

If a child has a more serious accident or illness that requires medical or hospital treatment the foster carer will need to show the signed consent to medical treatment to access this. This should be passed to the foster carer when a child is placed as part of the Looked After Child paperwork. Children sixteen years or over can give consent to medical treatment. Some children under sixteen may also be able to give or refuse consent if they are considered to have sufficient understanding. The foster carer can discuss this with the child's social worker if they are unsure about it.

The foster carer needs to notify the child's social worker as soon as any medical treatment has been organised. The social worker can be contacted on **01484 221000** during office hours if they are not available the foster carer can speak to the duty worker for that team.

If an accident or illness occurs outside office hours that requires hospital admission and, or surgery the foster carer must notify the Emergency Duty Service on **01484 414933**

Accident, record and medication administration templates can be obtained from your supervising social worker.

Also see Confidentiality, Records and Record Keeping

Allegations

A Looked After Child is likely to have experienced abuse or neglect and their life experience may include some of the following:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Neglect
- Domestic abuse
- Parental substance/alcohol misuse
- Parental mental health issues
- Inadequate parenting
- Poverty
- Homelessness
- Loss of a parent.

All of the above impact on a child's attachment experiences and their ability to make connections with others. A child can internalise these experiences such as presenting as withdrawn or externalise these such as presenting as aggressive.

The foster carer needs to understand the reasons behind a child's behaviour rather than focusing on a child's presenting behaviour, supervising social workers can offer support with this. The foster carer has an important role to play in supporting a child

to build resilience and feelings of self-worth. This insight and input from the foster carer is vital to reduce the likelihood of placement disruption as placement stability increases a child's chances of positive outcomes in all areas of their life.

If a child makes an allegation to the foster carer about another person's conduct towards them the child's social worker or supervising social worker must be notified.

Allegations and complaints are occasionally made against foster carers. This can place foster carers in a difficult and often distressing situation. Kirklees Council has an Allegations Management Policy which aims to deal with allegations against foster carers quickly, fairly, confidentially and impartially.

Why do allegations happen?

- A child may remember a previous experience of abuse or neglect and be confused about when this happened to them.
- A child may misinterpret behaviour as abuse, or fear it leading to abuse, based on their previous experiences
- A child or birth parent may hope that if an allegation is made the child will be able to go back home.
- A child may hope that if they make an allegation they will move to another placement
- A child may make unfounded allegations because they are angry about something without understanding the implications for themselves or their foster carers
- In some situations allegations are made because foster carers have in fact harmed or neglected a child.

A Looked after Child is more likely to be subject to abuse than the general population of children.

Strategies and actions the foster can take to reduce the risk of allegations:

- Attend the mandatory Safe Care Training and other relevant training identified by the supervising social worker
- Know the child and their history through the placement planning meeting, relevant paperwork and ongoing discussion with the child's social worker
- Regularly update the Safe Care Policy and when a new child is placed
- Communicate with children in an open and honest way to build trust so they are able to discuss when something is wrong
- Keep records up to date ensuring these are signed and dated regularly by the supervising social worker
- Work closely with other professionals and keep communication open
- Recognise stress, if there is tension in the home or, if the placement is difficult this needs to be discussed with the supervising social worker
- Have an identified support network
- Have clear rules within the home for ways of behaving, including how visitors should behave
- Know the Kirklees procedures for investigating allegations

When an allegation is made against a foster carer it can be a very difficult and stressful time. The supervising social worker will provide support but will not be able to discuss the allegation during the investigation period and this can result in a foster carer feeling isolated and unsupported.

Allegations are covered within the foster carer induction. In the event of an allegation being made all Kirklees Foster Carers are registered with the Fostering Network who can provide independent support. This referral should be offered and made by the supervising social worker.

Support is also available via the Kirklees Fostering Network (KFN) who operate a 24/7 Helpline. The number for the Helpline is **07866 635147**.

Please see procedures link for further information on allegations against foster carers.

The Safe Care template can be obtained from your supervising social worker.

Also see Confidentiality, Records and Record Keeping, Fostering Network, Support

Alcohol

Guidance on alcohol consumption is discussed with the foster carer during the assessment process. The guidance covers the foster carer and children. If the foster carer is unclear on the guidance, has any questions or requires any additional support this can be discussed with the supervising social worker.

The foster carer should remember that a Looked After Child may have come from a home where parental alcohol misuse was an issue.

The foster carer needs to ensure that any alcohol is stored away safely as detailed in the health and safety checklist

For the full guidance on this matter please refer to your Supervising Social Worker.

Please find below other useful alcohol links:

NHS guidance on alcohol abuse:

<http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/Alcohol-misuse/Pages/Introduction.aspx>

Enjoy responsibly (information for adults and young people):

<http://enjoyresponsibly.co.uk/>

Also see assessing and minimising risks

Allowances

A foster carer is paid on a fortnightly basis. Finance officers based within the fostering service process all these payments. Payments are paid directly into the bank account.

The foster carer will see different descriptions for these payments on financial statements detailed below:

- **Skills Level Payments** – the financial payment provided for the Skill Level a foster carer has achieved

Skill level	Rate
1	£100
2	£125
3	£175
4	£225

Level 1 progression- completed Skills To Foster Training, completed a portfolio, which demonstrates that the National Fostering Standards have been met.

Level 2 progression- completed all mandatory training, completed TSD workbook and undertake a minimum of 4 further days/equivalent hours training or activities (classroom training, work with the placement support team, online training) to meet identified needs within your first year of practice.

Level 3 progression- completed the Level 3 Diploma or have a relevant equivalent qualification.

Level 4- this is not a progression but is paid in certain circumstances. If a child placed is in receipt of the highest rate of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payment (PIP) it will be paid). This can also be paid based on the assessed individual needs of a child and the skills/experience a foster carer has to meet these. The decision to pay Level 4 would be agreed at the time of placement.

- **Allowances** – money paid directly to cover the care of a child placed

Age range	Rate
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Age range	Rate
0 - 4	£142.86
5 - 10	£162.73
11 - 15	£202.58
16+	£246.44

- **Continuous Service Award (CSA)** – This is paid in recognition of a Foster Carer’s ongoing practice and commitment to caring for our Looked After Children. On the anniversary of the Foster Carer’s approval with Kirklees they will be entitled to receive a CSA equivalent to £10.00 per week for each year of service. This CSA is payable up to a maximum of 15 years’ service.
- **Additional child payment-** £60 per week for each additional child or young person you foster

Mileage

A foster carer can claim mileage at 45p per mile for the following:

- Taking a child to and from school or nursery.
- Taking a child to and from contact sessions.
- Attending all professional meetings linked to the needs of the child placed
- Taking a child to medical appointments
- Attending training, support groups, KFN meetings, fostering steering group
- Facilitating recruitment and marketing events on behalf of the fostering service.

The list is not exhaustive so if a foster carer is unsure about claiming for a journey this can be discussed with the supervising social worker. The foster carer needs to send mileage claims to the supervising social worker who will check, authorise and pass them to finance officers to be processed.

The activities listed below should come out of the child’s allowance and mileage will not be paid for these:

- Taking and collecting a child from social activities, trips and contact with friends
- Trips out with the foster carer

Child’s Allowance

These payments cover the full cost of caring for a child:

- Food
- Clothing
- Pocket money
- Personal and household expenditure
- Equipment
- Special outings
- Dental and optical needs
- Attending clubs and participating in hobbies, including clothing and equipment required
- School activities
- Telephone expenses

Ongoing clothing and footwear costs must be funded from the child's allowance. This should be used flexibly to purchase items for young children and be provided to older children on a weekly/monthly basis as required. The use of the allowance will differ for all children. If a child has sufficient clothing and footwear the allowance should be saved for future needs. This should be agreed with the child, the child's social worker and the supervising social worker.

Foster carers are required to make a list of all clothing when children arrive, and when they leave. This can then be countersigned as an accurate record by their Supervising Social Worker. This will avoid any issues arising at a later date about inadequate clothing. Please keep the receipts for any clothing purchased.

Looked After Children living with a foster carer are not entitled to free school meals even if they were receiving them whilst living at home. School meals must be paid for from the weekly allowance.

The chart below is a guide on the expected percentage of the child's allowance to be used for certain things depending on the age of the child.

Age of Child	Clothing (includes clothing for sports, hobbies and school trips)	Hobbies/Activities/School Trips (including equipment)	Personal (includes Pocket Money and Savings)
0-4	20%	6%	6%
5-10	25%	12%	8%
11-15	26%	12%	10%
16+	26%	12%	12%

Initial Clothing Allowance

A foster carer can request this one off payment only when a child is being admitted to care, not where a child is moving from one placement to another. The need for

this should be minimal as children should wherever possible bring sufficient suitable clothing with them. If a child does not arrive with sufficient clothing the foster carer should discuss this with the child's social worker or the supervising social worker to see if these can be collected from home at a later stage.

If an emergency placement is made out of hours/weekend and the child does not have suitable or appropriate clothing or equipment, then necessary clothing/equipment should be purchased. The Supervising Social Worker will then advise on future purchases, if clothing continues to be unavailable from their home.

Items of clothing from home form part of a child's identity and could be important to them. If the clothes are not what a foster carer would choose but they are appropriate and fit then the child should be allowed to wear them. Clothes should be bought from stores such as supermarkets where the clothing is generally of a good standard. The maximum amounts are detailed below:

Children 0-10 - £100

Children 11-18 - £180

Allowances for School Uniform/Work clothing

A child should usually have their school uniform with them. If they do not the foster carer needs to discuss this with the child's social worker or supervising social worker to see if this can be brought from home.

If a child is starting Nursery, Primary or Secondary school or is required to change school funding towards the uniform is available. If a young person is starting work, an apprenticeship or college course, a payment towards this can be made and includes the cost of purchasing equipment. Please see below guidance and maximum amounts:

Child starting Nursery or Primary School- £120

Child required to change Primary School- £120

Young person moving to Secondary School - £200

Young person required to change Secondary School - £200

Young person starting work, an apprenticeship or college course - £300

Leisure Activities/Hobbies

Part of the child's allowance is provided for leisure activities, day trips or short holidays with the foster carer (see table for guidance). A child should be encouraged and supported to take part in at least one activity per week. The allowance can be used towards membership, costs of the hobby and equipment.

A child may take part in a leisure activity that has a higher cost than the guidance. In these circumstances a child may have to take part in the activity fortnightly instead of

weekly.

Proms/graduation

A foster carer can request a one off payment (maximum £150) towards clothing for these events.

Holiday, birthday & Festival Payments

A foster carer will receive a holiday allowance (equivalent to 2 weeks allowance), birthday Allowance (equivalent of one week's allowance) and a festival allowance for Eid or Christmas (equivalent to one week's allowance) for each child in placement. These allowances relate to the child so are paid to the foster carer that has care of the child at that time.

The holiday allowance that is paid once per year (usually June) is intended to cover the school summer holiday period as this is when holidays are usually taken. If a child is placed long term with a foster carer they may choose to take the holiday at another time in the year using the allowance. If a child moves before the summer holiday period the allowance should be passed onto the new foster carer.

School Trips

A contribution up to a maximum of £500 towards the cost of one trip organised by the school will be paid. This contribution covers the duration of a child's time in education. Other trips will need to be funded through the child's allowance set aside by the foster carer (see table for guidance). This contribution is monitored by the team for the child placed and the finance team.

Respite

A respite foster carer will be paid their skills level payment for the period of time a child is placed with them. The child's allowance for that period of time must go with them to the respite placement.

Allowance queries

If a foster carer has any allowance queries they should contact the finance officers or the supervising social worker.

Transitioning a child to family members or adopters

There should always be an introduction planning meeting and a midpoint review. Travel and accommodation for introductions should be arranged through your supervising social worker, they will arrange this through our business support team. As every introduction plan varies a foster carer can claim up to £15 per person daily, receipts for this should be submitted to the supervising social worker for this to be reimbursed.

Under payments/overpayments

Any underpayments will be reimbursed and over payments deducted. Overpayments are taken back in three payments over a six week period from the ongoing payments made to a foster carer. In situations where a foster carer may be taking a break from fostering then individually negotiated arrangements will be made, for example, paying back the overpayment in full by cheque or BACS transfer or if the amount of overpayment is significant then a different arrangement could be negotiated.

If a foster carer is experiencing difficulties making payments it needs to be discussed with the supervising social worker at the earliest opportunity. If there are significant delays in resolving payment issues this could be referred to the Council Central Finance team who will contact the foster carer directly.

Caring for a child with a disability

A foster carer providing care to a child with a disability may receive any disability payments that are already in place or these can be applied for with the agreement of the child's social worker and in discussion with the child's parents. These payments are in addition to the allowances and are for the child. These should be used for goods or services that will enhance quality of life for the child.

Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and Personal Independence Payment (PIP)

PIP is for young people aged 16 +. All children and young people who are eligible for a specialist foster placement may, in principle, meet the eligibility criteria for DLA or PIP. There will be some children placed with non-specialist foster carers who will also meet this. At the point of becoming looked after and being placed, both the statutory review and placement planning meeting should clarify matters relating to the DLA /PIP claim. The foster carer can get assistance from the supervising social worker to make a claim for DLA/PIP if this has not already been made. DLA/PIP is intended to meet the additional cost of caring for a disabled child. It is in addition to the weekly child's allowance and should be used to meet any additional needs due to the child's disability.

For further information on this please see links below:

<https://www.gov.uk/disability-living-allowance-children>

<https://www.gov.uk/pip>

Savings

A foster carer should make savings for each child they care for. These should be put into a bank or building society account so they can be easily transferred across to a new foster carer or family member if the child moves placement, or be put in trust until a child reaches 18 years of age. The savings payments are as follows:

Children aged 0-10 years	£ 5 per week
Children aged 11 – 18 years	£10 per week

A foster carer should discuss any queries with the supervising social worker.

The Government has made a £200 contribution into a junior ISA for all eligible Looked After Children. For further information on this follow the link below:

<https://sharefound.org/getting-access/>

Assessing and minimising risks in and out of the home

It is important that the home is as safe as possible for everyone living in it. A foster carer needs to speak to the supervising social worker for further support or guidance about any of the subjects covered in this section.

Fire Safety

A foster carer can contact the fire service to complete a fire safety check on the home. A fire safety check is recommended every two years. A check can also be requested if there have been changes to the home or if a child has been placed who has a history of lighting fires.

The latest information can be found here:

<http://www.fireservice.co.uk/safety>

Health and Safety Checklist

This is completed as part of the fostering assessment and reviewed as part of every foster carer annual review. Actions identified from this will need to be completed within agreed timescales. The foster carer has responsibility to notify the supervising social worker of any changes throughout the year so that necessary amendments can be made. The link to this template is below:

Pet and dog Questionnaire

These are completed as part of the fostering assessment and reviewed as part of every foster carer's annual review. The foster carer should speak to the supervising social worker before buying or bringing any new pets into the home.

It is a legal requirement for all dogs to be microchipped by the time they are 8 weeks old. Details of this registration, microchip number and Petlog ID need to be included in the dog questionnaire. For further information on dog microchipping click on the link below:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukdsi/2015/9780111125243>

The latest health and safety/pet questionnaire template can be obtained from your supervising social worker.

Safe Care

Safe Care Training is mandatory in the first year of approval for primary and secondary foster carers. During assessment the foster carer will complete a generic Safe Care Policy for the home. The purpose of this is to keep everyone safe so it needs to be as detailed as possible. The foster carer should complete an individualised Safe Care Policy for each child in their care and the supervising social worker can offer support with this. These are reviewed as part of every foster carer's annual review.

Supervision of children

The foster carer needs to provide developmentally appropriate supervision to the Looked After Child to keep them safe. Very young children will need constant supervision but older children will need support and supervision to ensure they can keep safe as they become more independent.

Keeping children safe from abuse

The foster carer should support children to keep themselves safe from abuse through developmentally appropriate discussion. The child's social worker and supervising social worker can offer support with this.

Please find the link below to the NSPCC underwear rule:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/underwear-rule/>

The foster carer should discuss any useful materials they come across with their supervising social worker so these can be shared with other foster carers and added to future handbook updates.

Children being left home alone

In law there is not a set age at which a child can be left home alone. The NSPCC suggests that no child under the age of 13 should be left unsupervised for more than brief periods. After this age it is a step which needs to be considered in the context of the child developing independence skills. A foster carer should never leave a Looked After Child without consulting with the child's social worker and the supervising social worker. Please see link below to NSPCC guidance:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/leaving-child-home-alone/>

Children going out alone

Looked After Children may have had few or no boundaries before coming into care. A foster carer should involve children in agreeing appropriate rules and boundaries for going out. Possible dangers such as traffic and strangers can also be discussed. A foster carer should help a child explore the possible risks that could be encountered and what to do in an emergency, such as if they miss the bus home. There will be times when a child does not stick to the house rules for example not

telling the truth about where they are going or not returning at an agreed time. A foster carer may be concerned that a child is putting themselves at risk but be unable to physically stop them from leaving. In these situations it is important for the foster carer to remain calm and avoid conflict whilst communicating to the child that they are worried they could be putting themselves at risk. The foster carer should discuss any concerns with the child's social worker and the supervising social worker who can offer advice and additional support.

This section has been written to recognise that a Looked After Child may function developmentally younger than their chronological age.

Also see also accidents and illness, Counter Terrorism, Child Sexual Exploitation, Safe use of Information and Communication Technology

Attachment

Attachment is the term used for the emotional bond between a child and the adult/s caring for them. Attachment behaviour starts from birth when a new born baby develops a means of engaging their caregiver in order to survive.

Ideally all children should have secure attachments with their caregivers where the carer is in tune with their needs and able to meet them consistently. However, Looked After Children are more likely to have formed insecure attachments with their birth parent or carer as a result of abuse or neglect that has led to them becoming looked after. Even very young children learn to develop behaviours which help them survive. They may shut down emotionally and become very self-reliant; alternatively they may be constantly demanding of attention; or they may try to be in control by crying incessantly, having outbursts or being defiant. Children may see themselves as unloved and unlovable and believe that they do not deserve good things. They may view adults as unreliable people, who do not protect children from harm.

A foster carer needs to understand attachment because it will help them understand a child's behaviour and how to manage this. Although it will take time given consistency and love, many children can be helped to trust adults and develop attachments. If a foster carer can support a child to form an attachment with them it helps the child develop the ability to make attachments with others in the future.

Attachment is covered in induction training, initial sessions available to newly approved foster carers through the Placement Support Team and Child's Journey Attachment Component classroom training. Please speak to your Supervising Social Worker to book onto this and use supervisory visits to reflect on how you can put what you have learnt into practice.

B

Babies

It is recommended that babies up to the age of 6 months old sleep in the bedroom with the foster carer. The reasons for this are associated with reducing risks in cot death. Research has shown that being in the same room as a responsible adult, allows for the adult to be semi-tuned in whilst asleep and also the baby can hear the sleep pattern of the adult, which it is thought prompts the baby to breathe.

It is recommended good practice for the mattress to be changed for each new baby. The reason behind this is more important for small babies, who are unable to roll and turn and whose faces could be in the same place on a mattress, breathing in potential bacteria, germs and dry vomit. In children over 1 year old or those that are moving about it is less important, but still considered best practice.

These recommendations would be followed by parents so the foster carer needs to be changing the mattress, especially for babies under 6 months old.

Side sleeper cots/safe sleep

We follow the Lullaby Trust advice on sleeping for babies. Their advice on sleeping for babies is "The safest place for your baby to sleep for the first 6 months is in a separate cot or Moses basket in the same room as you".

Their advice on co- sleeping is that it increases the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome These side sleeper cots are described by manufacturers as a safe alternative to co-sleeping as a baby is not actually in the bed with the parent/carer. The Lullaby Trust do not offer any specific advice on side sleeper cots.

We do not want foster carers to use these for babies in their care for a number of reasons:

- These are of benefit to breastfeeding mums as they do not have to get up to feed their baby. However, a foster carer would be getting up to get a bottle/feed a baby.
- A foster carer can soothe a baby over/through the cot/Moses basket. The situation you describe could be done in this way.
- Using these could put a foster carer in a position where they sit up to

feed/soothe a baby in bed with them, there is then a risk they could fall asleep.

- There is no evidence that these help a baby settle better and babies quickly grow out of them.
- These have to be securely fastened to the bed and there could be a risk if this is not done correctly.

Please see below link to website for reference that is a trustworthy resource within health:

<http://www.lullabytrust.org.uk>

Car seats

Kirklees follows Government and The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents advice in relation to car seats as this is updated regularly. Please see links to both below:

<https://www.gov.uk/child-car-seats-the-rules>

<https://www.rospa.com/road-safety/resources/films/child-car-seats/>

Foster carers should never purchase second hand car seats as they could have been in an accident. Please visit a supplier that fits car seats to ensure these are fitted correctly. In car safety training is available to foster carers please speak to your Supervising Social Worker to book on this course.

Belongings

Children will bring items of clothing, toys or other possessions with them when they go to live with a foster carer. These belongings may not seem very valuable to an adult but they will be precious to the child and should be respected. A child will have been separated from their family and familiar surroundings to be placed with strangers. Something that may seem like an unimportant item could be a child's most treasured possession. A child should be encouraged to display these things in their bedroom and the wider foster home to give them a sense of belonging.

The foster carers should keep an inventory of a child's belongings and add to this when items are purchased. This inventory can go with a child if they move on. If a child is moving on the foster carer should take time to help them pack their belongings to ensure they are not damaged in transit. All belongings should be packed in an appropriate suitcase, if a child does not have a suitcase the foster carer will need to purchase one.

Children's belongings must never be moved in plastic bags or bin liners as this will impact on their feeling of self-worth.

Birth Certificate

If a birth has been registered then a birth certificate is available recording the details of the child's birth. When a child becomes looked after the Local Authority obtains a copy of this. If the foster carer requires a copy of a child's birth certificate they need to contact the child's social worker or seek advice from the supervising social worker. If a child moves on the foster carer needs to ensure that their birth certificate goes with them.

Bullying

Bullying is defined as 'deliberately hurtful behaviour repeated over a period of time when it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves' (Department of Health, Education & Home Office document Working Together to Safeguard Children).

Many looked after children experience bullying at school, in the local area and sometimes from other children in the foster home.

Bullying can be:

- Name calling and teasing
- Threats, extortion and theft
- Physical violence
- Damage to someone's belongings
- Leaving people out of social activities
- Spreading malicious rumours
- Bullying by mobile phone text message or e-mail

If a foster carer thinks that a child in their care is being bullied or is bullying they need to discuss this with the child's social worker and the supervising social worker so appropriate action can be taken and support put in place. The child's school will have a bullying policy and any issues can be raised in school and with the virtual school (***see education for contact details***).

For further information please follow links below:

Bullying UK

<http://www.bullying.co.uk/>

Kidscape

<https://www.kidscape.org.uk/#>

Childline

<https://www.childline.org.uk/Explore/Bullying/Pages/online-bullying.aspx>

C

Care Leavers

All Looked After Children have a social worker who will have discussions with them around all aspects of their life prior to turning 16. This will be part of the assessment that forms the pathway plan that looks at needs in all aspects of life and how these can be met. The foster carer will be involved in this assessment. At 16 children should have a Personal Advisor (PA) who will prepare them for when they are no longer subject to a Care Order at 18 and continue to support them until they are at least 21. At 21 is that a needs assessment is completed with the young person to determine if post 21 support is needed. The PA can be the social worker but at some point between 16 and 18 another worker is allocated to this role. At 18 there will be a final meeting with the social worker and then ongoing support will be provided by the PA.

Preparing for 18 +

To care for themselves a young person requires knowledge and understanding about:

- Emotional resilience
- Health issues, including personal care and sexual health
- Education, employment and training
- Budgeting skills, paying bills and benefits advice
- Managing their own accommodation
- Living skills, such as cooking a balanced diet, washing clothes, ironing and cleaning
- How to manage adult social and sexual relationships.

The foster carer will need to offer support with all of the above with guidance from the child's social worker, PA and the supervising social worker. The foster carer is expected to promote and build confidence in developing skills and encourage the learning of basic skills that are needed for living alone such as:

- Providing opportunities to learn and practice skills
- Promoting financial responsibility
- Encouraging a young person to recognise the importance of building their independence skills before moving on
- Encouraging the young person in their chosen educational, training or

employment option

See also - *Staying Put*

Care Plan

Every child in care must have a Care Plan that is drawn up as soon as it is identified that child needs to be looked after. It should be completed prior to the child being placed wherever possible or, if it is not practicable to do so, within 10 working days of them being placed.

If there are exceptional reasons that prevent the Care Plan from being drawn up prior to the child's placement, the key objectives of the child's admission to care and the proposed placement must still be identified and recorded. If you do not receive this please contact the child's social worker.

If a child is subject to legal proceedings they will have a Court Care Plan.

All Looked After Children in Kirklees whether accommodated under Section 20 or subject to a Legal Order under the Children Act 1989 will have a child friendly Care Plan once the permanency plan for them has been agreed.

The foster carer will contribute to the Care Plan at Looked After Child reviews. The Care Plan should be updated after each review unless there are no changes. If a foster carer, through discussion with a child, identifies an aspect of the Care Plan that needs considering at any point this should be raised with the child's social worker. The Care Plan can be updated by the child's social worker, with the team manager's approval, at any time. The foster carer will receive a copy of the child's Care Plan every time this is updated. If not the foster carer should speak to the child's social worker or the supervising social worker.

Examples of child friendly care plans can be obtained from your supervising social worker.

Also see Children's Rights for more information on support available to the child

Caring for a child from a different heritage to your own

If a foster carer is asked to care for a child from a different ethnic, religious or cultural background the planning meeting and paperwork should inform of any specific needs that need to be met. The foster carer can speak to the child's social worker and the supervising social worker for further support with this. It may be beneficial for another foster carer who has relevant experience of caring for a child from the same background to offer mentoring.

The foster carer will need to understand the importance of background and culture to help the child build a positive identity. There are many ways to do this, for example providing opportunities for the child to meet others from similar backgrounds.

It is important to keep the child's heritage alive in everyday life, this can be done through: discussion, food, clothing, books, internet, television channels, contact with family and friends and life story work.

The foster carer may also need to support a child to cope with racism and other forms of discrimination.

Some children may have entered the United Kingdom unaccompanied by an adult and are fleeing conflict in their country of origin. Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) will be subject to immigration rules.

See also Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

Challenging behaviour

A child may exhibit behaviour that can be difficult to manage. This can include the use of bad language, throwing objects and refusing to co-operate with simple tasks or instructions. For many it is a way of trying to gain some control and predictability over their lives. A foster carer needs to understand how a child's early life experiences impact on them and this is often the reason for such behaviour. A foster carer needs to remember when managing challenging behaviour that it is the behaviour that is unacceptable and not the child involved.

A child's behaviour needs to be understood and managed appropriately. Approaches to this should not involve emotional or physical abuse of a child. The foster carer can speak to the child's social worker or the supervising social worker for guidance and support with this. If additional support or training is needed this could be offered by the supervising social worker or through a referral to Emotional Wellbeing clinic. Peer mentoring by a foster carer who has experience of dealing with a particular behaviour is also available. If a foster carer is struggling it is important that this is raised at the earliest opportunity so support can be put in place.

Use of 'time in' rather than 'time out'

'Time out' isolates a child and can leave them feeling abandoned, rejected and unloved. A child may already have these feelings due to early life experiences so if a foster carer uses this as a way of managing behaviour it reinforces this. It can cause fear, anger, confusion, resentment, embarrassment, humiliation, insecurity and low self-esteem.

A foster carer should have a dedicated area in the home that can be used for 'time in' that a child is invited to when behaviour suggests they are finding it difficult. Rather than the child being alone the foster carer should spend time in this area with them. A child of any age can be comforted and engaged in nurturing play or discussion, feeling safe in this dedicated area.

Awareness of limits

A foster carer needs to be aware of their own limits. A foster carer needs to

recognise if they are becoming stressed and losing patience with a child in their care and speak to the supervising social worker for additional support. Admitting to having difficulties is not a sign of weakness.

Restraint

This should only be used if a foster carer is appropriately trained and all other de-escalation techniques have been exhausted. A foster carer should record any use of restraint as soon as possible after the incident on the appropriate form and return this within 48 hours. The supervising social worker should be notified of any instance of restraint as soon as possible.

Team Teach training covering de-escalation and restraint is not mandatory because a minority of foster carers should require this. However, it is available to those foster carers who are assessed as requiring it. The need for this would be covered at the planning meeting or can be discussed with the Supervising Social Worker if a foster carer feels that this is needed.

The restraint template can be obtained from your supervising social worker.

See Also Mentoring, Support

Changes in circumstances

A foster carer should discuss any changes to circumstances or household with the supervising social worker at the earliest opportunity.

Child Protection Case Conference (CPCC)

A CPCC is when people who are involved with a child, come together to discuss concerns about the child's welfare. The foster carer may be invited to a CPCC.

A foster carer does not have an automatic right to receive the minutes of a CPCC due to the sensitivity of information recorded in these meetings. This can be discussed with the supervising social worker.

Follow the link below for further information on Child Protection:

<http://www.kirkleessafeguardingchildren.co.uk/child-protection-system.html>

Also see Children's Rights for support children can get when attending CPCC's

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

See Risk and Vulnerability section

Children's Guardian

If a child is subject to ongoing Court Proceedings they will have an allocated

Children's Guardian from Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass). The role of the Guardian is to ensure that decisions made are in a child's best interests. The Guardian will want to talk to the child and may want to talk to the foster carer. More information for children and adults can be found on the Cafcass website:

<https://www.cafcass.gov.uk/>

Children's Rights

The Kirklees Children's Rights Team are an Independent Support Service for children and young people who are looked after by Kirklees Council. The team provide advocacy to children and young people to ensure that their voice is heard and considered in any decisions which are made that affect their lives.

The team can help children and young people to prepare for meetings such as their looked after reviews, attend with them or attend and present their views on their behalf. Support can range from researching information to just being a listening ear. In addition to advice and information on rights the team help children and young people to understand their own responsibilities.

The service is confidential so no information that is given by children and young people would be passed onto anyone without their consent unless there was a risk to them or someone else.

There is the opportunity to take part in activities such as becoming a member of the Children in Care Council or Care Leavers Forum, delivering training to adults, taking part in one off consultations or interviewing adults who are applying to work with Kirklees Children's Services.

The team also co-ordinates the Independent Visitor Scheme. Children and young people are matched with a volunteer who meets with them to take them out to do fun things and build up a positive, trusting relationship.

For further information about any of the above please contact Children's Rights:

Freephone: 0800 389 3312 (*free from landlines*)

Telephone: 01484 225288

Text number: 07938195322

Email: childrens.rights@kirklees.gov.uk

www.kirklees.gov.uk/youngPeople

Write to: FREEPOST KIRKLEES COUNCIL CHILDRENS RIGHTS TEAM

Visit:

Kirklees Children's Rights Team

2nd Floor Brian Jackson House

New North Parade

Huddersfield

HD1 5JP

Children who Smoke

A foster carer should ensure that a child understands the dangers of smoking offering encouragement and support to stop. If a child does smoke this must be outside the home.

It is illegal for a child under the age of 18 to buy cigarettes and if a foster carer is aware that a shop is selling them they should speak to the proprietor.

The Specialist Nurse for Looked after Children can provide advice about stopping smoking and can signpost a child or a foster carer for stop smoking support.

Compliments and Complaints

If you have a compliment or complaint about the service please discuss this with the supervising social worker or their team manager. If your complaint is not resolved please refer to the compliments and complaints procedures:

<https://www.kirklees.gov.uk/beta/contact-the-council/complaints-procedure.aspx>

Complaints in Kirklees are dealt with in three stages that you can find more detail on in the procedures.

Confidentiality, Records and Record Keeping

The Placement Team will share any information known about a child with a foster carer prior to a child being placed. This and information from the child's social worker should enable the foster carer to provide appropriate care. Much of the information will be personal and all of it is told to a foster carer in confidence.

Who else needs to know?

The foster carer will need to share some of this information with children and family members who are likely to have regular contact with the child. The foster carer should know how much their own children can cope with, depending on their age and maturity and use discretion. It is important that the foster carer emphasises to children and family members the need for confidentiality.

Who does not need to know?

Friends and neighbours - basically it is none of their business. A firm refusal by a foster carer to talk about the Looked After Child will usually stop questions.

Discussions with other foster carers

Any foster carer is governed by the same principles of confidentiality. A foster carer can seek general advice from another foster carer, for example, managing a particular behaviour without breaking confidentiality. A foster carer must not

discuss specific details of a child's case or background with another foster carer.

Records

Records are kept by Children and Young People's service on every Looked After Child and every foster family. The supervising social worker will record information about the foster carer which will include a copy of their approval, all relevant checks, references and foster care reviews. The child's social worker will record information about the child.

For further information on records and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) please see link below:

<http://www.kirklees.gov.uk/beta/information-and-data/general-data-protection-regulation.aspx>

Record keeping

A foster carer needs to keep a clear record of events in the life of any Looked After Child they care for. A separate record needs to be kept on each child placed. These are important because:

- They will help a foster carer to provide clear information when they contribute to making plans about a child's future.
- They will provide useful information for life story work and the child in later life.
- It will help to protect children in their care, and safeguard family members from false allegations.
- Records could be of use in a Court hearing and may be requested by the Court

The supervising social worker will look at log sheets and sign these off during supervisory visits.

Children and their parents should be made aware that foster carers are making written records. This can be explained at the placement planning meeting.

A foster carer must return all written information about a child when the child moves on. The foster carer must delete all information relating to a child when the child moves on.

When to record

Records should ideally be made on a daily basis or as soon as possible after an event or incident. This will help to ensure the accuracy of dates, times, conversations and incidents.

How to record

- Keep it simple, clear and legible

- Notes do not have to be lengthy, just the main points
- Foster carers should record how a child has actually said something
- Keep to factual information and do not be judgmental
- Accuracy is important when referring to specific incidents

The article below highlights the significance of keeping records for the children you care for:

<http://www.communitycare.co.uk/2016/04/22/care-file-left-voice-social-worker-wont-make-mistake/>

Records the foster carer will receive when a child is placed

When a child is placed with a foster carer they should receive a copy of the following information from the child's social worker:

- Placement Plan including Delegated Authority
- Signed Medical Consent
- Care Plan
- Missing risk assessment if there is one

As the placement progresses the foster carer will receive copies of reviews they have attended regarding the child. Copies of all these documents should be stored confidentially as part of the child's records. The foster carer will also be kept informed of any key decisions which are made by the child's social worker or the supervising social worker.

Also see social media

Contact

The Children Act, 1989 places a legal duty on the Local Authority to promote contact for Looked After Children. There are clear expectations on the foster carer to promote contact outlined in section 10 of the National Minimum Standards for foster carers. The foster carer should be provided with information that enables them to make contact as safe and enjoyable as possible. The foster carer should prepare children for contact, take a child to contact and offer support afterwards reassuring a child it is okay to discuss contact. A foster carer could also be expected to facilitate contact in the home or at an agreed venue if it is considered safe and appropriate. It can increase a child's sense of security when the people who are important to them are comfortable with each other and can be less threatening for parents and other family members. It is important that the foster carer promotes sibling contact when siblings are placed in separate placements.

Contact is important for a child to maintain their sense of identity. A child with dual heritage or those who may be placed with foster carers who are not a cultural match,

need to maintain links with their family, friends and community so that their cultural history is encouraged and valued.

Contact arrangements will be discussed with the foster carer at the placement planning meeting and detailed within the child's Care Plan, Placement Plan and Delegated Authority. This will also highlight any assessment of risk of those involved. This contact may be direct or indirect such as telephone contact, letters and cards.

Problems with contact

Contact can cause distress for a child and the foster carer is often the person who has to deal with confusion or disappointment. This can be emotionally difficult for a foster carer who feels frustrated that the family are letting the child down, but, there are many possible reasons why parents and family members find contact stressful including feelings of guilt, anger and failure.

It is important that a foster carer supports the child and reassures them it is not their fault without appearing negative about the birth family.

The foster carer can also make invaluable contributions to the plans for a child by recording the behaviour in relation to contact. This may identify patterns which can contribute to decision making which may otherwise go unnoticed. It is also important that the issue of contact is discussed in formal supervision with the supervising social worker so that problems can be identified, shared and hopefully resolved.

Counter Terrorism

When children move into the adolescent stage of development they are trying to establish their identity making them vulnerable to grooming from terrorist groups. This is a safeguarding issue so the foster carer needs to be aware of the warning signs and behavioural indicators for this:

Behavioural Indicators

- Change in appearance
- Search for answers - identity, faith and belonging
- Desire for adventure/excitement
- Desire to enhance self esteem
- Sense of grievance triggered by personal experience of racism/discrimination/aspects of government policy
- Isolated from peers, associates with only one group of people
- Withdrawal from family members
- Additional vulnerability risk factors: Special Educational Needs, mental health issues, alcohol and drug abuse

Warning Signs

- Graffiti, symbols or artwork promoting extremist messages
- Accessing extremist material online
- Changes in behaviour, friendship and actions

- Young people voicing opinions drawn from extremist ideologies or narratives
- Use of extremist or hate terms to exclude others or incite violence

If a foster carer is worried about a child this should be discussed with the child's social worker or the supervising social worker.

For further information please see link and contact details below:

<http://www.kirklees.gov.uk/beta/community-safety-partners/prevent.aspx>

Prevent Hub 01924 483747

County Lines Exploitation

Children are being exploited by gangs involved in drug crime. They are used to courier drugs and money. These are some of the signs to watch out for:

- Persistently going missing from school or home, or being found out-of-area
- Unexplained money, clothes or mobile phones
- Excessive receipt of texts or phone calls
- Relationships with controlling, older individuals or gang association
- Leaving home or care without explanation
- Suspicion of self-harm, physical assault or unexplained injuries
- Significant decline in school performance
- Significant changes in in emotional well-being

If you are worried about a child placed with you please speak to their social worker and your supervising social worker.

For further information on county lines exploitation visit the links below:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/741194/HOCountyLinesGuidanceSept2018.pdf

<https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/what-is-county-lines>

Court

Children giving evidence in criminal proceedings

A child living with a foster carer may have to go to Court. They will be given what is known as special measures in Court. These should be explained clearly to the child and the foster carer. Please see useful link below:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/708133/ywp-adult-eng.pdf

Children making appearances in Court

A child in foster care may have to attend Court in relation to a criminal offence. A foster carer will need to support them to attend appointments and Court appearances.

Young People and the Law:

<https://www.gov.uk/browse/justice/young-people>

A foster carer appearing in Court

In certain circumstances a foster carer may be requested to give evidence to the Court. Accurate records kept by the foster carer will assist with this.

For a foster carers attending Court can be a daunting experience but the child's social worker and the supervising social worker will offer advice and support to prepare before the Court date.

Also see Confidentiality, Records and Record Keeping

D

DBS checks

A foster carer will have a DBS during assessment. This is then renewed every three years.

Members of the fostering household who are over 17 years old will also have a DBS check every three years. We are introducing an E-DBS update service which will require an annual update from each DBS holder. The cost of this will be covered by the Department.

Members of the support network who provide practical support such as baby sitting and taking children to school will also have a DBS check every three years.

It is the responsibility of the foster carer to make the supervising social worker aware of any new issues for them, members of the household or support network that could impact on the DBS. For example a new partner/significant relationship must be brought to the attention of the supervising social worker.

Delegated Authority

This will be agreed within the Placement Planning Meeting and included in the child's Placement Plan. The foster carer and the supervising social workers need to ensure that delegated authority is clear from the planning meeting asking questions as necessary for clarity. The delegated authority should be specific to the individual child and the foster carer will receive a signed copy of this from the child's social

worker. The foster carer should raise any issues about delegated authority with the child's social worker or the supervising social worker. Delegated authority will be considered as part of every Looked After Child review.

Permanency through long term fostering

The Care planning Regulations 2015 recognise long term fostering as a route to permanency on par with adoption for a Looked After Child. The foster carer makes a commitment for the child to stay with the family through childhood and beyond meaning the child is fully integrated into the family. The assessment for a long term foster carer includes identification of a support network of people that can offer practical support. These identified people will care for a child for longer periods of time if needed rather than a child going to respite in line with what happens in a family such as a child going to their Grandparents.

For further information on delegated authority please see the link to the procedures below:

Please refer to the procedures for further information on delegated authority.

Please see link below for more general information on delegated authority:

<http://www.fosterline.info/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Delegating-authority-to-foster-carers-Things-you-need-to-know.pdf>

Domestic Abuse

Impact on children of living with domestic abuse

The wheel below will help a foster carer understand why a child who has experienced domestic abuse may display certain behaviours.



Supporting a child who has experienced domestic abuse

How the foster carer responds to a child such as using a loud voice can trigger memories of being at home resulting in the child behaving in a certain way. In this example if a foster carer talks quite loud naturally it may mean adapting this to talk quieter. It is important that a foster carer is able to understand the reasons behind behaviour rather than focusing on the presenting behaviour. The child's social worker or the supervising social worker will be able to give further guidance and support to a foster carer on caring for an individual child.

It is important for a foster carer to have open, developmentally appropriate discussion with a child about healthy relationships.

For further information and resources for supporting children from violent homes please speak to your Supervising Social Worker.

Abuse in young people's relationships

Young people aged 16 and 17 are included in the Government definition of domestic violence and abuse:

'Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members¹ regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse:

- **Psychological**
- **Physical**
- **Sexual**
- **Financial**
- **Emotional**

'Controlling behaviour is: a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.'

Coercive behaviour is: an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.'

Abuse within young people's relationships is commonplace, they can be more accepting and, or dismissive of this than adults. Social networking is used more in young people's relationships as a method of exploitation and control but they often do not recognise this. Young people also often lack an understanding of sexual consent.

Impact of abusive relationships on young people

- Physical injuries
- Fear
- Isolation
- Low self-esteem
- Depression
- Self-harm
- Poorer educational attainment
- Substance use
- Earlier sexual intercourse
- Reduced contraceptive use
- Potential to impact on future relationship behaviour

A Looked After Child may already be impacted by some of the factors listed above. Looked After Children are vulnerable to abusive relationships due to their life experiences such as they may come from a home where domestic abuse, particularly physical violence is viewed as normal within a relationship.

What can prevent a young person becoming involved in an abusive relationship?

- Talk about relationships to help them distinguish between healthy and

unhealthy relationships

- Challenge stereotypes and attitudes
- Promote the consistent message that abuse is not acceptable
- Build supportive, empowering and non-judgemental relationships with young people
- Increasing self-esteem and positive coping strategies

Further useful information/links:

Impact on children of living with domestic abuse and young people and domestic abuse see link below:

<http://thehideout.org.uk/>

<http://www.equation.org.uk/resources/>

For more information and resources on abuse in young people's relationship please speak to your supervising social worker.

The teen power and control wheel can be used along with the teen equality to wheel to discuss healthy relationships with a young person in your care. Link for equality wheel below:

Spiralling short film about a young couple's relationship

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=spiralling+film&&view=detail&mid=DD6D7EC6905586E6E806DD6D7EC6905586E6E806&&FORM=VRDGAR>

The spiralling toolkit can be used with the film and can be obtained from your supervising social worker.

Disruption

The number of moves which a child has to have during their childhood can have a long lasting effect on their stability and welfare throughout their childhood. All efforts should be made to prevent disruption of a placement. Any issues that could impact on the placement will be identified at the earliest possible opportunity and a placement stability meeting will be called to look at what support can be put in place to prevent the disruption.

Unfortunately, there can be circumstances which prevent a foster placement from working and being in the best interests of the child. This can lead to a placement disruption which means it has ended outside the time frame agreed at the start of the placement. A disruption can occur when the professionals involved with the child feel the placement is no longer meeting the child's needs or when a foster carer decides that they are no longer able to care for a child. An older child may also "vote with

their feet” and decide to leave the placement.

Wherever possible when a placement is recognised to be coming to an end, a plan should be developed to move the child on. A Foster carer should avoid ending a placement abruptly or in an unplanned manner wherever possible. If you decide to end a placement this should not be done without consultation/placement stability meeting. Following this 28 days’ notice will be required to give the service time to consider alternatives for the child. A foster carer will need to work with professionals to move a child on appropriately to another placement. Finding another placement can take a number of weeks and we would expect foster carers to be flexible even if they have given notice. It is good practice to ensure a period of introduction is arranged for the child to increase the chances of the placement being successful.

Where placements are disrupted there can be strong feelings about how things went wrong. This can be an extremely difficult time for all concerned and it is important to remain professional and objective to enable lessons to be learned by all parties to the placement plan.

For further information on disruption refer to the Kirklees procedures.

Driving Licence/Lessons for Looked After Children

The Looked After Children and Care Leavers Service will fund a provisional driving licence for a young person. If a young person is working towards their Pathway Plan and has funded 10 driving lessons the Service will fund another 10. Please discuss this with the social worker or personal advisor.

Drug and New Psychoactive Substances (NPS)

A child can be tempted to take or experiment with drugs regardless of their home and social circumstances. It is often difficult to tell if a child is using drugs or legal highs, particularly when a child first takes drugs or only takes them occasionally.

Some possible indicators of drug and legal high abuse are listed below:

- Sudden changes of mood from happy and alert to sullen and moody.
- Unusually irritable
- Loss of appetite
- Bouts of drowsiness or sleepiness
- Increased evidence of telling lies or furtive behaviour
- Unexplained loss of money or belongings from the home
- Unusual smells, stains or marks on the body, clothes or around the house

Many of these signs can be easily confused adolescent development. It is important not to jump to the wrong conclusion but if a foster carer is concerned that a child could be using drugs or legal highs it should be discussed with the child’s social

worker and the supervising social worker.

Support for children/young people

The Base is a drug and alcohol service for young people and young adults in Kirklees (up to the age of 21). They provide friendly support around drugs, NPS (previously known as 'legal highs') and/or alcohol. The service also offers a provision for parents, carers and professionals who support young people in Kirklees.

The service is flexible and accessible. They offer appointments across Kirklees to ensure that accessing any of our services is made as easy as possible.

They are based at Brian Jackson House, 2 New North Parade, Huddersfield and Dewsbury Town Hall, Old Wakefield Road, Dewsbury.

<https://www.changegrowlive.org/young-people/the-base-kirklees>

Other resources:

Frank

<http://www.talktofrank.com/worried-about-a-child>

New Psychoactive Substances (formally legal highs):

<https://mentoruk.org.uk/legal-highs/>

E

Eating Problems

A child can have very different eating habits and preferences. Some will have large appetites whilst others may be reluctant to eat much particularly at the start of a placement. These differences are to be expected, and usually should not be a cause for concern. Some eating problems are serious and can have a damaging effect on physical and emotional health. The most common of these 'eating disorders' are detailed below:

Anorexia Nervosa

People who suffer with this have an extreme fear of normal body weight and feel fat, even when they have lost so much weight that it becomes obvious to others. They may starve themselves by only eating tiny quantities of food. Some stubbornly and angrily resist attempts to get them to eat or will pretend to have eaten when they have not.

Bulimia

People with Bulimia gorge themselves with food on 'binges' and then make themselves sick to get rid of the food. Children may also take large amounts of laxatives. They may not look overweight or underweight, which can make their eating problems difficult to detect.

Compulsive Eating Disorder

People who eat compulsively consume much more food than their bodies need or, use food for comfort or distraction. They may become very overweight, which can lead to serious medical problems for the future.

Signs that could indicate an eating problem

- Regularly skipping meals and obsessively counting calories
- Eating only low calorie food
- Avid interest in buying or cooking food for others
- Wearing very loose clothes to hide the body
- An obsession with exercise
- Dramatic weight gain or loss
- Food missing in large amounts from the fridge/cupboards
- Disappearing from the table directly after meal (in order to make themselves vomit)

The foster carer should ensure that members of the family eat together to help a Looked After Child's sense of belonging but to also pick up any indicators of an eating problem. It is important to promote healthy eating and sensible exercise so a child can model this.

Eating disorders affect many more girls than boys, but it is important to remember that boys do suffer from them too. If a foster carer thinks a child they are caring for may have an eating problem this should be discussed with the child's social worker and the supervising social worker as this can be a sign of emotional difficulty. Support can then be given to get additional help for the child if needed.

Due to the emotional impact of adverse life experiences Looked After Children can use food as a means of control, overeat, sneak or hide food. These signs do not mean that a child has an eating disorder but if a foster carer is worried about a child's eating patterns this should be discussed with the child's social worker and the supervising social worker. The foster carer should not punish a child for any of

this behaviour but give reassurance that food will always be available in the home.

Early Permanence Placements (EPPs)

EPP was previously referred to as 'foster to adopt' and is explored with all prospective adopters. The appropriateness of this is considered within permanency planning meetings for each individual child due to the impact moving has on a child's development. There is a legal duty to consider this option for all children with a plan for adoption where it is likely such as a sibling recently being adopted. With an EPP the adults take the risk rather than the child as there is no guarantee the child will remain there. Adopters with EPPs will have had a full adoption assessment and approval at panel. They will temporarily be approved as foster carers by the Agency Decision Maker (ADM). A social worker from the Adoption Team is the supervising social worker for these foster carers with support from the fostering service to reduce the number of professionals involved with the child.

E-Cigarettes

It is too early to identify any long term health risks from the use of or passive smoking of E cigarettes. A foster carer who uses an E cigarette cannot foster a child under 5 years old and these should not be used in the home. E cigarettes normalise smoking to a child. A foster carer needs to ensure any liquid used in these is safely looked away so that a child cannot access this.

Full guidance on this can be obtained from supervising social worker.

Education

Education is a universal entitlement and is a fundamental right for all children. Attending school is an important part of everyday life and can provide a point of stability for Looked After Children who have had their lives disrupted and live apart from their families.

It is well documented and evidenced that the educational performance and attainment of Looked After Children is well below that of children who are not in care.

Some of the significant disadvantage is a result of changes in placement and often changes in schools either prior to the child being taken into care, or as a result of them being taken into care. This lack of consistency is a major factor impacting on poor educational attainment and has an impact into later adult life.

Therefore it is essential that the foster carer provides the much needed stability and encouragement by working in partnership with schools and other children's services to improve the education attainment for the child.

It is vital, where possible, for a child to remain in their existing school, where they may have a network of friends and support. A foster carer will be required to take a child to school and any difficulties should be highlighted at the placement planning meeting.

A foster carer should be consulted and involved in all aspects of the child's education from ensuring the education provision is appropriate right at the start of the placement, to ensuring that this continues on a day to day basis. The foster carer should attend all parents' evenings, sports days and other school events to show their interest, commitment and support.

Early intervention in a child's education often prevents future problems and signals that their education is important. Taking positive action and avoiding delay should be a shared objective of everyone involved with a child.

It is not acceptable for a Looked After Child to be out of education. They should not be treated less favourably because they are in care. They should receive priority action by all involved to support their education.

Kirklees Virtual School

The Kirklees Virtual School supports all of our Looked After Children from the age of 3 to 18.

Every young person has a link to a named member of the team who will support and challenge schools and other professionals to ensure that every young person has access to an education provision that meets their needs and enables them to achieve their potential.

They will coordinate all initial PEP's and attend other PEP meetings as necessary, especially where there are issues with the progress a young person is making at school or college. They will be involved in supporting all school moves and should be involved as early as possible if you have any concerns.

You should know who this person is and be able to contact them if you have any concerns, if not please contact the Virtual School on

01484 221580

Kirklees.VirtualSchool@kirklees.gov.uk

Role of schools in supporting Looked After Children

Clearly there is a need for all schools to prioritise and support Looked After Children. A Looked After Child is guaranteed their first preference of school and every school has prioritised Looked After Children in their admission criteria. The Social Worker will make any school applications as the Corporate Parent, supported by the Virtual School and it is essential that you are involved in these discussions.

Schools have a responsibility to enhance the understanding of their staff about Looked After Children and to promote their involvement in extracurricular activities and clubs.

Attendance at planning meetings and reviews should be a priority for schools and there is an expectation that schools will release staff to attend meetings for these vulnerable young people. Every school should have a designated teacher for Looked After Children who should maintain close links with the foster carer and social workers. The foster carer should seek the advice of the Virtual School if they are experiencing difficulties. Every school should also have a designated governor for Looked After Children. Every school should have clear policies and guidelines for liaising with external agencies and communicating with the foster carer and social workers. Schools should keep the foster carer informed by:

- Making regular contact
- Having a clear plan for introduction and integration of a child into school
- Having a proactive approach to problems
- Sharing concerns at an early stage
- Jointly managing and writing the Electronic Personal Education Plan (EPEP) that every Looked After Child is entitled to.

The role of the PEP meeting (recorded in ePEP)

All PEP meetings should ensure that every Looked After Child receives access and support to services; contribute to stability; minimise disruption and broken schooling; signal particular and special needs; establish clear goals and who is responsible for achieving them; and act as a record of progress and achievement.

The PEP process should run concurrently with the Care Plan and should be set up in the first instance within 10 working days of a child coming into care. It should subsequently be reviewed in line with statutory reviews. Outcomes should be clearly recorded and named people should be allocated specific tasks with timescales to raise educational attainment.

It is essential that the foster carer attends PEP meetings and actively participate in its completion, as this will ensure that there is regular communication between home and school. The foster carer should be given a copy of the completed PEP by the Social Worker.

Role of the foster carer supporting Looked After Children with education

A foster carer plays an essential role in supporting the child with education. It is vital that a child's educational arrangements are prioritised and discussed with the social worker and the supervising social worker prior to placement. The foster carer should establish and maintain close links with the child's designated teacher and social worker.

Kirklees wants the best outcomes for all Looked After Children so has clear expectations of the foster carer to enable them to achieve, these are:

- Recognising the educational strengths and weaknesses and needs of each child
- Keeping schools informed of changes and emerging problems
- Helping the child to express their concerns or aspirations and advocating on their behalf
- Encouraging the child to develop their talents and recognise their achievements no matter how small
- Responding quickly to requests from school for meetings
- Ensuring attendance at school through establishing clear expectations of attendance, punctuality, uniform, and completion of homework
- Ensuring that attendance is promoted and supported, including taking the child to school
- Liaising with other agencies if non-school attendance is an issue
- Not taking family holidays during term time
- Providing an appropriate learning environment including a quiet area for homework and the required resources such as Internet access
- Providing learning opportunities outside the home such as visits to libraries and museums
- Ensuring the child's ethnicity and background are considered and supported when making plans
- Demonstrating a positive interest in a child's education daily
- Attending parent's evenings and encouraging where appropriate birth parent's involvement
- Supporting school's policies on discipline and dress
- Supporting homework by reading with a child, offering advice and making sure they complete set work
- Supporting school events
- Rewarding achievement
- Discussing any issues with the child's social worker and supervising social worker at the earliest opportunity. Seeking advice regarding a child's school and any difficulties they may be experiencing through the Kirklees virtual school.

- Providing positive messages about the benefits of lifelong learning by celebrating and sharing your own learning achievements.

School Exclusions

If a child is excluded from school for a fixed period it is the duty of the school to inform the foster carer, in writing within one day, of the reasons for the length of the exclusion. Whilst the child is excluded the school must:

- Provide appropriate work for them to do at home
- Put in place measures to try and support the child to avoid future exclusions
- Provide the foster carer with the name of a contact person should they wish to appeal the exclusion
- Be clear about the length of the exclusion and the date and time the pupil should return to school

Please ensure that the Social Worker and Virtual School are notified immediately if this happens and work together to ensure that the situation is resolved as soon as possible. If you are concerned that a young person is at risk of exclusion please contact the Virtual School to discuss your concerns

School applications/changing schools

These are made by the child's social worker as the corporate parent, supported by the Virtual School. The foster carer can input into this but the child's social worker, Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) and virtual school need to agree this.

Holidays

Looked After Children cannot be taken on holiday in term time

Pupil premium plus

The Pupil Premium plus is allocated to the Virtual School Head for all Looked After Children. They have the responsibility of allocating this funding to schools to support them to raise the achievement of Looked After Children. The Virtual School works with each educational setting to agree how pupil premium plus funding will be spent to meet the needs identified in the child's EPEP meeting. Examples of this support might be 1:1 tuition in English or maths, targeted reading support, revision sessions.

Equipment

A foster carer will be provided with the essential items of furniture and equipment needed to care for a child. There are maximum amounts available for this equipment and if a foster carer wants to opt for more expensive equipment they can fund the additional amount. These items include:

Bed (no mattress) -£200
Mattress -£100
Wardrobe £150
Chest of drawers- £100
Cot/cot bed (with mattress) - £150
Cot mattress (after each placement) - £50
Steriliser- £50
Monitor- £50
Safety gates - £20
Moses basket- £50
Car seat- £250
Pushchair/pram- £250
Fireguard - £30
High chair- £60
Bottles - £30

Specialist equipment for a disabled child would be discussed with the Disabled Children's Service

This furniture and equipment is purchased by the fostering service and is on loan to the foster carer so if they cease to foster the equipment needs to be returned.

If a foster carer has furniture or equipment that is no longer needed the fostering service will support for this to be passed on elsewhere. If a foster carer has furniture or equipment that is no longer serviceable they are expected to dispose of this.

For guidance on safer sleep for babies please refer to the Lullaby Trust:

<https://www.lullabytrust.org.uk/safer-sleep-advice/>

Also see Babies for advice on car seats

F

Foster Carer Agreement

See section A of the Handbook

Fostering Network

The Fostering Network is a charity working throughout the United Kingdom to promote and improve quality of the foster care services.

Kirklees provides membership to the Fostering Network for all foster carers. Once a foster carer has been approved they will receive an individual membership pack. If a foster carer does not receive this they need to speak to the supervising social worker. Membership includes:

- Access to online resources
- Four magazines per year
- Email updates
- Helpline for any fostering related query
- 24 hour Legal protection insurance and helpline
- Access to an online community
- Regional forums and workshops
- Discounts on things such as family days out

Kirklees also uses the Fostering Network Independent Support Service to offer support to foster carers or identified members of the support network if they are subject to any allegations.

For further information on the Fostering Network visit the website:

<https://www.fostering.net/>

Fostering Panel

The core work of the Fostering Panel is to:

- Consider the assessment of any prospective foster carer and to make recommendations to the ADM as to whether they are suitable to foster
- Consider the first annual review of approval for a foster carer after the first year of practice and subsequent reviews as required
- Consider amendments to a foster carer profile when there are significant changes in the approval status of the foster carer
- Consider long term matches of a child with a foster carer
- Consider service recommendations of termination of a foster carer approvals arising from concerns regards practice
- Acknowledge resignations of an approved foster carer due to other circumstances.

The Panel also has oversight from an independent standpoint of the overall practice and performance of the fostering service in the recruitment and retention of foster carers and overall delivery of service.

A foster carer is expected to attend Fostering Panel and answer the questions asked of them. The foster carer will see the Panel questions in advance and be given time to prepare answers with support from the assessing or supervising social worker. In the waiting room the foster carer can view a folder that explains Panel and introduces members. At Panel members will introduce themselves before the foster carer is asked the questions.

The Kirklees Fostering Panel consists of social workers, education professionals, health professionals, elected members, foster carers and other independent members.

Independent Review Mechanism (IRM)

The (IRM) is a review process which prospective foster carers and foster carers can use if they do not agree with the qualifying determination given to them by the fostering service provider. A qualifying determination' is a determination made by a fostering service provider that it does not propose to approve a person as suitable to foster a child, or proposes to terminate or change the terms of the approval of an existing foster carer. The review process is conducted by a review panel managed by CoramBAAF on behalf of the Secretary of State for Education and is independent of the fostering service provider. A review panel will consider the case and make a recommendation to the fostering service ADM, who may or may not accept it.

G

Gaming

Also see Safe use of Information and Communication Technology

GDPR

The **GDPR** is Europe's new framework for data protection laws – it replaces the previous 1995 data protection directive, which current UK law is based upon. The EU's **GDPR** website says the **legislation** is designed to "harmonise" data privacy laws across Europe as well as give greater protection and rights to individuals.

Please see the following link which explains in detail this new piece of legislation and how it applies to the council.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation>

H

Health

The foster carer should receive all the information required to meet an individual child's health or developmental needs from the child's social worker. The child's social worker should also be able to provide information and give advice on specialist advisory or support groups. This should be discussed at the placement planning meeting.

The specialist nurses for Looked After Children (LAC) can be approached for advice and/or signposting. The team consists of school nurses and a health visitor, who have a wide variety of skills and knowledge. They can be contacted through the 'Looked after Children and Care Leavers Service' on 01484 221000. The Medical Advisor/Paediatrician(s) are available for advice via the LAC nurses or the social worker.

The child's social worker should ensure that the foster carer has a copy of the latest health recommendation plan, to ensure they meet their responsibilities and are aware of the child's health needs. Health issues should always be discussed at the Looked After Child review and any issues related to carrying out the actions in the health plan by the carer should be discussed at the earliest convenience and not necessarily wait for the next review.

When a child has attended the dentist, the date must be provided to the child's social worker by the foster carer as soon as possible, as there is a statutory duty to ensure they attend and this information is recorded. The date of the dental visit can also be given if more convenient, to the LAC health business support workers on the number above.

An emotional well-being screening tool called the 'Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire' (SDQs) is sent out to carers to complete on an annual basis, for children who have been in care for 12 months or more and are aged between 4 and 17. A young person version is also sent for children over the age of 11 years which is not compulsory, but provides an opportunity for their opinion to be taken into account. There is a statutory duty for the carer to complete their questionnaire and it should be returned as soon as possible, as it informs the forthcoming health assessment.

Support and advice is available to young people and carers for sexual health and substance misuse issues. This is provided by dedicated outreach workers within Kirklees. Contact can be arranged via the social workers or LAC nurses.

First Aid

Fostering households should have a basic first aid kit available in both the home and car (if they have one) to deal promptly with minor injuries. First Aid training is mandatory for primary and secondary foster carers and should be refreshed every three years.

Medication

The child's social worker should ensure that the foster carer is aware of all the details related to any medication the child takes and any allergies when a child is placed.

It is essential for a foster carer to record any medication a child is given, whether it is prescribed by the child's GP or not.

In order for a foster carer to accept responsibility to undertake procedures such as injections, administering rectal medication, tube feeding or other additional medical responsibilities the following criteria should be met:

- Any person with parental responsibility has given written consent
- The foster carer is willing to do the task
- The foster carer is instructed in the technique by a health professional, who is satisfied that the foster carer has understood the information and at that time is judged to be competent to undertake the specific procedure. The foster carer should also be aware of any possible adverse reactions to the medication or procedure and the necessary steps to correct such an occurrence

Safe storage of medication is essential, ideally in a locked cabinet out of sight and reach of children. This will be monitored by the supervising social worker through supervision, unannounced visits and the health and safety checklist. Under no circumstances should medication or drugs be left in a place where children can access them.

If a child moves placement, the carer must ensure in collaboration with the social worker, that the medication and instructions for use are safely transported with the child. The social worker must ensure that the new carer is aware of the medication and details for administration. Any issues should be raised with the LAC health team or social worker. The carer must register the child with a local GP as soon as possible, in order to allow for a continuation of care and ensure there is no delay in obtaining further supplies of medication if required.

Medical Consent, including scheduled immunisations and campaigns

Medical consent signed by the person/s with parental responsibility, is available through the 'Parental Agreement to Medical Consent' and occurs alongside the 'Placement Agreement and Plan'. This consent covers: emergency medical examinations and treatment, Regular medical examinations e.g. the Initial and Review health assessments, Routine medical treatment e.g. scheduled immunisations and planned campaigns for targeted groups and dental examination and basic treatment. Young people who are 'Frazer competent' can be offered the opportunity to consent for themselves in some cases. A copy of the consent form will be saved in the child's local authority and health records.

The foster carer should ensure that delegated responsibility has been recorded by children's social care, which then allows for them to sign for example; the scheduled immunisation consent form that is sent out by child health to the child's home, during routine immunisations sessions and campaigns. If the foster carer signs this form, it should be made clear they are signing as the foster carer.

A foster carer **should not** arrange or agree any other medical intervention or immunisation without a discussion with the child's social worker.

Medical Examinations

Looked After Children, will have an Initial Health Assessment (IHA) within 20 working days of coming into care. This is undertaken by a LAC Paediatrician, usually in a clinic setting. If the child is placed out of the Local Authority, a request may be made for the assessment to be undertaken by an equally qualified practitioner. The assessment is supported by the Looked after Children Nurses.

A mutually convenient clinic date will be arranged with the social worker by the Child Health Department. The social worker will arrange for the attendees including the parents (where appropriate), and carers to be present.

The 'Health Recommendation Plan' following the assessment will be stored in the child's social care file and be made available to the child's social worker, who will share and discuss this with the foster carer. A copy is also sent to the carer to be kept with the child's papers at the foster carer's residence. If the child moves placement the plan should always be sent with the child. The GP and Independent Reviewing Officer will also have access to the plan. The full assessment will be stored in the child's health record in Child Health.

Thereafter children up to age 5 will have a statutory Review Health Assessment (RHA) every 6 months and children and young people age 5 up to 18 years will have an annual health assessment. These assessments are carried out by appropriately qualified health practitioners, e.g. Looked After Child nurses, health visitors, school nurses or specialist nurses. The foster carer should ensure that they engage with the arrangements for these assessments to take place and agree to support any actions that arise from either the IHA or RHA that require their involvement.

The foster carer is expected to organise non-emergency medical treatment, including dentists and opticians, with the permission of the person with parental responsibility. If the person with parental responsibility believes a child requires non-emergency medical treatment, then they should make the necessary arrangements. However if the foster carer feels that the child is not getting the treatment they require, the foster carer should speak to the child's social worker or the supervising social worker. If the child requires emergency treatment the foster carer should make the necessary arrangements and then contact the child's social worker (see accidents). If the treatment is urgent the attending doctors will generally treat the child first and then ensure the consent issues are addressed. It is essential for the foster carer to keep abreast of medication taken by the child and any allergies, to ensure this information is passed to the appropriate personnel in an emergency situation.

A foster carer should record if there has been a medical incident i.e. hospital admission, consultant/ GP appointment and report this to the child's social worker.

Holidays

Looked after Children want to go on holiday and be involved in planning these. It is a requirement within the Care Planning Regulations for children placed long term to go on family holidays but Kirklees wants all Looked After Children to experience family holidays. It is expected a child will be treated as a member of the family and be included in family holidays. To assist with this a holiday allowance is provided annually for each child paid to the foster carer (**see allowances**)

The delegated authority paperwork will detail what the foster carer can agree such as a child going on a school trip. If something is not covered in delegated authority the foster carer needs to check it with the child's social worker and the supervising social worker before making any plans or consenting to anything.

Consent will not be given for a foster carer to take a child on holiday during the school term. A school cannot consent to a Looked After Child being taken out of school. Please see link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence/overview>

If a foster carer has a child placed long term and wants to take a holiday without the child arrangements will generally be made under delegated authority. They will identify someone within their support network to care for the child who has had a delegated authority assessment.

In circumstances where this is not possible due to the needs of the child or in rare circumstances when the foster carer does not have anyone to provide this care in their support network the process for requesting holidays detailed below applies.

Foster carers need to make holiday requests in writing giving four weeks' notice as detailed in the fostering agreement. These requests need to have been discussed with the child's social worker and supervising social worker. The foster carer needs to consider if this is an appropriate time to be going on holiday based on the child's needs. Where possible we would ask short term foster carers to take holidays in between placements to avoid disruption for children. All requests need to be signed off by the team manager for the child and the team manager for the supervising social worker prior to being forwarded to the placement team to identify an appropriate placement.

A foster carer can take up to a maximum of 28 days holiday per year (April- March). Anything above this needs to be discussed with the supervising social worker and will be unpaid.

Holidays Abroad

If a foster carer is considering taking a child on holiday abroad this needs to be discussed with the child's social worker and the supervising social worker giving plenty of notice. Obtaining a passport for a Looked After Child can be a lengthy and complicated process if they do not have one. The cost of the child's passport will be

covered so the foster carer should discuss this with the child's social worker.

If a child is accommodated under Section 20 both parents have to consent to the child going on holiday abroad. If there are ongoing legal proceedings, the Court need to be consulted.

The foster carer will need a letter from the child's social worker detailing that there is permission from the relevant Service Manager to take the child abroad in case this is asked for wherever they are travelling from.

Kirklees follows foreign office advice on holiday destinations. However, before booking a holiday destination the foster carer needs to check with the child's social worker as there may be destinations the foreign office do not advise against travel to but that Kirklees are not allowing children to travel to. Please find the link to the foreign office advice below:

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>

Other things to consider

There may be reasons why a holiday might not be in the best interest of the child. It may be too soon after they have moved in. A foster carer may think of a holiday as an exciting thing but due to the life experiences of Looked After Children it could create things such as fear or trigger something from their past. There may be things to consider such as can the child's dietary requirements be met in a chosen country. This is why it is important to discuss this with the child's social worker and the supervising social worker.

Also see Risk and Vulnerability Section for additional requirements when taking a child at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) abroad

I

Insurance

Foster carers need to make their home insurance provider aware of their role. Please find below a link to the Fostering Network guidance on this:

<https://www.thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/advice-information/being-foster-carer/home-insurance-foster-carers>

Kirklees has a corporate insurance provider. If a foster carer is having issues making a claim through their own insurance company this should be discussed with the supervising social worker.

K

Kirklees Fostering Network (KFN)

The KFN is an organisation run by Kirklees foster carers for the benefit of all Kirklees foster carers. All Kirklees foster carers get automatic membership.

The KFN run coffee mornings, support groups, events and a helpline.

For further information visit the website:

<http://thekfn.co.uk/>

L

Life Story Work

If a child has lived and grown up in the same family throughout childhood they will know about themselves, their family and the wider community. A child will maintain their heritage by having personal memories, family history, customs and stories; all of which is the foundation on which self-image and identity is built. A child living with a foster carer will have moved from their birth family and may have moved between different foster carers. The foster carer needs to support a child in their care to keep memories and information about their past safe to avoid confusion and promote identity. If a child has an unhappy past it can be tempting to protect them by encouraging them to forget this. A child will have happy memories from living with their family and other foster carers and needs to remember these. A child needs to understand why they are separated from family and if they have moved from previous foster carers, the reasons for this. This understanding helps them to overcome feelings that they are somehow to blame for the separation, allowing them to accept the past and move forward into the future with more positive hopes and aspirations.

Life story work is a way of supporting a child to maintain a good sense of their life journey and identity. It can offer children the opportunity to gain access to important information, express their wishes, feelings and fantasies, accept difficult areas of their life experiences, learn new ways to understand themselves and increase personal confidence and self-esteem. It can also help a foster carer to gain a better understanding of a child living with them. A wide range of people can contribute to the creation of a child's life story birth family members, social workers, teachers and you. Life story work includes:

- Gathering treasured objects, photographs, videos and mementoes
- Creating a written story, explaining the reasons for the child's moves and information about birth family members
- Communicating the story to a child in a meaningful way.

It is important that life story work starts with the present and positives before covering areas that might be more difficult for the child.

Formal life story work will be led by the child's social worker but a foster carer will input into this as a key person in the child's life and the one who the child will come to asking further information when the social worker is not there. The foster carer will need to support a child to engage in the work and deal with any emotional issues it

raises. The foster carer should be aware that carrying out life story work can raise strong emotions in the child. They can contribute to life story work by:

- Taking photographs and/or videos of special occasions and creating photo albums for children that include text setting out the date, names of people and their significance to the child; please see the section on photographs
- Recording information about the child's development, for instance when they walked, talked; what toys and food they liked;
- Making a **memory box** for a child containing various types of memorabilia, such as a special toy given to them by a parent, their hospital identification wrist-band from the time of their birth, a memento from a holiday, birthday cards, pieces of schoolwork, a first tooth

Memory Boxes

All Looked After Children should have a memory box. If a child comes to live with a foster carer straight from home they will need to start this. If a child comes from another foster carer they should already have one and the new foster carer will need to help them add to this whilst they are living there.

For further support with life story work or memory boxes the foster carer should speak to the child's social worker or their supervising social worker.

Long Term Family Finding

The Long Term Family Finding Team is dedicated to securing permanent placements for children who require permanency through long term fostering.

When a child cannot return home, live with another appropriate family member or be placed for adoption they are referred for a long term foster placement and a social worker from the team is appointed as the family finder. This social worker will remain involved with the child until a permanent placement is secured for them. This can mean remaining with the family that is currently caring for them or moving to a new family.

There is a clear family finding process underpinned by the The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review and Fostering Services (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2013. The link to view the Regulations can be accessed below:

http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2015/495/pdfs/ukxiem_20150495_en.pdf

There is a much greater emphasis on involving the child in the family finding task and it is likely they will be invited to their own family finding meetings and planning meetings where possible.

If a foster carer is already caring for a child short term and wishes to be considered to offer permanency through long term fostering this should be discussed with the supervising social worker.

Link to further information on long-term foster care and permanence:

<https://www.thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/policy-practice/practice-information/long-term-fostering-in-england>

Looked After Child Review

Every child foster care will have Looked After Child reviews, the timings of these are:

- Initial review within 20 working days of the child becoming Looked After
- Second review within three months of the initial one.
- After the second review every six months unless an early review is needed.

Every child has an allocated Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO). The role of the IRO is to ensure that a child's Care Plan meets their needs. They do this by chairing the reviews, ensuring the child has their say and to make sure people do what they agree to do.

The LAC review will consider the child's Care Plan/Pathway Plan, Permanency Plan, Personal Education Plan to ensure that all their needs are being met.

A child should be consulted about who they want to attend their LAC review. If information is needed from some professionals this could be sought in writing, it is good practice not to have too many people at this meeting as this can be overwhelming for a child. A child can choose to attend all or part of it and can have support from Children's Rights with this. They will also have a feedback form to complete ahead of the review and may need your support from the foster carer to complete this. The foster carer will attend the LAC review.

Looked After Children

If a child is in the care of the Local Authority, they are referred to as a Looked After Child. A child in foster care will be subject to legal terms under the Children Act 1989, these are:

- **Police Powers-** if a Police Officer believes a child is at risk of suffering significant harm; they can take them to a place of safety for up to 72 hours.
- **Emergency Protection Order-** can be granted by the Court if a child is considered to be in imminent danger. This lasts for 8 days and can be extended for a further 7 days.
- **Accommodated under Section 20 of the Children Act-** Parents have agreed to this or a child has been abandoned; Parent cannot provide a suitable home or UASC.
- **Subject to an Interim or Full Care Order-** Court Order has been granted and the Local Authority shares Parental Responsibility with the Parents.

Please see the link below for terms you will come across as a foster carer:

<http://www.frg.org.uk/need-help-or-advice/an-a-z-of-terms>

M

Marketing and Recruitment

Kirklees would like all foster carers to be involved in marketing and recruitment because everyone's experience is individual. There is an expectation that a foster carer receiving skills level 3 payments will be involved in this and they will be contacted by the recruitment team to assist. Involvement could be through a variety of mediums including newspaper, press releases, radio advertisements, posters in public places and social media.

Matching

Matching a child with a foster carer is done based on the child's needs and the identified strengths and vulnerabilities of foster carers. A foster carer will give input into a detailed profile that will assist the Placement Team when they are searching for placements.

All children need a positive identity so it may be in a child's interest to be matched with a foster carer which reflect their own in terms of race, culture, religion and language and can therefore help them build a positive sense of their own identity. If this is not possible the foster carer will receive support to ensure that they can promote this. The foster carer should provide multi-cultural toys, books, cards and any other items required to meet the child's need.

Sibling groups should be kept together whenever possible. Placements for a child from black and minority ethnic groups must ensure that there are clear plans for the child in terms of needs and that the foster carer has ability to meet these. Parents' wishes and feelings about the placement must be ascertained and given due consideration. However, if the needs of the child are in conflict with the wishes of the parents the needs of the child must be prioritised.

Media

As a foster carer you may be asked by the supervising social worker or the recruitment team to be involved in marketing and recruitment.

Occasionally the newspapers, radio or even television will approach the council to provide more detail about stories, events or activities it is involved in. This contact could be to ask certain questions related to national or local news stories of public interest. In these situations the council Communication Department will manage many any contact with the press and media.

A foster carer should contact the supervising social worker and/ or team manager if approached to provide an interview or comment on the foster carer role. This will enable a foster carer to be directed to any support needed to manage this. It also

gives the foster carer, the family and the Looked After Child protection against intrusion in your family life.

Also see marketing and recruitment

Mental Health/Emotional Well-Being

A foster carer needs to support a child's mental health and emotional well-being. The foster carer needs to identify, understand and support a child with any mental or emotional health issues. If a foster carer is concerned about the mental or emotional health of a child it should be discussed with the child's social worker. This could lead to an emotional wellbeing clinic appointment, if any additional support the child needs.

The website below contains useful information for a foster carer:

<https://www.minded.org.uk/>

Self-harm

A foster carer may be caring for a child who is already known to self-harm or begins to self-harm. A child may self-harm for lots of reasons, for example, because of feelings or thoughts that are difficult to deal with. For some it could be a release from the emotional pain or punishing themselves for something they feel bad about. Below are some examples of how a child may self-harm: cutting or scratching

- causing bruises
- banging their head against a wall
- punching a wall
- pulling out their hair
- burning

If a foster carer needs support caring for a child who self-harms or is worried a child may be self-harming this should be discussed with the child's social worker. The foster carer can also access training to assist with this.

Support for foster carers

Foster carers can access support from their Supervising Social Worker and the Kirklees Fostering Network (KFN).

There is also a confidential stress counselling helpline provided through the Fostering Network 0345 074 2799, please ask to be put through to the stress helpline.

Also see support

Mentoring/Buddying

There are experienced foster carers that have undertaken further training to become mentors. This scheme is currently under review but if a foster carer feels that they would benefit from this it can be discussed with the supervising social worker.

Missing from Care

Looked After Children often have a history of inconsistent parenting and poor adult role modelling which may lead them to display behaviours which can place them, and sometimes others, at risk.

One such behaviour is absconding, going missing or staying out beyond agreed times. The reasons for such absences are varied and complex and should not be viewed in isolation from a child's home circumstances and experience of care. It is important that you know the difference between **unauthorised absence** and **missing**:

Unauthorised absence

- Child is not where they are supposed to be and
- Child is contactable but they will not return and
- Child is not considered to be at risk

Missing

- Child is not where they are supposed to be and
- Child is not contactable and
- Child is at risk or is a risk to others

If a foster carer has exhausted all attempts possible to contact/locate the child they need to contact the police if a child is missing.

Foster carers should undertake:

- Searching own home, and immediate locality;
- Telephoning and sending a text message to the child's mobile phone and checking their Facebook/social media page if this is accessible;
- Checking the places frequented by the child;
- Making enquiries with the child's relatives;
- Making enquiries with the child's friends;
- Making enquiries with the child's school, college, providers of education or work placement, community groups or places of worship if appropriate;
- Making enquiries with the other children in the foster, residential or parental home to establish if they have seen or heard anything (this can also stop distressing rumours from circulating);
- Making enquiries with and obtaining further information from other carers and professionals involved with the child;
- Attending at addresses frequented by the child to see if they are there.

Useful things to know as a foster carer

- A child/young person who is at risk of going missing should have a missing risk assessment. This is completed by the child's social worker and should be reviewed after every missing episode. The police will have a copy of this and so will the foster carer. There will be steps within this plan for the foster carer to take individual to that child before contacting the police such as contacting a known associate. If a child is going to a respite placement the foster carer will need to share this with that foster carer.
- It is important that a foster carer records information and share this with the child's social worker such as names of new people the child is associating with.
- When a child is reported missing the police review this every six hours. This means they may be contacting the foster carer or visiting every six hours.
- A child who has been missing will be offered an individual independent return interview and The Kirklees Risk and Vulnerabilities will co-ordinate and determine who is best placed to carry this out. The allocated social worker is responsible for completing risk management plans to address and disrupt missing episodes. The foster carer will need to complete an incident form.
- The foster carers should ensure that they have photographs (portrait and full length) of a child in their care as the police will need these if a child is missing.
- The foster carer should be observant as to what a child is wearing when they leave the house as this will help the police

What information the police may want from the foster carer

- A description of the child/young person.
- Legal/Immigration Status.
- When the child/young person was last seen and with whom.
- A recent photograph.
- Telephone numbers including the child's mobile phone number if she/he possesses one.
- Names of family, known friends/acquaintances, addresses and telephone numbers.
- Details of previous absconding behaviour.
- Any prevailing medical condition for which the child is requiring on-going treatment together with name, address and telephone number of their GP.
- Any other circumstances which increase the risk to a child including information from previous risk assessments.
- Details of other people the child may be with, including descriptions, approximate age or names, if possible.

When a child returns from being missing

The foster carer should always welcome a child back following a period of being missing and make inquiries to their previous whereabouts. Any information given should be treated sensitively. If the return occurs in the middle of the night it should be followed up in more detail as soon as it practicable. The foster carer may feel upset or angry but expressing these feelings when a child returns/is returned is not appropriate. At this point the foster carer will not know what emotional state the child is in and expressing these feelings could make the child think they do not care. The incident can be discussed the following day when everyone is calmer. When a child returns:

- Remain calm
- Express that you were worried/you are glad they are home safe
- Offer food/drink

Also see Children's Rights section

P

Passports

Please find below the link to the Kirklees procedures on obtaining passports for Looked After Children:

http://kirkleeschildcare.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_passports_lac.html

Also see holidays section

Pets

See assessing and minimising risk

Placement Plan

The Placement Plan sets out the agreed arrangements for the care of the individual child placed. It also serves as a confirmation of what is expected from the foster carers and Children's Services and what has been agreed with the child's parent.

Also see delegated authority

Placement Team

The Placement Team receive referrals for all children requiring placements. Placement referrals can be planned or required in an emergency. The team do not work directly with the families, children or young people but have access to their life stories and work closely with the child's social worker, supervising social workers, foster carers, residential managers, service managers and commissioners to ensure

that the most appropriate placement available is identified.

The team identifies all placement types including:

- In house foster placements
- External foster placements
- In house residential placements
- External residential placements
- Respite foster placements for Looked After Children
- Respite foster placements for children at home with their families
- Assessment placements for parent and babies
- Secure unit placements for young people
- Short break placements for children and young people with disabilities
- 16+ placements for young people, this includes:
 - Supported board and lodgings
 - Supported accommodation
 - Supported tenancy
 - Floating support
 - Staying put

Post Placement Forms

These will be sent to the child's social worker and foster carer following every child placed and kept on the foster carer file. The content of these which will include positives and any learning will be discussed during supervisory visits. These will also be considered as part of the foster carer annual review.

Practice Development Plan (PDP)

A foster carer is expected to demonstrate the fostering competencies detailed in section A of the handbook. This will be monitored through supervisory visits and the annual foster carer review. If a foster carer is struggling with any of these appropriate support will be put in place. If a foster carer continues to not meet they will be invited to a meeting with the supervising social worker and manager and if necessary a PDP will be put in place. This will be a clear plan with timescales of improvements the foster carer is expected to make. This will be monitored through supervisory visits.

If a foster carer has any queries about this they should be discussed with the supervising social worker.

Promotion of Social and Emotional Development, Activities and Hobbies

Play is vitally important to any child's development, it is one of the ways that young children learn and are children, what is most important is that they are given the attention they have previously lacked, and they are encouraged to play and learn and develop through play. The foster carer will need to provide a child with appropriate toys to aid this development. A child may require toys aimed at children lower than their chronological age due to their early life experience and missed play opportunities. If a foster carer is unsure or concerned about a child's skills in this

area this should be discussed with the child's social worker or the supervising social worker.

The foster carer should have knowledge about a child's development and activities that they enjoy from the placement planning meeting. The foster carer needs to promote the activities and hobbies of a child placed in their care. Activities and hobbies provide children with the opportunity to build their social skills. If a child is placed who does not have any known interests or hobbies the foster carer will need to encourage them and provide them with opportunities to try different things out. It is expected that a portion of the child's allowance should be spent on activities (**see allowances**).

R

Resilience

Resilience can offer a child a 'cushion' against difficult life experiences and help them to thrive in spite of difficulties. Some children are naturally resilient. The foster carer will need to support a child to develop this due to their early life experiences. Protecting a child against adversity may not always be possible, but increasing their resilience is one way of helping them to overcome setbacks and improve their life chances.

Resilience is developed through:

- A sense of belonging
- Positive self-esteem
- A sense of self efficiency

Promoting Resilience in Looked After Children

This can be built by ensuring stability so that the child can develop positive, nurturing relationships, feel in control of their lives and allow them think about their future in a positive way. This is achieved through:

- Supportive relationships with at least one adult
- Supportive relationships with family, especially siblings and grandparents
- A committed adult other than a parent who takes a strong interest in the child and who can act as a mentor or role model
- The capacity to develop and reflect on their life experiences
- Talents and outside interests and hobbies
- Positive experiences of school
- Positive friendships
- The capacity to think ahead and plan for their lives.

The foster carer can support a Looked After Child with all of the above.

Safe use of Information and Communication Technology

The internet is an amazing resource which enables children to connect, communicate and be creative in a number of different ways, on a range of devices. However, there are risks online. These will vary depending on a child's age and online activities. Looked After Children may be more vulnerable to these risks because of behavioural or emotional difficulties, or because of the people they are in contact with.

Children need a certain amount of privacy but also need adult involvement and supervision in their daily lives. The same general parenting skills that apply to the "real world" also apply while online. If a foster carer is concerned about a child's online activities this should be discussed with them. If a foster carer feels that they do not have enough knowledge about computers and the Internet this should be discussed with the supervising social worker. If a child tells a foster carer about an upsetting message, person, or website encountered whilst online, they need to help them to avoid problems in the future. The foster carer should record the incident in the daily log and report it to the child's social worker.

A foster carer should consider the 4 Cs when a child living with them is using the computer or other electronic devices:

- **Content** – is it age appropriate, is it reliable, is it legal. Talk to the child placed about appropriate and inappropriate content.
- **Conduct** – is the child showing respect for other people online and aware not to give out personal information to others online
- **Contact** – is a child being cyberbullied. It helps to be familiar with how to report this and how to block abusive users. Discuss with a child that new friends made online may not be who they say they are. If a child has been approached sexually online you should report to CEOP www.ceop.police.uk
- **Commercialism**- make sure children are aware of hidden costs they can be incurred online. Encourage them to keep their personal information private, learn how to block both pop ups and spam emails, turn off in-app purchasing on devices where possible, and use a family email address when filling in online forms.

The foster carer should encourage a child to discuss if something online is bothering them and reassure them that they will not get into trouble. The foster carer should show interest in, and discuss websites and apps a child is using.

Sexting

Sexting is when a young person sends the following to a friend, boyfriend/girlfriend or someone they met online:

- Naked photographs
- Photographs in underwear
- Sexual photographs

- Rude text messages or videos.

Sexting is illegal.

Further information

Safe use of Information and Communication Technology is covered in the Safe care Policy and should be individual to the child. Please see links below for further information on Internet safety

<http://www.kirkleessafeguardingchildren.co.uk/internet-safety.html>

Sexting

<https://www.childline.org.uk/explore/onlinesafety/Pages/Sexting.aspx>

Respite and Holiday Placements

Respite is the term used when a child has regular agreed periods away from their main placement as part of their Care Plan. Holiday placements are when a child spends a period of time away from their main placement as the foster carer has taken a holiday.

In both circumstances relevant information about the child and paperwork, including any risk assessments should be shared with the respite or holiday foster carer by the placement team, main foster carer and the child's social worker.

If a foster carer is providing a respite or holiday placement they are expected to follow the same routines and boundaries as the main foster carer to provide consistency for the child.

Also see allowances

Risk and Vulnerability

Looked after Children can be vulnerable to Exploitation, which can include criminal exploitation as well sexual exploitation, due to their history and experiences before becoming looked after. They may have lived in a chaotic and dysfunctional household (parental substance misuse, domestic abuse, parental mental health issues, and parental criminality). They may have a history of physical, sexual, emotional abuse and neglect. They will have suffered loss and possibly bereavement. They may have low self-esteem and self-confidence.

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

CCE is not defined in law but is a term that has come to be associated with 'county lines'. The government definition of county lines is set out below together with our definition of child

criminal exploitation, which is increasingly used to describe this type of exploitation where children are involved.

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas [within the UK], using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of 'deal line'. They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move and store the drugs and money and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons.

Child criminal exploitation occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into any criminal activity:

- in exchange for something the victim needs or wants.
- for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator.
- through violence or the threat of violence.

The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Child criminal exploitation does not always involve physical contact, it can also occur through the use of technology.

The criminal exploitation of children is not confined to county lines but can also include other forms of criminal activity such as theft, acquisitive crime, knife crimes and other forms of criminality.

What is Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)?

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).

The definition of child sexual exploitation is as follows:

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

Like all forms of child sexual abuse, child sexual exploitation:

- can affect any child or young person (male or female) under the age of 18 years, including 16 and 17 year olds who can legally consent to have sex;
- can still be abuse even if the sexual activity appears consensual;
- can include both contact (penetrative and non-penetrative acts) and non-contact sexual activity;
- can take place in person or via technology, or a combination of both;
- can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence;
- may occur without the child or young person's immediate knowledge (through others copying videos or images they have created and posting on social media, for example);
- can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and children or adults. The abuse can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time, and range from

opportunistic to complex organised abuse; and

- is typified by some form of power imbalance in favour of those perpetrating the abuse. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, sexual identity, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources

Boys and Girls can be subject to CSE and it is Child Abuse.

Possible signs of CSE and CCE

- Going missing/returning late
- Missing school/not taking part in education
- Physical injuries such as bruising
- Unexplained gifts/new possessions
- Associating with other young people at risk of [missing and exploitation \(CCE, Gangs, CCE, trafficking\)](#)
- Having older boyfriends/girlfriends. Under 16s cannot be in a sexual relationship
- Sexually Transmitted Infections
- Mood swings/changes in emotional presentation
- Drug and alcohol misuse
- Lot of time spent online
- Multiple mobile phones

A foster carer needs to be aware of these possible signs and that a combination of some of these in a child can indicate possible [Child Exploitation](#). If a foster carer is worried that a child is [vulnerable](#) or at risk of being exploited this needs to be discussed with the child's social worker or the supervising social worker.

Risk Management Plans

If risk of harm through child exploitation is identified a meeting will be held and the foster carer will be included in this. The allocated social worker for the child will undertake a risk and vulnerability risk assessment and from this an intervention plan is formulated. The risk assessment needs to be sent to the risk and vulnerability team in order for appropriate support and advice to be offered to the child, carer and allocated social worker. The foster carer may be asked to do things as part of this plan, for example ensuring a child hands their mobile telephone in at night time. This Plan is reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that risks /vulnerability are being managed and reduced. Team Managers and social workers for the child are responsible for chairing the meetings and updating the intervention plan.

The Kirklees Risk and Vulnerabilities Team encourage social care practitioners to consider Contextual Safeguarding when completing their risk management plans and risk assessments. Contextual Safeguarding is an approach to understanding, and responding to, young people's experiences of significant harm beyond their families. It recognises that the different relationships that young people form in their

neighbourhoods, schools and online can feature violence and abuse. Parents and carers have little influence over these environments, and young people's experiences of extra-familial abuse can undermine the parent/carer and child relationships. Therefore children's social care practitioners need to engage with individuals and sectors who can offer support and reduce the risks/vulnerabilities for the child.

Taking a child at risk of CSE abroad

If a child is known to be at risk of exploitation on police systems a signed letter is not sufficient for the foster carer to take them abroad. The foster carer and allocated social worker should be given prior notice of travel plans (dates and destinations) before travel so they can inform the police and this can be added to the police systems. Any child with a police CSE Flag should be stopped at any port they go through.

CSE training

E-learning on CSE can be accessed through the Kirklees Safeguarding Children's Board website and this needs to be completed by all Kirklees foster carers. The foster carer will need a log in and password to access this. The foster carer can discuss learning from this and any issues raised with the supervising social worker. A link to the training can be found below:

<http://www.kirkleessafeguardingchildren.co.uk/child--sexual--exploitation.html>

Other useful websites/links

Parents against child sexual exploitation (PACE)

<http://www.paceuk.info/>

Barnardo's spot the signs

http://www.barnardos.org.uk/get_involved/campaign/cse/spotthesigns.htm

Marie Collins Foundation

<http://www.mariecollinsfoundation.org.uk/>

CEOP Thinkuknow

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sC4Nn_mYKu0&feature=youtu.be

Further resources can be obtained from your supervising social worker.

Also see county lines exploitation and missing from care

S

Sex Education and Relationships

A foster carer is expected to assist in the ongoing education of Looked After Children with regard to sex and relationships. This includes both discussion of the facts and providing opportunities to discuss worries about relationships.

All schools have a sex and relationship policy which has been agreed by school governors and senior members of staff. It explains what and how children are taught in Personal, Health and Social Education (PHSE) classes. It is important that the foster carer has a copy of this policy is familiar with its content, so that whatever is taught in school can be followed up at home.

Young people may also get confidential advice on sex and relationships from their local GP, sexual health clinic or sexual health outreach nurse. The sexual health clinic can provide advice and access to treatment around sexuality transmitted infections, contraception through a drop in clinic or appointment system.

If a foster carer needs further information, advice or guidance this can be obtained from the child's social worker, supervising social worker or the sexual health nurse.

Please see below link to a short film that can be used to help children understand consent:

<http://www.examiner.co.uk/news/west-yorkshire-news/want-sweet-sexual-assault-victim-11131209>

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT)

A foster carer should support the child to have open discussions about sexuality. For young people aged 13-19 there is a group called Yorkshire Mixtures Youth, the link to this is below:

<https://www.kirkleessafeguardingchildren.co.uk/lgbtq.html>

Also see domestic abuse- abuse in young people's relationships

Short Breaks

Kirklees Short Breaks Scheme is a scheme that offers short term respite care for families who have children with additional and complex needs because of a disability or chronic health condition. It is important that children with additional needs have access to alternative family based placements for short periods so they can be continue to have their needs met within a family environment

Having a short break allows the whole family to have a break knowing that the child with complex needs is being well cared for in a family environment. A break can be for one day, a weekend or a couple of weeks: as a regular event or as a one off. By spending time away from their family the child or young person will also have the opportunity to access different activities in the community or a different setting which will help to promote inclusion and independence.

If a foster carer or someone they know are interested in finding out more information about becoming a short breaks foster carer this can be discussed with the supervising social worker.

Social Media

Facebook and other forms of social media such as Twitter and Instagram are popular means of communication. These are used by companies, adults and children. There are lots of positive benefits but with these come some risks and challenges in terms of keeping children and information safe. If a foster carer uses social media sites it puts them in a better position to understand what a child might be doing and help keep them safer online.

In Kirklees a prospective foster carer will be subject to social media checks as part of the assessment process. If a foster carer has social media accounts these need to have high security settings. Confidential or disclosing information about Looked After Children must not be shared on social media as this could potentially compromise their safety and well-being. A foster carer needs to be mindful of what they access and share on social media.

The following tips will help the foster carer keep themselves and Looked After Children safe when using social media:

- On Facebook the foster carer can be 'friends' with a child in their care so monitor the Facebook page;
- The foster carer can get to know the sites that the child uses. If a foster carer does not know how to log on, get the child to show them. The foster carer can find out more about the site and whether there are settings to block out objectionable material;
- If a foster carer understands how to use privacy settings for their own Facebook profile they can ensure that the child can hide their profile in searches and block unwanted contact;
- Facebook allows users to sort your friends into different lists so that they can control which list of friends or contacts see what. This could be used as a safety mechanism but could also be misused to prevent a foster carer seeing

something

- The foster carer should work to create openness about social networking with the child, encouraging them to tell them if their family is in contact with them online. The foster carer can ask to see the messages that are being sent.

There are some simple steps that a foster carer can take to mitigate the negative aspects of using social networking sites for the child:

- Ensure that the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) 'panic button' has been installed on any Facebook profile. The panic button is an application aimed at children and young people that allows them to easily report suspected abuse to CEOP and Facebook. The application has to be added by the user even if they are a child.
- Posting of photographs that give out clues as to where a child lives or goes to school should be avoided as this could help others to trace the young person;
- Never allow a child to arrange a face to face meeting with someone they meet online without parental permission. If a meeting is arranged, make the first one in a public place and go with the young person;
- Have the computer situated in a shared 'family' space such as the lounge and ensure that all computers have updated virus protection;
- Many modern mobile phones have the ability to connect directly to the internet. Some mobile phone operators sell phones with filtering software included;
- The foster carer should make sure that everyone in the household who is using social networks is aware of their security settings and how to change them if they need to;
- The foster carer should make sure that all children in the household know not to download programs to the computer without checking with them first;
- The foster carer should talk with the child about internet safety and privacy.
- The foster carer should establish common sense rules for the child's use of the internet;

The Home Office has produced a website for children about safety and the internet, see the link below:

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>

Social Work Visits

The child's social worker and the supervising social worker will work closely together. This will enable them to offer the foster carer any support to meet the needs identified in the child's Care Plan.

A newly approved foster carer may be visited fortnightly for the first three months

(following placement being made) and these visits may be conducted by different professionals from children's services e.g. Placement Support Team workers.

The foster carer and supervising social worker will discuss the frequency of visits after this period and this will be agreed by the Supervisory Social Workers team manager.

There will be at least one unannounced visit each year.

The supervising social worker will see the child placed alone to discuss how the placement is going and identify if there are any issues.

The foster carer can find more information on what to expect from the supervising social worker from reading the procedures.

Special Occasions

A foster carer needs to bear in mind that different families, cultures and religions have varying attitudes to how birthdays and festivals should be celebrated. The foster carer can find out from birth parents what their views are and if the practice is very different from that of the foster carer it should be discussed with the child's social worker to decide how to celebrate the occasion. The decision should be based on the needs and wishes of the child.

Foster carers should reward and celebrate the achievements of Looked After Children for instance success in academic examinations or sports.

Staying Put

A Staying Put arrangement is when a young person who was an eligible Looked After Child prior to their eighteenth birthday continues to reside with the former foster carer.

The Staying Put arrangement extends until:

- the young person first leaves the Staying Put arrangement;
or
- the young person reaches their twenty-first birthday, if continuously, and still living in the arrangement

The only exception to the above is when the young person is undertaking an agreed programme of education or training when they reach their twenty-first birthday. In such cases then there may be some negotiation to extend that arrangement to avoid significant disruption for that young person, at a crucial time.

At eighteen the young person is no longer looked after as they are an adult. Staying Put arrangements are not regulated by the same Regulations, Standards or guidance as foster placements.

Staying Put is a three-way partnership with the primary arrangement being between the young person and the former foster care. The Local Authority acts in a facilitating and supporting capacity.

The principles behind the idea of Staying Put

These are:

- Improving the support for a child making the transition to adulthood, and enabling young people to remain with the foster carer beyond the age of 18.
- Staying Put is generally the best way of promoting stability in preparation for transition to adulthood for those living in foster care at 18.
- It enables Looked After Children to experience a transition to independent living that a peer living in the birth family would have

Staying Put is something that Kirklees hopes will happen for most young people in foster care.

The criteria for a Staying Put Arrangement

The criteria is straightforward, a young person must be :

- an eligible child i.e. have been Looked After, aged 16-17, and have been in care for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14.

AND

- living in a foster placement on the day before their 18th birthday

This criteria applies whether the foster placement was long term or short term and includes placements made at any time up to the young person's 18th birthday.

If the situation meets the criteria then only in exceptional circumstances would the Local Authority decide not to support such an arrangement i.e. only when it would not be consistent with the young person's welfare.

Planning for a Staying Put Arrangement

Staying Put legislation places a duty on all Local Authorities to help everyone involved in a child's life to plan ahead for Staying Put as much as possible. Staying Put should be discussed at the planning stage of all long term placements and for short term placements when there's a possibility that the young person will still be there at 18. The foster carer and child/young person should be provided with information and discussions should be had at various stages of the life of a placement, to enable both parties to make informed decisions about entering into Staying Put arrangements. These discussions should take place at any pathway planning meetings for the young person, and at the foster carer annual reviews, but can also take place on a less formal basis in between.

In all situations where a Staying Put arrangement is being requested the arrangement should be considered by the Looked After Child's Service Manager

following a referral being made to the placement team by the child's social worker. This should be made at least six months before a child turns 18.

Support for Staying Put Arrangements

The young person and foster carer person will continue to get Support during a staying put arrangement.

The young person's support will come from the Care Leavers service; this will usually be via a Personal advisor. They will see the young person regularly i.e. at least 8 weekly and offer support, guidance and advice in keeping with their pathway planning.

The level of support, should reflect the fact that the young person is now 18 and an adult, and is moving towards being more independent, so, although visits will continue to be at least 8 weekly, there should be a gradual reduction in the level of support needed over time.

The Staying Put carer will continue to get support from the supervising social worker if they are still a foster carer or a social worker specifically for Staying Put if not.

There is a support group available for Supported Lodgings and Staying Put carers that focuses on the issues that arise in living with older young people

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Financial Support

Please see the relevant section in the Staying Put policy, which outlines in detail the

financial support in place for Staying Put arrangements.

For further information the foster carer can speak to their supervising social worker.

Support

A foster carer will have regular visits at an agreed frequency from the supervising social worker. Outside of these visits the supervising social worker can be contacted by telephone and additional visits arranged if required. If the supervising social worker is not available a duty worker is available daily for matters that cannot wait. The duty worker can be contacted on 01484 221000 and asking for Placement, Permanency and Support Service.

The child's social worker will also have an agreed frequency of visiting the child. If the child's social worker is not available a duty worker is available daily for matters that cannot wait. The foster carer needs to make sure they know which team the social worker is from to access the duty worker.

Office hours are Monday to Thursday 8.45-5.15 and Friday 8.45-4.45.

If there is an emergency situation outside of office hours please contact the Emergency Duty Service **01484 414933**

Various support groups are available to the foster carer through Kirklees and the KFN, details of which will be sent to the foster carer. Any queries can be discussed with the supervising social worker. There is also a support group available for birth children.

Mentoring/buddying is also available from experienced and trained foster carers.

Foster carers can also access a mentoring scheme (***see mentoring***)

Placement Support Team (PST)

The Placement Support Team is a Multi-Disciplinary Team which has 3 Senior Social Work Practitioners, 1 social worker, 1 Community Care Officer, a Child Psychotherapist, Child Psychologist and a Senior Mental Health Worker. As of 7th October 2019 this team moved from the Fostering service to the Looked after Children's service.

The focus of the team is to prevent placement disruption, promote placement Stability and promote the emotional health and wellbeing for Looked After Children. The Placement Support Team offer the following interventions to foster carers to support them in understanding and meeting the emotional and psychological needs of the children placed with them:-

- Attend new foster carers' transfer meetings
- Undertake pre-placement work with a newly approved foster carer around the generic issues of parenting Looked After Children
- Provide targeted early support to a new foster carer with the first child placed,

as a continuation of the above, if required.

- Attend pre-placement meetings for long-term foster carer matches and to provide, if required, proactive, child specific, early support strategies, through an allocated Placement Support Practitioner.
- Telephone consultations, where appropriate on referred cases
- Provide input within a package of support for proposed placements
- Direct work with new and experienced foster carers around the use of dyadic, attachment- based parenting/ behaviour management strategies based on Bruce Perry's work, Dan Hughes' Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy (PACE Model) and "Emotional Warmth" strategies
- Psycho-educational exploration of specific difficulties including going Missing, CSE, sexualised behaviours, low self-esteem, Loss, anger, low level generalised anxiety, low level deliberate self-harm, disaffection, parent/child conflict
- Specific work with foster a carer to address practice development issues in discussion with the supervising social worker
- Identification of the therapeutic needs of children placed with foster carers and support to access an appropriate resource to meet any identified needs.

Clinicians on the team will offer the following:-

- Clinical Consultations – focussing on identifying the emotional, psychological and mental health needs of looked after children.
- Emotional Wellbeing consultation clinics/ Drop in sessions for the child's social worker and supervising social worker
- Training Workshops for the foster carer, child's social worker and supervising social worker.

How the Placement Support Team is accessed

- Referrals can be made by any professional involved with the child, foster carer, family (with the knowledge of the allocated social worker for the child)
- Foster carers should speak to their supervising social worker if they wish to access the placement support team and this has not already been offered as part of the placement plan.
- Role of placement support should be considered at placement planning meetings.

Support for Children/Young People

The info 4 Care Kids website helps Looked After Children understand their rights and entitlements while they are in care. It includes first-hand experiences and presents animated information on key topics, such as health, education, changing placements, keeping in touch, identity and moving to independence. The link can be found below:

www.info4carekids.org.uk

Also see *Children's Rights, mentoring, social work visits*

The financial position of each foster carer will be unique as some will be in receipt of benefits and others will have income outside of fostering. Foster carer fee and allowance payments can impact on Income Tax and welfare benefits, if applicable. A foster carer needs to be familiar with HMRC guidance on tax and relevant guidance on welfare benefits. A foster carer can seek individual advice from HMRC, welfare benefits service, other foster carers or the supervising social worker.

In order to complete your tax return you will need to keep your fortnightly remittance slips. If you require an annual financial statement please contact the Finance team

PPSS.Finance@kirklees.go.uk

For further information on completing your tax return please access the government link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/qualifying-care-relief-foster-carers-adult-placement-carers-kinship-carers-and-staying-put-carers-hs236-self-assessment-helpsheet>

For benefits advice please click the link below:

<https://www.betteroffkirklees.org.uk/#/home>

T

Training

There is an annual foster carers training brochure which contains a broad range of mandatory and optional training courses. The majority of the courses are accessed via an electronic training calendar. Full description of the courses available and how to book onto training is explained in the Foster Carers Training Brochure.

The foster carer can discuss current expectations regard training attendance with the assessing social worker and supervising social worker.

Personal Development Record (PDR)

A foster carer should keep record of any training or support groups attending using the PDR template. This should be used to reflect on this and how learning will be put into practice. The PDR is discussed as part of supervisory visits and will be considered as part of the foster carer annual review.

Cancelling Training

If a foster carer fails to attend training it costs money. If a foster carer cannot attend a booked course this needs to be discussed with the supervising social worker. If a foster carer cannot attend training due to illness or an emergency they should notify

the Learning and Development Unit.

U

Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)

UASC who enter the UK seeking refugee status alone are usually accommodated by the Local Authority. As a foster carer you may be asked to care for a UASC. The information available to a foster carer on a UASC could be limited. The supervising social worker can offer further support on things such as meeting cultural needs and applying for permission to stay in the UK.

Further information can be found on The Fostering Network, please see link below:

<https://www.thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/advice-information/looking-after-fostered-child/looking-after-unaccompanied-asylum-seeker-children>

W

Welcome Packs

All foster carers will be asked to complete a 'Welcome to our home' booklet during assessment. This can be used to show children and parents the family and home prior to a placement being made. This booklet should be updated as required. A parent needs and wants to know where their child is unless it is too much of a risk. A foster carer needs to empathise with this parental need to know where and who a child is living with.

Please discuss with your Social Worker any queries you have about making your Welcome booklet.

Well-Being for Carers

New in 2019 is access for foster carers to the Kirklees Council Employee Healthcare scheme. This is an in-house occupational health and wellbeing department providing a range of services to foster carers. As part of the Councils wellbeing commitment to employees we have extended this to foster carers and we want to actively encourage you to take responsibility for your own health and wellbeing and offer you support to help you stay healthy, prevent illness and cope with difficult and challenging times.

As part of a new approach, as a foster carer you can now "self-refer" for many of our services at an early stage. This includes In house counselling services, Physiotherapy and HEAL. Please refer to your health care pack that you will have received from the Employee Health Service as to services available and how to self-refer.

They have a team of health professionals from a variety of backgrounds - not just doctors and nurses. This allows them to work with our carers as individuals and means they can give specific advice about a person's health.

They will always respect your confidentiality and the Fostering Team is not informed of your contact with the scheme and reasons for doing so. However, they actively encourage carers to discuss their health with their Supervisory Social Worker as they know keeping you healthy and caring is often requires a two way approach. We hope that you will see the benefit of the council's new direction and that self-referral will be beneficial to you.

FAQs from Foster Carers

1. What do I do if a child arrives with no clothes or inadequate clothing?

See allowances

2. If a child changes school do I get help with school uniform?

See allowances

3. Who do I ring if I have a problem with payments?

See allowances

4. How does my looked after children get to contact if I don't drive/or picking my own children up from school prior to the contact team been involved.

This needs to be discussed with the child's social worker and your supervising social worker.

5. What do I do if my supervising social worker and child's social worker are not available, and I have an issue?

See support

6. Who do I contact out of hours in emergency – telephone numbers etc?

See Useful telephone numbers

7. Do I get help with equipment and furniture?

See Equipment

8. What mileage can I claim for?

See allowances

9. How do I get delegated authority and what does it cover and when should I receive the paperwork of the child. i.e. Placement Plans etc ?

See delegated authority and Confidentiality, Records and Record Keeping

Abbreviations

ADM Agency Decision Maker

Cafcass Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service

CEOP Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre

CICC Children In Care Council

CPCC Child Protection Case Conference

DLA Disability Living Allowance

EEP Early Permanence Placements

EDS Emergency Duty Service

IHA Initial Health Assessment

IRM Independent Review Mechanism

IRO Independent Reviewing Officer

KFN Kirklees Fostering Network

Ofsted Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills.

PA Personal Advisor

PHSE Personal, Health and Social Education

PST Placement Support Team

PDR Personal Development Record

PDP Practice Development Plan

RHA Review Health Assessment

UASC Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

Useful telephone numbers

Emergency Duty Service 01484 414933

Fostering Network 020 7401 9582, 24 hour legal and stress counselling helpline
0345 013 5004

KFN 24 hour helpline 07866 635147.

Kirklees switchboard 01484 221000

Prevent Hub 01924 483747.