

SUPPORT AND SUPERVISION

SUPPORT

Foster Carers need support and help with the difficulties that arise from the special demands of the fostering role. Fostering makes demands on the whole family and can be the cause of stress in family relationships. You and your partner provide the first and most important supportive role. Foster carers can often find that their usual support from family and friends is not as effective as usual because confidential details cannot be shared and not everyone understands the demands of the fostering task. Foster Carers are therefore encouraged to support each other (especially if they are a single carer) and are supported through a number of different means

(a) **Fostering Social Worker**

Your fostering social worker, the family placement team and other foster carers are all part of a support network. Normally the social worker that undertakes your assessment as a foster carer will go on to become your fostering social worker. During the assessment you will however have met other members of the team at information evenings and during training. You will also get to know the regular members of the duty team especially if you are a short-term carer. All these workers are committed to supporting foster carers and they will offer what ever help is possible. You will meet the team manager at your annual review or at training events.

There is a worker on the duty desk every working day between 9 and 5 (4:30 Friday). There is an answerphone that will always be checked on the next working day. ☎ 0116 2759 321.

If you want to be put in touch with other foster carers who live in your area or who attended your training course please ask your fostering social worker.

(b) **The Fostering Network**

All carers are automatically members of the FOSTERING NETWORK (previously known as the National Foster Care Association) and can phone for advice ☎ 020 7620 6400 (24 hour service) or you can fax on ☎ 020 7620 6401 or email info@fostering.net.

There is a web sit at www.fosteringnet

The Network represents the views of Foster Carers to the press, radio, television and parliament. It produces a quarterly magazine called "Foster Care", which you will receive a copy of, and arranges meetings throughout the UK.

Fostering Network also produces a number of useful leaflets and guidance books

(c) **The Leicestershire Foster Care Association (LFCA)**

This is affiliated to The Fostering Network and was formed in 1975. The Leicestershire Foster Care Association produces a regular News sheet "*Grapevine*" and organises meetings throughout the year. Membership is automatically paid for all foster carers. There is active liaison between the Leicestershire Foster Care Association and the department, both of whom are committed to developing the quality of foster care. The association offers a 24-helpline. ☎ 079 260 75686 or can be contacted through www.lfca.org.uk. Their email address is lfca2007@btinternet.com.

(d) **Emergency Duty Team (EDT)**

When ever the offices are closed the Emergency Duty Team is available. This group of social workers covers any social emergency in the City, the County or Rutland. There are times when the service is extremely busy. The team members will offer help and advice if you have a medical emergency needing consent to treatment. They will advise you on when to call the police if you have a child who has gone missing. They will also offer help if you have a problem with a contact visit such as the transport not turning up.

The EDT will always be very reluctant to remove a child from your care unless there is a child protection or health and safety issue. It is always better if children can have planned moves organised by people who are known to the child. EDT do let us know that you have called them and we do offer any necessary support on the next working day

(e) **Supervision**

The Department has a policy in relation to the recording of visits and discussion between the fostering social worker and foster carers. This process combines support, advice and guidance together with agreements on training needs.

The supervision record is completed by your fostering social worker and then you are given a copy. You and your fostering social worker will draw up a supervision timetable as soon as your approval is finalised.

(f) Unannounced Visits

The majority of visits made by your fostering social worker will be made by appointment and will be to offer support and supervision. There is, however, an expectation in the fostering regulations that at least one unannounced visit is made to every foster home each year. A health and safety check is usually done at these visits.

(g) Visits by the Child's Social Worker

The child's social worker will also make regular appointments to see you; some of these visits will be to discuss the progress of the child, to assess how contact is going, to keep you up to date with developments. The child's social worker is also expected to do some unannounced visits. They will also routinely want to see the child on their own and will periodically ask to see the child's bedroom.