

## **THE FOSTER CARER AND THE CHILD CARE SOCIAL WORKER**

You and your foster children are of great importance to the Children and Young People's Service and you should expect to receive support, help and advice from social work staff. Many foster carers, even after years of fostering, are faced with situations where they require additional support and an opportunity to talk about the problems they are having.

Children will normally be placed with you by a social worker from either **Children's Access** or the **Child Care Operations** team.

Because social work is about the provision of help and care to people who are facing difficulties, the task of a social worker is complicated and demanding. The social worker is often faced with competing demands and commitments and that may mean that, on occasion, the social worker is not always immediately available. Should you need to contact the child's social worker and she is not immediately available: -

1. Leave a message asking that they contact you on their return – speak to the team clerk or the team's duty officer
2. Let them know whether or not the situation is urgent
3. If the situation will not wait ask to speak to the team manager
4. If they are not available speak to your fostering social worker, the family placement duty officer or the family placement team manager

Each child who is placed in foster care has a named social worker that is responsible for the care plan of that child. The social worker is responsible for visiting the child or young person to help them understand their situation. The social worker's role is also to act as a link between the foster child and their own family. The social worker will encourage links with other important people in the child's life such as school, doctors, friends and relatives, but you will have the day to day management of these contacts. At times the social worker will call to see you and the foster child together. At other times the social worker will need to see the young person alone to find out how they feeling and about how life in foster care is progressing.

Fostering is not a simple task and the demands made on foster carers can, at times, be very heavy, especially when things do not seem to be working out well. It is at times such as this that your fostering social worker will be particularly important to you. They will be available to talk issues through with you and to offer advice. It is really important to discuss any difficulties, however trivial, as these can often be dealt with before situations become more serious

**In the event of your feeling concerned about the practice of any social worker, you should contact their team or service manager.**