

Emergency Fostering Scheme

Procedure for Emergency Duty(ED) carers & Children's Social Care & Safeguarding Teams and the Fostering Service

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Emergency Fostering Scheme will be the responsibility of Warwickshire Fostering Service. This procedure sets out the expectations and roles of the Emergency Foster Carers, Children's Social Care and Safeguarding and Fostering Services.

2. Specification of the Emergency Fostering Scheme

- 2.1 The emergency fostering scheme provides access to foster care placements out of office hours for children and young people who are in crisis and where immediate safeguarding measures are required to keep them safe. The scheme can also be used to avoid young people spending unnecessary time in custody.
- 2.2 The nature of the scheme means carers need to be available at very short notice to take children and young people. This is often evenings, through the night, weekends and bank holidays. All young people must have their own bedroom.
- 2.3 The emergency foster carers are dedicated to take emergency placements via the Fostering Placement Hub and Emergency Duty Team (EDT) and will be approved Emergency Foster Carers only.
- 2.4 Emergency carers need to be approved for all age ranges (0-18 years) and either gender. They must be willing to accept the placement of any child or young person deemed suitable by the Fostering Placement Hub or an Emergency Duty Team social worker/manager. Foster carers must be available when on active duty and cannot refuse to take a child or young person unless there is a clear risk identified and evidenced.
- 2.5 Placements are made on the basis of crisis and are therefore very short term. They should end and the child should be moved to another placement by midday on the next working day or after 72 hours if it is a weekend. The children's team will be responsible for collecting the child and supporting them to move to another longer term placement if this is required.

3. Recruitment and assessment of emergency foster carers

- 3.1 The recruitment, assessment and annual reviews for emergency foster carers will be the responsibility of the fostering service. Foster carers will be approved by Warwickshire Fostering Panel. Upon approval they will be allocated a fostering service social worker. Foster carers will be provided with consistent and accessible support.

4. Supervision, training and support for emergency foster carers

- 4.1 Emergency foster carers will be allocated a fostering social worker who is responsible for providing supervision every 3 weeks for new carers during the first year of approval and every 6 weeks thereafter emergency foster carers will be invited to fostering support groups
- 4.2 Emergency foster carers will be expected to attend the same training as for mainstream carers.
- 4.3 The Emergency Duty Team social workers have a vital role in supporting emergency foster carers out of hours. Therefore foster carers will be seen as team members of the out of hours service.
- 4.4 When needed Emergency Duty Team social workers will provide support to foster carers out of hours.

5. Emergency foster carer rota and decision to place a child

- 5.1 The fostering service will ensure that for 365 nights a year, two emergency foster carer households are on duty and available to take a child or young person.
- 5.2 Two sets of carers will be on the rota at any one time. When actively on the duty rota, carers will be ready to take a child when needed (within an hour). The other carers will be resting but might be contacted as a last resort by the Fostering Placement Hub or Emergency Duty Team social worker, for example when another carer is ill and a replacement is required to cover their absence.

- 5.3 The emergency fostering scheme rota will be completed by the fostering service, at least three months in advance. The rota will be sent to the EDT team, the Placement Hub, the FSW and the foster carers. The rota will be designed so that carers are on the rota for two weeks and resting for two weeks. Where possible carers will be alternated between being on first call and second call.
- 5.4 Once the rota is circulated, it is the foster carers' responsibility to arrange any swaps and inform the rota organiser. The rota organiser will then reissue the rota to all parties as above. It is expected that emergency foster carers will arrange holidays when they are resting; this will not affect the resting fee.
- 5.5 The decision to place a child in an emergency foster placement should be made in working hours by the Placement Hub Manager or out of hours by the team manager or operations manager within the Emergency Duty Team.
- 5.6 Fostering Services will ensure there is at least one emergency duty foster carer available for the Emergency Duty Team.
- 5.7 When EDT make placements with emergency foster carers, they will send a notification through to the Fostering Placement Hub and the allocated FSW to inform them at the start of the next day. This includes a brief report on how the foster carer responded to the child at the time of placement
- 5.8 When the Fostering Placement Hub make placements with emergency carers, they will send an email with a copy of the referral to the EDT so that EDT can support the carers out of hours (see 4.3)

6. Payments to emergency foster carers

- 6.1 Emergency foster carers will receive a payment of £213.29 per week when active /on duty in line with skill level two. When resting, carers will receive a payment of £84.70 per week.
- 6.2 In accordance with other foster carers, age related maintenance allowances are paid in addition to the above when a child is placed, to cover the cost of food, reasonable transport, activities etc.
- 6.3 Foster carers do not receive personal allowances and therefore items such as clothing will need to be agreed in advance by the team manager or operations manager within the Emergency Duty Team or by the children's team.
- 6.4 All foster carers are self-employed and they are responsible for arranging suitable sickness/critical illness cover.