



## Out of Hours Support Policy

### Relevant legislation and guidance

The Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011, regulation 17 states:

'The fostering service provider must provide foster parents with such training, advice, information and support, including support outside office hours, as appears necessary in the interests of the children placed with them.'

National Minimum Standards 21 specifies that there should be an effective out of hours advise and support service for foster carers.

Slough Children First (SCF) provides an Out of Hours telephone advice and support service to foster carers who are experiencing a difficult situation and need assistance outside of office hours.

The telephone advice and support service is run solely by fostering staff, specifically for fostering issues and a member of the team will be able to;

- Talk a foster carer through a situation they are experiencing
- Provide advice and practical support over the phone
- Speak to the child or young person which can often help de-escalate a situation
- Identify an experienced foster carer to help, who may be able to come to the home to offer immediate support.

The remit of the service also extends to the Emergency Duty Team (EDT) who may contact the service if a placement is needed for a child or young person. The Out of Hours (OOH) duty worker will look at the vacancy list and consider which carers are available to meet the child/young person's needs, considering the matching criteria. If a suitable match is identified the OOH duty worker will discuss the potential match with the duty manager and gain authorisation for the placement.

The Out of Hours telephone advice and support service operates from 5 p.m. to 11 p.m. Monday to Friday and from midday until 11 p.m. on weekends and bank holidays.

**The telephone number for the Out of Hours Telephone and Support Service is 01753 690960.**

If foster carers have an emergency situation outside the operating hours of the OOH service, they should contact the Emergency Duty Service to seek their assistance.

**The telephone number for the Emergency Duty Team (EDT) is 01344 786543.**