

EMERGENCY FOSTER PLACEMENT SCHEME

The resource is a bed rotation-based scheme involving foster families providing an emergency foster bed. The carers are on duty for one week in any four week cycle. Children will have a maximum placement opportunity of seven nights/eight days but, can move sooner if an appropriate longer term placement is identified.

It is vital that children do not move between emergency beds. The nature of the scheme does not allow for placements to be extended beyond the seven night maximum. It does provide a time limited window of opportunity for emergency care planning.

AIMS – to provide a placement for children/young people between the ages of 0 and 18 who need an immediate foster placement and where a planned, matched placement with a foster carer cannot be made.

1. Foster carers will not be responsible for collecting unknown children from police stations etc. but will receive children into their homes accompanied by social workers with the appropriate placement information and delegated authority forms completed;
2. In instances where placements are identified during office hours, it is expected that carers will accept all placement referrals based on a suitable match. Careful consideration should be given where there are identified risks of fire starting or significant violence. The placing social workers will make reference to positive child care practice when determining risk and placement viability;
3. Emergency bed foster carers are expected to meet all reasonable transport needs for the young people in their care;
4. The Home Finding team will notify finance and all relevant people in the fostering service at the start and end of all foster placements;
5. Placements will be available for seven nights or eight days;
6. The carers will attend any emergency child protection, case planning or youth offender meeting as required. This will include supporting their transition from the emergency bed scheme. A separate bedroom will be available for emergency placements;
7. In the case of illness or holiday, the carer will advise the fostering duty worker that they are unavailable to take an emergency placement and payments will be adjusted accordingly;
8. The carer will provide appropriate care for children/young people in what are usually traumatic circumstances;

9. The emergency carer will carry a mobile phone to ensure that they can be contacted at all times of the night and day;
10. Emergency foster carers will receive normal maintenance payments and the fee element. There will be an additional payment of a £150 retainer for foster carers on the rota for that week, and £200 for the two week Christmas and New Year fortnight. The Fostering Team will provide this;
11. The emergency carer will keep a daily log or diary for the child and provide a brief written or verbal assessment report of the child as requested by the social worker;
12. Emergency bed carers will inform their fostering worker/duty fostering worker as soon as possible of any change to circumstances which may impact on their fostering role;
13. In normal circumstances it would be expected that the emergency bed carer will give 28 days notice if they no longer wish to offer this service.

The Fostering Support Team

14. Access to the emergency beds during the day is via the Home Finding Team. After hours it is via the Emergency Duty Service;
15. Additional support may be provided to emergency placements via fostering Social Care Workers during the day;
16. Fostering social workers/admin will monitor and intervene to ensure that correct payments are received by the carers.

Children and Families Teams

17. Placing social workers will advise the finance section of placement start and end dates and will complete foster payment authorisations as a priority for all children;
18. Every effort will be made to supply the carers with full accurate information on every child using the scheme. This will include delegated authority and placement information. A placement planning meeting should take place within 5 days of the placement;
19. A social worker will be allocated to any child placed in the emergency bed within one working day.