

## Communication: Supervisory visits to foster carers for foster carers

In line with the Governments recent easing of lockdown restrictions it is now felt that wherever it is safe to do so – support visits to foster carer households by Supervising Social Workers should resume as of the 7<sup>th</sup> September. The commitment and effort shown by our foster carer community over the last 4 months is fully recognised by the Senior Leadership Team and whilst every effort was made to provide support to you ‘virtually’ during this period we appreciate that face to face visits are integral to supporting and safeguarding you, your families, and the children in your care. It is clearly essential that these visits are undertaken as safely as possible and in full consideration of the risk that Covid 19 continues to pose to us all. Therefore, each and every visit will be subject to a risk assessment to ensure that the visits are conducted as safely as possible- your SSW’s will be in contact with you presently to complete these. Accompanying the risk assessments will be some basic safeguarding principles which many of you will have grown accustomed to over the last few months – these have been listed below.

- The SSW should contact the foster carer on the day of the visit to ensure that no one in the household is symptomatic as well as to provide assurance that they are well.
- Where weather conditions allow and confidentiality can be maintained consideration should be given to the supervisory visit taking place in the carer’s garden area if they have one.
- If the visit is to take place indoors social distancing should be adhered to by all parties at all times throughout the duration of the visit. Consideration should be given to how this will be managed with mobile children who may be too young to understand the need to distance themselves.
- SSW’s should either wash their hands at the carers home or use antiseptic gel upon arrival and exiting the property.
- Efforts should be made by SSW’s to avoid touching door handles, cups and mugs, pens, or any items that could aid cross contamination.
- Consideration should be given to all parties wearing masks -particularly when there is a concern about an underlying health condition by either party.
- Carers and SSW’s are obliged to inform all parties if they or a member of their household has tested positive for Covid 19 or asked to self-isolate as a result of coming into contact with someone who has.

Every fostering household will be subject to a face to face visit in the month of September but, dependent on the needs of the household and upon consultation with you the carer, consideration will be given to alternating face to face visits with virtual visits for the remainder of the year. This decision is taken in recognition of the need to balance the need for much needed support with risk posed to you and your families.

Once again, I would like to thank you and your family’s for your ongoing commitment and hard work at this difficult time.

<b>Review / Contacts / References</b>	
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