**Children First Northamptonshire Face to Face Contact COVID-19 Risk Assessment Plan**

Following the change in the government’s position whereby advice has moved from *stay at home* to *stay alert* it is appropriate to review the Local Authority’s current position on face to face contact between family and children in care, in the majority of cases.

In considering resuming contact arrangements, the safety of all those involved (children, young people, families, carers and those who transport children to contact) will be planned for by following clear risk assessments and taking into consideration relevant government advice.

To manage the current risk and following recent research and guidance the decision has been made that the following groups of children should be offered supervised contact.

1. Children aged 0 - 5 years old
2. Children/Young People who are struggling emotionally with having no face to face contact with their parents and families, and the social work team deem it necessary for face to face contact to be facilitated.
3. Children who are transitioning to their permanent home i.e. adoptive home or return home to birth parents or family.

This risk assessment has been completed in line with the following guidance <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19>, which details the measures that must be in place before reopening a site.

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| **Risk: Transmission Through Contact** | Who | Measures taken: | Status |
| To create strategies for social distancing in contact centres by considering:   * Using rooms large enough to promote social distancing where possible. * Using outdoor space to minimise transmission. * Limit parent and children attending centres at one time. | All staff | * All persons included in the contact must have signed a contact agreement which provides guidance of how face to face contact can be reintroduced so the risks around COVID.19 can be managed and addressed. * Scheduling of contacts to avoid back to back contacts to avoid carers, parents and children gathering in one area. * Outdoor space to be used. * To reduce the risk of infection contacts will be restricted to a maximum of 1 hour. | Contact team are working with social work teams to create a timetable for contacts to avoid congestion in waiting areas.  Garden areas to be utilised in the contact centre; where possible.  Contacts to be held in the community in outdoor spaces where safe and appropriate to do so.  Guidance for a range of settings also includes reference to cleaning/ toys etc.  <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safe-working-in-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care/safe-working-in-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care-settings-including-the-use-of-personal-protective-equipment-ppe#how-to-work-safely-in-specific-situations-including-where-ppe-may-be-required> |

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| To reduce risk of exposure to COVID-19 by providing necessary PPE. | All staff | * Supplies are stored centrally in William Knibb and OAS and two members of staff have been identified to collect the PPE (Personal Protective Equipment). * PPE is located at the relevant contact centre and will be ordered on a weekly basis by the contact service 2 designated persons. * Parents will be provided with PPE and this must be worn by all parents and family members attending contact. * Children and young people attending contact will not be expected to wear PPE * Bins and areas for PPE storage have been identified in a designated * Relevant advice and guidance has been obtained from NCC Public Health consultant who liaising with colleagues in Public Health England. * PPE will be available at all contact centres for First Aiders. | PPE to be worn by parents/family members and contact supervisors in the contact areas - standard surgical masks (not-FRSM – Fluid Resistant Masks). Parents/family members will place the bag for the PPE and the contact service will place this in the bin provided.  The contact service have designated one person to order and pick up the weekly PPE from William Knibb and OAS. PPE will be  All staff who use PPE should have undertaken the on line PPE ILearn training.  Parents will be asked to bag used PPE up. Contact Service will dispose of used PPE in bins and areas that have been designated. |
| To promote social distancing contact will be restricted to small groups of no more than 2 parents/family members and 2 child/young person. | All staff | * Each individual contact will be supported by a risk assessment which is specific to that contact. * Contact arrangements should therefore be assessed on a case by case basis taking into account a range of factors, including the government’s [guidance on staying alert and safe (social distancing)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing) and the needs of the child. * Contact will only be provided to small group numbers to promote social distancing and support | Basic PPE to be worn by parents/family members and contact supervisors.  [social distancing guidelines](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/full-guidance-on-staying-at-home-and-away-from-others) should be read and adgered to by staff where possible. |
| The session will not be going ahead if anyone shows any symptoms of the coronavirus. | All staff | * Each individual contact will be supported by a risk assessment; which is specific to that contact. * The allocated contact supervisor will contact the children’s carers and the parents prior to each contact to check this information and record the discussions on Care First. * The contact supervisor will not allow the contact to go ahead if parents or children appear to be showing symptoms. * If a child attends contact and presents with symptoms of COVID.19 then the Contact Supervisor will contact the carers for immediate collection. The child will be safely located into an area; which ensures social distancing and the Contact Supervisor will supervise for the child until the safe collection. * If a child becomes unwell and requires a First Aider, then the PPE on site needs to be used. | The arrangements and agreement are clearly explained in the contact agreement and individual risk assessment.  If member of the child’s household or the family’s household is shielding and has received an NHS letter to confirm this then contact will not go ahead. The below guidance can be followed for relevant advice. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19#work-and-employment-for-those-who-are-shielding> |
| To establish procedures to ensure regular hand washing in accordance with guidelines. | All Staff | * Children and Parents are encouraged to wash hands when entering centre; after coughing or sneezing; after using the toilet; before and after handling food. | Hand washing routines established by all staff.  The arrangements and agreement are clearly explained in the contact agreement and individual risk assessment |
| No person should attend contact if they are shielding and a member of their household has received a letter from the NHS to advise they are shielding. (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19) | All staff |  |  |
| Alternative ways of supervising the contact to be explored and utilised. | Contact Supervisor,  Social Worker | * Has it been explored if the Foster Carer can supervise the session limiting the need to have the Contact Supervisor attending (limiting number of households in the contact session)? * Residential placement to supervise the contact session; where appropriate. | Regular discussions with in-house Fostering Services and Independent Fostering Agencies by the allocated Social Worker. |
| **Risk: Managing Cleanliness** | **Who** | **Measures taken** | **Status** |
| Cleaning to be undertaken in line with government guidance COVID-19: cleaning of non-healthcare settings.  Sanitiser and anti-bacterial supplies to be available in all contact venues. | Property Services,  Team Manager and Service Manager of contact service | The following will be available in the contact centres:  Hand sanitizer supplies  Anti-bacterial wipes / spray  Boxes of tissues  Staff who are required to use cleaning products they will also have to be provided with the Control Of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) safety information. | Property Services have been notified of the intention to open the contact venue  Property risk assessment has been updated.  Hand sanitiser and ant-bacterial has been ordered and will be restocked through liaising with the cleaning computer. |
| To ensure that the contact rooms and equipment are cleaned after each contact and reduce the risk of the virus. | Contact Supervisors | Contact staff to ensure that toys, books, chairs, doors, sinks, light switches, etc. are cleaned after each contact. Staff  should wear PPE whilst cleaning each article and should then dispose of the PPE in the bag provided. | The arrangements and agreement are clearly explained in the contact agreement and individual risk assessment.  Expectations of procedures to be explained to contact service staff in weekly meetings. |
| Ensure cleanliness of outdoor equipment is maintained | All staff  Property Services | * Where used by different groups of children, sanitiser is used by staff to wipe down all outdoor equipment. | Expectations of procedures to be explained to contact service staff in weekly meetings. |

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| Safe and clean transport to contact to be provided. | Contact Supervisors  Foster Carers  Social Workers | * Attendees to use their own means of transport (car, bike and/or walk)? * Parents to be advised to use public transport when no other means available. Then to   + Use relevant PPE   + Allow appropriate travel time (some services may be limited)   + Avoid eating and drinking * Contact staff to ensure their vehicles are kept safe and clean * Children and staff to be a safe distant apart in vehicles * Child to be seen safely into venue / agreed meeting point and hand over to Contact Supervisor / named person. * Staff will ensure that their cars are ventilated and windows are open if transporting children in their vehicles. * Staff to wear PPE when transporting children. | The arrangements and agreement are clearly explained in the contact agreement and individual risk assessment.  Expectations of procedures to be explained to contact service staff in weekly meetings and relevant services to be informed. |
| Periodic natural ventilation (flushing through the building with clean air) to reduce airborne contamination ensuring that site security is not breached during this activity. | Contact Supervisors  Contact Co-ordinators/Team Manager | * Contact Supervisors to open door and windows after each contact. * Reception staff to ensure doors and windows are opened after each contact. * Door and windows will be locked at the end of each day to ensure the properties are secure. | To be explained to staff during consultations and meetings. |
| Disposal of PPE after usage by Contact Supervisors and Parents/family members | Contact Supervisors | * Contact Supervisers will place their PPE equipment in bags provided. The Contact Superviser should place the PPE equipment in the bin; which is situated in a designated area. * Parents will be expected to place their used PPE into a bag and give to the Contact Superviser who will dispose on this (as above). | Expectations of procedures to be explained to contact service staff in weekly meetings. |
| **Risk – Support for staff to manage the transition to Face to Face contact** |  |  |  |  |
| To manage anxiety of staff members through the communication of expectations, process and procedures for day to day operation |  | * X 3 Staff meetings have been held to share expectations with all staff and to address concerns. This has included x 1 meeting chaired by the Service Manager. * Regular meetings timetables to allow staff opportunities to express concerns * Access to well-being and mental Health support communicated and shared with staff. * Staff to attend x2 weekly meetings with their supervisor and one meeting with their Service Manager. | Regular discussions with all staff will continue. |
| To share information detailing processes and procedures for day to day operation to reassure parents, courts and agencies of the steps taken to reduce and manage risk. | Service Manager and Strategic Manager, Children In Care | * Risk assessment to be shared with relevant agencies in place to mitigate risk of infection * Clear contact agreement in place. | Letter to be sent to parents and children when a date for face to face is arranged and documents agreed by SLT. |

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| To manage anxiety of staff members through the communication of expectations, process and procedures for day to day operation | Team Manager | * Staff meeting held (in person or virtually) to share expectations with all staff and to address concerns * Regular meetings arranged to allow staff opportunities to express concerns * Access to well-being and mental health support communicated and shared with staff. | Regular discussions with all staff have taken place. |

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STEPHEN TEE, SERVICE MANAGER, CONTACT SERVICE

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ABIGAIL MARSDEN, STRATEGIC MANAGER, CONTACT SERVICE