

Bedroom Sharing Practice Guidance

SCOPE OF THIS Guidance

This chapter details the procedures to be followed when considering the bedroom arrangements for a Looked After Child in a foster home.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011

Fostering National Minimum Standards 2011, Standard 10 and 15

Introduction

- 1.1 This policy confirms the procedures to be followed when considering the bedroom arrangements for a Looked After Child in a foster household. All **Children** Looked After should have adequate space and privacy and should be cared for safely. The National Minimum Standards (2011), Standard 10, specifically applies in this policy.
- 1.2 Standard 10 requires the fostering provider to make available foster carers who provide a safe, healthy and nurturing environment. Each child placed has his/her own bed and accommodation arrangements reflect the child's assessed need for privacy and space or any specific need resulting from a disability (10.1). Standard 10.6 states that each foster child, aged three years and over, should have her/his own bedroom. This is NOT a regulatory requirement and, if the child has the potential to display bullying behaviour or, is known to have been abused, or it is known that the child has shown sexualised behaviour towards another child, then the child's needs and the needs of all other children in the foster home are assessed before any decision is made to allow sharing of bedrooms. The decision-making process and the outcome of that risk assessment is recorded in writing. (10.6). The responsibility for undertaking this assessment lies with the supervising worker in conjunction with the children's social workers and the children.
- 1.3 Standard 15 requires fostering providers to ensure that a child placed in foster care is carefully matched with a foster carer capable of meeting his/her assessed needs. In many circumstances this will mean a child having his/her own bedroom. Children who have experienced trauma and loss need their own individual space, in addition to being part of a loving family, and this can most easily be achieved by having their own bedrooms. That said, there are some situations when children benefit from sharing a bedroom. One example is siblings coming into care, having been separated from their family, who may gain comfort and a sense of security from sharing a bedroom. Some siblings may never have had their

own individual bedrooms and not want this. Another situation might be family and friend foster carers where the benefits of a child remaining within their family/social network outweigh considerations for the child having their own room, as opposed to sharing with a sibling, or perhaps a cousin. In each instance the arrangement must be risk assessed as appropriate

In some circumstances, this may be identified as a child having his/her own bedroom. In other circumstances, the sharing of a bedroom may be risk assessed as appropriate.

2. Fostering Provider's Position

2.1 It is the view of this fostering provider, that whilst striving to achieve compliance with Standard 10.6, there will be some situations where this may not be appropriate or achievable for every child. In each situation the welfare and safety of the individual child(ren) must be the paramount consideration.

his will neither be achievable nor is appropriate in every child's circumstance.

3. Bedroom Sharing

3.1 When determining the appropriateness, of a child sharing a bedroom, the specific needs and wishes of the child should be taken into consideration e.g. enuresis, waking in the night, requiring the light on, wanting to share a bedroom with brother/sister. For a child in adolescence, the provision of privacy and adequate personal space should be considered are key considerations.

3.2 A child over the age of 5 years should not share a bedroom with a child of the opposite sex.

3.3 A child under the age of 18 months 2 years can share the foster carer's bedroom. Unless there are circumstances that require the child to remain in close proximity to the foster carers at night (for example the child having complex needs), children of 18 months plus should move to their own bedroom. If there are reasons for a child to remain in the foster carers' bedroom beyond the age of 18 months this needs to be documented in the Safer Care Plan and regularly reviewed.

3.4 **A child should not share a foster carer's bed in any circumstances.**

3.5 Arrangements that involve sharing a bedroom in holiday circumstances should be subject to a separate risk assessment. Similarly, the sharing of bedrooms, upon friends/family visiting the foster household, should be subject to a separate risk assessment. All of these arrangements should be detailed in the family Safer Care Plan which should be updated, signed and dated by the supervising social worker.

4. Documentation for Completion

4.1 The referral form should identify a Looked After Child's needs.

4.2 The Foster Carer's Safer Care ing Policy Plan and the Foster Carers' Health and Safety Assessment should both address the bedroom arrangements, within the foster household, and the space available for a looked after child.

4.3 The bedroom sharing assessment should be reviewed at least annually at the time of the carers' review and following any change of circumstances or a change of the child's presentation or behaviour. Any changes should be added to the Safer Care Plan.

5. Recruitment of Foster Carers

5.1 The recruitment of Foster Carers should take this policy into consideration from the initial enquiry stage.

6. Exceptional Circumstances

In exceptional circumstances, it may be necessary to act outside of this policy. Such a circumstance could, for example, involve the bedroom sharing arrangements for a sibling group. In such circumstances, the rationale for acting outside of the policy should be clearly recorded on the foster carer's file. The decision to act outside of the policy should be made by a senior fostering manager. the Group Manager (Fostering).

7. Records

7.1 A central record of children sharing a bedroom will be kept.

COVID 19

During the Covid 19 pandemic fostering households are expected to follow government guidelines regarding the isolation of anyone diagnosed with Covid 19. Foster carers will need to consult their supervising social worker to ensure that they are continuing to meet the needs of looked after children, whilst keeping everyone in the household as safe as possible.

Review / Contacts / References	
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