

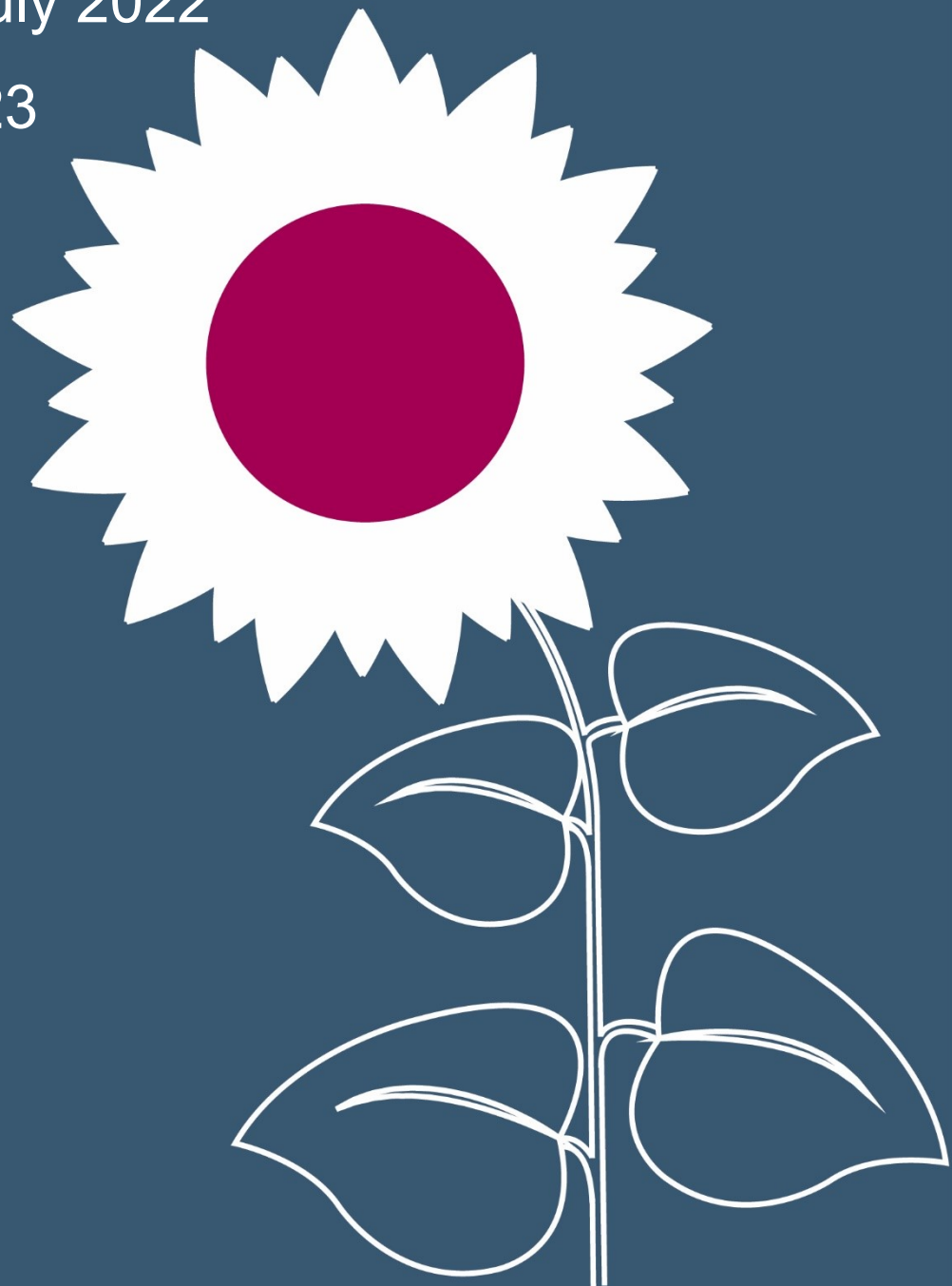


City of
Stoke-on-Trent

BABYSITTING / ALTERNATIVE CARE ARRANGEMENTS FOR A CHILD IN CARE IN A FOSTER CARE PLACEMENT

Tri x 5_1_18 July 2022

Review July 2023



Ref: CIC Procedures Overnight Stays

1 Introduction

Stoke-on-Trent Early Intervention and Children's Social Care recognises the importance of balancing the Local Authority's duty of care with the need to offer the child a 'normal' experience of family and social life.

- 1.1 It is the aim of this policy to offer clarity in decision-making and to ensure that children and young people who are in the care of Stoke-on-Trent City Council are adequately safeguarded whilst accepting the guiding principle that children in care should, as far as possible, be granted the same permissions to take part in normal and acceptable age appropriate peer activities as would reasonably be granted by the parents of their peers. Foster carers are therefore expected to make the same enquiries as any other parent would in similar situations.
- 1.2 Arrangements made for the alternative care of children in care should not subject them to multiple alternative carers/babysitters.

2 Alternative Carers Identified in Foster Carers Assessment

- 2.1 As part of the Form F assessment, prospective foster carers are expected to discuss members of their support network who they and/or their own children may visit, go on outings with, or who may care for the foster carer's own children. This would include any persons they may use as babysitters in the future. Prospective foster carer's are also asked to discuss who they would call on to support them in times of emergency to care for the child.
- 2.2 These person(s) would then be identified as part of the provision of support for the foster carers in the Form F assessment and would be included in the assessment.
- 2.3 In making the decision about who is identified as providing the main source of alternative child care the following will need to be considered:
 - The extent to which the individual concerned will be alone with the child
 - The regularity and frequency of contact such as caring while the foster carer takes up additional employment/provision of alternative care more than 6 times a year
 - Any relevant restrictions contained in the child's care plan or foster placement which restrict the child from particular activities
 - Foster carer's own knowledge or person concerned

- Any grounds for concern that the child may be at significant risk in the household concerned or from activities in question
 - Any other factors or characteristics which may make the child more vulnerable than any other children in similar circumstances
 - Knowledge about the individuals concerned, including whether they are properly qualified in any proposed activity/existing DBS.
- 2.4 If those identified within the assessment will be caring for the child/young person on a regular basis, they must be subject to an enhanced Disclosure & Barring Service Check.
- 2.5 For existing carers, where this information was not established at the time of the assessment, their proposed arrangements should be discussed with their supervising social worker as soon as issues arise and at their annual review. Any person who is identified as a regular alternative carer will be subject to an enhanced DBS check.

NB If the foster carer is not providing the majority of the care for the child, the placement for the child and the registration of the foster carer may need to be reviewed.

3 Assessment of Proposed Arrangements

- 3.1 The following aspects should be considered by foster carers in assessing the most appropriate arrangements for the child in care:
- Age of the child in care
 - How long the child has been in placement
 - Familiarity between child and proposed babysitter/alternative carer
 - Familiarity between foster carer and proposed babysitter/alternative carer
 - Vulnerability of child
 - Any risks the child may pose
 - Child's own wishes and feelings
 - Views of the child's parents
 - Health needs of the child
 - Complexity of the child's needs
 - Number of children babysitter/alternative carer is caring for.
- 3.2 Additionally the foster carer in consultation with the supervising social worker will make an assessment of the babysitter/alternative carer's suitability to care for the child by addressing the following points:

- Age of babysitter/alternative carer (that they are at least over 18 years of age)
- The experience of the babysitter/alternative carer is sufficient in terms of understanding the needs of the child and promoting their welfare.

PRACTICE GUIDANCE

Foster carers could consider reciprocal arrangements with other foster carers in order to ensure the looked after child is subject to consistent safe care.

3.3 Any decision to make an alternative care arrangement should demonstrate a consideration of the factors outlined in 4.1 and 4.2 and should be recorded on the foster carers' records.

Arrangements put in place should ensure:

- The babysitter/alternative carer has a contact number for the foster carer
- The babysitter/alternative carer has a contact number for Children's Services and vice versa
- Arrangements are made for the provision of medical consent should this be required
- The babysitter/alternative carer knows whom to contact in the event of an emergency if the foster carer is not contactable.

3.5 If alternative care arrangements are required in an emergency, foster carers should use those persons that have been identified as part of their assessment.

4 Notification

4.1 If the foster carer requires short term alternative care arrangements the child's social worker should be informed about the arrangement.

4.2 The foster carer should notify the supervising social worker that alternative care is required and should provide the detail of what arrangement is being made and the reason why alternative care is required.

5 Monitoring Arrangements

5.1 All alternative care arrangements should be reviewed regularly by the supervising social worker and discussed during the foster carer's annual review.

5.2 Supervising social workers will need to monitor the extent to which foster carers are using alternative care arrangements. If alternative care arrangements become a regular feature that has not been addressed during supervision or during the assessment or review process, supervising social workers will need to address this with foster carers.

6 Paying for Babysitting/Alternative Care Arrangements

- 6.1 Should there be any incurred cost as a result of a foster carer requiring babysitting/alternative care arrangements **no** reimbursement for this care can be sought from Stoke-on-Trent City Council.