

Using a Baby-Sitter or Child Minder

SCOPE OF THIS CHAPTER

This chapter provides guidance for foster carers who need to use a baby-sitter or child minder.

Contents

1. **Using a baby-sitter**
2. **Using a childminder**

1. Using a baby-sitter

All foster carers should be aware of the policy around delegated authority. Any proposed babysitting must be discussed with the Fostering Supervising Social Worker.

The supervisory needs of all children and young people in placement should be discussed with the child's Social Worker and the Fostering Supervising Social Worker, so that the individual needs of the child are managed safely. These supervisory needs should be reviewed on a regular basis.

In most cases, children under the age of sixteen would need a baby-sitter or a responsible adult to supervise them. However, this is dependant on the maturity of the child and the nature of the placement. In conjunction with the child's Social Worker and Fostering Supervising Social Worker, the foster carer should undertake a risk assessment of the appropriateness of leaving the child unsupervised.

Factors to consider and discuss with the Fostering Social Worker:

- The baby-sitter should be known personally to a foster carer and should be someone with whom the foster carer has confidence in caring for a child.
- A foster carer's Safe Care Policy and Fire Policy must be shared with any baby-sitter and they must agree to act in accordance with that Policy.
- A foster carer's choice of baby-sitter should take account of their knowledge of the child's age, background and behaviour.
- If a foster carer feels unable to leave a fostered child with a baby-sitter they should contact the Fostering Social Worker to explore other possibilities.
- Babysitters must be vigilant in relation to pets and ensure the child is never left unsupervised in a room with a pet.

In most cases, babysitters will be over the age of 18 years, although there can be exceptions dependant on the level of maturity of the young person, their ability to manage any situation that might arise, and the circumstances of the child to be cared for.

The foster carer must be satisfied that the babysitter is a suitable person with a proper understanding of the needs of the child and will supervise the child and ensure their safety and welfare at all times.

If there are any doubts about a person's suitability to baby-sit these should be discussed with the Fostering Supervising Social Worker.

A Disclosure and Barring Service check will not normally be necessary, however if the babysitter is to provide regular care, then a DBS check should be obtained.

2. Using a child minder

It is preferred practice for foster carers to use a member of their support network to provide any child care that may be required, as the looked after child will know the support network carer.

In exceptional circumstances, if the support network carer is unavailable, it may be necessary for the foster carer to arrange for a Local Authority registered child minder to provide an occasional short period of care (for example, so that the foster carer can attend a meeting).

The proposed arrangement must be discussed with the child's Social Worker and the Fostering Supervising Social Worker.

The foster carer must be satisfied that the child minder has sufficient information to meet the needs of the child, alongside other children, and must be happy with the standard of care provided.

Feedback from the childminder about how the child has presented should be noted in the foster carer's daily recording.