

Death of a Foster Child

SCOPE OF THIS CHAPTER

This chapter provides specific guidance for Foster Carers in the event of the death of a foster child whether the death has occurred in your home or outside your home. Information about the responsibilities of Children and Young People's Services in the event of the death of a foster child can be found in **Death or Serious Injury to a Child (Looked After and Child In Need)**.

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1. Immediate Action for the Foster Carer

- If the death has occurred as a result of an accident/hazard, make safe any hazards as soon as possible to avoid further accidents. If there are other foster children in your home at the time of death, please ensure that everyone is kept away from the site of the death.
- Contact the relevant emergency services e.g. ambulance, police and the child's/your own G.P.
- Inform the child's Social Worker as soon as possible by speaking to him/her personally. If they are not available, speak to the Team Manager/First Contact/the Emergency Duty Team (Tel: 03000 267 979). Insist on speaking to someone as a matter of urgency, do not leave a message.
- Record the time that the body was discovered and the times that the relevant emergency services arrived. Record as much information as possible, statements will be necessary.
- Ensure that you know where the child is being taken by professionals.

2. Immediate Action Taken by Professionals

- Either the G.P will certify death or if there are any doubts regarding the circumstances of the death of the child the G.P will inform the Coroner/Police.
- The Coroner/Police will decide if the body requires moving to hospital or morgue for post mortem.

3. Contact from the Media

If you are contacted by the media, you should not engage in conversation. The media should be referred to the Durham County Council Media Team on 03000 268 070.

4. Coroners Court

In the event of a sudden death there is likely to be an inquest, which you may be required to attend.

5. Support with Loss

Should a child in placement have a terminal illness or die unexpectedly you and your family may need significant support to cope with the loss. Your Supervising Social Worker in conjunction with other professionals will arrange for appropriate support to be provided.