

Emergency foster care placements COVID-19

The consequences of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak and the incremental implementation of contingency plans relative to the rate of infection, is likely to have a very significant impact on the delivery of, and increased demand for care services. At this time of great challenge across children's services dealing with unprecedented circumstances, the Care Inspectorate acknowledges that there may be a rise in the number of children placed in foster care arrangements. Due to the availability of foster carers and the potential impact of COVID-19 on authorities placing children authorities are looking to augment the number of placements available by using SSSC registered social work staff or teachers registered with GTC employed by the fostering agency/provider where there is no alternative placement available. The staff member would care for the child or young person in the staff member's home.

It is important during these placements that the fostering agency satisfy themselves that:

- All other potential care options have been explored and the proposed provision is assessed as the most appropriate available.
- It has sought its own legal advice, and ensures it receives written confirmation that the process it wishes to follow is legally competent.
- The primary prospective carer has been employed by them in a relevant professional capacity **and** is registered with a professional regulatory body.
- The employee is assessed as being fit to undertake this role in relation to their skills, environment, and others in the household.
- A proportionate framework of assessment is developed for carers and their accommodation which safeguards children and young people.
- Carers and children are matched to their respective skills and needs.
- There is provision of comprehensive and formalised foster carer support arrangements are in place.
- The chair of the panel has oversight of the developed framework of assessment, matching criteria and support arrangements and have approved their use.
- All placements are approved by the Chair of the Panel/Fostering Panel.
- Arrangements are set for all placements to be reviewed after four weeks and time limited to three months, with panel review if placements are extended beyond this time.
- The child or young person and family as far as is possible and appropriate are involved in the decision making and arrangements.