Duty & Out of Hours Cover

A vital function of the Agency is to provide Foster Carers with support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days of the year to assist them with advice and guidance to help them manage the children they have living in their homes. The Agency must also be able to manage referrals which may be received either during the day or out of hours.

To facilitate the duty system a duty SSW or senior manager will be on call.

*Foster Carers*

If Carers wish to access the duty support they should call the number listed on the Out of Hours Duty Rota for the Social Worker who is on call.

It is the expectation that your call will either be answered immediately or if you leave a message, your call will be returned within 15 minutes.

You can access the duty system to seek advice, guidance, and support or to report significant incidents to the duty SSW. The SSW will listen carefully to your situation and will make an assessment on how best to support you.

If you are unsure as to whether you need to access the duty service it is always safer to make a call for guidance.

If you have not been satisfied with the response of the out of hours service you should contact the Registered Manager directly to discuss your concerns. If this fails to resolve the matter you can instigate the company’s formal complaints procedure.

As well as calling for support, Reg 35 of the Fostering Services Regulations 2011 states that the following incidents must be reported to the Agency and others responsible for the care of the child:-

- The death of a child
- A child protection incident or concern
- An outbreak within the foster home of any infectious disease
- A serious illness or accident involving the foster child
- An allegation that a foster child has committed a serious offence
- Suspicions that a foster child is involved with prostitution
- If a child absconds
- A serious incident relating to a child placed which has necessitated calling the police to the Carers home.

If the duty call is relating to a notifiable event (*see Notifications Policy*) the Carer’s allocated SSW will undertake the further notifications which are also required under this regulation.

There may be other occasions which are detailed throughout these policies which may necessitate a duty call.

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