Draft update letter to parents of looked after children

Dear Parents

Once again we apologise for not being able to address you personally due to needing to send out this letter to all in a timely way.

Thank you for all your efforts to work with us for the benefit of your children through this difficult time.

Many of you are now asking when face to face family time can be arranged again between your child and their family. We want to assure you we are working hard to follow the government guidance to enable this to happen when it is safe and possible to do so.

As new guidance comes out we will assess what this means in terms of changes we can make to arranging family time and visiting.

For all face to face family time, we will need to assess with you that all involved have followed COVID guidance to date and do not have COVID symptoms, so the risk of infection is minimal.

If agreed, we will then make a COVID Safety Plan with you that will be checked before each face to face arrangement.

We will not be able to support or agree to any face to face family time arrangement that is not within Government Guidance or is assessed as unsafe due to a risk of COVID infection to one or more people involved.

The assessments will be individual for each child and family, dependant on your child’s circumstances.

This means we will not be doing the same for everyone, and the timing of when face to face family time can resume and how often will be different for each child.

We will support children, families and carers who can make arrangements between them for face to face family time. However, this must always be within the current government guidance and subject to the risk assessment.

We are looking to use outdoor spaces as much as possible when the weather permits this as it is safer from risk of COVID infection and easier to socially distance.

The indoor venues we use for supervised family time are limited as many have not yet opened. The venues we have will need to be cleaned between different family visits and ensure families are not there at the same time to reduce the COVID related risks.

We also need to ensure that any face to face family time that needs to be supported by our Family Time Team will not pose any risk to your child or yourselves through cross infection. This means our staff will need time to change their own clothes/sanitise between arrangements.

This will affect how many face to face family times we can support both outdoors and indoors and may mean some families have to wait until we have a space in a venue available.

Your children’s review meetings and PEP meetings are likely to still take place virtually by phone, skype or WhatsApp.

Parenting assessments may involve some face to face time, using social distancing between yourselves and the social worker. We will carry on using virtual contact with you also to ensure assessments are not delayed.

We will be making face to face visits again with your child and also continue to keep in contact with your child by phone, skype, WhatsApp and Facetime.

If you have to self-isolate due to having COVID symptoms, or you are needing to shield yourself or someone you live with, let us know straight away.

Your child, their carers and social care staff they are in contact with are all now eligible to be tested if they have COVID symptoms so we should know quickly if they have to self-isolate or pose any risk of cross infection.

Plesae be assured we will do all we can to keep your child, the people involved in their care and yourselves safe.

With continued thanks for working with us to protect your children

Regards

Sonya Miller

Assistant Director