

Foster Carers' Escalation Policy

Delivering good outcomes for looked after children requires all members of the team involved in their care to be committed to achieving those outcomes. Foster carers are an essential part of these teams and will usually have the most contact with the children around whom they form.

Each member of the team needs to have a clear and agreed understanding of their role and responsibility. For the team to work effectively each member needs to be able to share their thoughts and to raise issues when they occur. Likewise, each member needs to remain focussed on the needs of the children and their best interests.

Wherever possible, difficulties in working relationships should be resolved informally without recourse to this policy. However, this policy is intended to clarify how foster carers can raise issues around the quality or timely completion of tasks as they arise. At each stage, the foster carer will be advised of what has been done to address the issue raised and who this has been escalated to.

The timescales seek to ensure that concerns should be in most cases be resolved within a week and exceptionally within 10 working days.

This policy is intended to address day to day care planning issues and does not replace existing arrangements in place in relation to issues of safeguarding.

Where foster carers wish to raise issues of practice related to members of the fostering service they should do so through contacting the member of staff's line manager.

In some cases, there will be a difference of opinion in relation to whether an expectation is reasonable e.g. different views in relation

to contact or the care plan. This policy is not intended to be applied in those circumstances but rather to consider issues in which policies and processes are not being followed.

Stage 1

Should any member of the team have issues to raise, it is expected that, in the first instance, s/he would discuss this with their own supervising social worker. The supervising social worker should record this discussion and the agreement made as to how it will be addressed. This will usually be by the supervising social worker supporting the foster carer through discussions with another team member.

Resolution at this stage should be achieved within 3 working days

Stage 2

Should this not resolve the issue, the supervising social worker will discuss the issue with their line manager. The line manager will make contact with the relevant team member's manager to address the issue.

Resolution at this stage should be achieved with 3 working days

Stage 3

In all instances where concerns have not be resolved between team managers, the supervising social worker should ask that the team manager to escalate to the relevant Operational Lead. The Operational Lead will contact the team member's equivalent manager to resolve the issue. The team manager and supervising social worker will be copied into correspondence.

Resolution at this stage should be achieved within 2 working days.

Stage 4

If there is no resolution following stage 3, the supervising social worker should contact the Operational Lead to advise that the issue has not been resolved. The team manager should be copied into this correspondence. If there remains no resolution, the Operational Lead should consider escalating the issue to the relevant Strategic Lead.

If the issue is not escalated to the Strategic Lead, the Operational Lead will feed this back to the foster carer detailing the reasons for this and offering a proposed alternative resolution.

Resolution at this stage should be achieved within 2 working days.