

### Adoption and Children (Coronavirus) (Amendment) (No 2) Regulations 2020

The Adoption and Children (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 came into force on 24 April 2020 and remained in force until 25 September 2020. The Regulations made temporary amendments to various requirements and timescales.

The Adoption and Children (Coronavirus) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2020 ('the temporary Regulations') came into force on 25 September 2020 and will continue in force until 31 March 2021.

The amended Regulations temporarily amend a series of 6 Regulations which are applicable during periods of national lockdown. The temporary Regulations:

- allow visits to take place over the telephone, a video link or other electronic communication methods, where face-to-face visits are not possible due to coronavirus (COVID-19)
- change the rules regarding health assessment in the process for approving adopters and foster carers, as long as assessments are obtained and considered for the final stage and prior to approval
- suspend the minimum frequency of Ofsted inspections, recognising that assurance visits will be conducted using a risk-based approach

These amendments are shown in the table below highlighted in green.

Revised guidance **Coronavirus (COVID-19): Guidance for Children's Social Care Services** (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-childrens-social-care-services/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-local-authorities-on-childrens-social-care>) provides that the temporary regulations are intended to be used where the flexibilities are still needed to provide effective support for children involved with children's social care services during the pandemic. These can be when:

- it would be contrary to any guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) published by Public Health England or the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care
- it is not reasonably practicable for a reason relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19)

The overarching approach to making use of these flexibilities should include:

- approval at chief officer level in local authorities and, where appropriate, top tier management level in other services and providers
- properly recording the use, along with the reasons for doing so and communicating to the other safeguarding partners and providers
- each local authority and provider recording the reason or reasons for use of a flexibility

Ofsted will take note of any use of these flexibilities, so providers should be ready to explain why their use was necessary, for what length of time and how any possible longer-term impacts were mitigated. This should be available to share with Ofsted, and others such as Independent Reviewing Officers, as appropriate. The records may be used to inform Ofsted's annual engagement meetings with local authorities and in any local authority or provider inspection activity. Ofsted will review the relevant records if they receive any complaints or concerns or whistleblowing.

The difficult and complex decisions that need to be taken during this period should be made in the spirit of the following principles:

- child-centred – promoting children's best interests: nothing is more important than children's welfare; children who need help and protection deserve high quality and effective support as soon as help is identified
- risk-based – prioritising support and resources for children at greatest risk
- family focussed – harnessing the strengths in families and their communities
- evidence informed – ensuring decisions are proportionate and justified
- collaborative – working in partnership with parents and other professionals
- transparent – providing clarity and maintaining professional curiosity about a child's wellbeing

There should be no blanket changes to social work practice, but COVID-19 brings additional risk and complexity to social work practice and may necessitate some different ways of working which should always be risk-based.

Note also the **Principles of Good Administrative Practice During the Response to Covid 19** set out by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, especially when departing from usual practice.

<https://www.lgo.org.uk/information-centre/reports/guidance-notes/principles-of-good-administrative-practice>

This sets out principles to be followed by local authorities and safeguarding partners, including:

- There should be a clear audit trail of how and why key decisions were made, summarising key reasons for departing from normal practice;
- Where new or adapted policies and procedures are brought in, ensure staff are clear on these;
- The basis on which decisions are made and resources allocated should be open and transparent. Any new criteria, thresholds and timescales should be clear to service users and staff;
- Even where national rule changes allow raised thresholds for action, ensure you properly consider the individual circumstances of each case;
- Consider a triage approach.

**It is important that practitioners check their local position before varying duties and practice standards in the way permitted by the regulations.**

TOPIC	AMENDMENTS/INFORMATION
<a href="#">Department for Education Coronavirus Helpline</a>	<p>The Department for Education coronavirus helpline is available to answer questions about COVID-19 relating to education and children’s social care.</p> <p><a href="mailto:dfc.coronavirushelpline@education.gov.uk">dfc.coronavirushelpline@education.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Phone: 0800 046 8687            Opening hours: 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday and 10am to 6pm Saturday and Sunday</p> <p>If you work in a school, please have your unique reference number (URN or UK PRN) available when calling the hotline.</p>
<a href="#">Children’s Guide to Coronavirus (Children’s Commissioner)</a>	<p><a href="https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/publication/childrens-guide-to-coronavirus/#163961_20200428063510">https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/publication/childrens-guide-to-coronavirus/#163961_20200428063510</a></p>
<a href="#">Remote Working and Use of Technology</a>	<p><b>IMPORTANT NOTE:</b>            Whilst many staff will be working remotely during the coronavirus outbreak, it is important to note that personal data</p>

	<p>must at all times continue to be processed and stored in accordance with Data Protection principles. You should not use personal devices to communicate with service-users, store personal data on personal devices or download and use apps onto work or personal devices (phones/laptops/tablet computers) without express authorisation from your manager.</p> <p>For more information, see chapters on <b>Use of Social Media Sites by Social Care and Safeguarding Staff</b> and <b>Storage of Data on Mobile Devices</b>.</p> <p>These chapters will also be offered to customers at the next scheduled update of your procedures manual. See also <b>Home Working: Preparing Your Organisation and Staff - National Cyber Security Centre</b> How to make sure your organisation is prepared for an increase in home working, and advice on spotting coronavirus (COVID-19) scam emails.</p> <p><a href="https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/guidance/home-working">https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/guidance/home-working</a></p>
<p><b>Data Protection and Information Sharing</b></p>	<p><b>Data Protection and Coronavirus Information Hub (Information Commissioner’s Office)</b>  <a href="https://ico.org.uk/global/data-protection-and-coronavirus-information-hub/">https://ico.org.uk/global/data-protection-and-coronavirus-information-hub/</a></p>
<p><b>Ofsted Inspections</b></p>	<p>The Regulations continue the suspension of the minimum intervals for inspection of children’s homes, residential family centres, voluntary adoption agencies, adoption support agencies, fostering agencies and holiday schemes for disabled children until 31 March 2021.</p> <p>The Regulations continue the suspension of the minimum intervals for inspection of children’s homes, residential family centres, voluntary adoption agencies, adoption support agencies, fostering agencies and holliday schemes for disabled children until 31 March 2021.</p> <p><b>Coronavirus (COVID-19): Guidance for Children’s Social Care Services</b>  <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-childrens-social-care-services/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-local-authorities-on-childrens-social-care">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-childrens-social-care-services/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-local-authorities-on-childrens-social-care</a></p> <p>The Secretary of State has agreed that Ofsted will undertake assurance visits in relation to children’s social care establishments and agencies during an interim period from September 2020 until the end of March 2021 and minimum inspection intervals for these settings will remain suspended until April 2021.</p>

	<p>See also <b>Ofsted: Coronavirus (COVID-19) Rolling Update</b> <a href="https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ofsted-coronavirus-covid-19-rolling-update">https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ofsted-coronavirus-covid-19-rolling-update</a></p>
<p><b>Workforce</b></p>	<p>The Coronavirus Act 2020 allows for the emergency registration of social workers who have recently left the profession to expedite their registration allowing them to return to practice. Social workers can register their interest via the <b>Local Government Association website</b> <a href="https://www.jobtrain.co.uk/lga/displayjob.aspx?jobid=936">https://www.jobtrain.co.uk/lga/displayjob.aspx?jobid=936</a></p> <p>Social workers, and others, brought in for coronavirus (COVID-19) purposes are eligible for free, fast-tracked <b>DBS checks - COVID-19: Free-of-charge DBS Applications and Fast-track Barred List Check Service</b> <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-free-of-charge-dbs-applications-and-fast-track-barred-list-check-service">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-free-of-charge-dbs-applications-and-fast-track-barred-list-check-service</a></p> <p><b>Coronavirus (COVID-19): Right to Work Checks</b> <a href="https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-right-to-work-checks">https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-right-to-work-checks</a> Right to work checks have been temporarily adjusted due to coronavirus (COVID-19). This is to make it easier for employers to carry them out.</p> <p>The following temporary changes have been made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• checks can now be carried out over video calls</li> <li>• job applicants and existing workers can send scanned documents or a photo of documents for checks using email or a mobile app, rather than sending originals</li> <li>• employers should use the <b>Employer Checking Service</b> if a prospective or existing employee cannot provide any of the accepted documents</li> </ul> <p><b>How to make right to work checks: video</b> <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-make-right-to-work-checks?utm_source=16e187c6-d366-48c8-b93f-f3acd004cb83&amp;utm_medium=email&amp;utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&amp;utm_content=immediate">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-make-right-to-work-checks?utm_source=16e187c6-d366-48c8-b93f-f3acd004cb83&amp;utm_medium=email&amp;utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&amp;utm_content=immediate</a></p>

	<p><b>Information for Social Workers from Social Work England</b></p> <p><a href="https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/coronavirus/information-for-social-workers">https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/coronavirus/information-for-social-workers</a></p> <p><b>PCFSW COVID-19 Ethical Response and Best Practice Guide For Children and Families Services</b> _this guidance has been developed by the Principal Children and Families Social Worker (PCFSW) Network to stimulate ethical thinking and reflection about the ethical response to current Covid-19 pandemic and to support practitioners in applying social work values and principles and Social Work England’s practice standards in their everyday practice, decisions and actions. This is a best practice guidance as such is neither prescriptive nor meant to present a single way of doing things.</p> <p><a href="https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Documents/Learning-and-development/social-work/psw/COVID-19-PSW-Ethical-Response-and-Best-Practice-Guide.pdf">https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Documents/Learning-and-development/social-work/psw/COVID-19-PSW-Ethical-Response-and-Best-Practice-Guide.pdf</a></p>
<p><b>PPE equipment for children’s social care staff</b></p>	<p>Guidance for infection prevention and control in children’s social care settings, including the specific circumstances where PPE should be used, can be found in the <b>Guidance on Safe Working in Education, Childcare and Children’s Social Care Settings</b> <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safe-working-in-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care/safe-working-in-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care-settings-including-the-use-of-personal-protective-equipment-ppe">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safe-working-in-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care/safe-working-in-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care-settings-including-the-use-of-personal-protective-equipment-ppe</a></p>

<b>COVID-19 Vaccination: a Guide for Social Care Staff</b>	<p>Information for frontline social care workers on COVID-19 vaccination.</p> <p><a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-vaccination-a-guide-for-social-care-staff?utm_medium=email&amp;utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&amp;utm_source=84d3c865-d297-4e00-871d-c7966d2f7bd1&amp;utm_content=daily">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-vaccination-a-guide-for-social-care-staff?utm_medium=email&amp;utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&amp;utm_source=84d3c865-d297-4e00-871d-c7966d2f7bd1&amp;utm_content=daily</a></p>
<b>Coronavirus (COVID-19) testing for children’s social care workers</b>	<p>Education, childcare and children’s social care settings and providers must ensure they understand the <a href="https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/">NHS testing and tracing for coronavirus process</a> (<a href="https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/">https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/</a>) so that they know how to respond if anyone within the setting is suspected or confirmed to have coronavirus (COVID-19). They must also know how to contact their local <a href="https://www.gov.uk/guidance/contacts-phe-health-protection-teams">PHE health protection team</a> (<a href="https://www.gov.uk/guidance/contacts-phe-health-protection-teams">https://www.gov.uk/guidance/contacts-phe-health-protection-teams</a>), and do so as soon as they have a confirmed case or an overall rise in suspected cases.</p> <p>Anyone who displays symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) should request a test. Tests can be booked on the <a href="https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/">NHS testing and tracing for coronavirus website</a> (<a href="https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/">https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/</a>) or ordered by telephone via NHS 119.</p> <p>Settings must take swift action when they become aware that someone who has attended has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19). Based on the advice from their local <a href="https://www.gov.uk/guidance/contacts-phe-health-protection-teams">PHE health protection team</a> (<a href="https://www.gov.uk/guidance/contacts-phe-health-protection-teams">https://www.gov.uk/guidance/contacts-phe-health-protection-teams</a>), settings must ask those people who have been in close contact with the person who has tested positive to self-isolate for 10 days from the day after contact with the individual who tested positive.</p>
<b>Delivery of Services</b>	<p>The Government want to support the effective delivery of all children’s social care services at this time, whilst always ensuring children’s safety is paramount.</p> <p>Local leaders, local safeguarding partners, the social care workforce, and the wider children’s workforce understand the needs of the children in their area and have the skills and knowledge to make decisions in their best interests. In line with government advice, local authorities, providers and local safeguarding partners should consider how to create the best working environments for their teams whilst prioritising face-to-face contact with children where possible. It is important for employers to consider how to create and maintain a safe working environment for all staff and those they</p>

	<p>support, in particular those who are at increased risk.</p> <p><b>Coronavirus (COVID-19): Guidance for Children’s Social Care Services</b>  <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-childrens-social-care-services/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-local-authorities-on-childrens-social-care">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-childrens-social-care-services/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-local-authorities-on-childrens-social-care</a></p>
<p><b>Local authority children’s services: coronavirus (COVID-19)</b></p> <p>What local authority children’s services need to do during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak</p>	<p>Link added to gov.uk on 17 June 2020, which provides a link to various pieces of existing guidance.</p> <p><a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/local-authority-childrens-services-coronavirus-covid-19?utm_source=9741cb3b-6cc1-4355-b3f8-60c6f4f676bc&amp;utm_medium=email&amp;utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&amp;utm_content=immediate">https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/local-authority-childrens-services-coronavirus-covid-19?utm_source=9741cb3b-6cc1-4355-b3f8-60c6f4f676bc&amp;utm_medium=email&amp;utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&amp;utm_content=immediate</a></p>
<p><b>Contacts and Referrals</b></p>	<p><a href="https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus">https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus</a></p> <p><b>BASW Professional Practice Guidance for Home Visits During Covid-19 Pandemic</b>  <a href="https://www.basw.co.uk/professional-practice-guidance-home-visits-during-covid-19-pandemic">https://www.basw.co.uk/professional-practice-guidance-home-visits-during-covid-19-pandemic</a></p> <p>For further information, including use of PPE, see the section (below) on <b>Social Worker Visits to Looked After Children.</b></p>
<p><b>Assessments</b></p>	<p>Government social distancing requirements apply.  <a href="https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus">https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus</a></p> <p><b>BASW Professional Practice Guidance for Home Visits During Covid-19 Pandemic</b>  <a href="https://www.basw.co.uk/professional-practice-guidance-home-visits-during-covid-19-pandemic">https://www.basw.co.uk/professional-practice-guidance-home-visits-during-covid-19-pandemic</a></p> <p>For further information, including use of PPE, see the section (below) on <b>Social Worker Visits to Looked After Children.</b></p>
<p><b>Child Protection Enquiries (Section 47)</b></p>	<p>Government social distancing requirements apply.  <a href="https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus">https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus</a></p>



	<p><b>BASW Professional Practice Guidance for Home Visits During Covid-19 Pandemic</b>  <a href="https://www.basw.co.uk/professional-practice-guidance-home-visits-during-covid-19-pandemic">https://www.basw.co.uk/professional-practice-guidance-home-visits-during-covid-19-pandemic</a></p> <p>For further information, including use of PPE, see the section (below) on <b>Social Worker Visits to Looked After Children.</b></p>
<p><b>Get Help with Technology</b></p>	<p>Guidance for local authorities, academy trusts and schools on devices and support available to provide remote education and access to children’s social care.</p> <p><a href="https://www.gov.uk/guidance/get-help-with-technology-for-remote-education-during-coronavirus-covid-19">https://www.gov.uk/guidance/get-help-with-technology-for-remote-education-during-coronavirus-covid-19</a></p>
<p><b>Court Proceedings/Private Law Proceedings/Applications for Emergency Protection Orders/Care and Supervision Proceedings and the Public Law Outline</b></p>	<p>The Lord Chief Justice has acknowledged that the justice system cannot continue to operate normally during the Covid-19 coronavirus crisis.</p> <p>All hearings that can lawfully take place remotely should do so if the facilities exist. Hearings requiring the physical presence of parties and their representatives and others should take place only if a remote hearing is not possible and if suitable arrangements can be made to ensure safety.</p> <p><b>New video tech to increase remote hearings in civil and family courts</b>  <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-video-tech-to-increase-remote-hearings-in-civil-and-family-courts?utm_source=be83c7ed-810d-4fe3-9537-bc9ae387d965&amp;utm_medium=email&amp;utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&amp;utm_content=immediate">https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-video-tech-to-increase-remote-hearings-in-civil-and-family-courts?utm_source=be83c7ed-810d-4fe3-9537-bc9ae387d965&amp;utm_medium=email&amp;utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&amp;utm_content=immediate</a></p> <p><b>Family Court Business Priorities</b>  <a href="https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/950824/Civil_court_listing_priorities_11_January_2021.pdf?utm_medium=email&amp;utm_source=">https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/950824/Civil_court_listing_priorities_11_January_2021.pdf?utm_medium=email&amp;utm_source=</a></p>

	<p><b>Coronavirus (COVID-19): Advice and Guidance (Courts and Tribunals Judiciary)</b></p> <p><a href="https://www.judiciary.uk/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-and-guidance/">https://www.judiciary.uk/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-and-guidance/</a></p> <p><b>COVID 19: National Guidance for the Family Court 19th March 2020 (President of the Family Division)</b>  <a href="https://www.judiciary.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Presidents-Guidance_Covid-19-1.pdf">https://www.judiciary.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Presidents-Guidance_Covid-19-1.pdf</a></p> <p><b>The Family Court and COVID-19: the Road Ahead 9 June 2020 (President of the Family Division)</b>  <a href="https://www.judiciary.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/The-Road-Ahead_FINAL.pdf">https://www.judiciary.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/The-Road-Ahead_FINAL.pdf</a></p> <p><b>Coronavirus (COVID-19): Message from the Lord Chief Justice to judges in the Civil and Family Courts</b></p> <p><a href="https://www.judiciary.uk/announcements/coronavirus-covid-19-message-from-the-lord-chief-justice-to-judges-in-the-civil-and-family-courts/?mc_cid=f2da93cce8&amp;mc_eid=4f19faf643">https://www.judiciary.uk/announcements/coronavirus-covid-19-message-from-the-lord-chief-justice-to-judges-in-the-civil-and-family-courts/?mc_cid=f2da93cce8&amp;mc_eid=4f19faf643</a></p> <p><b>Cafcass: COVID-19 Guidance for Children and Families</b>  <a href="https://www.cafcass.gov.uk/grown-ups/parents-and-carers/covid-19-guidance-for-children-and-families/">https://www.cafcass.gov.uk/grown-ups/parents-and-carers/covid-19-guidance-for-children-and-families/</a></p>
<p><b>Child Arrangements Orders</b></p>	<p><b>Coronavirus Crisis: Guidance on Compliance with Family Court Child Arrangement Orders</b>  <a href="https://www.judiciary.uk/announcements/coronavirus-crisis-guidance-on-compliance-with-family-court-child-arrangement-orders/">https://www.judiciary.uk/announcements/coronavirus-crisis-guidance-on-compliance-with-family-court-child-arrangement-orders/</a></p> <p><b>Coronavirus: Separated Families and Contact with Children in Care FAQs (UK) (House of Commons Library)</b>  <a href="https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-8901/">https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-8901/</a></p>
<p><b>Legal Planning Meetings</b></p>	<p>Government social distancing requirements apply to meetings. <a href="https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus">https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus</a></p>
<p><b>Complaints and Representations</b></p>	<p><b>The Adoption and Children (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 Regulations amended the statutory</b></p>

	<p>timeframes (under the Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006) for the review process to require local authorities to comply with the existing timeframes <b>OR AS SOON AS IS REASONABLY PRACTICABLE</b>. These amendments allow more time for the review to be carried out, because it may not be possible for the review process to be carried out within the existing statutory timeframe during the outbreak. There is a provision to extend this to include any representations made <b>before 25 September 2020</b>.</p> <p>The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman has suspended all casework activity that demands information from, or action by, local authorities and care providers, in light of the current Coronavirus outbreak.</p> <p><a href="https://www.lgo.org.uk/information-centre/news/2020/mar/lgsco-suspends-complaints-enquiries-of-councils-and-care-providers">https://www.lgo.org.uk/information-centre/news/2020/mar/lgsco-suspends-complaints-enquiries-of-councils-and-care-providers</a></p> <p><b>Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Good Administrative Practice During the Response to Covid 19</b>  <a href="https://www.lgo.org.uk/information-centre/reports/guidance-notes/principles-of-good-administrative-practice">https://www.lgo.org.uk/information-centre/reports/guidance-notes/principles-of-good-administrative-practice</a></p>
<p><b>Children and Young People Aged 0-25 with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities/Transitions/Young Carers</b></p>	<p><b>Guidance: Young carers and Young Adult Carers: Providing Care During Coronavirus</b>  <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/young-carers-and-young-adult-carers-providing-care-during-coronavirus?utm_source=47fb7e37-9133-4910-963b-e32f7fe5c168&amp;utm_medium=email&amp;utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&amp;utm_content=immediate">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/young-carers-and-young-adult-carers-providing-care-during-coronavirus?utm_source=47fb7e37-9133-4910-963b-e32f7fe5c168&amp;utm_medium=email&amp;utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&amp;utm_content=immediate</a></p> <p>Guidance and information for people under the age of 25 who are providing care for someone during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.</p> <p><b>Risk assessments for children and young people with an education, health and care plan attending on-site education</b>        see the section on Education</p> <p>Information for providers of non-residential respite services (such as holiday clubs and out of school provision) is available in the guidance on <b>Protective Measures for Out-of-school Settings During the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic</b> (<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protective-measures-for-holiday-or-after-school-clubs-and-">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protective-measures-for-holiday-or-after-school-clubs-and-</a></p>

	<p><a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protective-measures-for-out-of-school-settings-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak/protective-measures-for-out-of-school-settings-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak">other-out-of-school-settings-for-children-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak/protective-measures-for-out-of-school-settings-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak</a>) and <b>Actions for Early Years Childcare Providers During the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic</b> (<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures#who-this-guidance-is-for">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures#who-this-guidance-is-for</a>).</p> <p>Where providers need to offer transport to enable children with SEND to access respite services, they should follow the principles set out in the Guidance on <b>Transport to Schools and Other Places of Education: Autumn Term 2020</b> (<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/transport-to-school-and-other-places-of-education-autumn-term-2020/transport-to-school-and-other-places-of-education-autumn-term-2020">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/transport-to-school-and-other-places-of-education-autumn-term-2020/transport-to-school-and-other-places-of-education-autumn-term-2020</a>).</p>
<p><b>Direct Payments</b></p>	<p><b>Using Direct Payments During The Coronavirus Outbreak: Full Guidance For People Receiving Direct Payments And Personal Assistants</b> <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-people-receiving-direct-payments/coronavirus-covid-19-qa-for-people-receiving-a-personal-budget-or-personal-health-budget">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-people-receiving-direct-payments/coronavirus-covid-19-qa-for-people-receiving-a-personal-budget-or-personal-health-budget</a></p> <p><b>Guidance for Local Authorities and CCGs in the Delivery of Direct Payments and Personal Health Budgets</b> <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-people-receiving-direct-payments/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-people-receiving-direct-payments">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-people-receiving-direct-payments/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-people-receiving-direct-payments</a></p> <p><b>Coronavirus (COVID-19): Guidance for Children’s Social Care Services</b> <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-childrens-social-care-services/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-local-authorities-on-childrens-social-care">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-childrens-social-care-services/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-local-authorities-on-childrens-social-care</a></p> <p>Direct payments may be used to enable families to purchase respite care and equipment to use at home, for the child or young person and their siblings. Direct payments could also be used to support families with a disabled child whose usual services have been suspended or reduced.</p>
<p><b>Short Breaks</b></p>	<p><b>Coronavirus (COVID-19): Guidance for Children’s Social Care Services</b></p>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-childrens-social-care-services/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-local-authorities-on-childrens-social-care>

### **Short breaks – continuing effect of the Adoption and Children (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020**

For short break placements beginning **before 25 September 2020**, the temporary relaxation under the Adoption and Children (Coronavirus)(Amendment) Regulations 2020 continues to apply so that a child can remain under a ‘Regulation 48’ short break in the same short break placement for up to 75 days.

For short break placements beginning **on or after 25 September 2020**, the usual timescales apply, i.e. a single placement does not last longer than 17 days and does not exceed 75 days in total in any 12 month period.

### **Respite care**

Services which provide respite care for disabled children are able to continue to operate during periods of national lockdown, with specific provision in the regulations allowing for both services which care for children away from home and care which is delivered in the family home, which is for respite purposes either for the child or young person or the carer who looks after the child or young person. This can include continued operation of Residential Holiday Schemes for Disabled Children where appropriate.

The Government continue to encourage local authorities to prioritise this support for disabled children and to consider flexible and pragmatic options to deliver that support, for example, some local authorities have made more use of direct payments beyond their usual criteria. Direct payments may be used to enable families to purchase respite care and equipment to use at home, for the child or young person and their siblings. Direct payments could also be used to support families with a disabled child whose usual services have been suspended or reduced.

The Council for Disabled Children has worked with providers to produce **short break learning examples**. These case studies are examples of the effective ways services can operate so that children, young people and their families can

	<p>access vital support with confidence. <a href="https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/help-resources/resources/short-break-learning-examples">https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/help-resources/resources/short-break-learning-examples</a></p> <p>Where families rely on informal arrangements provided by family or friends, families are able to form a ‘childcare bubble’ with another household for the purposes of informal childcare, where the child is 13 or under, as part of a consistent childcare arrangement. Where a young person with SEND is over the age of 13, a linked childcare household cannot be provided. However, the exception that allows for respite care to be provided applies to those who are vulnerable or people with a disability and it applies to the carers of such people.</p> <p><b><u>Social Worker Visits</u></b></p> <p>Visits may be conducted by telephone, video link or other electronic means, where carrying out a physical visit would be contrary to any guidance published by Public Health England or the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, or where it would not be reasonably practicable for a reason relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus. Any ‘virtual visits’ must be carried out in accordance with any recommendations given by the Nominated Officer, and the responsible authority must keep a record of any ‘virtual visits’ carried out.</p>
<p><b>Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children/Modern Slavery</b></p>	<p><b>Coronavirus (COVID-19): Guidance for Children’s Social Care Services</b>  <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-childrens-social-care-services/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-local-authorities-on-childrens-social-care">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-childrens-social-care-services/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-local-authorities-on-childrens-social-care</a></p> <p>Where an unaccompanied asylum seeking child arrives in England, the local authority receiving them will need to take steps to ensure that they are placed in suitable accommodation in isolation from other people in line with <b>Coronavirus (COVID-19): Guidance on How to Self-isolate when you Travel to the UK</b>  <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-how-to-self-isolate-when-you-travel-to-the-uk/coronavirus-covid-19-how-to-self-isolate-when-you-travel-to-the-uk">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-how-to-self-isolate-when-you-travel-to-the-uk/coronavirus-covid-19-how-to-self-isolate-when-you-travel-to-the-uk</a></p> <p>This includes details on exemption rules and the position regarding transit stops. It is not always possible to ascertain which countries a young person has travelled through. In such circumstances, steps should be taken to isolate the young person as above.</p> <p>As regards making provisions for isolation, local authorities should note that the regulations state that for a child, any</p>

person who has custody or charge of the child during the period of self-isolation must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that the child self-isolates in accordance with this regulation.

If an UASC is symptomatic of coronavirus (COVID-19) on or after arrival, the local authority with responsibility for them will need to take steps to place them in isolation in accordance with the self-isolation guidance **Coronavirus (COVID-19): Guidance for Households with Possible Coronavirus Infection** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance>.

[The Government] encourage local authorities to engage with their existing service providers.

Local authorities can also now source accommodation through central government Crown Commercial Services, supported by Calder Conferences and Corporate Travel Management Limited (CTM). Both CTM and Calder Conferences provide 24/7 services and both aim to respond with options within 24 hours. Due to the nature of the requests Calder Conferences handle (large scale/block booking or exclusive use), they may occasionally require longer than 24 hours but they will inform the local authority if this is the case. Local authorities may refer to Crown Commercial Service guidance **Finding temporary accommodation during COVID-19** for details on how to use these services. <https://www.crowncommercial.gov.uk/news/finding-temporary-accommodation-during-covid-19>

#### **Who will have legal responsibility for UASC in self-isolation accommodation?**

As with any spontaneous arrival, the local authority that initially collects the child (for example, from the police station or from Border Force) should assess the child's needs as they would do in normal circumstances. The local authority must find suitable accommodation for the young person and if the child is accommodated for more than 24 hours by that local authority they will be responsible for the child as a 'looked-after child'. The child should be placed in suitable self-isolation accommodation if they are exhibiting symptoms. This is in line with PHE guidance and will allow them to be placed in their longer-term placement after isolation.

#### **Support for Modern Slavery Victims Affected by Coronavirus**

	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/news/support-for-modern-slavery-victims-affected-by-coronavirus?utm_source=17df47c9-8a57-41b6-a464-b9104fddd67d&amp;utm_medium=email&amp;utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&amp;utm_content=immediate">https://www.gov.uk/government/news/support-for-modern-slavery-victims-affected-by-coronavirus?utm_source=17df47c9-8a57-41b6-a464-b9104fddd67d&amp;utm_medium=email&amp;utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&amp;utm_content=immediate</a>
<b>Families with No Recourse to Public Funds</b>	<b>NRPF Network</b> <a href="https://www.nrpfnetwork.org.uk/information-and-resources/policy/covid-19-and-everyone-in">https://www.nrpfnetwork.org.uk/information-and-resources/policy/covid-19-and-everyone-in</a>
<b>Prevention of Homelessness and Provision of Accommodation for 16 and 17 year olds who may be Homeless and/or require Accommodation; and Duty to Refer</b>	See gov.uk <b>Guidance – Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Services</b> <a href="https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-local-government">https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-local-government</a>
<b>Private Fostering</b>	In cases where the original notification to the local authority of the private fostering arrangement was received <b>before 25 September 2020</b> , the Adoption and Children (Coronavirus)(Amendment) Regulations 2020 continue to amend the statutory timeframes for social worker visits to comply with the existing timeframes or <b>AS SOON AS IS REASONABLY PRACTICABLE</b> .  For notifications received on or after that date, the usual time limits in the Private Fostering Regulations apply.
<b>Family and Friends Care</b>	<b>Coronavirus (COVID-19): Guidance for Children’s Social Care Services</b> <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-childrens-social-care-services/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-local-authorities-on-childrens-social-care">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-childrens-social-care-services/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-local-authorities-on-childrens-social-care</a> Within any restrictions on social distancing and contact, local authorities can revert to considering broader family networks as sources of support and respite for children and families. Wider support networks can provide an important protective factor for children at risk and should be prioritised, within the broader framework set by <b>government guidance on social distancing</b> . ( <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-meeting-with-others-safely-social-distancing">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-meeting-with-others-safely-social-distancing</a> )
<b>Placement Planning and Disruption</b>	Government social distancing requirements apply to meetings.



<p><b>Meetings</b></p>	<p><a href="https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus">https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus</a></p>
<p><b>Placements with Parents</b></p>	<p><b>Coronavirus (COVID-19): Guidance for Children’s Social Care Services</b>  <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-childrens-social-care-services/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-local-authorities-on-childrens-social-care">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-childrens-social-care-services/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-local-authorities-on-childrens-social-care:</a></p> <p><b><u>Placement – continuing effect of the Adoption and Children (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020</u></b></p> <p>Where the responsible authority has, under regulation 19 of the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010, placed a child <b>before 25 September 2020</b> with the child’s parent, someone with parental responsibility for the child or someone named in a child arrangements order as a person with whom the child was meant to live, the 2010 Regulations will continue to apply to the placement as if all the amendments made to them remain in force. That means that the assessment of suitability and review of the child’s case in accordance with regulation 17 can still be completed <b>as soon as reasonably practicable</b> from the start of the placement.</p> <p>Where placements under regulation 19 are made <b>on or after 25 September 2020</b>, the responsible authority must comply with the original regulatory provisions and ensure that the assessment of suitability and review of the child’s case is completed <b>within 10 working days</b> from the start of the placement.</p> <p>The Adoption and Children (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 provided that the child can be placed with parents before a placement plan has been prepared. They also provided that the child can be placed before the assessment has been completed, provided that the assessment is completed <b>‘AS SOON AS IS REASONABLY PRACTICABLE AFTER’</b> (rather than within 10 working days).</p>
<p><b>Placements in Foster Care</b></p>	<p><b>Coronavirus (COVID-19): Guidance for Children’s Social Care Services</b>  <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-childrens-social-care-services/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-local-authorities-on-childrens-social-care">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-childrens-social-care-services/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-local-authorities-on-childrens-social-care:</a></p> <p><b>What happens to foster children if foster carers are self-isolating or become ill?</b></p>

	<p>In most cases, [the Government] expect that children will continue living with their foster carers, observing government guidance on self-isolation and social distancing.</p> <p>If foster carers develop symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19), the foster home should follow the <b>guidance for households</b> (<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance</a>) to avoid the spread of infection, and the fostering service should follow the <b>guidance on safe working in education, childcare and children's social care settings</b> (<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safe-working-in-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care/safe-working-in-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care-settings-including-the-use-of-personal-protective-equipment-ppe#what-care-should-be-taken-in-foster-care-settings">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safe-working-in-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care/safe-working-in-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care-settings-including-the-use-of-personal-protective-equipment-ppe#what-care-should-be-taken-in-foster-care-settings</a>), including the use of personal protective equipment (PPE).</p> <p>In circumstances where this is not possible, the Government would expect fostering services to identify alternative temporary placements with other carers, or respite carers for the duration of the foster carer's illness. They would then expect the child to return back to their usual home.</p>
<p><b>Social Worker Visits to Looked After Children</b></p>	<p><b>'Virtual' visits</b></p> <p>Visits may be conducted by telephone, video-link or other electronic means where it would not be reasonably practicable to conduct a face-to-face visit for a reason relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus. Any 'virtual visits' must be carried out in accordance with any recommendations given by the Nominated Officer, and the responsible authority must keep a record of any 'virtual visits' carried out.</p> <p><b>Coronavirus (COVID-19): Guidance for Children's Social Care Services</b>  <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-childrens-social-care-services/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-local-authorities-on-childrens-social-care">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-childrens-social-care-services/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-local-authorities-on-childrens-social-care</a> provides that during periods of <b>national lockdown</b>, the use of virtual visits should be the exception and can be used as a result of public health advice or when it is not reasonably practicable to have a face-to-face visit otherwise for a reason relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19). This could include in the event of local or national</p>

restrictions, self-isolation or social distancing advice due to coronavirus (COVID-19).

This does not provide blanket cover for all such visits to be held virtually. Wherever possible, visits should be held face-to-face. This can include considering whether it is possible to move the time or location of the meeting within the statutory timescales.

The temporary regulations require any virtual visits to be held in accordance with any recommendations from the nominated officer. When making recommendations, nominated officers should consider:

- the wishes of the children and young people affected
- the ability of the child or young person to engage in a virtual visit due to reasons such as their age, disability, learning difficulty or use of English, for example with unaccompanied asylum-seeking children
- whether there is an established bond between the social worker and the child or young person
- any other factors the nominating officer thinks relevant

As good practice, children and young people should be told why a face to face visit is not possible and be advised of their right to advocacy or support.

All uses of this temporary flexibility must be recorded in individual case files. These records should include the reasons why a virtual visit was necessary. Local authorities and social workers should consider available guidance on the use of virtual visits such as that issued by the principal social worker network.

PSW Best Practice Guide for Video Call and Virtual Home Visits

<https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Documents/Learning-and-development/social-work/psw/PSW-best-practice-guide-for-video-call-and-virtual-home-visit.pdf>

Social Work England Guides of Ethics, Risk Assessments and Virtual Meetings Guidance for infection prevention and control in children's social care settings, including the specific circumstances where PPE should be used, can be found in the **Guidance on Safe Working in Education, Childcare and Children's Social Care Settings**

	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safe-working-in-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care/safe-working-in-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care-settings-including-the-use-of-personal-protective-equipment-ppe">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safe-working-in-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care/safe-working-in-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care-settings-including-the-use-of-personal-protective-equipment-ppe</a>
<b>Advocacy and Independent Visitors</b>	<p><b>Coronavirus (COVID-19): Guidance for Children’s Social Care Services</b>  <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-childrens-social-care-services/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-local-authorities-on-childrens-social-care">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-childrens-social-care-services/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-local-authorities-on-childrens-social-care:</a></p> <p>The ongoing provision of advocacy for looked-after children is of critical importance and local authority duties to provide it remain unchanged. The DfE funded <b>Always Heard</b> safety net service continues to be fully operational and can be contacted at 0808 800 5792 and the Children’s Commissioner’s <b>Help at Hand</b> service is also available on 0800 528 0731.</p> <p><a href="https://coramvoice.org.uk/for-professionals/always-heard-the-national-advocacy-helpline-and-safety-net-for-england/">https://coramvoice.org.uk/for-professionals/always-heard-the-national-advocacy-helpline-and-safety-net-for-england/</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/help-at-hand/">https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/help-at-hand/</a></p>
<b>Appointment and Role of Independent Reviewing Officers</b>	<p>Government social distancing requirements apply.</p> <p><a href="https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus">https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus</a></p>
<b>Secure Accommodation (Criteria) Reviews</b>	<p>Government social distancing requirements apply to reviews.</p> <p><a href="https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus">https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus</a></p>
<b>Notifications of Significant Events</b>	<p>Covid19 is a notifiable disease.</p> <p><a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/news/coronavirus-covid-19-listed-as-a-notifiable-disease">https://www.gov.uk/government/news/coronavirus-covid-19-listed-as-a-notifiable-disease</a></p>

	<p><b>Notifying Ofsted</b></p> <p>You only need to <a href="#">notify Ofsted</a> about incidents that the regulations require you to tell them about. They do not need you to tell them about anything else. However, they do expect you to risk assess and carefully record any steps you are taking in running your services.</p> <p><a href="https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ofsted-coronavirus-covid-19-rolling-update?utm_source=4f233d07-f952-458e-9379-0d33a80c9d8c&amp;utm_medium=email&amp;utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&amp;utm_content=immediate">https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ofsted-coronavirus-covid-19-rolling-update?utm_source=4f233d07-f952-458e-9379-0d33a80c9d8c&amp;utm_medium=email&amp;utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&amp;utm_content=immediate</a></p> <p><b>RIDDOR reporting of COVID-19</b></p> <p>You must only make a report under RIDDOR (The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013) when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an unintended incident at work has led to someone’s possible or actual exposure to coronavirus. This must be reported as a dangerous occurrence.</li> <li>• a worker has been diagnosed as having COVID 19 and there is reasonable evidence that it was caused by exposure at work. This must be reported as a case of disease.</li> <li>• a worker dies as a result of occupational exposure to coronavirus.</li> </ul> <p><a href="https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/riddor-reporting-coronavirus.htm">https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/riddor-reporting-coronavirus.htm</a></p>
<p><b>Contact with Parents/Adults and Siblings</b></p>	<p><b>Coronavirus (COVID-19): Guidance for Children’s Social Care Services</b></p> <p><a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-childrens-social-care-services/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-local-authorities-on-childrens-social-care">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-childrens-social-care-services/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-local-authorities-on-childrens-social-care:</a></p> <p><b>What about court orders related to contact for children in care?</b></p> <p>[The Government] expect that contact between children in care and their birth relatives will continue. It is essential for children and families to remain in touch at this difficult time, and for some children, the consequences of not seeing</p>

relatives would be traumatic.

However, there may be local or individual circumstances where face-to-face contact may not be possible, including where members of households are isolating or continuing to take precautions due to clinical vulnerability.

Under the current provisions for social distancing, there are exceptions for the purposes of arrangements for access to, and contact between, parents and children where the children do not live in the same household as their parents or one of their parents. There is also an exception to allow for contact between siblings when they do not live together and one or more of them is a looked after child or a 16 or 17-year-old care leaver. Where it is not possible for the usual face-to-face contact to happen, keeping in touch will need to continue to take place virtually. The Government would encourage social workers and other professionals to reassure children that this position is temporary.

The Government would also expect carers to be consulted on how best to meet the needs of the children in their care and to be supported to facilitate that contact.

When considering the most appropriate ways for children to stay in touch with their families, social workers and carers should seek the views of children who may welcome different forms of contact, including less formal and more flexible virtual contact with their birth families.

**Coronavirus: Separated Families and Contact with Children in Care FAQs (UK) (House of Commons Library)**  
<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-8901/>

**Cafcass have produced guidance for children and young people with 'top tips for keeping in touch with family and friends**

<https://www.cafcass.gov.uk/grown-ups/parents-and-carers/covid-19-guidance-for-children-and-families/>

## Education

### Coronavirus (COVID-19): Guidance for Children's Social Care Services

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-childrens-social-care-services/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-local-authorities-on-childrens-social-care>

Early years setting remain open for all children.

During the period of national lockdown, primary, secondary, alternative provision and special schools will remain open to vulnerable children and young people and the children of critical workers only (recognising that the characteristics of the cohorts in special schools and alternative provision will mean these settings continue to offer face to face provision for all pupils, where appropriate). All other pupils should receive remote education. Pupils who are self-isolating should not attend school. Clinically extremely vulnerable pupils are also advised not to attend school.

The definition of vulnerable children and young people includes children who have a social worker, an education, health and care (EHC) plan or who may be vulnerable for another reason at local discretion ("otherwise vulnerable").

Schools are expected to allow and strongly encourage vulnerable children and young people to attend. Parents and carers of vulnerable children and young people are strongly encouraged to take up the place.

If vulnerable children and young people do not attend, schools should:

- work together with the local authority and social worker (where applicable) to follow up with the parent or carer to explore the reason for absence, discussing their concerns using supporting guidance considering the child's circumstances and their best interests
- work together with the local authority, social worker (where applicable) and other relevant partners to encourage the child or young person to attend educational provision, particularly where the social worker agrees that the child or young person's attendance would be appropriate

Where schools grant a leave of absence to a vulnerable child or young person they should still speak to parents and carers, and social workers (where applicable) to explore the reasons for this and any concerns raised. The discussions should focus on the welfare of the child or young person and ensuring that the child or young person is able to access appropriate education and support while they are at home.

Where providers have had to close, they should inform the local authority to discuss alternative arrangements for vulnerable children and young people and work towards reopening as soon as possible, where feasible to do so.

Regardless of setting, schools are encouraged to work collaboratively with other schools and education providers and other local partners (including the local authority, social workers, police, youth services, key workers) to maximise opportunities for face-to-face provision for vulnerable children.

The Government have also published guidance on **Improving school attendance: support for schools and local authorities** which includes guidance on the responsibilities of virtual school heads (VSHs) in monitoring the attendance of looked-after children and previously looked-after children, and securing appropriate interventions for those who are persistently absent.

This guidance sets out expectations on social workers and family support workers to convey high expectations for attendance, make sure school attendance is prioritised within multi-agency plans and support children and families to overcome barriers to attendance where needed. The Government have published a **toolkit of resources and guidance to help social workers in conversations with children and families about school attendance** .

This is especially important when schools are open for vulnerable children and young people and children of critical workers only: there is even more need to have eyes on vulnerable children and young people and, where they do not attend school, social workers should work together with others to address concerns and encourage attendance.

Where individuals who are self-isolating are within our definition of vulnerable, it is important that schools put systems



in place to keep in contact with them, offer pastoral support and check they are able to access education support.

When a vulnerable child and young person is asked to self-isolate, schools should notify their social worker (if they have one). School leaders should then agree with the social worker the best way to maintain contact and offer support to the vulnerable child or young person. Social workers should be in communication with schools and, where possible, engaged in conversations with the school and parents to put in place strategies to reduce the risk of exclusion.

The Government have reiterated to schools that they should, as far as possible, avoid permanently excluding any pupil with an Education, Health and Care Plan or a Looked-After Child. Where a looked after child is at risk of exclusion, the VSH, working with others, should consider what additional assessment and support needs to be put in place to help the school address the causes of the child's behaviour and prevent the need for exclusion, and make any additional arrangements to support the child's ongoing education in the event of an exclusion.

Where a child has been permanently excluded, this will include rapidly securing new educational provision in line with the child's needs and Personal Education Plan (PEP). Where a school has concerns about the behaviour of a previously looked after child which could result in the child being excluded, advice may be sought from the VSH on strategies to support the child to avoid exclusion.

All children deemed clinically extremely vulnerable are advised not to attend school.

Where a child's GP or clinician has confirmed they are still considered clinically extremely vulnerable, they should follow shielding advice and should not attend school, because the risk of exposure to the virus in their area may currently be very high.

A child or member of staff who lives in the same household as someone who is clinically extremely vulnerable or clinically vulnerable can still attend the setting, unless advised otherwise by an individual letter from the NHS or a specialist doctor.

### **Risk assessments for children and young people with an education, health and care plan**

Following the March closure of schools and colleges to most pupils and students, local authorities and settings were asked to undertake risk assessments for children and young people with EHC plans. These risk assessments are no longer required.

Pupil level risk assessments, which were used last spring, should not be used to filter children and young people in or out of attendance, but could be helpful to prioritise the amount of time in school children can get if full time attendance for all is not possible.

Local authorities and educational settings should make their own judgements as to whether risk assessments continue to be useful for each child or young person after they have returned full time. They may for example prove useful to:

- help identify any additional support that pupils need in order to make a successful return to full-time education
- to help reassure pupils, families, and staff that it is safe for the pupil to be welcomed back to their setting in the event that children and young people have to self-isolate; or if there is a local outbreak of coronavirus (COVID-19)

Where a child or young person with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has a social worker, the social worker should be involved in maintaining any risk assessment. Where a child is looked-after, the local authority virtual school head should also be involved.

### **Alternative provision (AP) schools and providers**

Alternative provision (AP) settings should remain open and allow vulnerable children and young people and children of critical workers to attend. The Government expect AP schools to actively encourage those they consider to be most vulnerable – identified in partnership with local services – to attend provision. They should provide robust remote

	<p>learning for those who are not attending.</p> <p>On occasion AP schools will encounter circumstances where they cannot provide their usual interventions and provision at adequate staffing ratios, or with staff with vital specialist training. In these circumstances they should seek to resume as close as possible to full time provision as soon as possible for all children of critical workers and those deemed vulnerable.</p> <p><b>Critical workers and vulnerable children who can access schools or educational settings</b></p> <p><a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision?utm_medium=email&amp;utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&amp;utm_source=31faca4b-814d-4606-947d-432ab6d24ea6&amp;utm_content=daily">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision?utm_medium=email&amp;utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&amp;utm_source=31faca4b-814d-4606-947d-432ab6d24ea6&amp;utm_content=daily</a></p> <p><b>Providing school meals during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak</b></p> <p><a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-free-school-meals-guidance?utm_medium=email&amp;utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&amp;utm_source=0d96046e-2048-4d3a-b4c7-67e69d789a99&amp;utm_content=daily">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-free-school-meals-guidance?utm_medium=email&amp;utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&amp;utm_source=0d96046e-2048-4d3a-b4c7-67e69d789a99&amp;utm_content=daily</a></p>
<p><b>Health and Wellbeing</b></p>	<p>If a child, or another member of the household, develops symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19), follow Government guidance on infection control procedures and isolation.</p> <p><a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance</a></p> <p><b>Coronavirus (COVID-19): Guidance for Children’s Social Care Services</b></p> <p><a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-childrens-social-care-">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-childrens-social-care-</a></p>

[services/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-local-authorities-on-childrens-social-care](#)

### **What support is available to promote the mental health of looked-after children?**

There will be particular issues arising from coronavirus (COVID-19) that will affect looked-after children e.g. changes to contact with birth families. Local authorities should be alert to these issues and the impact they may have on looked-after children's mental health and wellbeing. Local authorities should continue to encourage looked-after children to speak to their social worker, carer or other trusted adult e.g. their advocate about how they are feeling and any mental health and wellbeing needs they have so that they can ensure they get the help and support they need.

Social workers may also want to make carers aware of Public Health England's general **guidance for parents and carers on supporting children and young people during the coronavirus outbreak** (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing/guidance-for-parents-and-carers-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>) and NHS England's general **guidance on looking after children and young people during the coronavirus outbreak** (<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/looking-after-children-and-young-people-during-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak/>). Both sets of guidance also contain helplines and websites which children and young people can access directly, including for anonymous support. Public Health England **Every Mind Matters** contains useful information for young people and carers on how to look after their own or someone else's mental health.

Additionally, Become has a dedicated **Care Advice Line** (<https://becomecharity.org.uk/for-young-people/care-advice-line/coronavirus-advice/>) for looked-after children and care leavers.

Mental health continues to be a priority for the NHS and the NHS remains open to support everyone. NHS funded services across the statutory, independent and voluntary community and social enterprise sectors have worked with partners including education, local authorities, public health agencies and the justice system throughout the pandemic to help ensure that children and young people can get the support they need. This includes the use of e-clinics, online video calls or apps which enable children and young people to self-refer and talk to services through

	<p>their mobile devices. 24/7 all ages crisis helplines are available across the country so anyone, including children and young people, can get urgent help whenever they need it.</p> <p>NHS England has published <b>guidance for services on mental health, learning disabilities and autism</b>.  <a href="https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/community-social-care-ambulance/mental-health/">https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/community-social-care-ambulance/mental-health/</a></p>
<p><b>Behaviour Management</b></p>	<p><b>Coronavirus (COVID-19): Guidance for Children’s Social Care Services</b>  <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-childrens-social-care-services/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-local-authorities-on-childrens-social-care">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-childrens-social-care-services/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-local-authorities-on-childrens-social-care</a></p> <p><b>What can we do to manage a young person’s behaviour if they are not complying with social distancing guidelines?</b></p> <p>If a young person is not complying with social distancing guidelines, the response should be considered on a case by case basis. In the first instance, encourage staff who know these young people best, to continue to engage with them on this issue, including residential care staff, foster carers or social workers.</p> <p>Where this is a persistent problem for those responsible for the child or young person, they should discuss with the child’s responsible authority to develop a plan to encourage the child to comply. Providers should also support those who are caring for the child to find alternative ways and/or incentives to encourage children to comply with the overall restrictions in place at the time. Restraint should not be used to ensure children and young people comply with social distancing measures.</p> <p>Ofsted has published <b>guidance about physical intervention and restrictions of liberty</b>  <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/positive-environments-where-children-can-flourish">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/positive-environments-where-children-can-flourish</a></p>
<p><b>Care Leavers</b></p>	<p><b>Coronavirus (COVID-19): Guidance for Children’s Social Care Services</b>  <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-childrens-social-care-services/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-local-authorities-on-childrens-social-care">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-childrens-social-care-services/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-local-authorities-on-childrens-social-care</a></p>

### **How should local authorities meet their responsibilities to care leavers?**

Local authorities must continue to meet their statutory responsibilities towards care leavers such as providing personal advisers, or preparing and reviewing pathway plans. Personal advisers should proactively reach out to care leavers during the pandemic, including care leavers aged over 21 who are eligible for support up to age 25, but who were not accessing support before the pandemic.

Local authorities should be clear about what additional support is available to care leavers - over and above their existing published local offer - to help them overcome any additional challenges they face due to coronavirus (COVID-19), including access to discretionary funding if needed.

The government has provided additional funding for local authorities to help them address pressures arising from coronavirus (COVID-19), and would encourage local authorities to utilise some of this funding to provide discretionary payments to care leavers to cover items such as food, utilities and rent during this period if required.

Given the financial vulnerability of many care leavers during this period, local authorities should make arrangements for discretionary payments to be authorised and paid to care leavers at short notice if necessary and with minimal administrative burdens. Other forms of financial support for care leavers including setting up home allowances should continue to be available during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

### **Are personal advisers still expected and able to visit care leavers?**

The Government encourage personal advisers to keep in touch with young people in the most effective way for the individual young person, including through technology such as phone or video. Face-to-face visits will be necessary to provide the right help to some young people and these should continue, taking account of Working Safely During Coronavirus (COVID-19) to protect staff and the care leavers they are visiting. (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working->

[safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/homes](#)

Personal advisers should carefully assess what is the right level and frequency of contact with each care leaver, taking into account each young person's particular circumstances and levels of vulnerability. They should always consider the individual wishes and feelings of care leavers.

**Should children in care and care leavers continue to move into independent living when they turn 18? Can care leavers still be moved between different accommodation settings if necessary?**

Young people who have left care, or are just about to, are especially vulnerable right now. All decisions about their future should be carefully considered in the light of the pandemic and with an overriding objective of supporting them during this period and minimising any additional stress for them. In particular, the Government expect local authorities to take account of coronavirus (COVID-19) when making decisions about leaving care, and to ensure that no one has to leave care during this period. As set out in Regulation 39 of the Care Planning Regulations, when considering ceasing to look after a young person, local authorities should carry out an assessment, including ascertaining and giving consideration to the young person's wishes and feelings. The same principle should apply to young people who are in Staying Put arrangements and in relation to decisions about care leavers who were due to make a planned move into new accommodation.

While young people will still be able to move out of care into suitable accommodation, where this happens the move should be right for that young person and take account of their wishes and feelings.

Care leavers can also be moved between different accommodation settings, provided that the move is in accordance with the wishes of the young person and that the local authority is assured that the setting they are moving into is safe in relation to risk factors arising from coronavirus (COVID-19).

	<p><b>What are you doing to ensure care leavers don't experience loneliness and isolation during this period?</b></p> <p>During the summer term, devices were provided to local authorities and academy trusts to support families, children and young people most in need who did not have access to them through another source, such as their school. Laptops, tablets and 4G wireless routers were provided for care leavers, children and young people with social workers and disadvantaged year 10 pupils.</p> <p>The government has published <b>Guidance on Supporting Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing</b>  <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing</a></p> <p>The Government has also provided funding for three care leaver charities (Become, Drive Forward Foundation and the Care Leaver's Association) to provide extra support to help care leavers to reduce loneliness and isolation and their impact on young people's emotional health and well-being.</p>
<p><b>Youth Offending</b></p>	<p><b>Coronavirus and the Police: a Guide for Under 18s</b>  <a href="https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/895370/Coronavirus_and_police__under_18s_guide.pdf">https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/895370/Coronavirus_and_police__under_18s_guide.pdf</a></p> <p><b>Youth Justice Resource Hub</b> <a href="https://yjresourcehub.uk/practice/covid-19-resources-for-youth-justice.html">https://yjresourcehub.uk/practice/covid-19-resources-for-youth-justice.html</a></p> <p><b>Youth Justice Board update on COVID-19</b>  <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/news/youth-justice-board-update-on-covid-19">https://www.gov.uk/government/news/youth-justice-board-update-on-covid-19:</a></p> <p><b>As an organisation we are taking the following action:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>all YJB staff will work from home until further notice and will not be expected to undertake work-related travel</i></li> <li>• <i>we intend to continue our work with the use of video conferencing and telephone</i></li> <li>• <i>our regular meetings, fora and events will be held virtually and we will contact attendees in advance to confirm arrangements</i></li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• we will postpone any events where it isn't possible to meet virtually, rearranging with attendees in good time</li> <li>• we will continue to review our activity as and when government advice changes</li> <li>• we will keep in contact with youth justice partners to ensure we are providing additional support wherever that may be considered helpful</li> </ul> <p><b>Amendments to the Prison and Young Offender Institution Rules</b></p> <p><u><a href="#">The Prison and Young Offender Institution (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Rules 2020</a></u> amend the Prison and Young Offender Institution Rules to allow for early release due to the Coronavirus. The changes came into force on 6 April 2020.</p> <p><a href="https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-8892/">https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-8892/</a></p> <p><b>Guidance - Coronavirus and court: advice for children</b></p> <p>This leaflet contains advice for under-18s attending court during the COVID-19 outbreak</p> <p><a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-and-court-advice-for-children">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-and-court-advice-for-children</a></p> <p><b>Coronavirus (COVID-19) and Prisons</b> - <a href="https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-and-prisons">https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-and-prisons</a></p>
<p><b>Fostering Panel</b></p>	<p>The Adoption and Children (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 removed the <b>requirement</b> for a fostering panel to be set up to assess applications for potential foster carers, ongoing suitability of existing foster carers and any cases referred to it where the foster carer was deemed not suitable by the fostering service provider and then to make a recommendation to the fostering service provider. The Regulations changed this so that fostering panels became <b>optional</b>.</p> <p>In cases where the decision is not to set up a fostering panel the relevant decision will be made by the fostering service provider based on their own assessment.</p>

Where a panel is formed the number of people required to be part of the foster panel is reduced to cater for panel member shortages (in addition to the chair and one member who is a social worker who has at least three years' relevant post-qualifying experience, **1 other independent person** (rather than the usual 3 people/4 for joint panels)).

**Coronavirus (COVID-19): Guidance for Children's Social Care Services**

[https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-childrens-social-care-services/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-local-authorities-on-childrens-social-care:](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-childrens-social-care-services/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-local-authorities-on-childrens-social-care)

**Suitability assessments – continuing effect of the Adoption and Children (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020**

Where the fostering service provider has started the assessment process for a new foster carer **before 25 September 2020** under regulation 26 of the Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011, it must continue to assess that individual as though all the amendments in the Adoption and Children (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 that came into effect from 24 April 2020, to the 2011 Regulations remain in force. This means that the service provider can **continue to choose** whether to refer the case to the fostering panel for a recommendation on suitability.

It can still notify the applicant of a decision not to approve them as suitable to foster as soon as is reasonably practical, once all the relevant information has been gathered. This means that:

- a fostering service provider can continue to decide if it refers the case to a panel for a recommendation on suitability
- a panel can still go ahead under reduced quoracy (not having enough members to carry out business and cast votes)

This is to avoid restarting the assessment process for foster carers from the beginning when the Adoption and Children

	<p>(Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 expired on 25 September 2020.</p> <p>The Fostering Network and CoramBAAF have useful <b>practice information regarding virtual fostering panels</b> during the coronavirus outbreak.</p> <p><a href="https://www.thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/covid-19-fostering-services">https://www.thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/covid-19-fostering-services</a>  <a href="https://corambaaf.org.uk/updates/coronavirus-adoption-and-fostering-panel-virtual-meetings">https://corambaaf.org.uk/updates/coronavirus-adoption-and-fostering-panel-virtual-meetings</a></p> <p><b>Foster Talk also offer support during this outbreak:</b> <a href="https://www.fostertalk.org/coronavirus-support/">https://www.fostertalk.org/coronavirus-support/</a></p>
<p><b>Assessment and Approvals of Foster Carers</b></p>	<p><b>Medical Checks</b></p> <p>The temporary Regulations allow fostering agencies to proceed to obtaining the information required under regulation 26(2)(a) Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 without having received medical reports.</p> <p><b>Coronavirus (COVID-19): Guidance for Children’s Social Care Services</b>  <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-childrens-social-care-services/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-local-authorities-on-childrens-social-care">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-childrens-social-care-services/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-local-authorities-on-childrens-social-care</a></p> <p>The temporary regulations do not remove the need for medical reports as they still must be obtained before the fostering agency can consider the suitability assessment of the prospective foster carer and their household. A final decision cannot be made without a medical report being obtained and considered as part of the suitability assessment. If medical reports are available at the initial stage, they should still be obtained and considered then.</p> <p>As good practice, agencies should let prospective foster carers know that if their application is progressed to the next stage, their medical information, when received, could affect the outcome. Equally, if agencies are aware of medical history that could affect the outcome of the application, they may decide not to progress the application until the relevant information has been received from the GP or other health professional.</p> <p>The decision to use this flexibility must be recorded. Agencies may also find it helpful to keep a separate collated record</p>

	of cases in which he flexibility has been used.
<p><b>Temporary Approval as Foster Carers</b></p>	<p><b>Coronavirus (COVID-19): Guidance for Children’s Social Care Services</b>  <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-childrens-social-care-services/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-local-authorities-on-childrens-social-care">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-childrens-social-care-services/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-local-authorities-on-childrens-social-care:</a></p> <p><b><u>Temporary approval – continuing effect of the Adoption and Children (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020</u></b></p> <p>Where the responsible authority has started to assess a person as a temporary foster carer under regulation 24, or has approved a person under regulation 24, <b>before 25 September 2020</b>, the responsible authority can continue these assessments and approvals in accordance with the amendments made by the Adoption and Children (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020. This means that temporary approvals for non-connected persons can continue if the assessment was started before or on 25 September, and that these placements can continue for up to 24 weeks.</p> <p>Assessments under regulation 24 started <b>on or after 25 September</b> must comply with the original regulations and as such can only allow the temporary approval of a connected person for a maximum of 16 weeks while an assessment of suitability is completed.</p> <p>The Adoption and Children (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 amended Regulation 24 Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010 (usually ‘placements with connected persons), so that temporary approval as foster carers can be given to people who are not ‘connected persons in relation to the child. The period of this temporary approval is extended to 24 weeks (rather than 16 weeks).</p>
<p><b>Emergency Placement with a Local Authority Foster Carer</b></p>	<p><b>Coronavirus (COVID-19): Guidance for Children’s Social Care Services</b>  <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-childrens-social-care-services/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-local-authorities-on-childrens-social-care">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-childrens-social-care-services/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-local-authorities-on-childrens-social-care:</a></p> <p><b><u>Placement – continuing effect of the Adoption and Children (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020</u></b>        Emergency placements under regulation 23 of the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations 2010 that</p>

	<p>were made <b>before 25 September 2020</b> should be reviewed to see if they remain appropriate. They can continue to last for up to 24 weeks in accordance with the amendments made by the Adoption and Children (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020. Placements made on or after this date must comply with regulation 23 of the 2010 Regulations and must not last for longer than 6 working days.</p> <p>The Adoption and Children (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 provided that, where it was necessary to place a child in an emergency, they may be placed with any approved local authority foster carer, even if the terms of that approval are not consistent with the placement, provided that that the placement is for no longer than <b>24 weeks</b> (rather than the usual <b>6 working days</b>).</p>
<p><b>Exemptions and Extensions/Variations to Foster Carer Approval</b></p>	<p><b>Coronavirus (COVID-19): Guidance for Children’s Social Care Services</b>  <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-childrens-social-care-services/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-local-authorities-on-childrens-social-care">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-childrens-social-care-services/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-local-authorities-on-childrens-social-care:</a></p> <p><b>Can we change the number of children that a foster household can care for?</b>        Foster carer approval terms, including age range and number of placements, may need to be flexible in the current circumstances. Schedule 7 of the Children Act 1989 currently allows for some flexibility in placing multiple children together by allowing local authorities to grant exemptions to the usual fostering limit in specific placements.</p> <p>Where fostering services are concerned about capacity, they could start identifying potential fostering households that may be able to accommodate additional children. As part of their contingency planning, they may wish to consider where it would be appropriate for some children (e.g. siblings) to share bedrooms to increase the space available in fostering households. They will need to have thorough, sensitive conversations with foster families and children as part of this planning. No foster carers should be expected to look after additional children without proper discussion and appropriate support. However, many will want to offer help and these families should be enabled to do so. Fostering services could also consider whether foster carers who have recently stopped fostering as a result of personal or environmental factors, such as work pressures or retirement, could come back into the service temporarily, as long as</p>

	<p>they are not in high risk or vulnerable health groups and they are offered the necessary support to do so.</p>
<p><b>Supervision and Support of Foster Carers</b></p>	<p>FosterlinePlus, an extended service delivered by Fosterline, offers free-to-access and specialist one-to-one support to foster families, in recognition of the additional support needed at this time to keep foster families together. Through this service, foster families can access to a range of specialist services, including behaviour management experts, independent social workers, advocacy services, plus fostering-specific tax and benefits services.<a href="https://www.fosterline.info/fosterline-plus-see-how-we-can-support-you/">https://www.fosterline.info/fosterline-plus-see-how-we-can-support-you/</a></p> <p><b>The Fostering Network have information on Support for Foster Carers</b></p> <p><a href="https://www.thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/advice-information/coronavirus-covid-19">https://www.thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/advice-information/coronavirus-covid-19</a></p> <p><b>Access to respite care</b></p> <p>The Government would encourage fostering services to consider how they can offer respite care safely during the coming weeks, whilst making every effort to manage the risks that contact between different households may present. This may be through existing support bubbles, community care models, or relationships between local carers, for example.</p>
<p><b>Assessment and Approvals of Prospective Adopters</b></p>	<p><b>Coronavirus (COVID-19): Guidance for Children’s Social Care Services</b>  <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-childrens-social-care-services/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-local-authorities-on-childrens-social-care">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-childrens-social-care-services/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-local-authorities-on-childrens-social-care:</a></p> <p><b><u>Suitability assessments - continuing effect of the Adoption and Children (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations</u></b></p> <p>Where an adoption agency is in the process of assessing the suitability of a prospective adopter <b>before 25 September 2020</b> under Part 4 of the Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005, they must continue to assess that individual as though all the amendments in the Adoption and Children (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020, that came into effect from 24 April 2020, to the 2005 Regulations remain in force. This means that:</p>

- an adoption agency can decide if it refers the case to a panel for a recommendation on suitability
- a panel can still go ahead under reduced quoracy (not having enough members to carry out business and cast votes)
- an adoption agency can move to stage 2 of the process while still waiting for medicals and DBS checks This is to avoid restarting the assessment process from the beginning for assessments in progress when the Adoption and Children (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 expired on 25 September 2020.

**Moving to stage 2 of adopter assessment process without medical reports**

The temporary regulations allow an adoption agency to proceed to stage 2 of the assessment process without having received the medical report, where applicable, requested under regulation 26(b) of the Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005.

This does not remove the need for medical reports as they still must be obtained and considered before the adoption agency makes a final decision. If medical reports are available at stage 1, they should be obtained and considered then.

As good practice, agencies should let prospective adopters know that if their application is progressed to the next stage, their medical information, when received, could affect the outcome. Equally, if agencies are aware of medical history that could affect the outcome of the application, they may decide not to progress the application until the relevant information has been received from the GP or other health professional. The decision to use this flexibility must be recorded. Agencies may also find it helpful to keep a separate collated record of in which cases the flexibility has been used. The position under the new temporary regulations from 25 September is that a person cannot apply for a review to the Secretary of State of a decision that the person is not suitable for reasons related to medical information only.

The Adoption and Children (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 made the following amendments during the coronavirus pandemic:

**They amended the stage at which medical and DBS checks are completed.**

The Regulations allowed these checks to be completed as part of Stage 2 of the process, rather than Stage 1 as usual, enabling adoptions to continue to progress rather than stall.

Applicants will not be able to access the Independent Review Mechanism (IRM) where their applications are unsuccessful for reasons relating to DBS or health checks, as would have been the case if these checks were completed in stage 1. Adopters will be able to access the IRM after stage 2, if their application fails for any other reason not relating to DBS or health checks.

**They relaxed the timescales for the adoption process**

Timescales for stage one and stage two of the process from 2 months (stage 1) and 4 months (stage 2) remained in place but agencies were only required to meet the timescales where reasonably practicable during the outbreak. The 6 month limit on the length of time a prospective adopter could leave between stage 1 and stage 2 was removed. This is to provide maximum flexibility to agencies working with families and continue to progress in the adoption process.

This will include cases where the adoption agency is in the process of assessing a prospective adopter **on the 25 September 2020.**

**They removed the requirement for an adoption panel** (which make a recommendation to the agency on whether the adopters are suitable), to allow agencies maximum flexibility.

Should agencies decide to conduct a panel, the minimum number of panel members required was reduced from 5 to 3 to ensure that adoption approvals and matches can continue even where there is a shortage of available panel members.



	<p>The Fostering Network and CoramBAAF have useful <b>practice information regarding virtual panel meetings</b> during the coronavirus outbreak.</p> <p><a href="https://www.thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/covid-19-fostering-services">https://www.thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/covid-19-fostering-services</a>  <a href="https://corambaaf.org.uk/updates/coronavirus-adoption-and-fostering-panel-virtual-meetings">https://corambaaf.org.uk/updates/coronavirus-adoption-and-fostering-panel-virtual-meetings</a></p> <p><b>Foster Talk also offer support during this outbreak:</b> <a href="https://www.fostertalk.org/coronavirus-support/">https://www.fostertalk.org/coronavirus-support/</a></p> <p><b>COVID-19: Changes to DBS ID Checking Guidelines</b></p> <p><a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/news/covid-19-changes-to-dbs-id-checking-guidelines">https://www.gov.uk/government/news/covid-19-changes-to-dbs-id-checking-guidelines</a></p> <p>To ensure that the necessary DBS checks can still be carried out, the DBS ID checking guidance will be changed for a temporary period.</p> <p>The change will enable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ID documents to be viewed over video link</li> <li>• scanned images to be used in advance of the DBS check being submitted</li> </ul> <p>Please note, the change should only be implemented for urgent cases where it is not possible to follow the normal identity checking guidelines. The applicant must present the original versions of these documents when they first attend their employment or volunteering role.</p>
<p><b>Placement for Adoption</b></p>	<p><b>Coronavirus (COVID-19): Guidance for Children’s Social Care Services</b>  <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-childrens-social-care-services/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-local-authorities-on-childrens-social-care">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-childrens-social-care-services/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-local-authorities-on-childrens-social-care:</a></p>

	<p><b>Should we stop all introductory meetings for children with new adopted parents?</b></p> <p>There needs to be a case by case, risk-based decision about what is right in the circumstances.</p> <p>Face to face introductory meetings, such as adopters and foster carers visiting each other’s homes so the child(ren) can get to know the adopters before moving in with them, can continue to take place if it is possible to do so and if all parties are comfortable with the arrangements. Individuals should consider what is most appropriate in their specific circumstances.</p> <p>The Government accept that for some children introductory meetings may have to be postponed for example, where someone in the foster family is in a vulnerable category and that other ways may need to be found to prioritise permanent placements for children in line with their best interests.</p>
<p><b>Monitoring and Supervision of Adoptive Placements</b></p>	<p>Government social distancing requirements apply to meetings.</p> <p><a href="https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus">https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus</a></p>
<p><b>Applications for Special Guardianship Orders</b></p>	<p>Government social distancing requirements apply to meetings.</p> <p><a href="https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus">https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus</a></p>