

Update for foster carers – 2nd April 2020

I hope you and your families are all well and keeping safe.

It is certainly an interesting time, given the Covid-19 pandemic, in which we are having to manage changes to the routines we may have previously taken for granted and adapt accordingly. I know this is not easy and I am grateful for your support and resilience during this period.

Our staff are currently adjusting on having to rely on contacting you and participating in relevant meetings via digital solutions and are in the process of downloading Whatsapp to their work's mobile, something they were not previously able to do. It would be great if you could also download this app, if you have not got it already, as it would be nice for you to have some video calls with your SSW/Family Worker throughout this difficult period.

DBS checks

The use of video calls is also being utilised in processing DBS checks as it will enable you to send photos of your ID in a secure way. This is in line with temporary government guidance. Your FSO or SSW will be in touch well in advance in case there is a delay in processing them centrally. This could also apply to any other sensitive information you may wish to share. Please contact your FSO or your SSW if you need any help with this.

Medical checks and repeat medical checks for foster carers

The below update from Ofsted was sent to all local authorities and all registered children's social providers on 27 March 2020, which is what we are now working to:

We recognise that medical checks are difficult to complete as GPs have to prioritise other matters. Some of you have asked what kind of medical assessment would be acceptable instead. We have raised GP medicals with the DfE who are considering whether further guidance is needed. We expect providers to gather as much information as possible for the assessment. Panels should be able to make recommendations based on the health information provided in carers' assessment reports. Serious health concerns should be assessed by a GP as soon as it is possible to do so.

Support care

I am informed that there seems to be some confusion regarding whether all support care arrangements are cancelled. I think it is worth reiterating what was stated in last's week's update.

We are endeavouring to continue with support care arrangements, where deemed appropriate on a 'case by case' basis, firstly checking if both households are free of the virus and/or underlying conditions to assess the situation first.

Helpful resources

I have seen some lovely pictures produced by children in your care and know you are making use of available resources to support children.

The following resources identified by our fantastic fostering staff, including a video highlighted by one of our foster carers, by Dan Huges which may be of use to you and children in your care:

- Dr Dan Hughes - Parenting a Traumatized Child While Living through COVID 19
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2nLF0wdoSJO>
- Free Open University courses available at the moment www.open.edu/openlearn (click free courses from the Open University) which may help people in meeting their training requirements while staying at home.
- This website is fantastic and there's some free resources to support carers and children from TherapistAid.com
[Mental Wellness During a Crisis](#)
[Considerations for Online Therapy](#)
[Symptoms of Stress](#)

Also, please see our foster carer website: <https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/fanotts> for updates re; COVID-19 and where there is lots of good information and resources.

Thank you for all you are doing and for your ongoing support to our looked after children and young people. I will keep you all updated of any changes to our working practices impacted by any further government guidance.

Ty Yousaf
Fostering Service Manager
2nd April 2020