



One minute guide

Support Care

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What do we mean by Support Care?

Support Care, as part of Leeds Fostering Service, is a preventative and supportive service which provides time-out or a short break for children with another family. The aim of the service is to support children to continue to live at home and prevent family breakdown.

It is a resource for families where practitioners have significant concerns that a child or young person is on the edge of care – and may need to become looked after.

Support Carers look after children in the carers' own homes on a regular basis, normally for up to 48hrs each break.

It includes day care, evening, and/or overnight stays. Support Carers can also offer outreach to young people to build relationships and support families with positive parenting.

Children are carefully matched to their carers and all parties have the opportunity to meet prior to placement beginning. The child is matched to the same Support Carer for the duration of the placement.

Placements are time limited up to 18 months and are reviewed in line with child in need, child protection or child looked after care plans.

Carers are supported by the Support Care Supervising Social Workers.

Who is Support Care for?

All children must have an allocated social worker and be subject to a child in need plan, child protection plan or child looked after plan to access Support Care.

Support Care is:

- For children aged 0 – 16 years at the time of referral;
- For families who are isolated and have little or no family/community support and are experiencing a crisis or difficult situation; and is
- Also available to children in adoptive and Kinship Care placements.

How is the service accessed?

The service can only be accessed from within Children's Social Work Service. Prior to making a referral the child's social worker should seek approval from their Team Manager and Service Delivery Manager.

A discussion with the supervising social workers co-ordinating the scheme is helpful at this stage.

When a suitable match is identified then a visit is arranged with the child's social worker and family, to provide further information about Support Care placements and give details about the proposed carer.

If the family wish to proceed, the supervising social worker will arrange a meeting at the Support Carer's home with the child, their family and social worker. This visit is to allow all the parties involved to decide whether they wish to progress.

If all parties are in agreement, introductory visits are arranged for the child and subsequent overnight stays if required.

The child's social worker is responsible for arranging transport if this is required.

Key contacts or for more information

For further information you can contact Leeds Fostering Service on tel: 0113 37 83665 and at Fostering.Admin.Inb@leeds.gov.uk