

Manual:	Foster Carers Handbook; Fostering Service Procedures
Title:	In the Event of a Death of a Foster Child (FCH/024)
Last Reviewed:	27/02/2017
Next Review Due:	27/02/2020

INTRODUCTION

In the event of the death of a foster child a Foster Carer will need to be clear about who they should inform and what action they should take. The following information is for your guidance whether the death has occurred in your home/outside your home.

Should a child in placement have a terminal illness or die unexpectedly any Foster Carers and their families will need significant support to cope with the loss. In these circumstances Fostering Supervising Social Workers in conjunction with other professionals and the Foster Carers will arrange for appropriate support to be provided. This guidance is intended to provide practical support as well as the steps to follow in the event of a death.

Foster Carers should note:

- If the death has occurred as a result of an accident/hazard, make safe any hazards as soon as possible to avoid further accidents. If there are other foster children in your home at the time of death, please ensure that everyone is kept away from the site of the death.
- In the first instance the Foster Carer should contact the relevant emergency services e.g. ambulance, police and the child's/your own G.P.
- Inform the child's Social Worker as soon as possible by speaking to him/her personally. If they are not available, speak to the Team Manager or Social Care Direct. Do not leave a message but insist on speaking to someone as a matter of urgency.
- If the death occurs out of normal working hours the Foster Carer must immediately notify Social Care Direct/EDT on **0845 8 50 50 10**.
- Remember to record the time that the body was discovered and the times that the relevant emergency services arrived.
- Either the G.P will certify death or if there are any doubts regarding the circumstances of the death of the child the G.P will inform the Coroner/Police.
- The Coroner/Police will decide if the body requires moving to hospital or morgue for post mortem.
- Dependent upon the action that the emergency services take please ensure that you know where the child is being taken.
- In the event of a sudden death there is likely to be an inquest, which you may be required to attend.
- The Fostering Service will be required to contact OFSTED (complete Sch.8) and a Serious Case Review considered by the Local Safeguarding Children's Board.

NOTE: It is important to record as much information as possible as statements will be necessary and appearance at Coroners Court may be required.

Responsibilities of Personnel from Children's Care

- A member of staff from Children's Care will take responsibility for informing the child's parents and/or anyone with parental responsibility. They will also notify Senior Management.
- The Social Worker will discuss with the parents the arrangements they wish to make about the funeral. The responsibility for funeral arrangements lies with the parent or person with parental responsibility. The parents may/may not wish to involve or include the Foster Carer in these arrangements.
- A worker will be made available to Foster Carers offering them and their family support and take on the task of keeping Foster Carers informed of procedures and arrangements. This task will usually be carried out by your Fostering Supervising Social Worker or the child's Social Worker.
- DCC have a legal responsibility to inform the Secretary of State, as well as OFSTED of any death of a child in a foster placement, either party may request additional information at any time.

Any Foster Carer contacted by the media should not engage in conversation but respond by referring them to the Durham County Council Media Team on 03000 268 070.