



Bedroom Sharing

1. Legal Framework

This policy is based on the 2011 National Minimum Standards for Fostering (NMS), and the Family and Friends Care: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities.

Standard 10.6 (NMS) states

“In the foster home each child over the age of three should have their own bedroom. If this is not possible, the sharing of a bedroom is agreed by each child’s responsible authority and each child has their own area within the bedroom. Before seeking agreement for the sharing of a bedroom, the fostering service provider takes into account any potential for bullying any history of abuse or abusive behaviour, the wishes and of the children concerned and all other pertinent facts. The decision-making process and outcome of the assessment are recorded in writing where bedroom sharing is agreed”.

Statutory Guidance for Family and Friends Care 5.30 states

“Children living with family and friends foster carers have the same rights to privacy and suitable sleeping accommodation as other looked after children, but these should be seen as part of the total assessment of suitability, to be balanced against other factors. A child who would be unhappy to share a bedroom with a child unknown to them may not mind sharing with another child who is a relative and who they know well. They may already be living in the carer’s home and happy with the overall situation. In approving the foster carer, the fostering service will need to be satisfied that there is adequate space to a suitable standard, as set out in Standard 10.6 of the NMS or if this is not the case set out proposals as to how it will be met in the future. The wishes and feelings of the child will be an important factor in helping the social worker to assess the suitability of the accommodation.”

2. Procedure regarding bedroom sharing for children in care

Worcestershire Fostering (WF) will not normally place children in mainstream fostering homes where the child would be required to share with an unrelated child.

In assessing family and friends carers it will take into consideration the accommodation available and whether the looked after child will be required to share either with a sibling or another member of the fostering household.

Some children are used to sharing with siblings in their family home and WF will consider offering placements where they would be sharing a room based on the information on the Placement Request Form and in discussion with the child’s placing social worker. Continuing to share a bedroom may make the transition into foster care easier and less frightening and for those children who eventually return home it maintains their “lived experience”.

There may also be occasions when non related children, especially those in long term placements ask to share a bedroom. Although this would not normally be agreed the wishes of the children should be discussed with them and their social workers.

In all these situations a risk assessment should be completed.

If children will be expected or would prefer to share a bedroom (whether brother and sister or not) a risk assessment must be carried out for each individual child. This should be done in conjunction with the children's social worker and must include the wishes and feelings of all the children who would be involved in this arrangement. The template for the risk assessment is attached. (Appendix 1)

The risks and benefits need to be assessed in each case.

Foster carers can have children up to the age of two in their bedroom. After the child's second birthday it is expected that they should have their own bedroom unless there are exceptional circumstances or needs. If this is case the foster carers' supervising social worker should undertake an assessment of the risks and issues and ensure this is recorded on the foster carer record.

A copy of the risk assessment should be kept on the foster carer's file.

If there is a change in the circumstances of any of the children who are sharing a bedroom which will impact on the welfare or safety of them or any other child the risk assessment must be updated and reviewed.

If children are sharing bedrooms this should be considered and recognised within the child's Safer Caring\Individual Risk Assessment.

If children are sharing bedrooms it should also be considered as part of the foster carers' annual review of approval for carers to ensure that this is still an appropriate arrangement.

3. Bedroom Sharing on Holiday.

Foster carers may also need to give some thought to sleeping arrangements when they go on holiday. At such times children are often asked to share a bedroom either in a caravan, a family room in a hotel or B&B or self – catering accommodation. WF understands that it may be impractical and financially prohibitive to take foster children on holiday, unless they share a room either with other looked after children, foster carers or other members of the fostering household. WF would not want children to miss out on these positive experiences. Foster carers should discuss any issues about how to organise the sleeping arrangements with their supervising social worker or child's social worker as early as possible so that risk assessment can be completed.

Appendix 1

Worcestershire Fostering

BEDROOM SHARING ASSESSMENT AND ARRANGEMENTS

To be completed jointly between the children's social workers, the foster carers and the supervising worker.

This form must be completed whenever bedroom sharing is proposed and sent to the relevant team Manager (Fostering) for approval.

A copy of this risk assessment must be retained on child's and foster carers' file.

The risk assessment should be reviewed annually at the carers' review, following any change of circumstances or change to the children / young people placed into the fostering environment.

Name of Children Sharing	Date of Birth		
Reason for sharing			
What alternative arrangements have been considered?			
View of the children / young people			
Do the children have sufficient individual space?	Yes		No
Is there a clear personalised side for each child?			
What are the risks associated with this arrangement (taking into consideration the children's background, age difference, stages of development)?			
What measures are in place to reduce risks?			
What are the rules regarding the use of bedrooms (with regard to playing, sleeping routines, bedroom doors, undressing, dress code)?			

Date	
Fostering Social Worker	
Foster Carer	
Team Manager (Fostering and Kinship)	