

Wirral Fostering Service

Children's Bedrooms Guidance

IT TAKES A BIG **HEART** TO FOSTER



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Scope of this Chapter

This procedure applies to children placed in children's homes and foster homes managed by the authority, but the principles apply to the placement of all Children Looked After. Therefore, where children are placed with parents, relatives or friends or in placements not managed by the authority, the social worker must ensure these or other adequate procedures are applied.

As set out in [Social Worker Standards](#), the social worker when carrying out visits to the child at his or her placement must see the child's bedroom at least once every 3 months.

In Wirral children placed outside of the birth family in local authority foster care should be provided with their own bedroom, any exemptions to this needs to be agreed by the Head of Service and the relevant risk assessments are required. The child's wishes and feelings need to be recorded if bedroom sharing is to be agreed.

1. Planning

Suitable arrangements should exist in all foster homes and children's homes for matters relating to children's bedrooms, including security, visiting or sharing of bedrooms etc.

2. Bedroom Furniture, Facilities, Equipment and Decoration

Children's bedrooms should be pleasantly furnished, equipped and decorated in a manner appropriate to their individual needs, interests and choices.

Children should be encouraged to personalise their bedrooms, with posters, pictures and personal items of their choice.

Children of an appropriate age and level of understanding should be encouraged and supported to purchase furniture, equipment or decorations, preferably as part of a plan to prepare the child for independence.

3. Bedroom Security and Keys

Children should have adequate, safe, storage for their belongings and medicines, if permitted to administer their own.

Each child should have a lockable cupboard where they can keep personal items.

Locks should not be on bedroom doors.

4. Monitoring Arrangements

Although not encouraged, in the very unlikely circumstances where it is necessary to install or use listening or other strategies to monitor children, these arrangements must be set out in the [Placement Information Record](#) for individual children. In addition, this must be discussed with the social worker and the children, with agreed reasons as to why this action may be necessary. It must also be included within the carer Safe Caring Policy, naming the specific child/ren it is being used for. This does not cover the use of baby monitors for very young children, or for young children with disabilities where their condition requires this type of monitoring.

5. Staff/Carer Presence in Rooms

Children's privacy should be respected.

To this end, unless there are exceptional circumstances, residential staff/foster carers should knock on the door before entering any children's bedrooms; and then only enter with their permission.

The exceptional circumstances where residential staff or Foster Carers may have to enter a child's bedroom without knocking or asking permission are as follows:

- To wake a heavy sleeper, undertake cleaning, return or remove soiled clothing; (although, in these circumstances, the child should have been told/warned that this may be necessary).

- To take necessary action, including forcing entry, to protect the child or others from injury or to prevent likely damage to property.
- To look for information which may help to find the whereabouts of a missing child.
- To carry out maintenance and repairs to the property. (In these circumstances the child/young person should be informed and permission sought wherever possible.)

When entering a child's bedroom when they are not there, there should be respect for the child's privacy, for example if documents or the child's diary have been left out, they should not be routinely inspected, unless a specific risk has been identified and recorded.

Residential staff/Foster Carers should always record when they have entered a child's bedroom and share the recording with the child.

6. Visiting and Sharing Rooms

There is an expectation on the Wirral that where a child over the age of one year is placed they 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.

In circumstances where bedroom sharing is being considered, the risks associated with a child sharing a bedroom must be assessed as part of the placement planning process before a decision is made to allow this and the outcome of the assessment should be shared in full with Foster Carers prior to the child's placement, or within a specified time following a placement if placed in an emergency.

The risks associated with a child receiving visits in his/her bedroom should also be assessed before it is allowed. Where visitors are allowed in the child's bedroom, the door should always be kept open while the visitor is there.

Children may not share a bedroom or receive visits in their bedrooms unless this has been agreed by the Social Worker, the children's views and wishes have been obtained and considered, and the arrangements are outlined in the relevant Placement Information Record.