

# Fostering Out of Hours Support (FOOHAS)

## Guidance for Foster Carers

### What is Fostering Out-of-Hours Support?

The fostering service provides 24/7 advice and support to all Suffolk foster carers. Fostering Out of Hours Support (FOOHAS) offers advice, guidance, and emotional support outside normal office hours. It is designed to help you manage urgent situations, unexpected challenges, or incidents that cannot safely wait until the next working day.

FOOHAS works alongside the Emergency Duty Service (EDS) and ensures that foster carers have direct access to a social worker who understands fostering and fostering-household issues.

**Contact Number: 0808 800 4005**

**Email: EDS@suffolk.gov.uk**

**Service Hours: 5:20pm – 8:45am weekdays, Friday 4.20- Monday 8.45 weekends including bank holidays.**

### Who's Involved and What Are Their Roles?

Call Co-ordinator	Emergency Duty Service (EDS) Social Worker	FOOHAS Worker	Operational Manager (On-Call)
<p>The call co-ordinator is the first person you speak to when you call or email.</p> <p>They take brief initial information and route your call appropriately.</p> <p>When you identify yourself as a foster carer and request to speak with the <i>Fostering Out-of-Hours Social Worker</i>, they will ensure that your call is passed onto the FOOHAS worker.</p> <p>They cannot give advice or make decisions, their role is to ensure the call</p>	<p>EDS covers both children's and adults' services across Suffolk and consists of three social worker county-wide per shift</p> <p>They respond to safeguarding concerns, urgent welfare issues, and crisis situations.</p> <p>EDS may give immediate safety advice, speak with or visit children, and make urgent protective decisions.</p> <p>When an issue relates to a fostering household, EDS will</p>	<p>The FOOHAS worker is a fostering social worker who is on the out-of-hours rota. They support carers with:</p> <p>Placement stability concerns</p> <p>Behaviour management advice</p> <p>Reporting and recording incidents</p> <p>Emotional support during challenging situations</p>	<p>An Operational Manager is available out of hours to support EDS and the FOOHAS worker. They may be consulted for:</p> <p>Decision to accommodate children out of hours</p> <p>Significant risk concerns</p> <p>Urgent care planning</p> <p>Escalation or decision-making</p>

reaches the correct worker.	work closely with the FOOHAS worker.	<p>Decisions about whether a placement can safely continue overnight</p> <p>Home-finding for emergency placements or urgent moves</p> <p>Offer planned check in calls to foster carers.</p> <p>FOOHAS works closely with EDS when safeguarding or high-risk issues arise and ensures information is passed to the fostering service for follow-up during office hours.</p>	Their role is to ensure decisions are safe, consistent and proportionate.
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### **How to Access FOOHAS**

Contact the EDS out of hours line on:

**0808 800 4005**

At times of high call volume, messages can be left on the voicemail system.

As a Suffolk foster carer, you can also contact the EDS mailbox:

**EDS@suffolk.gov.uk** (not advertised to the public).

**When you call, it is essential you identify yourself as a foster carer and request to speak to the Fostering Out of Hours Social Worker.** This ensures your call is passed to the correct person without delay.

You may first speak to:

- a **Call Co-ordinator**
- then the **FOOHAS Social Worker**
- and if necessary, **EDS** or the **Operational Manager**

## **When Should Foster Carers Contact Out-of-Hours?**

Below are examples (not exhaustive) of when you may need to call:

### **Situations requiring FOOHAS support**

- A child is emotionally distressed and you need support or guidance.
- Behaviour is escalating or feels unsafe.
- You are unsure whether a child can safely remain in placement overnight.
- An incident has occurred that must be reported immediately (e.g. missing episodes, allegations, serious injury).
- A child requires medical attention — any hospital attendance must be reported to EDS.

### **Situations where EDS involvement is required, alongside FOOHAS**

- A child makes an allegation related to harm, abuse or significant risk and the child needs to be spoken to immediately.
- You believe a child cannot safely remain in your home and the child may need to move out of hours
- A child is at immediate risk of harm to themselves or others.
- A child arrives out of hours, including under police protection.
- A parent/family member arrives unexpectedly causing distress or risk.

**If unsure, Call the EDS line.**

**It is always better to report your concerns, even if only for recording and safeguarding purposes.**

The FOOHAS worker can stay in contact with you overnight, if needed, they are here to offer support and advice.

As part of our commitment to supporting fostering households, the service undertakes **planned check-in calls** to ensure carers feel held in mind especially:

- when a new placement has recently started
- when challenges have arisen during the week and its agreed that additional weekend support would be beneficial

These may be phone calls or text messages.

Carers will always know in advance, as check-ins are agreed with the Supervising Social Worker (SSW).

If you feel a check-in would support you, please speak to your SSW, who can arrange this.