

Will Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) available?

Yes, PPE will be provided and should be worn appropriately.
Please dispose of used PPE responsibly.

What if a parent or child arrives for Family Time displaying symptoms?

Family Time will not go ahead. Everyone who has been within two metres will be required to self-isolate for 14 days. The person displaying symptoms will be advised to seek a test.

What about siblings who are in separate placements?

This is more difficult as it increases the amount of households attending Family Time. These situations will be discussed on an individual basis to ensure the correct course of action is taken to keep everyone safe.

Can gifts/ toys be given to a child?

Yes they can and we'll support families to protect their children by making sure they are safe. If you wish to offer a gift or toy please give it to the Family Support Worker who will provide sanitiser to clean the gift. Soft toys should not be given as these are not easily sterilised.

Supporting Children and Families contact 0191 433 2585



Family Time

Important information
for parents and carers

During the COVID19 pandemic Gateshead Children's Services are working hard to make sure that Family Time takes place wherever possible enabling parents and carers to see their children.

We are committed to minimising the risks from Coronavirus to ensure that children and families are brought together safely. Where the risks are too high, we'll make sure that Family Time is maintained indirectly either by phone or video call, or a range of other options.

To help us to work safely and continue to bring children and families together, please follow these simple steps:

- **Use Social Distancing** - parents, carers, children and young people should follow the government's social distancing guidelines. This includes safe exercising and shopping, who you can see, who can visit, and also handwashing and hygiene guidelines.
- **Tell us about risk** - inform your Social Worker or Family Support Worker if you, or anyone in your home is showing symptoms and/or has tested positive for COVID19.
- **Encourage children to be safe** - children who are able to understand the need to social distance should be encouraged to do so in Family Time.
- **Make Family Time safe** the safety of children, families and staff is paramount. PPE will be provided and should be worn appropriately. Please make sure you observe hygiene routines at the beginning and end of Family Time sessions to help keep risks low and everyone safe. Please follow staff support and instructions before, during and after sessions to ensure risks are minimised and everyone is safe. Please dispose of used PPE responsibly. Please note our kitchen facilities will not be in use until further notice.
- **Please arrive on time** for your contact and **NOT** before, and you are asked to leave immediately after your contact ends, this is to ensure we can clean rooms before the next contact session starts, and that we minimise the risk of people crossing paths.
- **You are asked NOT to bring family or friends** along to your contact sessions as usual, this is especially important now, to limit the amount of people in one room at any one time.

When appropriate, Family Time will take place outdoors to minimise the risk of spread of infection. We are also closely working with building management teams to ensure all venues meet the recommended hygiene requirements.

We appreciate this is a very difficult time and that social distancing and safety measured may be very difficult in some cases. To help answer some of your questions we've put together a 'Family Time – frequently asked questions' sheet to help address some of your main concerns. You can also speak to your Social Worker or Family Support Worker for advice and support.

Thank you – with your help we'll make sure our Family Time sessions continue and we minimise the risks to everyone involved.

Family Time Questions and Answers

Can I change a nappy, feed and cuddle my child during Family Time? If so, how can this be done with minimal risk?

We will ask that parents, carers, children and young people follow the government's social distancing guidelines wherever possible but we know this will be difficult and direct contact will happen on occasion. We would encourage parents to keep direct contact to a minimum and use toys, talk and singing to encourage interactions.

Where possible we will ask the carer to change and feed before Family Time starts in order to reduce risks. If feeding or nappy changing is required during Family Time, handwashing and good hygiene will be used before and after any direct contact for personal care. The service will provide you with Personal Protective Equipment.

What if foster carers cannot transport children to Family Time sessions?

Staff can provide transport to one child per carer. Children will sit behind the passenger seat to maximise safety and social distance.

What about babies and toddlers who need to be transported in a car seat?

The Children's Services worker will do this. They will use good hygiene techniques and some may wear masks and gloves to help minimise risks.