

My ref:

Your ref:

Tel No: 0121 569 3101

Date: 31 March 2020

Dear Carer,

I hope you are all safe and well.

I am writing to provide you with a further update from the service following my letter to you last week.

It is incredible to believe that only a week ago, I requested the courts to accept a significant reduction in supervised contact arrangements through the contact centre in the interest of safety due to concerns about the spread of coronavirus.

By the end of last week, I had reached agreement with the courts that all direct supervised contact through the contact centre would cease and that instead we would support and promote all forms of indirect contact between children and their parents / family members.

We have uploaded some useful information from a range of different resources about supporting indirect forms of contact on our webpage <https://www.sandwellchildrenstrust.org/fostering/foster-carer-updates/> Please refer to this information if you do need support with alternative arrangements for contact.

Please also contact your Supervising Social Worker for any additional support or guidance you may need about supporting indirect contact arrangements.

As you are aware children in care are considered to be a vulnerable group and therefore entitled to attend ongoing educational provision. As I stated last week, the Government guidance is that if children can stay safely at home, they should, to limit the chance of the virus spreading. The decision of whether the child will continue to attend education or not needs be agreed between the social worker and the carer. If children are not attending school, LACE have provided some useful information that we have out on our website. You can also look at the LACE webpage here: <https://www.sandwell.gov.uk/info/200328/virtual_school_for_looked_after_children>

In addition, there are lots of things online for children, some of which we have already promoted on our foster carers information page, but here are a few more ideas:

**David Walliams** (comedian and children’s author) is reading stories at 11:00 each day on TV from his new children’s book, which you can also get online: <https://www.worldofdavidwalliams.com/elevenses/>

**Noel Fielding** has been hosting a weekly Art Club on Twitter for children: <https://twitter.com/noelfielding11>

Children’s entertainer **Nick Cope** is performing weekly children’s concerts at 15:00 on YouTube and Facebook, where the performance will be broadcast live. Nick’s next concert will be on 2 April 2020:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCHswhfkdahDSsJBHew8sOUg>

and

<https://www.facebook.com/nickcope4/>

**Carol Vorderman** has an online **Maths Club** for children which is free for all 4 to 12 year olds:

<https://www.themathsfactor.com/>

To help children keep fit and healthy, there is a **Joe Wicks P.E lesson** at 09:00 each day:

<https://www.thebodycoach.com/blog/pe-with-joe-1254.html>.

**Oti Mabuse** from Strictly Come Dancing is providing a **daily dance** for children at 11:30, here’s the YouTube link: <https://www.youtube.com/user/mosetsanagape>.

There’s lots more of course but hopefully this will give you a few ideas.

The LAC Health Team have asked for the following information to be shared with carers:

Due to the Coronavirus outbreak the LAC health team are utilising new ways of working with our children, young people and families to ensure we are able to offer health advice and support whilst continuing to complete statutory review health assessments. This is to ensure the health needs of our children and young people are being met.

For the foreseeable future all review health assessments will be completed via telephone or virtual means such as WhatsApp messenger.

The contact details are below should any young person or foster carer need any advice or support in relation to health. Please note if advice is required regarding coronavirus follow NHS guidance accessible online:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Other useful contacts:

**LAC Health Team** 0121 507 2624 lac.sandwell@nhs.net

**Debbie Lock** Named Nurse for Looked after Children debbie.lock1@nhs.net

**Charlene Plant** Specialist Nurse for LAC charlene.plant@nhs.net

**Gemma Shannon** Specialist Nurse for LAC gemma.shannon1@nhs.net

A copy of the letter from the LAC Health Team will also be posted on our website.

Finally, as I mentioned before, the situation is changing on a daily basis and we will continue to keep you updated on all changes. We want to give you all the support that you need as foster carers during this difficult and challenging period. Please do contact your Supervising Social Worker for any support needs that you have and we will do our very best to provide you with any support, advice or guidance that you need.

Thank you so much for all you are doing to care for our children during this time.

Kind regards



**Shanti Eaves**

**Head of Service, Children in Care, Care Leavers and Fostering.**