

UPDATE ON ARRANGEMENTS TO REINTRODUCE FACE TO FACE CONTACT

We wanted to update you about the work that is going on to reintroduce face to face contact between children and their families.

We understand that it has been a difficult time during the lockdown and that this has been made more difficult for many parents and extended family members because they have not been able to have direct contact with their children.

A key priority for SMBC is that we can ensure that when direct contact resumes this will be in a safe environment for all concerned including staff, carers, parents and children.

With that in mind we are actively undertaking the following:

- Reviewing the premises that are available to facilitate contact and exploring the possibility of using alternative venues
- Making appropriate changes to the premises to ensure that social distancing can be maintained when contact resumes
- Arranging a deep clean of the premises and putting in arrangements for regular cleaning to enable contact to take place every day
- Identifying the frequency of contact that can be offered to children and their families in light of the reduced capacity of the building to enable contact to take place whilst maintaining social distancing
- Identifying appropriate staff members to co-ordinate and facilitate contact in the context of restrictions arising out of Covid-19
- Considering appropriate arrangements for managing contact with children who may need physical handling
- Considering whether there are any health issues relevant to the children, parents or carers which could preclude the reintroduction of contact or require specific safeguards to be put in place
- Identifying the need for PPE and sourcing an appropriate supply for staff, parents and carers
- Considering the appropriate arrangements for the transportation of children to and from contact
- Preparing working agreements for parents to sign before contact can resume
- Preparing risk assessments pulling together all the factors outlined above

This is not an exhaustive list but does give you an indication of some of things that need to be considered.

You can be reassured that before direct contact resumes, the plans and risk assessments that have been formulated will be referred to Public Health England for approval.

We do already know that, due to the need to maintain social distancing in the contact centre, we will not be able to offer direct contact at the same frequency as families may have enjoyed previously. We will continue to promote virtual contact and support other means of indirect contact.

The process is not straight forward and involves many aspects to be resolved before a decision can be made to move ahead, but please be reassured that SMBC is actively working on this so that face to face contact can resume in a safe environment for all concerned.

12th June 2020