

# North Tyneside Council

## Fostering Handbook

### Being a Foster Carer

#### Section 1

What happens now I am approved?
North Tyneside Kinship Care Offer
Support offer for Connected Person Foster Carers
Foster Care Agreement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appendix (i) Foster Care Agreement Initial</li> <li>(ii) Foster Care Agreement Subsequent</li> <li>(iii) Connected Person's immediate</li> <li>(iv) Staying Put Agreement</li> </ul>
Support and Supervision <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appendix (i) Foster Carer Supervision Agreement.</li> </ul>
North Tyneside Fostering Framework
Foster Carer Finance Handbook <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appendix (i) Childminding Outreach and Family Time claim form</li> <li>(ii) Holiday- short break care request form</li> <li>(iii) Mileage expenses form</li> <li>(iv) Short Break Care Timesheet</li> </ul>
DLA Policy and Guidance
SGO Allowance
Support your own children
Reviewing my Approval and Appeals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appendix (i) Carer Report</li> <li>(ii) Child in Connected Persons report</li> <li>(iii) Child in Care</li> <li>(iv) Children who Foster</li> <li>(v) Young Person in Care</li> </ul>
Training and Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appendix (i) Evidence Workbook</li> <li>(ii) TSDS for Connected Person Guidance</li> <li>(iii) TSDS for Short Break Carers</li> <li>(iv) TSDS for Mainstream Foster Carers Guidance</li> <li>(v) TSDS Evidence Fact Sheet</li> </ul>
Recording (i) Recording sheet
Working with Families and other Professionals
Support groups for all Foster Carers
Hold or Break Policy

# What happens now I am approved?

## 1. Introduction

---

Congratulations and welcome, you are now an approved Foster Carer for North Tyneside Council Fostering Service. We hope you enjoy Fostering and supporting the children of North Tyneside. You now need to spend some time familiarising yourself with all the policies and procedures that you should be expected to follow. All foster carers have an allocated Supervising Social Worker from the Fostering Service, who will make sure that you have all the information and support you need to offer the best possible care to children and young people.

[The Fostering Service Regulations](#), together with the [National Minimum Standards 2011](#), provide the basic legal framework for all Fostering Services in England. The Regulations stipulate that you, as an approved Foster Carer, may only be registered with one fostering provider at any one time.

Your approval as a foster carer will be regularly reviewed, see [Reviewing my Approval and Appeals](#).

You will need to enter into a [Foster Care Agreement](#) with the Fostering Service.

## 2. Your Role as a Foster Carer

---

There are many reasons why children and young people may need to live with a Foster Carer.

The Statutory Guidance for Fostering Services (2011) describes the fostering task as follows:

*Foster Carers have a challenging and key role to play within a Foster Care Service. They need skill, knowledge, expertise, self-awareness, commitment and the ability to work as part of a team, providing a high quality, effective service to vulnerable children. To undertake this role successfully it is essential that their contribution to improving outcomes for looked after children is appropriately recognised and acknowledged, their status respected and their levels of authority clearly defined so that they can give children in their care a full experience of family life, safeguard them and help them to grow and reach their potential.*

Your role as a Foster Carer will include the following, non-exhaustive things:

- Providing a safe and caring environment for the child(ren) in your care;
- Supporting and meeting the health needs of the child(ren) in your care;

- Ensuring a child/young person's attendance at educational settings including nursery, school, college and any placement. Encouraging them to learn and help them with their homework;
- Contributing to lifestory work while a child is in placement with you;
- Supporting and, if appropriate, facilitating family time with a child's birth family and significant others;
- Supporting the child(ren) with any future transitions they may have; including moving to a new family through adoption, special guardianship or children returning home.
- Establishing a routine, setting clear boundaries and demonstrating an understanding of issues that impact upon the child/young person;
- Supporting and promoting the child's development so they can achieve their full potential and have the best life chances;
- Preparing the child/young person for independence.

### 3. What Information do I Need When a Child comes to live with me?

A Placement Duty Worker (PDW) from the Fostering Service will contact you when they are looking for a home for a child/young person that is in your approval category. When they do, you need to be sure that the child/young person will be best suited to you, your family and your home environment so that you are able to meet their needs.

It will be useful to prepare a list of questions that you may want to ask when they call. If you are unsure about whether you could meet the child(ren)'s needs, we want you to feel able to be honest about this and discuss it with the Placement Duty Worker.

You may want to ask:

1. The name of the child's Social Worker, and if the case allocated. if not, who should you contact in the future?
2. The child's name, age, how they identify in relation to gender, ethnic origin, religion;
3. Whether the child has any special dietary, cultural or linguistic needs?
4. The child's legal status;
5. General information regarding the family situation;
6. What are the family time arrangements?

7. How is the child's health, do they have any allergies or medical problems, specific equipment or are they currently on medication?
8. Are they at school, nursery or alternative education? Is there any additional information needed?
9. Does the child have any communication issues?
10. Any there any issues regarding the child's behaviour that needs to be consider?
11. Are there any known risks from the child, e.g. aggressive or sexualised behaviour?
12. Who will bring the child and with what clothes and belongings?
13. When will you have full information about the child?

You need as much information as possible about a child/ young person before they come into your home.

You should receive written information before a child comes to live with you, wherever possible, from the child's Social Worker. Occasionally for example in emergencies, there can be a delay and the telephone call between yourself and the Placement Duty Worker is what you will need to base your decision on.

The written information should be shared with you within 5 days. All information known by the Fostering Service will be shared with you both at the point of contact and as soon as further information is available.

## 4. Meeting the Child/Young Person

Wherever possible there should be a period of introductions between you, your family and the child.

This should involve:

- The child/young person receiving information about you, your home and members of your family network;
- The child/young person having at least one tea visit, where possible, before they come to live with you.

During the period of introductions, you should answer any questions the child may have and provide them with general information about your home and family.

It is expected that children will be anxious and worried about coming to live in a new home with people they do not know. It is important that time is spent reassuring them about their worries and clarifying any questions they may have. Both the child's

Social Worker and your Supervising Social Worker will support both you and the child throughout this time.

## 5. Children from Abroad who are Unaccompanied

Foster Carers can sometimes be needed when children have entered the UK as unaccompanied asylum seekers or child victims of modern slavery including trafficking.

Some of these children will have been trafficked or persecuted and may have witnessed or been subject to horrific acts of violence. Other children may have been sent in search of a better life or may have been brought to the UK for private fostering and subsequently exploited or abandoned when the arrangement fails.

As a Foster Carer, if you have a child living with you in this situation, the child's care plan and any care team meetings or reviews held, should help you understand their individual circumstances and care needs. Your Supervising Social Worker can also help you to develop a better understanding of the circumstances and the support which can be accessed for both you and the child.

## 6. The Child's Care Plan

The child's Care Plan provides information of the care that must be provided to meet their individual needs. The child's Social Worker is responsible for providing specific advice or support in relation to the child and their Care Plan.

The Care Plan usually includes:

- The child's Placement Plan (setting out why you have been identified as a suitable carer and how you will meet the child's needs)
- The Permanence Plan (setting out the long-term plans for the child's upbringing including timescales);
- The Pathway Plan (where appropriate, this is for young people leaving care);
- The Health Plan; (setting out the child's individual health needs will be met)
- The Personal Education Plan; (setting out the child's individual educational needs)
- The contingency plan;
- The date of the child's first Child in Care Review (within 20 working days);
- The name of the Independent Reviewing Officer.

## 7. The Child's Placement Planning meeting

The Fostering Duty Worker (or your Supervising Social Worker when they are available), you, the child/young person (when appropriate), family members (whenever possible) and the child's Social Worker will hold a placement planning meeting. This is completed either on the day of the child coming to live with you or within 5 days. Placement planning meetings will be held in your home wherever appropriate. If it is felt too risky to have the parents come to your home, then these may be held at a council office, hospital or child's school. You will be informed where this is going to be held when it is arranged.

The Placement Planning meeting covers:

- Purpose of the child coming to live with you;
- Any health or educational needs and how they will be met;
- The child's personal history;
- The child's likes/dislikes;
- Any matching considerations for example, any cultural needs, or how any additional or specific needs of the child will be met while in your care.
- Agreements for family time between the child/young person, family or relevant individuals;
- When visits to your home will be made by both the child's Social Worker alongside your Supervising Social Worker to both yourself and the child. Dates of any planned meetings will also be shared.

## 8. The Children's Guide

If age appropriate the child/young person should receive this when they first come to live in a fostering household. This guide will help them understand all about foster care and provide information that may be important to them. It will tell them about their rights and how they can contact people such as their Independent Reviewing Officer or Ofsted if they wish to raise a concern. It will also explain the information which the Fostering Service keeps on them and why, including who it might be shared with, and their right to access their case file.

If the child needs the Children's Guide in another format such as in another language or Makaton the Fostering Service should provide it.

## **North Tyneside Council Kinship Care Offer**

### **What is Kinship Care?**

When children are brought up by members of their extended family, friends or other people who are connected to them we call this kinship care.

Kinship care arrangements are when children are separated from their parents or parents are unable to provide the care and support a child's needs. Kinship care arrangements may happen for a variety of reasons and may be permanent or temporary. Sometimes the arrangement is made the by Local Authority or it can be arranged within the family.

Many people become Kinship carers and they include, grandparents, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, stepparents (who have separated from the birth parent) Step grandparents, great grandparents, friends of the family or other people connected to the child.

Consideration of children's welfare and best interests will always be at the centre of the work we do. It is an underlying principle that children should be enabled to live within their families, unless this is not consistent with their welfare. We will therefore work to maintain children within their own families and facilitate services to support any such arrangements, wherever this is consistent with the child's safety and well- being. This principle applies to all children in need, including those children in our care by the Local Authority. Where a child can not live within their immediate family and the Local Authority is considering the need to care for the child, we will make strenuous efforts to identify potential carers within the child's network of family and friends who are able and willing to care for the child.

We will provide support for any such arrangements based on the assessed needs of the child and will seek to ensure that Kinship Carers are provided with support to ensure that children do not become children in our care of the Local Authority or do not have to remain in a care arrangement longer than necessary.

### **Legal Framework**

The Local Authority has a general duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in need living within its area and to promote the upbringing of such children by their families. The way in which we fulfil this is by providing a range of level of services appropriate to those child's assessed needs. This can include for example, financial, practical or other support.

It is important to note that the Local Authority does not have a general duty to assess all arrangements where children are living within their wider family or friends' network rather than its parents, but it does have a duty where it appears that services may be necessary to safeguard or promote the welfare of a child in need.

Other legal arrangements include children in the care of the Local Authority under Section 31 of the [Children Act 1989](#) or via S20 of the Children Act 1989. In both cases the children may be cared for by family and friends only if the carers have been approved as Local Authority Foster Carers under the [Fostering Regulations 2011](#) and where the Local Authority can demonstrate they are supporting the carers to meet the requirements of the [National Minimum Fostering Standards 2011](#). This can include using Reg 24 of the 2010 [Care Planning Regulations](#) to allow for the temporary approval of a connected person to the child as Foster Carers for a period of up to 16 weeks to allow for immediate care and sufficient time for a Foster Carers approval process to be undertaken.

Further legal arrangements for children to live with family and friends include Adoption Orders and Special Guardianship Orders under the [Adoption and Children Act 2002](#); Child Arrangement Orders under the Children Act 1989 and Private Fostering under the [Private Fostering Regulations 2005](#). Private Fostering is where a parent arranges for their child to live with someone who is not directly related to them or who is a friend of the family, and the length of stay is for more than 28 days.

## **What types of Kinship care Arrangements are there?**

Informal Family Arrangements.



The parent makes the arrangement or a close family member step in to help support the care of a child. The length of the arrangement is decided by the person with parental responsibility (PR) or someone who has taken out a legal order for the child.

The Local Authority does not have a duty to assess informal family arrangements, unless it appears necessary to the Local Authority that services may be necessary to safeguard or promote the welfare of a child in need. In such cases, the Local Authority has a responsibility under section 17 of the Children Act 1989 to assess a child's needs and provide services to meet any assessed needs of the child.

Parental responsibility remains with the birth parents, but the carer may do what is reasonable to safeguard or promote the child's welfare.

### Private Fostering

A privately fostered child is a child under 16 (or 18 if has a disability) who is cared for by a carer who is not a parent or close relative. Close Relative is defined as a 'grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt (where of full blood, half blood or by marriage or civil partnership) If the arrangement is intended to last for 28 days or more as decided by the person with PR, the arrangement needs to be approved by the Local Authority. The parent will still hold parental responsibility for the child and agrees the decision-making arrangements with the private foster carer.

The Local Authority has a duty to assess and monitor the welfare of all privately fostered children and the way in which they carry out these duties is set out in the children ([Private Arrangements for Fostering](#)) However, the Local Authority may also become involved with a child in private fostering arrangement where the child comes within the definition of a child in need.

The parent and or the person caring for the child can ring North Tyneside Council Front Door on 03452000109 for help and advice on private fostering arrangements.

### Connected Person Foster Carer.

A Connected Person Foster Carer is someone who is either being assessed via Regulation 24 of the [Care Planning, Placement and Case Review](#)

[Regulations 2010](#), or has been assessed by the Local Authority Fostering Service to be a Registered Foster Carer for the child (section 22 of the [Children Act 1989](#)). The child in this case would be a Child in our Care.

The assessment and approval process for family and friends who apply to be Foster Carers for a specific child in our care will be fully explained during the Placement Planning Meeting. Please see [support for Connected Person Foster Carers document](#) for more details.

Once approved as Foster Carers, they will be allocated a Supervising Social Worker from the Kinship Care Team within the Fostering Service to provide them with support and supervision. Connected Person Foster Carers will receive [fostering allowances](#) as per all North Tyneside registered Foster Carers for as long as they are caring for a child in our care.

While the child remains a child in our care, as a Foster Carer they will be expected to co operate with all the processes that are in place to ensure that the child receives appropriate care and support, for example: - completing training, working with the child's social worker and contributing to the child's care plan.

Specific support may be required for Connected Person Foster Carers to ensure that they can meet the day-to-day requirements of being a registered Foster Carer. Support may include 1-1 support from a Fostering Support Worker on areas such a child play, support and guidance on areas such as housing, understanding of children needs where they have suffered trauma, support to attend groups and activities with a child alongside attendance at or 1-1 bespoke training.

Authority for day-to-day decision making about the child should be delegated to the carer, unless there is a valid reason not to do so. During the placement planning meeting delegated responsibilities and what is delegated to who, is discussed in more detail.

### Child Arrangement Order

A Child Arrangement Order (CAO) is a Court Order which sets out the arrangements as to when and with whom a child is to live and spend time with. A CAO may give parental responsibility to the person in whose favour it is made, PR is shared with the parents.

Authority for the day-to-day decision making about the child should be delegated to the carers, unless there is a valid reason not to do so.

Child Arrangement Orders may be made in private family proceedings in which the Local Authority is not a party nor involved in any way in the arrangements. However, a CAO in favour of a relative or previous Connected Person Foster Carer with whom the child was living with may be an appropriate outcome as part of a plan of permanence for a child in our care. Please see the [Child Arrangement Order guide to payments](#) for further information on financial support offered.

Where the Kinship Care Team were involved in the assessment for the CAO to be granted, than a Post Order Support Plan would have been devised with the carers so that they knew what support and advice was available to them post order until the child reached the age of 18.

Should a Child Arrangement Order Carer feel they require further support and advice then they should contact the Kinship Care Team in North Tyneside on 0191 6432540 asking for an assessment of support needs.

Should the child have been a child in our care immediately before the granting of the order than the [Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund \(ASGSF\)](#) may be accessed for therapeutic support for the child. This will be something which is discussed via the assessment of support needs completed with yourself by a Social Worker and Foster Support Worker from the Fostering Service.

### Special Guardianship Order

[Special Guardianship](#) offers a further option for children needing permanent care outside their birth family. It can offer greater security without absolute severance from the birth family as in adoption.

Relatives may apply for a Special Guardianship Order after caring for a child for one year, however, if a Special Guardianship Order is part of the Local Authorities plan of permanence for a child, then the length of time caring for a child can be shorter, depending on the circumstances.

Special Guardians will have parental responsibility for the child which, while it is still shared with parents, can be exercised with a greater autonomy on day-to-day matters than where there is a child arrangements order.

Where the child was a child in our care immediately prior to the making of the Special Guardianship Order, the Local Authority has a responsibility to assess the support needs of the child, parents and special guardians, including the need for financial support.

Once the Special Guardianship assessment is complete recommending you as a Special Guardian for the child in your care, a support plan will be devised by the Kinship Care Team, Child's Social Worker and yourselves, outlining what support is available to you post order. A Special Guardian can contact the Foster Service and ask for an Assessment of Support Needs at any point up until the child is 18 years of age.

Upon the completion of a positive full assessment for a Special Guardianship Assessment, then North Tyneside Council will provide you with a letter outlining how you can access two hours, of legal aid rate, free legal advice with a solicitor of your own choosing.

Post Order support may include 1-1 support from a Fostering Support Worker on areas such as family time, life story work, support and guidance on areas such as housing, understanding of children needs where they have suffered trauma, support to attend groups and activities with a child alongside attendance at training.

All North Tyneside Council Special Guardians are able to access the full training package on offer to all North Tyneside Foster Carers. Please refer to our full training brochure that provides course contents and learning outcomes.

The Kinship Care Team offer quarterly support groups to Special Guardians via a newsletter than all Special Guardian's will be requested to join upon the granting of a Special Guardianship Order. This is a chance to stay connected to the Kinship Care Team, Other Special Guardians, and to hear from guest speakers who may attend.

Should the child have been a child in our care immediately before the granting of the order than the [Adoption and Special Guardianship Support](#)

[Fund](#) (ASGSF) may be accessed for therapeutic support for the child. This will be something which is discussed via the assessment of support needs completed with yourself by a Social Worker and Foster Support Worker from the Fostering Service.

Please see [Special Guardianship Order Financial Support document](#) for more details.

### Adoption Order

[Adoption](#) is the process by which all parental rights and responsibilities for a child are permanently transferred to an adoptive parent by the court. As a result, the child legally becomes part of the adoptive family.

An Adoption Order in favour of a relative or foster carer with whom a child is living may be an appropriate outcome as part of a permanence plan for a child in our care.

[Early Permanence](#) enables a baby or young child who may need adopting to live with a potential permanent family earlier than a conventional adoption. Early Permanence is an umbrella term we use when talking about certain types of adoption arrangements for young children. It includes arrangements also referred to as Fostering for Adoption (FfA) and Concurrent Planning.

Local Authorities must make arrangements, as part of their Adoption Service, for the provision of a range of adoption support services. They then have to undertake assessments of the need for adoption support services at the request of the adopted child, adoptive parents and their families, as well as birth relatives. The support required is then set out in an Adoption Support Plan and this may include [financial support](#).

Should the child have been a child in our care immediately before the granting of the order then the Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund (ASGSF) may be accessed for therapeutic support for the child.

Any North Tyneside Adopters needing post order support should contact [Adopt North East](#) for further support and advise on 0191 6435000

## **What support is on offer to Kinship Carers within North Tyneside Council.**

The Majority of Kinship Care Arrangements work well and meet the needs of the child with the support of universal agencies such as health, education and housing services.

It is important however, that any difficulties are responded to early, and the Kinship Care Service is part of North Tyneside Council Fostering Service who have a dedicated Kinship Care Team. Families may need advice and assistance during early stages of caring for a relative or friend's child and alongside the Kinship Care Team, carers can access support via Kinship Care Charity, Family Rights Group and by seeking their own independent legal advice. Some solicitors offer one off advice should a positive Special Guardianship assessment be completed then North Tyneside Council will fund 2 hours free legal advice for you to support you in considering what is the right legal order for you and your family. Your assessing Social Worker will guide you through this process at the appropriate time.

The [Kinship Care Charity](#), Kinship is the leading kinship care charity in England and Wales. They work with all Kinship Carers who are caring for children when their parents can't. Kinship aims to provide support, advise and training to all Kinship Carers irrespective of under which Kinship Care arrangement they are in.

[Family Rights Group](#) are a charity that advises parents, grandparents, relatives and friends about their rights and options when Social Workers or courts make decisions about their child's welfare.

Support Groups are open to Kinship Carers of North Tyneside.

North Tyneside Council have a Fostering Support Worker who takes responsibility on being the point of contact for our Kinship carers within the Fostering Service. Information is gathered and quarterly emails are sent to all kinship carers who have consented to being on the mailing list. This email includes up to date information, resources and links to services which are relevant to Kinship carers.

A quarterly event is held in different areas around the borough where this includes the kinship care team, and at times guest speakers. This is an

opportunity for kinship carers to meet together, gain support and widen their networks.

There are 4 independent kinship groups that run within North Tyneside that Kinship Carers can be signposted to, should they wish to attend, and the Kinship Care Support Worker attends as and when requested to consider themes and issues to bring back to the Local Authority. This supports the shaping of future policy and practice.

#### What should agencies and practitioners do?

Agencies working with Kinship carers should acknowledge not only the joy and fulfilment experiences, but also the personal cost and sacrifice that many kinship families make in order to care for children, often having to change their lifestyle and plans for the future and take this into account when working with them.

Practitioners should encourage kinship carers to access all the universal services available to them, both locally and nationally including any universally available benefits and allowances, and to seek advice when the child's needs exceed these by contacting the Kinship Care Team on 0191 6432540.

#### Accommodation

It is recognised that when Kinship Carers take on the care of a relative or friends' child that the space in their home is a big consideration. The Kinship Care Team therefore has developed good working relationships with North Tyneside Council Housing department to ensure that should they be living in social housing they are given appropriate priority to move to a more suitable accommodation wherever appropriate and possible. It should be noted, however, that North Tyneside Council Housing Department do not have many larger properties in their stock for rent and therefore the Kinship Care Team will work with you alongside the council housing department to look at realistic options should housing be an issue you are facing.

#### Education

The [Hive Team](#) (Health, Information and Advice, Virtual School, Emotional Wellbeing), virtual school offer is for pupils attending North Tyneside Schools

who have previously been children in our care and have now achieved permanency through living under a Special Guardianship Order, Child Arrangement Order or Adoption, and from September 24, for Pupils living in Kinship Care Arrangements that have not been previously in care. The Virtual School Staff are available to offer advice and guidance to schools, social workers and families.

Schools receive Pupil Premium Plus of £2530 for all children who were previously children in care where their parents/ guardians have notified the school of the eligibility. The School's Designated Teacher now have oversight for children who were previously children in care and is responsible for this funding and how it is used in school.

The Hive Team can also provide therapeutic support and advise and guidance around emotional wellbeing related to early life experiences.

To find out more or to get in touch with the team please contact them on 0191 6438365

<https://nthive.org.uk/virtual-school/>

[HIVETeamAdmin@northtyneside.gov.uk](mailto:HIVETeamAdmin@northtyneside.gov.uk)

### Financial Support

Informal care arrangements that were organised within the family are funded by the child's parents and agreement should be reached between all parties who is going to apply for any child related benefits as applicable.

Child in the care of the Local Authority within a Fostering Arrangement will be supported by the relevant child age related Fostering Allowances as set by the Government minimum allowance to Foster Carers. It should be noted that children who are looked after by the LA, are not entitled to claim any child benefits.

North Tyneside Council has a policy for the calculation and payment of [Child Arrangement Order Allowances and Adoption Order allowances](#). This policy refers to Child Arrangement Order Allowances and Adoption Order Allowances as 'Permanence Allowances' and may be paid to a parent/ carer to support the permanent placement of a child.



The council does not have a legal requirement to financially assess parents/ carers who are awarded a Child Arrangements Order or Adoption Order but will do so. All allowances will be reviewed annually, or when there is a change of circumstances. It is important that you report any changes in your circumstances to the council's finance team add email of any changes relating to the child's living arrangements as this can affect the financial support available. Requests for information will be sent out by the finance team and any delay in providing evidence for the review will result in payments being suspended.

A Policy for the calculation and payment of [Special Guardianship allowances](#) is also in place for Special Guardians.

A Special Guardianship Allowance (on-going financial support paid periodically to meet a need which is likely to give rise to recurring expenditure) will be payable where:

The Council consider that it is necessary to ensure that the Special Guardian can look after the child; and/or

The Council consider that the child's assessed needs require a greater expenditure of resources than would otherwise be the case because of his illness, disability, emotional or behavioural difficulties or the consequences of past abuse or neglect.

All allowances will be reviewed annually or when there is a change of circumstances. Any requests for support that is deemed exceptional and not within the current policy will be presented to a panel, chaired by the head for Safeguarding and Childrens Services.

### Supporting family time with birth parents

Family time when it works well can reassure children that their family members are alright and still care about them. It can help them process why they no longer live with them and come to terms with their past. It can help them to continue to develop relationships with siblings and their wider family network which may be very important to them as they get older.

The Local Authority is under a duty to promote family time for all children who are in the care of the Local Authority 'unless it is not practicable or consistent with the child's welfare'. The overall objective of the family time arrangements will be included in the child's care plan and will be regularly reviewed.

Where a child has a plan of permanence via either a Child Arrangement Order or Special Guardianship Order than the level of family time for the child and parents will be specified by the court. Following the granting of a Special Guardianship Order it is up to the child's carers to follow the plans set by the court however, family time must always reflect what is in the best interests of the child and can be changed to reflect this by the child's carers.

Support for Kinship Carers who have a legal order such as a Child Arrangement Order or Special Guardianship Order can contact the Kinship Care Team for further advice and support around family time issues on 0191 6432540.

Where a child is not a child in our care, the Local Authority is required to promote family time between the child and their family 'where it is necessary to do so in order to safeguard and promote their welfare.' As part of support arrangements, it may be identified that specific assistance is required to ensure that any such family time can be managed safely. If necessary, information will be made available to friends and family carers about local contact centres and family mediation services and how to make use of their services.

#### Family Network Meetings.

As North Tyneside Council follows the Signs of Safety Practice Model, and therefore believe that involving family, friends and community networks is crucial to keeping children safe.

Family Network meetings are meetings held between professionals and family members, which aim to achieve the best outcomes for children. They promote the involvement of the wider family to achieve a resolution of difficulties for children in need/ children in our care and may help to identify short- term and/ or permanent solutions for children within the family network.

North Tyneside Council aim to hold a family network meeting at an early stage of working with families. If a child becomes a child in our care, we will arrange one as soon as possible. A family network meeting may also be held to find a resolution to a permanent care arrangement within a Special Guardianship care arrangement or child arrangement care arrangement and there are issues which may de stabilise the care arrangement where the wider family can support.

### Disruption meetings

Disruption meetings are now held following a non-planned ending of a Special Guardianship Care Arrangement where the child has not returned to birth parents care. The disruption meeting should focus on the needs of the child and help the child and carers to move on while also informing future planning, particularly with a view to securing permanency for the child by preventing any further breakdowns. These meetings are also an opportunity for the service to consider what could have been done differently for any future learning.

### Complaints Procedure

Where a Kinship Carer is not satisfied with the level of support provided to enable them to care for the child, then they have access to the Local Authorities complaints process. Our aim would be to resolve any such dissatisfaction without the need for a formal investigation but where an informal resolution is not possible, then a formal investigation will be arranged.

The timescale and process are set out in the [Council's Complaint Procedure](#).

## Connected Person Foster Carer Support

### Contents

<b>Support Offer for Connected Person Foster Carers</b> .....	1
<b>Dedicated Fostering Support Worker and Social Worker allocated to each Connected Person Foster Carer</b> .....	1
<b>The Fostering Team</b> .....	2
<b>Out of hours support</b> .....	2
<b>Membership of the Fostering Network</b> .....	3
<b>Training</b> .....	3
<b>Support and development groups</b> .....	3
<b>Core training</b> .....	4
<b>Additional training</b> .....	5
<b>Fees</b> .....	5
<b>Allowance</b> .....	5

North Tyneside Fostering Service includes a dedicated Kinship Care Team, which provide a full range of support and advice alongside training opportunities to promote our Fostering Strategy, designed to recognise each carer's developing experience in their fostering role.

Find out more about what we offer: –

### **Dedicated Social Worker and Fostering Support Worker allocated to each Connected Person Foster Care Household**

From the time a child comes to live in your care under a temporary Fostering Arrangement a Placement Planning Meeting will be held. It is during this meeting that the support and assessment process will be explained to you in more detail.

Within the Kinship Care Team there are Fostering Support Workers who will assist you with the application process before completing the initial statutory checks. They are also available for any practical advice and support you may need in caring for the child (ren).

You will also be allocated your own dedicated Supervising/ Assessing Social Worker to supervise and support you in caring for the child (ren) alongside completing the Connected Person/ SGO assessment. Your allocated Social Worker will support you throughout this process, this will include regular visits; with support matched to your needs and circumstances as a Foster Carer.

Our Social Workers have considerable experience in working with children and young people. They can provide help and support and will also link in with the child's Social Worker. Your Social Worker can also attend meetings (such as Child in Care Reviews) with you and help you to understand and complete relevant paperwork, they can also attend court hearings with you should you need this. You can keep in regular contact with your Social Worker by phone.

As a Connected Persons Foster Carer, we will provide you with a link to access the Fostering Handbook, which contains information about being a carer, safeguarding everyone in your household, the expectations of caring for a child under Fostering Regulations, and relevant policies and procedures. It is important that you familiarise yourself with these policies and procedures, your Social Worker will support you in areas that you may feel you need further clarity on. We know and understand that caring for family or children connected to you can bring different challenges and we are here to support you throughout your journey.

### **The Fostering Team**

Our Fostering Service comprises of two teams, one for Mainstream Foster Carers and one for Kinship Carers. If your Social Worker is unavailable during office hours, you will always be able to talk to another member of the team to discuss any queries you may have either via the Fostering Support Worker or contacting the fostering duty number on 0191 6432540.

### **Out of Hours support**

North Tyneside Council has an emergency duty team that operates outside of working hours who are available to support and advise during emergency situations.

Please call the Emergency Duty Team on 0330 3337475 should you need help and support outside of office hours.

### **Membership of the Fostering network**

You can be an individual member of the Fostering Network, the National organisation for Foster Carers, on an individual basis.

### **Training**

As a Connected Person Foster Carer, we expect that you would be actively involved in further training and would expect regular attendance at both core training and support and development groups. In line with our policy in order to be in receipt of a fostering fee all Foster Carers are required to complete fostering training.

We provide ongoing training and professional development for all Connected Persons Foster Carers to help them carry out their caring role tasks. Feedback from the carers who attend our training, has been positive in that the experiences they gained has helped to enhance and develop the skills required to meet and promote the needs and welfare of the children/young people in their care.

### **Support and development groups**

We hold a regular support and development groups which you will be invited to, if you have any question about what we offer please contact your Social Worker or Fostering Support Worker.

Attending groups and meeting with other Connected Persons Foster Carers can be a good way of sharing experiences and provides an opportunity to talk about what's working well, what is working not so well and what needs to change.

**Local support groups for Foster Carers** exist across the region, please contact us for further information about any of the support groups listed below;

- **Social Worker led support groups.** These groups are led by a Social Worker and meet monthly in various locations across North Tyneside.

- **Foster Carer led support group.** Some Foster Carers organise these groups independently of the Fostering team and groups meet monthly in various locations across North Tyneside.
- **Children Who Foster group.** This group meets each school holiday and it is aimed at children aged 6-18 who are family members of Foster Carers, this could be your own children, nieces, nephews, and or grandchildren.
- **Men who foster group.** This group meets monthly and are led by other male foster carers.
- **Teenage Support Group.** The group meets monthly and is to support Foster Carers who care for teenagers.
- **Fostering Committee events.** These events are held throughout the year and are offered by members of the Fostering Committee which are open to all carers.
- **Quarterly coffee events.** These events are offered quarterly throughout the year and are attended by Fostering Team Managers and Social Workers. Guest speakers are also often arranged to attend.

If there are any additional development and/or support groups that you feel would benefit you on your journey as a Connected Person Foster Carer, please contact your Supervising Social Worker to discuss these.

## **Core training**

During your assessment you will be invited to some basic training. This is specifically designed for Connected Person Foster Carers and is over two days, following the completion of a work book. This training must be completed in order to be eligible for a fostering fee

We also have half-day and full-day training sessions, called Core Training, which are held frequently throughout the year. Topics include areas such as:

- Child Protection
- Attachment
- Family Safe Caring
- First aid

Core training is something which you will be expected to complete every three years and your Supervising Social Worker will discuss this with you. If you have any difficulties in completing training please speak to your Supervising Social Worker so they can support you through this journey.

### **Additional training**

We encourage all carers to identify their own individual training needs, and to suggest topics on further training which would be beneficial to them.

We offer additional training on current topics, including (this list is not exhaustive):

- Solihull Parenting Programme
- Court skills
- Care4me
- Life story Work
- County Lines
- recording

### **Allowance**

Caring for children can be an expensive business. All Foster Carers receive a child related allowance paid per child.

### **Fostering Allowances 2024-2025**

<b>Age</b>	<b>Weekly Fostering Allowance</b>
0 – 4	<b>£170.00</b>
5– 10	<b>£187.00</b>
11 – 15	<b>£213.00</b>
To Carer for 16+	<b>£ 249.00</b>

### **Foster Carer Fees**



Once you have been approved as a carer at our Fostering Panel and Via our Agency Decision Maker and you have completed your basic training you are eligible for a fostering fee as an accredited carer. Our current fees are -

<b>Band Levels</b>	<b>Fees</b>
Band 1 - Accredited Carer	£110.00
Band 2 - Advanced Carer	£380.00
Band 3 - Specialist Carer	£550.00

We also pay additional allowances to approved Foster Carers, which are set out below and are payable alongside a fostering fee -

<b>Additional Premiums – per child</b>	<b>Fees</b>
Siblings ( 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> child only)	£75.00
Disability	£50.00
Mother & Baby (only mother CIC)	£90.00

## Foster Care Agreement

The Fostering Services Regulations 2011 requires the Fostering Service to enter into a written agreement with you following your approval. The purpose of this agreement is to provide written information about the terms and conditions of the partnership between both yourself and the service. Your agreement will incorporate the terms of your approval, which will include the preferred matching age range which was determined during your fostering assessment.

This agreement clearly sets out the Fostering Service's expectations of you, alongside what you can expect from the service, including ongoing training and supervision.

You need to:

- Read and sign the Foster Care Agreement upon your approval, thereafter this is updated annually.

The agreement will contain:

- Your terms of approval;
- Expectations around support and training;
- The review process;
- The process for making a complaint.

It will also cover your responsibilities:

- To care for the child with at least the same care and concern as you would if they were your own, keep them safe and promote their welfare;
- To keep the Fostering Service updated on the child's progress and any significant events that affect the child;
- Not to use any physical/corporal punishment;
- To keep all information about any child living with you confidential unless the Fostering Service says you can share it;
- To carry out actions identified in the child's Placement Plan;
- To attend any meetings or appointments relevant to the child.
- To work within the Fostering Service's policies and procedures and guidance;
- To allow inspectors of the Fostering Service to visit your home, see you or the child/young person by prior arrangement;
- To attend the mandatory training courses as required.

You should inform the Fostering Service of:

- Any change of address or people moving into or leaving your household;
- Any changes in your personal situation or events which affect your ability to care for the child living with you;
- Any criminal convictions, cautions or criminal charges pending at any time following your approval as a foster carer, this includes both yourself or anyone else either living in your home or who is a regular visitor.
- Any request by you or any member of your household, to foster or adopt children;
- Any request to be a registered childminder or day care provider by someone living in your household.



North Tyneside Council

# North Tyneside Council Health, Education, Care & Safeguarding Directorate

## Fostering Service

### An Agreement to Terms and Conditions For North Tyneside Foster Carers

#### Terms and Conditions for Foster Carers, as set out in The Fostering Services (England) Regulations (2011)

**These Terms and Conditions comply with the matters and obligations in Foster care agreements as laid out in Schedule 5 (Regulation 27 (5) (b) of the Fostering Service Regulations 2011.**

North Tyneside Council welcomes you as an Approved Foster Carer. The Fostering Panel for North Tyneside Council has recommended your status as Foster Carers as follows:

<b>Foster carer(s) Name(s)</b>	
Your current approval is	
<b>Type of Resource</b>	
Short Term <input type="checkbox"/>	Long Term Fostering <input type="checkbox"/>
Short Break <input type="checkbox"/>	Kinship Care <input type="checkbox"/>
Mother and Baby <input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Matching Considerations</b>	
Number of children approved to Foster	
Age Range(Include both full and preferred age range where applicable)	
Any specific matching considerations referred to as part of assessment and or approval process	

NMS 31  
CWDC Standard 2  
Fostering Services Regulations 2011, 27 (5) (b)

## **Foster Care Agreement**

- Please read this document carefully before you sign the Foster Carer Agreement. If you do not understand anything contained in it please discuss it with your Supervising Social Worker. This agreement is intended to provide you with written information about the terms and conditions of the partnership between you and the Local Authority. It sets out in writing areas, which have been discussed during your assessment. It aims to clarify the terms, conditions, mutual obligations, and expectations that flow from giving and accepting approval as a Foster Carer for North Tyneside Council.
- The future success of good working relationships must be based on open and honest discussion, sharing difficulties and respect for all parties' differing roles and responsibilities.
- The Local Authority is obliged in all its planning and decision making to view the welfare of children/young people in placement as its prime consideration.

## **Reviews**

- We are required by the Fostering Regulations to regularly review the approval of Foster Carers. All Carers will be reviewed within 12 months after approval and annually thereafter, generally at their home. Your Supervising Social Worker will be responsible for organising this review, which will provide you with an opportunity to discuss your views, any problems you might have and share your feelings about the service you are receiving from the Council. Similarly, your Supervising Social Worker will discuss with you the service that you are providing as a Foster Carer and your training and development needs. The views of Social Workers, the young people currently in placement or who have received a placement since your last review will already have been sought. This is alongside parents of the children in your care alongside any other professional's working with you.
- We may also call a Review if we receive complaints or have concerns or allegations to investigate or following a Standards of Care meeting.
- You are required to give written notice of any major changes in your household (see section on notifications). An early review may be held to discuss the implications for yourselves and young people placed with you of that change. You may request a review yourselves at any time if you have issues you wish to discuss.

- All first reviews will be presented to the Fostering Panel, and those where a change of circumstances ie health or composition of the household or approval, ie change of age group may also be shared with the Panel. All Reviews will be presented to the Fostering Panel on a three yearly rota. You are encouraged to attend panel. The outcome of the Reviews and terms of re-approval will be notified in writing to you and you have the opportunity to appeal if you are not happy with the decision. Where the Foster Carer Review or the Fostering Panel recommend a change to your approval, or Termination of Approval (deregistration) you will receive a 'qualifying determination' letter from the Agency Decision Maker (ADM) which sets out the procedure to follow and gives the Foster Carer 28 days to make a written representation.
- Carers will be provided with a copy of the Review Report.
- Written records by your Supervising Social Worker will be kept on your electronic file. These are available for you to see at your request via access to records and are confidential. We have a duty to keep all Foster Carer records for 10 years from the date on which your approval was terminated.
- All reports prepared about Foster Carers will be shared with Carers, usually by your Supervising Social Worker.

### **Medical Reports on Foster Carers**

- The Agency medical adviser will advise as to whether there are contra-indications to your ability to Foster.
- The Fostering Service reserves the right to take professional medical advice when appropriate. You will be asked to discuss any concerns about health at your review and medical examinations will be arranged when necessary.

### **Complaints Procedure for Carers and Procedure for Complaints Against Foster Carers**

- North Tyneside has a procedure for you to follow should you have a serious complaint to make about the Directorate or one of it's employees. Your Supervising Social Worker will advise you how to put this procedure into effect. Please refer to your policies and procedures for details.
- Should anyone make a complaint or allegation against you, or the care you are providing, we are required to investigate if the allegation refers to possible child abuse.

## Insurance

- North Tyneside Council provides all Foster Carers with insurance against allegations from Standard Securities. North Tyneside Council have also contracted with an independent Social Worker to provide a confidential support service to Foster Carers who find themselves in this position.

For a premium Foster Carers can choose to become individual members of Fostering Network which provides insurance to cover adult family members living in the household in case of allegations.

- All foster carers have the right to choose to contact the Independent Review Mechanism instead of the Fostering Panel considering any appeals against deregistration or change of approval. For detailed information refer to your Policies and Procedures.
- The Foster Carer is covered by the insurance policy of North Tyneside in respect of injury or damage caused to third parties by a Foster child in their care.
- North Tyneside Council will notify the Fostering Network of your registration. The Fostering Network has access to a legal advice and support help line. Your Supervising Social Worker will advise you on how to access this service.
- We advise all Foster Carers to check with their car insurer that they have appropriate policy coverage given their role as a Foster Carer and the transportation of fostered children.

## Payment

- Please see the payment to foster Carer's handbook for all payments, benefits and tax information.

## Approval by Other Agencies

- If you wish to become a Foster Carer for, or receive a child through, any other authority or agency prior to applying you are required to notify your Supervising Social Worker in writing.

## Notifications

Foster Carers are required to give written notice to the fostering service provider without delay, with full particulars of:

- Any intended change of the foster parent's address
- Any change in the composition of the household
- Any other change in the foster parent's personal circumstances or any other event affecting either their capacity to care for any child placed or the suitability of the household
- Any request or application to adopt children, or for registration as an early years provider or a later years provider under Part 3 of the Childcare Act 2006
- All accidents, injuries and illnesses of children placed with foster parents
- Any serious illness or serious accident of a child placed with foster parents
- The outbreak of any infectious disease at your home which, in the opinion of a general practitioner attending the home, is sufficiently serious to be so notified
- Allegation that a child placed with foster carers has committed a serious offence
- Involvement or suspected involvement of a child placed with foster carers in prostitution
- A serious incident relating to a child placed with foster carers necessitating calling the police to the foster carers home
- Use of any measures of control, restraint or discipline in respect of children accommodated in a foster home
- Medication, medical treatment and first aid administered to any child placed with foster carers
- A child placed with foster carers is missing from the placement

Note that if out of hours, you should notify the Police if a child goes missing or is significantly overdue and you have concerns for his/her welfare.

## **Recording**



Foster Carers are provided with the appropriate recording sheets in which it is expected that carers will use to detail their daily recording. This recording will be checked and signed by your supervising social worker during home visits.

### **Medical Treatment**

North Tyneside Council has a statutory duty to ensure that each young person is provided with health care, including medical and dental treatment. A young person Looked After by North Tyneside should receive a full health assessment within 28 days of accommodation. The young person must be registered with a general practitioner and a dentist. The Social Worker for the young person is responsible for ensuring that the young person has regular medicals.

Foster Carers caring for young people will need to be aware of, and also able to respond to particular health issues that may be important. It is the responsibility of North Tyneside to provide the necessary information to enable the Foster Carer to respond appropriately.

Carers are advised to maintain good standards of hygiene in relation to all children/young people. It is not always known if a child/young person has any infection (HIV, Hep B etc.). If we are aware of any infection we would discuss this with you.

### **Education and Preparing for Adulthood**

Foster Carers have a valuable role in encouraging and assisting children and young people in their care to achieve their full potential. It is important that this is done through all stages of the child/young person's life. Please refer to your policies and procedures for further information.

### **Removal of Children/Young People**

North Tyneside Council has a duty to remove a child/young person from a Foster placement if it appears that the placement is no longer the most suitable means of safeguarding or promoting their welfare. Most placements will be brought to a planned ending to which the Foster Carer will have contributed. North Tyneside Council would therefore expect to avoid the hasty removal of a child/young person. If a child/young person leaves suddenly or unexpectedly, or you ask for that child/young person to be removed, a disruption meeting will be held to discuss the reasons for the disruption of the placement.

As part of the Fostering Service, we expect you to give 28 days notice of the need for removal so that this may be planned and present minimum disruption to children and young people.

If you disagree with the Authority's action in removing a child/young person you may wish to make representation by following the appropriate procedure. Your Supervising Social Worker can advise you on how to do this.

### **Visits to Children and Young People by their Social Worker**

The child/young person's Social Worker has a statutory duty to visit them. Frequency of visits depends on the placement and should be detailed in the Placement Plan. However, there are minimum visiting requirements:

- Within one week of the placement
- Thereafter not more than six weekly unless
- The placement has been formally agreed as a permanent placement until the child reaches 18 years, then visiting in the second and subsequent years must not be less than three-monthly

Reviews on the child/young person will also be held. You are expected to attend these Reviews. You will also be invited to attend any other meetings concerning the child/young person. Should you be unable to attend for any reason, please advise with your Supervising Social Worker. At times, a brief written report from you, as the Foster Carer, may be requested.

The child/young person's Social Worker will offer advice and you should discuss with them any concerns or problems relating to the child/young person. You may request to see the Social Worker at any time to resolve or discuss any immediate problems. Similarly a child/young person may contact their Social Worker at any time.

### **Child Protection**

The Fostering Service have clear child protection policies and procedures and Foster Carers are advised to familiarise themselves with their roles and responsibilities in this area to ensure compliance. To support Foster Carers in this area a specific training session on Child Protection is contained within the Core Training Programme.

### **Corporal Punishments/smacking**

North Tyneside Council has a no smacking policy. You are required to give an undertaking not to use corporal punishment/smacking on any child/young person placed with you. Appropriate methods of discipline will be discussed with you. You will have access to a copy of North Tyneside Council Fostering Service's "Acceptable Measures of Control" and "Safe Caring" policies to enable you to update your own family's safe caring policy with your Supervising Social Worker.

## **Bullying**

The Fostering Service have Anti-Bullying Guidelines and Foster Carers are advised to familiarise themselves with their roles and responsibilities in this area to ensure compliance.

## **Babysitters**

The Fostering Service has Guidelines Regarding Babysitters – a copy of which is included in the Foster Carers' policies and procedures. If you require a babysitter, you must discuss this with your Supervising Social Worker at the earliest opportunity so the necessary statutory checks can be completed before the person babysits.

## **Equipment**

All equipment provided to Foster Carers remains the property of North Tyneside Council and should not be relocated or disposed of without prior consultation with the Supervising Social Worker. Any equipment provided will be noted on supervision/support visit forms and entered into your electronic record.

## **Health and Safety**

You will be provided with written guidance on your responsibilities for the health and safety of a child/young person who is placed with you. A Health and Safety Checklist and a pet questionnaire (if applicable) will have been completed during your assessment to become an Approved Foster Carer. It is important that you bring to your Supervising Social Workers' attention any matters, which may affect or alter your present Health and Safety Check/pet questionnaire. The Health and Safety Checklist and pet questionnaire will be reviewed at least annually and updated as required.

During the initial assessment and further health and safety checks, issues regarding smoking and drinking within the family will be discussed and, if necessary, recorded.

Government guidelines indicate that passive smoking can have an adverse effect on children and young people in a household. Foster Carers need to be aware that children under 5 or older children with specific health needs, will not be placed in a household where someone smokes or where they are not prepared to take appropriate measures to ensure that the child(ren) in their care are not exposed to passive smoking. It may also be a preference of the child's family that their child is not exposed to cigarette smoke.

Alcohol should be kept in a place inaccessible to children and young people. Foster Carers need to be aware of how their own use of alcohol may affect a child in their

care. Your Supervising Social Worker will be pleased to offer guidance on this. Please refer to your policies and procedures.

### **Training, Development and Support**

The Fostering Service will provide:

- Regular visits from your Supervising Social Worker to discuss placements and issues that may have been raised. The frequency will be mutually agreed taking into account a foster carers level of experience and the needs of the child in placement. However, the Fostering Service will visit more frequently if the foster carer requests this.
- A duty worker is available in office hours in the absence of the allocated Supervising Social Worker. A Fostering Service Out of Hours worker is available for telephone advice/support at all times outside of office hours. The worker can be contacted via the Emergency Duty Team on 0191 2006800 and asking for the fostering out of hours worker.
- The opportunity to participate in local Foster Carer support groups.
- The opportunity to participate in formal training with other Foster Carers and social workers. Foster Carers will be notified of training courses via the training programme and have their training needs identified through the completion of their Personal Development Plan (PDP) with the their Supervising Social Worker.
- Whenever possible, we expect you to attend training courses arranged by North Tyneside Council Fostering Service to develop your Fostering skills. Training programmes will be developed following feedback and consultation with Carers. The core training courses are compulsory. Attendance at support groups and training sessions are subject to your individual needs and your current fee banding.
- You are required to complete the Training, Support and Development Standards for Foster Care in the first year of your approval. Please speak to your Supervising Social Worker about this.
- All Foster Carers will have the on going opportunity to complete accredited post approval courses as they become available.

## **Personal and/or Conflicts of Interest**

A 'conflict of interest' would be for example, where a child's Social Worker is related to the Foster Carer or where the relationships existence affects how actions are taken and decisions made regarding the child placed with the Foster Carer.

It is important for all staff and Foster Carers to declare if there is potential for such conflict of interest. Should an instance of conflict of interest not be declared, this would be regarded as a serious breach of trust which may result in action being taken.

## **Procedure in connection with the placement of children**

When a child/young person is placed with you, you will be required to comply with the matters included in the care plan relating to the care of that child/young person. This should be signed by you, the child's Social Worker, a parent and any other appropriate person. On the first day of the placement, where a child is placed in office hours (or before if it is to be a planned placement) a meeting will be chaired by the Fostering Service duty worker and attended by yourself, the parent (where possible), and the Social Worker and this will provide an opportunity for the sharing of information to enable you to provide the best possible care to meet the child's known needs. Within 5 working days the Social Worker will share with you the child's care plan, which will provide more detailed information around all aspects of the child's needs and wishes and support you in your roles and responsibilities specifically for this child, including the greater levels of delegated authority to yourself.

Together the Fostering Service and the Foster Carer will ensure that full attention is paid to the individual child's gender, faith, ethnic origin, cultural and linguistic background, sexual orientation and any disability he/she may have. In doing so the Fostering Service will offer any additional support a Foster Carer requires to meet the above individual needs to ensure that every child/young person is encouraged and supported to have positive views of themselves and to be proud of their identity and heritage.

## **Confidentiality**

All information relating to the child in your care, the child's family or to any other person which has been given to you in confidence in connection with a placement is kept Confidential and not disclosed to any person without the consent of the fostering service provider. Any written information should be kept safe and returned to your Supervising Social Worker when the child/young person leaves. If you are in any doubt as to how to manage confidential information you should discuss this with your Supervising Social Worker. The Fostering Service will fund the purchase of appropriate lockable storage specifically for this purpose.

Any new information relating to a child coming to live with you will be communicated to you as soon as it is available. If you become aware of any new information you should communicate this to child's Social Worker or your Supervising Social Worker as soon as possible.

### **The Foster Carers Agreement**

We are very pleased that you will be working in partnership with the Fostering Service, which has been established specifically to find and support family placements for children and young people of North Tyneside. We would like you to feel that you are an integral part of the services for Children in Care.

As a Foster Carer with North Tyneside Council you will be allocated a Supervising Social Worker from the Fostering Service.

Any child or young person placed with you will have their own Social Worker with whom you can discuss any issues arising from the care of that child/young person.

Our Fostering Service is responsible for supervising/supporting you and developing your practice to provide the best possible placement for children and young people.

### **Expectations/Responsibilities of Foster Carers**

1. I/we understand that by offering care for a child/young person I/we must make myself/ourselves available for supervision and consultation with my/our Supervising Social Worker.
2. I/we understand the Service expectation upon attendance at training sessions and support groups and I/we will endeavour to attend all of the training courses agreed appropriate with my/our Supervising Social Worker.
3. I/we understand that I/we are required to complete the Training, Support and Development Standards for Foster Care in the first year of my/our approval.
4. I/we will only take the placements I/we are authorised by the Fostering Panel to take, as set out in my/our current approval, unless alternative arrangements are made by mutual consent.
5. I/we understand the system of payments and I/we are clear about my/our position with regards to tax and national insurance.

**NMS 31  
CWDC Standard 2  
Fostering Services Regulations 2011, 27 (5) (b)**

6. I/we understand that from the allowance payable I/we are expected to supply pocket money and clothing for the child/young person and to ensure that their personal possessions are kept in such a way that will enhance their self esteem. I/we will keep records of monies spent on clothing.
7. I/we understand that if I/we receive any monies for the child from another source ie from the child's relative or DLA/Incapacity Benefit/EMA/ PIP, I/we will open a bank account in the child's name and keep records of monies received and expenditure.
8. I/we understand the position with regard to insurance. I/we understand that it is my/our responsibility to ensure that my/our household and car insurance policies provide appropriate coverage given my/our role as Foster Carer and that it is my/our responsibility to check the position with my/our insurers.
9. I/we are in receipt of the Agency Decision as Foster Carer/s for North Tyneside Council, which specifies the limits to my/our Fostering.
11. I/we understand that I/we cannot continue to be registered as a North Tyneside Foster Carer whilst at the same time becoming registered for another Foster Care agency. If I/we intend to take up a position with another Fostering agency, I/we will notify my Supervising Social worker in writing prior to making an application.
12. I/we at the point of any child entering our care shall expect that as a basic minimum an emergency agreement is made and written down. If this does not happen I/we will notify my Supervising Social Worker as soon as possible.
13. I/we will undertake not to use any form of physical or corporal punishment or any other form of physical or emotional sanction considered inappropriate by North Tyneside Council.
14. I/we will at all times provide adequate supervision for the needs of a child/young person. Where this involves leaving the child in the care of someone else, e.g. babysitter, I/we will discuss this fully with the child's Social Worker/Supervising Social Worker. I/we understand that where we allow our own children under 16 to remain at home alone, this arrangement will be discussed with the young person and his/her Social Worker to enable the young person the same choices as our children, such agreements should include those with parental responsibility and be detailed in the child's care plan.

15. I/we will care for a child/young person placed with me/us as I/we would a member of my/our own family, and promote his/her welfare having regard to the long and short term plans for the child/young person. This will include attending formal and where necessary informal meetings, health, education and other appointments with the child/ young person - e.g. Medicals examinations, Parent Teacher evenings etc and taking an interest in and encouraging their leisure interests.
16. I/we will work within the delegated responsibility conferred upon us within the child's care plan to ensure the child/young person does not experience delays and missed opportunities as a result of being Looked After.
17. I/We acknowledge that in the great majority of cases, placement with a family of similar ethnic origin, religion and language is most likely to meet a child's/young person's needs as fully as possible. However, where a child/young person placed within my/our Family has a different ethnic, linguistic or religious background to ourselves, I/we undertake to help him/her to understand and take a pride in all elements of their cultural heritage and to feel positive and comfortable about their origins.
18. I/we are aware of the areas about which I/we need to notify the Authority immediately or in writing.
19. I/we shall ensure that my/our home is a safe and healthy environment for a child/young person and I/we shall take advice and training where possible as required on all issues of health and safety.
20. I/we will be available and accessible unless otherwise planned in order to provide a good standard and consistency of service to young people in my/our care.
21. I/we will undertake tasks and comply with the terms of the child's Care Plan.
22. I/we will assist a child/young person to move on to independence.
23. I/we understand the importance of confidentiality and will at all times treat any information about children/young people and their families as confidential.
24. I/we will keep information safe and return it to the department when a placement ends.



25. I/we understand the duty of North Tyneside Council is to safeguard and promote the welfare of children/young people looked after by them and their obligations under the Children Act. I/we also understand that I/we am/are working in partnership with the Council and the child/young person's family.
26. I/we understand the complaints procedure and agree to follow these procedures. I/We accept that any complaint made against me/us will be investigated. It is also accepted that any complaint which I/we make will be investigated.
27. I/we undertake to allow North Tyneside Council to remove a child/young person from my home where the Service considers it is not in the child/young person's best interests to remain there.
28. I/we will undertake to transport the children in my/our care and where practicable to use public transport in favour of other means of transportation and in particular taxis to and from school, hospital etc.
29. I/we undertake to adhere to the policies and procedures of the fostering service provider for the protection of children as agreed by North Tyneside Council's Children Safeguarding Board.
30. I/we undertake to adhere to the policies and procedures of the fostering service provider in respect of behavior management and children missing from my/our home.
31. I/we agree to North Tyneside Council undertaking any necessary Health and Safety Assessment (including the completion of a pet questionnaire, where applicable) of my/ our home.
32. I/we will comply with the terms of the Foster Carer Agreement as it applies to me/us as well as to any changes subsequently made in that agreement.
34. I/we undertake to report damage to any equipment provided by North Tyneside Council and accept that any equipment provided remains the property of North Tyneside Council and can be moved whilst not in use and removed once we cease to foster or take a break from fostering.

## **Expectations/Responsibilities of Fostering Service**

1. The Fostering Service Supervising Social Worker will supervise and support the Carer/s.
2. Fostering Service Supervising Social Workers will be involved in the care planning arrangements through dialogue with the children's Social Workers and other members of the care team.
3. Where Carers indicate the possibility of placement breakdown the Fostering Service Supervising Social Worker will assess and co-ordinate support to the Carer/s. This may include short breaks and outreach support.
4. Fostering Service Supervising Social Workers will provide additional support through Carers groups, which Carers are recommended to attend. Support Groups will be organised and structured in a flexible manner to optimise the opportunity for Carers to attend.
5. Fostering Service Supervising Social Workers will ensure that Carers attend all forms of training and notify the Team Manager's of specific training needs.
6. The Fostering Service will ensure compliance with the matters to be monitored by the registered person as determined by Schedule 6 Fostering Service Regulations 2011 35 (1).
7. North Tyneside Fostering Service is regularly inspected by The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted). In becoming a Foster Carer for North Tyneside, Foster Carers are reminded that they may be interviewed or visited at their home as part of Ofsted's Inspection process.

**I/we confirm that the above agreement is accepted by:**

Foster Carer Name                      Signature.....Date.....

Foster Carer Name                      Signature.....Date.....

Fostering Service  
Social Worker                      Signature.....Date.....

Team Manager Fostering              Signature.....Date.....

Copy of this signed Agreement provided to Foster Carer on .....

# Fostering Service

## Supervision Agreement

<b>Foster Carer:</b>	
<b>Supervising Social Worker:</b>	

<b>1.</b>	<b>Frequency of Supervision</b>	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Recording Arrangements</b>	
<b>3.</b>	<b>Cancellation Arrangements</b>	
<b>4.</b>	<b>Unannounced Visits</b>	

<b>Signatures:</b>	<b>Foster Carer</b>		<b>Date:</b>	
	<b>Foster Carer</b>		<b>Date:</b>	

	<b>Supervising Social Worker</b>		<b>Date:</b>	
--	----------------------------------	--	--------------	--

**An Agreement to Terms and Conditions  
For North Tyneside Foster Carers**

**Terms and Conditions for Foster Carers, as set out in The Fostering Services (England) Regulations (2011)**

**These Terms and Conditions comply with the matters and obligations in Foster care agreements as laid out in Schedule 5 (Regulation 27 (5) (b) of the Fostering Service Regulations 2011.**

Having reviewed your Foster Carer status, North Tyneside Council continues to approve you as a Foster Carer.

<b>Foster carer(s) Name(s)</b>		
Your current approval is		
<b>Type of Resource</b>		
Short Term	<input type="checkbox"/>	Long Term Fostering <input type="checkbox"/> Short Break <input type="checkbox"/>
Kinship Care	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mother and Baby <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Matching Considerations</b>		
Number of children approved to Foster		
Age Range (Include both full and preferred age range where applicable)		
Any specific matching considerations referred to as part of assessment and or approval process		

## **Foster Care Agreement**

- Please read the full Foster Carer Agreement which you signed after your original approval as a Foster Carer, which detailed the terms and conditions of the partnership between you and North Tyneside Council.

By signing this subsequent Foster Carer Agreement you are agreeing to continue to abide by the information detailed in the earlier document.

If at any time the full Foster Carer Agreement is substantially altered or the expectations of North Tyneside Council change you will be re-issued with this Agreement and we will request that it is signed to enable your continued approval as a Foster Carer for North Tyneside Council.

## **Expectations/Responsibilities of Foster Carers**

1. I/we understand that by offering care for a child/young person I/we must make myself/ourselves available for supervision and consultation with my/our Supervising Social Worker.
2. I/we understand the Directorate's expectation upon attendance at training sessions and support groups and I/we will endeavor to attend all of the training courses agreed appropriate with my/our Supervising Social Worker.
3. Where I/we have a vacancy and are in receipt of a weekly fee, I/we will participate in a training course or attend a support group at least once a month. If I/we do not comply with this requirement I/we are aware that the weekly fee will be reviewed and could be stopped until I/we participate in training or a support group or have a child/young person placed.
4. I/we will only take the placements I/we are authorised by the Fostering Panel to take, as set out in my/our current approval, unless alternative arrangements are made by mutual consent.
5. I/we understand the system of payments and I/we are clear about my/our position with regards to tax and national insurance.
6. I/we understand that from the allowance payable I/we are expected to supply pocket money and clothing for the child/young person and to ensure that their

**NMS 31**  
**CWDC Standard 2**  
**Fostering Services Regulations 2011, 27 (5) (b)**

personal possessions are kept in such a way that will enhance their self esteem. I/we will keep records of monies spent on clothing.

7. I/we understand that if I/we receive any monies for the child from another source ie from the child's relative or DLA, I/we will open a bank account in the child's name and keep records of monies received and expenditure.
8. I/we understand the position with regard to insurance. I/we understand that it is my/our responsibility to ensure that my/our household and car insurance policies provide appropriate coverage given my/our role as Foster Carer and that it is my/our responsibility to check the position with my/our insurers.
9. I/we are in receipt of a notice of approval as Foster Carer/s for North Tyneside Council, which specifies the limits to my/our Fostering.
11. I/we understand that I/we cannot continue to be registered as a North Tyneside Foster Carer whilst at the same time becoming registered for another Foster Care agency. If I/we intend to take up a position with another Fostering agency, I/we will notify my Supervising Social Worker in writing prior to making an application. See Guidance in Appendix A.
12. I/we at the point of placement shall expect that as a basic minimum an emergency agreement is made and written down. If this does not happen I/we will notify my Supervising Social Worker as soon as possible.
13. I/we will undertake not to use any form of physical or corporal punishment or any other form of physical or emotional sanction considered inappropriate by North Tyneside Council.
14. I/we will at all times provide adequate supervision for a child/young person. Where this involves leaving the child in the care of someone else, e.g. babysitter, I/we will discuss this fully with the child's Social Worker. I/we understand that children/young people should not be left alone under 16, unless individual arrangements have been agreed at placement agreement/looked after review. Over 16 the use of a substitute Carer should be discussed with the young person's Social Worker and the child/young person themselves consulted. In all cases the supervision details should be agreed with those with parental responsibility and included in the Placement Plan.



15. I/we will care for a child/young person placed with me/us as I/we would a member of my/our own family, whilst accepting the difference between my/our own children and those in my care. This will include attending formal and where necessary informal health, education and other appointments with the child/young person – e.g. Medicals examinations, Parent Teacher evenings etc and taking an interest in and encouraging their leisure interests.
16. I/We acknowledge that in the great majority of cases, placement with a family of similar ethnic origin, religion and language is most likely to meet a child's/young person's needs as fully as possible. However, where a child/young person placed within my/our Family has a different ethnic, linguistic or religious background to ourselves, I/we undertake to help him/her to understand and take a pride in all elements of their cultural heritage and to feel positive and comfortable about their origins.
17. I/we are aware of the areas about which I/we need to notify the Authority immediately or in writing.
18. I/we shall ensure that my/our home is a safe and healthy environment for a child/young person and I/we shall take advice and training where possible as required on all issues of health and safety.
19. I/we will be available and accessible unless otherwise planned in order to provide a good standard and consistency of service to young people in my/our care.
20. I/we will undertake tasks as outlined in the Placement Plan.
21. I/we will assist a child/young person to move on to independence.
22. I/we understand the importance of confidentiality and will at all times treat as confidential information about children/young people and their families.
23. I/we will keep information safe and return it to the agency when a placement ends.
24. I/we understand the duty of North Tyneside Council, Health, Education, Care & Safeguarding Directorate is to safeguard and promote the welfare of children/young people looked after by them and their obligations under the Children Act. I/we also understand that I/we am/are working in partnership with the Council.

25. I/we understand the complaints procedure and agree to follow these procedures. I/We accept that any complaint made against me/us will be investigated. It is also accepted that any complaint which I/we make will be investigated.
26. I/we undertake to allow North Tyneside Council, Health, Education, Care & Safeguarding Directorate is to remove a child/young person from my home where the Directorate considers it is not in the child/young person's best interests to remain there.
27. I/we will undertake to transport the children in my/our care and where practicable to use public transport in favour of other means of transportation and in particular taxis to and from school, hospital etc.
28. I/we undertake to accept the principles and practice of partnership with the Local Authority and the child/young person's family.
29. I/we agree to North Tyneside Council undertaking any necessary Health and Safety Assessment (including the completion of a pet questionnaire, where applicable) of my/ our home. I/ we further understand that any non-compliance with the Council's Health and Safety standards will render my Foster Care status with North Tyneside Council as void until such time as the non-compliance is remedied, reassessed and approved.
30. I/we will comply with the terms of the Foster Carer Agreement as it applies to me/us as well as to any changes subsequently made in that agreement.
31. I/we will notify the finance section when a placement commences / ends.
32. I/we undertake to report damage to any equipment provided by North Tyneside Council and accept that any equipment provided remains the property of North Tyneside Council and can be moved whilst not in use and removed once we cease to foster or take a break from fostering.

### **Expectations/Responsibilities of Fostering Service**

1. The Fostering Service Supervising Social Worker will supervise and support the Carer/s and manage their workload.

2. Fostering Service Supervising Social Workers, where necessary will be involved in the care planning arrangements through dialogue with Fieldwork Service Social Workers and other members of the care team.
3. Where Carers indicate the possibility of placement breakdown the Fostering Service Supervising Social Worker will assess and co-ordinate support to the Carer/s. This may include respite and outreach support.
4. Fostering Service Supervising Social Workers will provide additional support through Carers groups, which Carers are recommended to attend. Support Groups will be organised and structured in a flexible manner to optimise the opportunity for Carers to attend.
5. Fostering Service Supervising Social Workers will ensure that Carers attend all forms of training and notify the Service Manager of specific training needs.
6. The Fostering Service will ensure compliance with the matters to be monitored by the registered person as determined by Schedule 6 Fostering Service Regulations 2011 35 (1). See Appendix B.
7. North Tyneside Fostering Service is regularly inspected by The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted). In becoming a Foster Carer for North Tyneside, Foster Carers are reminded that they may be interviewed or visited as part of Ofsted's Inspection process.

I/we confirm that the above agreement is accepted by:

Foster Carer Name.....

Foster Carer Signature.....Date.....

Foster Carer Name.....

Foster Carer Signature..... Date .....

Fostering Service  
Supervising Social Worker..... Date .....

Team Manager  
Fostering..... Date .....

Copy of this signed Agreement provided to Foster Carer on.....

Fostering Service  
**Foster Carer Agreement**  
**For Temporary Placement of Child/Young Person**  
**with a Connected Person Foster Carer**

I/We \_\_\_\_\_ (Names of Carers) agree to care for \_\_\_\_\_ (Name of Child/Young Person), \_\_\_\_\_ (Dob) from \_\_\_\_\_ (Date of Approval by Manager, Health, Education, Care & Safeguarding Directorate).

In accepting responsibility for \_\_\_\_\_ (Name of Child/Young Person) I/we agree to provide a high standard of care and support to \_\_\_\_\_ (Name of Child/Young Person) as if he/she were a member of my/our family.

I/we agree to admitting any appropriate person authorised by North Tyneside Council to visit \_\_\_\_\_ (Name of Child/Young Person) at our home.

In any circumstances whereby North Tyneside Council believe \_\_\_\_\_ (Name of Child/Young Person) needs are no longer being met by myself/ourselves, I/we recognise North Tyneside Council's responsibility to remove \_\_\_\_\_ (Name of Child/Young Person) at any time.

I/we agree to ensure any information (written or verbal) is kept confidential and not disclosed to another party without the agreement of North Tyneside Council.

I/We understand that we are not eligible to claim Child Benefit and/or Child Tax Credit in relation to the Looked After Child/ren and/or receive payments in respect of the child's care from any other source, ie birth family.

I/we agree to support contact arrangements between \_\_\_\_\_ (Name of Child/Young Person) and any other person as specified in a Court Order or arrangements made or agreed by North Tyneside Council.

In undertaking these responsibilities I/we recognise that I/we shall have a nominated Supervising Social Worker from the Fostering Service. This Supervising Social Worker shall offer a minimum of monthly support visits to my/our home in addition to completing an Assessment of my/our suitability to be approved as Connected Persons Foster Carers for \_\_\_\_\_ (Name of Child/Young Person).

**Foster Carer Agreement  
For Temporary Placement of Child/Young Person  
with a Connected Person Foster Carer**

I/we confirm that the above agreement is accepted by:

Foster Carer Name.....

Foster Carer Signature..... Date.....

Foster Carer Name.....

Foster Carer Signature..... Date .....

Fostering Service  
Supervising Social Worker..... Date .....

Team Manager  
Fostering Service..... Date .....

Copy of this signed Agreement provided to Foster Carer on.....

**Staying Put Arrangement**

**This is an agreement between:**

.....  
(Name of Young Adult)

**AND**

.....  
(Name/s of Carer(s))

**AND**

**North Tyneside Fostering Service**

**AND**

**Leaving Care Service**

**Principles of this agreement-** everyone involved in the Staying Put Arrangement has responsibilities in making sure that this arrangement works well, as documented below:

.....  
**(Name of Young Adult)**

**Agrees to:**

- Respect the wishes of other people who live in the home.
- Keep to the agreed house rules as set by the Carer(s).
- Pay regularly any money towards the cost of the Staying Put Arrangement, if applicable.
- To take more responsibility in developing my independent living skills such as cooking, cleaning, washing and budgeting, to ensure I have the necessary life skills to support me to move into independent living.
- To continue to help with housework and to keep my bedroom tidy.
- To pay for any loss or damage to my own furniture or belongings and I will let my Carer(s) know if anything is broken or needs mending.
- To not smoke in the property and I will discuss and agree my use of alcohol within the home with my Carer(s).
- To not use or keep illegal substances in the property.
- To work with my personal advisor and Carer(s) on all areas identified within their Pathway Plan and engage fully with education, employment or training as outlined in my Pathway Plan.
- Bring any concerns about the Staying Put Arrangement to the attention of my Leaving Care worker or the Duty Worker from the Fostering Service.



**(Name/s of Carer/s)**

**Agrees to:**

- ❑ Meet the support needs of the young adult as agreed in the Pathway Plan and any future needs identified during Pathway Plan Reviews and/or during the course of the placement.
- ❑ Attend and contribute positively to all Pathway Plan Reviews where applicable.
- ❑ Treat the young adult as a full member of my family/ household.
- ❑ To understand, respect and support the young adult in developing their autonomy by providing them responsibilities in line with their maturity, allowing them to socialise with friends and to attend social events and venues. This, of course, should be in line with the rules of your home. For example, allowing the young person to go clubbing with friends but to be in at a certain time or allowing them to stay at a suitable person's home on such occasions. Should any concerns be raised regarding the safety and welfare of the young person, this is to be brought to the attention of the Leaving Care Team and Fostering Team in the first instance.
- ❑ Respect the young adult's privacy and dignity at all times. This includes respecting the confidentiality of any information received about the young person and to work within the Fostering Service Confidentiality Policy.
- ❑ Allow the young person to take more responsibility in developing their independent living skills such as cooking, cleaning, washing and budgeting, to ensure that they have the necessary life skills to support them moving into independent living.
- ❑ Attend any training relating to the Staying Put Arrangement.
- ❑ Discuss with the Leaving Care Team before any changes are made to care arrangements for the young person.
- ❑ Inform the Fostering Service and Leaving Care Team as soon as possible of any emergency situation or accident involving the young person or that which would impact upon the care of the young person.
- ❑ Inform the Fostering Service and Leaving Care Team of any change of address or my family circumstances.
- ❑ To give at least 28 days notice of my intention to stop offering the Staying Put Arrangement.
- ❑ Understand that the personal advisor will communicate directly with the young person, which may include seeing the young person out in the community, without prior consultation with me as the Carer(s).

- Understand that should a young person remain in my care under a Staying Put Arrangement and no other young people requiring foster care are placed with me, I will receive the accredited carer fee of £110 per week until the end of this Staying Put Arrangement (in line with the Fostering Finance Guide). Should I continue to provide additional placements to children in care, my fee will remain on the band that I have been assessed to receive.

**The Fostering Service**

**Agrees to:**

- ❑ To consider the Carer(s) training needs and how these can be met during the Staying Put Arrangement.
- ❑ Provide Carer(s) and the young person with copies of this agreement and policies relating to the Staying Put Agreement.
- ❑ Continue to provide support to the Carer(s) as required to meet the young person's needs. Should the Carer(s) not wish to take any further children in care during this Staying Put Arrangement, the Carer(s) can resign from the Fostering Service and receive support via the Fostering Duty System. Should the Carer wish to take future fostering placements then visits will continue on a three monthly basis by a named Supervising Social Worker. This can be increased in frequency depending on the needs of the Carer and young person.
- ❑ End the Staying Put Arrangement if the safety or well-being of the young adult or Carer(s) is felt to be at risk by the Staying Put Arrangement continuing.

**Leaving Care Team**

**Agrees to:**

- ❑ The named Personal Advisor will arrange regular Pathway Plan Reviews, record any agreed changes as necessary and ensure relevant parties are made aware of any changes.
- ❑ The Personal Advisor will inform the Carer(s) of any concerns or relevant information in order to ensure the young person is kept safe from harm.
- ❑ Communicate regularly with Carer(s) to discuss how the Arrangement is going and to help the young adult and Carer(s) address any issues.
- ❑ End the Staying Put Arrangement if the safety or well-being of the young adult or Carer(s) is felt to be at risk by the Staying Put Arrangement continuing.

**Name of Young Person**.....

**Signature** ..... **Date** .....

**Name of Carer**.....

**Signature** ..... **Date** .....

**Name of Carer**.....

**Signature** ..... **Date** .....

**Name of Supervising Social Worker** .....

**Signature** ..... **Date** .....

**Name of Personal Advisor**.....

**Signature** ..... **Date** .....

**Team Manager Fostering Service**.....

**Signature** ..... **Date** .....

**Manager of Leaving Care Team**.....

**Signature** ..... **Date** .....

# Support and Supervision

## 1. Introduction

---

All foster carers will be allocated a Supervising Social Worker who will work with you and your family. All foster carers will face challenges in their role however, there are also many rewards too and the primary task of your Supervising Social Worker is to support you with this. They will offer you regular visits, which incorporates high quality therapeutic supervision.

It is recognised that Supervision is an important part of your role as a Foster Carer. Your Supervising Social Worker will work with you in identifying your individual training and development needs, alongside giving you opportunities to reflect on your learning from your formal training and your fostering experiences. Supervision will also allow you time to consider complex issues, challenges etc and gives you the space and time to think through and share strategies of ways of helping the child in your care.

Your Supervising Social Worker will ensure you have the necessary guidance for this role including an understanding about working within the [National Minimum Standards](#) for Fostering and all the Fostering Service's Policies, Procedures and Guidance.

Your Supervising Social Worker will also work closely with the child's Social Worker.

There will also be a number of other places in which you can get support from including;

- The child's allocated Social Worker;
- Other Foster Carers;
- Other professionals;

The Fostering Service also offers a dedicated Out of Hours Service on evenings, weekends and public holidays to ensure that you can access support and advice outside of office hours.

It will remain the responsibility of the child's Social Worker to offer you specific advice or support for the child in relation to their care plan.

## 2. Supervision Meetings

---

The frequency of visits undertaken by your Supervising Social Worker will be agreed between you both. The frequency of these meetings will be determined by both the child's needs and your specific support needs, the frequency of which can change over time. These meetings are usually set at 4-6 weekly however, will be no more

than 8 weekly unless you are in a Staying Put Arrangement. Each session will be planned and recorded on a supervisory visit record, of which you will receive a copy. At the end of every visit your next visit should be planned and agreed in advance.

Supervision should be seen as a two-way process which will include some of the following:

- Ensure you are taking into account the child/ren's wishes and feelings;
- Ensure you have the opportunity to discuss the child/ren you are caring for;
- Help you to identify possible solutions to any issues;
- Discuss any issues you may be having with your own children;
- Ensure you understand how you contribute to Children's Services objectives;
- Give you feedback on your care to make sure you are meeting the child's needs;
- Ensure you are accessing relevant training and resources and are working towards achieving the [Training, Support and Development Standards](#) within a year of approval;
- Ensure you are working within the [National Minimum Standards](#) for Fostering;
- Where appropriate to the fostering role support with any financial or practical issues;
- Keep you updated about new policies, procedures, training and good practice
- Check foster carers daily recording.

Supervision helps you to evidence how you are developing, meeting the [Training, Support and Development Standards](#) alongside providing an appropriate home for the child/young person.

As a Foster Carer, you are seen as a professional and both you and the Supervising Social Worker are expected to work openly within a framework of respect, honesty and trust.

The supervision meetings will be an important part of collecting information for your annual review as a Foster Carer. The supervision session will be confidential; however, the Supervising Social Worker will discuss relevant information with the child's Social Worker, or other professionals working with the child or family alongside your Supervising Social Worker's own professional supervision with the Team Manager.

If you are not happy in any way with the arrangement or content of supervision, speak to your Supervising Social Worker in the first instance. However, if they cannot resolve your issues or your concern is about the supervising Social Worker please contact the Fostering Team Manager.

Your Supervising Social Worker will do one unannounced visit per year. The main purpose of the unannounced visit will be to look at the home environment that a child

is living in. This visit will be recorded. You will also receive a second unannounced visit which is likely to be done by another worker from the Fostering Service.

### 3. What Your Supervising Social Worker Will Do

Your Supervising Social Worker should ensure the following tasks are done:

After approval

1. Ensure you complete the Training, Support and Development Standards Workbook by your first annual review, or 18 months if you are a Connected Person Foster Carer. These time frames can be extended if extra support is needed, which will be agreed by the Fostering Team Manager.
2. Give the Foster Care Agreement to you: to sign and return a signed copy to you.
3. Support you with any specialist issues for children, including those with disabilities for example support in completing applications for relevant entitlements etc.

Before a child comes to live with you

4. Discuss and check equipment (especially in the child's bedroom) and ensure it is appropriate to the age of the child to be placed;
5. Take part in discussions about potential referrals for children coming to live with you and placement planning meetings;
6. Ensure that the child's Social Worker gives you all known information about the children, including a history of abuse or suspected abuse and the reason for them needing to live in a fostering household;
7. Discuss family time with birth parents', other siblings and identified family members;
8. Discuss how the child's health needs are promoted and how children should be encouraged to adopt a healthy lifestyle;
9. Help you in your work with other services such as health and education;
10. Identify training needs to ensure that you can meet the needs of children you are caring for.
11. Ensure you have a good understanding of the finance guide both in relation to you as a Foster Carer and each specific child you care for.

When a child is living with you

17. Visit regularly as detailed within the supervision meetings information. This includes unannounced visits
18. Maintain regular contact with you to discuss that any concerns with you and identify any issues for example, information needed about the child from the

placement planning meeting, any issues around family time or concerns you may have about the child.

19. Record on the Local Authority electronic recoding system their contact and communication with you.
20. Ensure you receive invitations to any meetings relating to the child and offer appropriate support before during and after meetings. Under exceptional circumstances where you are unable to attend your supervising social worker will either attend or share your information on your behalf.
21. Help you to prepare for your foster care annual review meetings, while at the same time gathering information from other involved professionals and preparing their report. Together with the IRO your Social Worker will attend your review with you.
22. Ensure that they regularly share with you the up to date training schedule for North Tyneside Council Service.
23. Update Disclosure and Barring checks on members of your family every three years, including those reaching 18, and other persons who come to live at the home, who are 18 or over.
24. Update medical checks should your medical circumstances change.
25. Assess and review any health and safety issues within the fostering household including the addition of any new pets and the environment in which they are kept;
26. Should the court request information relating to a child you are caring for or have previously cared for we will support you in completing court reports and attending court as necessary.

Once a child leaves your care

27. We understand that when a child leaves your care this can be very difficult for not only you but for other members of your family. Your Social Worker will work alongside you and your family during this time.
28. Discuss with you and your family all the issues that have led to any unplanned end of a child leaving your care and identify any learning opportunities;
29. Attend Disruption Meetings as required.

If your Supervising Social Worker has any concerns about your care or feels you need extra support, they will not wait until supervision meetings or reviews but deal with any issues as they arise.





**North Tyneside Council**

# **Fostering Framework**

## **Introduction**

This document sets out the revised level of payments for Foster Carer's and the rationale for the introduction of Payments for Skills framework.

The framework underpins North Tyneside Fostering Services commitment to achieving best possible outcomes for children who are fostered by ensuring they are supported by skilled, motivated and rewarded Foster Carers.

The payments for skills framework incorporates:

- The Foster Carer's experience of the fostering task
- Training the Foster Carer has completed and qualifications they have received
- The range of the fostering tasks the Foster Carer is willing and able to undertake
- Fees linked to accreditation level

Our primary aim is:

- To provide choice in high quality, in-house, child-centred fostering arrangements for children of all ages, ensuring safety, stability and positive outcomes for them.
- To recruit and retain skilled Foster Carers.
- To provide a clear, fair, consistent framework for all carers.

- To provide motivation for the continued personal development and training of carers.
- To promote the delegation of authority to Foster Carers.
- To develop a wide range of fostering arrangement options for children in care
- To provide a range of quality Foster Carers who deliver a wide choice of fostering arrangement options to meet the needs of children and Young People in care in North Tyneside
- To provide appropriate remuneration to competent and skilled carers in a competitive fostering market

The framework contains three band levels; the three levels are based on the complexity of fostering arrangements and on the Foster Carers' skills and experience.

Band Level 1 - Accredited

Band Level 2 - Advanced

Band Level 3 - Specialist

Each band provides entry requirements and clearly sets out expectations regarding carer training, skills development and reflective learning. The model also supports existing carers wishing to progress to a higher level; to progress up through the bands if they meet the task, skills and competencies requirements.

This framework supersedes all previous policies on the provision of payments to persons approved by North Tyneside Fostering Service as Foster Carers in accordance with regulation 27 of the 2011 Regulations, or temporarily approved under regulation 24 of the 2010 Regulations. It applies to both related (Connected Person/Family and Friend Foster Carers) and unrelated Foster Carers and to both long term and short-term arrangements. This framework will be reviewed at least every two years

**Progression:**

A Foster Carer can be a person who is approved as a Local Authority foster parent in accordance with Regulation 27 of the 2011 Regulations, or temporarily approved under Regulation 24 of the 2010 Regulations but who has not yet progressed via completed Training and Development Standards and Core Training to become an accredited Foster Carer.

The competencies identified as essential for each level must be clearly demonstrated in the care offered to children.

Foster Carers wishing to be considered for progression to another grade should discuss this with their Supervising Social Worker who will be able to provide further advice on progression requirements and procedure.

Foster Carers will be required to provide evidence for their Foster Carer Review that they meet, or continue to meet, the requirements of the respective grade.

Transferring between levels will also be considered via a Foster Carer Review; depending on how many spaces at each band. The review will consider whether the criteria is met for ongoing approval in a particular band or indeed whether progression or regression between bands is evidenced. Recommendations from previous reviews must be fulfilled. Recommendations from the Independent Chair of Foster Carers Reviews will then be presented to the Agency Decision Maker for ratification.

Where a Foster Carer applicant expresses a commitment to being 'fast tracked' to a specific Foster Carer band due to their previous experience (e.g. Foster Carers from other agencies), they may be initially recognised at that band. There will be a stipulation that the Foster Carer demonstrates within a six-month time limit, that they can fully meet the tasks, skills and competencies required of that band, enabling verification of banding and a continuation at this band.

If a Foster Carer fails to meet or retain grade requirements (including training), a Foster Carer Review will be undertaken with a time limited action plan of no more than a 6-month period in place to support recovery. If this plan proves to be unsuccessful; a recommendation of a reduction in band level will be presented to the Agency Decision Maker for ratification.

### **Payment:**

The weekly skills related fee is paid to all bands of carer; this fee is paid in addition to weekly fostering allowance payments, Foster Carers who are at the pre-accreditation level will receive the age-related weekly fostering allowance but no skills related fee.

Fees are paid 52 weeks per year and are payable for the first two weeks of any holiday taken without the Child in Care.

**Band 1 - Accredited Carer** – Once you are approved as a Foster Carer in accordance with Regulation 27 of the Fostering Services (England) Regulation 2011 and completed the relevant skills to foster training you will qualify for a fee by fulfilling the criteria requirements for Foster Carers as detailed in the framework.

**Band 2 - Advanced Carer** - Foster Carers who have attended training and are assessed as having demonstrated their ability to offer care to complex children and young people, including (not exclusively) UAAS children, children with complex health and/or behavioural needs.

**Band 3 - Specialist Carer** - Foster Carers who have attended training and are assessed as able to demonstrate their ability to meet the needs of children and young people who may display significantly challenging behaviour that might otherwise require residential childcare.

**Foster Carer Fees**

Payment for Skills (PFS) Bandings 1, 2, & 3 Foster Carers are paid a weekly fee, based on the PFS level for which the Foster Carer is approved. Each fee levels reflect the PFS Tasks, Skills and Competencies (TSC) requirements for that level.

Skills and competencies will be assessed annually at Foster Care Review to ensure all training requirements are complete and skills are maintained.

**Table 1 – Payment for Skills (PFS) Fee Structure**

<b>Band Levels</b>	<b>Fees</b>
Band 1 - Accredited Carer	£110.00
Band 2 - Advanced Carer	£380.00
Band 3 - Specialist Carer	£550.00

<b>Additional Premiums – per child</b>	<b>Fees</b>
Siblings ( 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> child only)	£75.00
Disability	£50.00
Mother & Baby (only mother LAC )	£90.00
Out of Hours placement	£50 (one off)

In exceptional circumstances, there will be social work practice issues that will necessitate consideration of placing a child/young person with assessed advanced or specialist needs with an accredited Foster Carer. In such circumstances the Foster Carer may temporarily be paid as an advanced Foster Carer or specialist Foster Carer for the duration of the arrangement by recommendation of the Resource Allocation Panel and then to the monthly higher cost financial meeting which is chaired by the Assistant Director Children's Services. Decisions outside of this timeframe will also be made by Assistant Director Children's Services or the delegated Senior Manager.

For advanced carers, there will also be an expectation that there is a decrease in working hours/income that is compensated for by then receiving the advanced fee. The carer will return to the accredited or advanced level unless there is a requirement for new advanced or specialist Foster Carers and they meet the criteria for the level.

Carers in receipt of a fee but with a vacancy may be asked to contribute support to other carers i.e. supporting family time, mentoring and short breaks.

Traditional short break carers for children with disabilities offer in the range of 24 – 50+ nights care a year and are paid for each night of care given. For advanced and Specialist short break carers an agreement to give up to 200 nights of care a year. All short break carers will receive a payment for each night of care they provide based on the age of the children, they also receive a pro rota annual fee depending on skill band level identified if not already provided full time care to other children.

**Table 2 – Fostering Allowances 2024-2025 in line with the National Minimum Fostering Allowances**

<b>Age</b>	<b>Weekly Standard Fostering Allowance</b>
0 – 4	£170.00
5– 10	£187.00
11 – 15	£213.00
To Carer for 16+	£249.00
To Young Person 16+	£15

In addition, payment equivalent to four week’s age-related fostering allowance is payable annually towards the cost of birthday, Christmas/religious festival and holiday costs; as outlined in the table below:

**Table 3 – Annual Allowances**

<b>Age</b>	<b>Birthday</b>	<b>Christmas / Festivals</b>	<b>Holidays</b>
0 -4	£170.00	£170.00	£170.00 x 2
5 - 10	£187.00	£187.00	£187.00 x 2
11 - 15	£213.00	£213.00	£213.00 x 2
16+	£249.00	£249.00	£249.00 x 2
Staying Put (18-21 in full time education or training)	£249.00	£249.00	£249.00

The competency framework aims to assist Foster Carers by providing clarity about expectations and requirements at each level both for new entrants and for those approved carers wishing to progress to a higher level.

There are nine essential competency areas identified in each band; with overarching criteria that must be met to attain each level:

1. Availability
2. Care / Behaviour Support
3. Health
4. Education
5. Records / Written Assessments
6. Planning / Team Working
7. Fostering Arrangement Stability
8. Support / Supervision
9. Family Time

## Pre-Accredited

<b>Entry Requirements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connected Person Foster Carer/ Foster to Adopt Carers, who have been granted temporary approval via the agency decision maker</li> </ul>
<b>Training Requirements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan to complete the TSDS standards within 18 months if a Connected Person Foster Carer or 12 months if mainstream Foster Carer</li> <li>• Have completed or plan to complete the training identified for them in line with their assessment</li> <li>• Complete the relevant Skills to Foster Training</li> <li>• Attend a minimum of one development session per year; this can include support groups, Foster Carer's consultation meetings and training</li> </ul>
<b>Evidence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supervision records</li> <li>• Foster Care Review</li> <li>• Diary recording</li> <li>• Observations of practice</li> <li>• Demonstrate reflective practice from training and learning</li> <li>• Attendance and contributions to meeting</li> </ul>

### 1. Availability

1. Meet Fostering Regulations and National Minimum Standards.
2. Provide and maintain suitable accommodation for the number, needs and age of the child or children in their care.

### 2. Care / Behaviour Support

1. Care for the child as if s/he was a member of your family.
2. Respond to all basic care needs of child in their care including providing appropriate levels and standards of clothing.
3. Keep to Safer Caring Agreement for each child placed.
4. Contribute to Life Story and maintain a Memory Box for child in their care.
5. Ensure the physical condition of the home is conducive to fostering.
6. Establish and maintain daily routines for children e.g. school attendance, mealtimes, bedtimes, homework completion.
7. Provide a range of age-appropriate activities and opportunities for developing interests.
8. Maintain confidentiality.
9. Provide a pattern of care designed to meet the cultural needs of the child.
10. To meet the transport requirements of the child
11. Empathise with the children and young people placed and have well developed skills in engaging, communicating and building relationships with these children and young people.
12. Ensure emotional resilience in children and young people is developed and the child's voice is heard.

13. Significant events such as unauthorised absences from the foster home; family time, child behaviours are managed well maintaining perspective and following procedures as required
14. Be aware of how they respond to stress and have effective support/ strategies in place to sustain positive relationships and effective functioning during periods of stress
15. Demonstrate an ability to manage stress and maintain functioning during prolonged periods of difficulty and pressure

### **3. Health**

1. Support children and young people to have a healthy lifestyle by encouraging a balanced diet of food and drinks, taking part in regular exercise and activities.
2. Support the child/ young person with all health needs such as arrange and attend any necessary health appointments (e.g. GP/dentist/ therapist/paediatrician), manage repeat prescriptions and taking of prescribed medications.
3. Support good emotional and mental health by facilitating and modelling good attachments, play and development.
4. Work to establish routines for positive wellbeing and a healthy sense of self, including supporting a good sleep pattern and routine.
5. Encourage awareness of drug and alcohol risks and positively promote healthy relationships.
6. To be able to have healthy conversations about growing up, puberty and sexual relationships.
7. Support the child/young person to meet their short and long term health needs such as diabetes, epilepsy, asthma, allergies or eczema and administer prescribed medication.
8. Facilitate and promote statutory health checks and support meeting the actions from the health plan as appropriate, including Education, Health and Care Plan for Children and young people with SEND.
9. Ensure child has an EASE card if in North Tyneside.
10. Complete SDQ in a timely manner and encourage young person over the age of 11 to complete their SDQ.
11. Ensure the HIVE Team are notified if any concerns around Health

### **4. Education**

1. Support the child's education by promoting learning at home, maintaining links with school, including attending parents evening, and attending PEP meetings.
2. Ensure children are transported to school in a consistent and timely manner.
3. Support child's attendance at school ensuring that no holidays are booked within term time.



4. Ensure the HIVE Team are notified if any concerns around education. This can be via supporting Social Worker.
5. Support child with any learning needs in line with their Education, Health and Care Plan or SEN Support Plan

#### **5. Records / Written Assessments**

1. Maintain systematic record of developments on child in their care.
2. To provide information for court reports if required.
3. Ensure the safe storage and confidentiality of all information given.

#### **6. Planning / Team Working**

1. Contribute to care planning.
2. Attend all meetings relating to the child and be prepared to contribute.
3. Work as part of a professional team and at times follow guidance and instruction in carrying out aspects of the care of the young people placed.

#### **7. Foster Care Arrangement Stability**

1. To sustain and provide stability for the children.
2. To end fostering arrangements in a planned way unless it is unsafe.

#### **8. Support / Supervision**

1. Prepare for supervision and accept guidance from a Supervising Social Worker.
2. Undertake actions agreed in supervision with Supervising Social Worker.

#### **9. Family Time**

1. Promote contact with the child's family network in line with the care plan.
2. Provide emotional support for a child having family time
3. If appropriate support family time within the foster carer home subject to a risk assessment
4. Keep appropriate written records of family time as per agency guidelines.

## Band Level 1 – Accredited

<b>Entry Requirements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence and ability to meet the needs of a range of children.</li> <li>• Have completed skills to foster training,</li> <li>• Have a completed fostering assessment and been approved by the ADM following fostering panel.</li> </ul>
<b>Training Requirements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have completed or plan to complete the TSDS standards within 18 months, if a Connected Person Foster Carer or 12-month mainstream Foster Carer</li> <li>• Have completed or plan to complete with 12 months of approval, their mandatory and core training alongside other identified training from the assessment</li> <li>• Ensure that their personal development plan is completed annually</li> <li>• Attend a minimum of two development session per year; this can include support groups, Foster Carer’s consultation meetings and training</li> </ul>
<b>Evidence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supervision records</li> <li>• Foster Care Review</li> <li>• Diary recording</li> <li>• Observations of practice</li> <li>• Demonstrate reflective practice from training and learning</li> <li>• Attendance and contributions to meeting</li> <li>• Personal Development Plan PDP</li> <li>• Training engagement and feedback</li> </ul>

### 1. Availability

1. Provide and maintain suitable accommodation for the number, needs and age of the child or children in their care.
2. Remain available to foster existing or new children on request within approval category and preference.

### 2. Care / Behaviour Support

1. Provide a high standard of care to the child in placement in a safe, healthy and nurturing environment meeting Fostering Regulations and National Minimum Standards
2. Understand the implications of delegated authority
3. Care for the child as if s/he was a member of your family.
4. Contribute to Life Story and maintain a Memory Box for child in your care.
5. Ensure the physical condition of the home is conducive to fostering.
6. Establish and maintain daily routines for children e.g. school attendance, mealtimes, bedtimes, homework completion.
7. Provide a range of age-appropriate activities and opportunities for developing interests.
8. Maintain confidentiality.
9. To meet the transport requirements of the child

10. Ensure emotional resilience in children and young people is developed and the child's voice is heard.
11. Significant events such as unauthorised absences from the foster home; family time, child behaviours are managed well maintaining perspective and following procedures as required
12. Be aware of how they respond to stress and have effective support/ strategies in place to sustain positive relationships and effective functioning during periods of stress
13. Demonstrate an ability to manage stress and maintain functioning during prolonged periods of difficulty and pressure
14. Provide a positive parenting experience which contributes to the child's wellbeing and sense of self -esteem
15. To attend and support child with all appropriate appointments.
16. Promote positive behaviour and provide clearly understood boundaries
17. Help children cope with separation and loss and assist them with coming to terms with previous experiences.
18. Act in the best interests of the child in co-operation with other professional and agencies e.g. education, health, police.
19. Maintain a Safe Care plan to protect each child placed from all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation and deprivation.
20. Provide Foster Care that positively values and promotes diversity and equality of the child.
21. Enable children to move on positively to other care arrangements when required and as part of their child in care plan e.g. return to a birth parent, to other fostering arrangements or to adoptio.
22. Promote and encourage the development of life skills to help young people develop the skills, confidence and knowledge necessary for independent living.

### **3. Health**

1. Promote children and young people to have a healthy lifestyle by encouraging a balanced diet of food and drinks, taking part in regular exercise and activities.
2. Support the child/ young person with all health needs such as arrange and attend any necessary health appointments (e.g. GP/dentist/ therapist/paediatrician), manage repeat prescriptions and taking of prescribed medications.
3. Work to establish routines for positive wellbeing and a healthy sense of self, including supporting a good sleep pattern and routine.
4. Promote the child/ young person to identify their own key priorities in developing independence skills to manage their health needs. Provide role modelling support to then enable the development of Children and young people's key health skills working towards independence.
5. Support good emotional and mental health and self- esteem by facilitating and modelling good attachments, play and development alongside recognising when children/ young people may need additional support.

6. Encourage awareness of drug and alcohol risks and support children and young people to identify problematic use of drug and alcohol and seek appropriate support to change.
7. Support the young person in all aspects of their sexuality including proactively negotiating healthy relationship choices and good sexual health including accessing services.
8. Support the child/young person to meet their short- and long-term health needs such as diabetes, epilepsy, asthma, allergies or eczema and administer prescribed medication. Alongside consider any health transition requirements for children and young people with long term conditions or complex health needs.
9. Facilitate the delivery and monitoring of any prescribed care or intervention such as speech and language therapy, physiotherapy, occupational therapy and psychotherapy.
10. Facilitate and promote statutory health checks and support meeting the actions from the health plan as appropriate, including Education, Health and Care Plan for Children and young people with SEND.
11. Ensure child has an EASE card and promote the use of this if in North Tyneside.
12. Complete SDQ in a timely manner and encourage young person over the age of 11 to complete their SDQ.
13. Ensure the HIVE Team are notified if any concerns around Health

**For short break fostering:**

1. Support the child with any additional health needs in line with any plan including an Education, Health and Care Plan.
2. Support child with emotional, mental, physical or sensory needs including use of any specialist equipment and bespoke approaches to care delivery.
3. Understand and administer individual child/ young person therapy plans including liaison with therapists.

**4. Education**

1. Support the child's education by promoting learning at home, maintaining links with school, including attending parents evening, and attending PEP meetings.
2. Ensure children are transported to school in a consistent and timely manner.
3. Support child's attendance at school ensuring that no holidays are booked within term time.
4. Ensure the HIVE Team are notified if any concerns around education. This can be via Supervising Social Worker
5. Support child with any learning needs in line with their Education, Health and Care Plan or SEN Support Plan.
6. Play an active role in relationships with education providers contributing and commenting on school reports and actively supporting school-home agreements.
7. Understand a child's Special Educational Needs and contribute to requests for advice and contributions to reviews.
4. Provide a suitable place for completing homework to include a desk and IT equipment appropriate to age of child.

### **5. Records / Written Assessments**

1. Maintain systematic record of developments on child in their care.
2. To provide information for court reports if required.
3. Ensure the safe storage and confidentiality of all information given.

### **6. Planning / Team Working**

1. Contribute to care planning.
2. Attend all meetings relating to the child and be prepared to contribute.
3. Work as part of a professional team and at times follow guidance and instruction in carrying out aspects of the care of the young people placed.
4. Attend court proceedings involving children and/or **contribute to court** statements when required.

### **7. Foster Care Arrangement Stability**

1. To provide durable and stable placements.
2. Demonstrate commitment to sustaining a placement as agreed in the child's care plan.
3. Demonstrate a commitment to ending care arrangements, where needed, in a planned way and in the best interests of the child.

### **8. Support / Supervision**

1. Prepare for supervision and accept guidance from a Supervising Social Worker.
2. Undertake actions agreed in supervision with Supervising Social Worker.
3. Attend local support groups regularly.
4. Make positive use of supervision and guidance from a Supervising Social Worker.
5. Demonstrate reflective practice from training, learning and supervisory visits and how this learning can shape future practice.
6. Positively represent the Fostering Service to external partners and work in co-operation with the Fostering Service to achieve positive outcomes for children.

### **9. Family Time**

1. Provide emotional support for a child having family time.
2. If appropriate support family time within the foster carer home subject to a risk assessment
3. Keep appropriate written records of family time as per agency guidelines
4. To take appropriate steps when required to facilitate and supervise family time with those important to the child and as detailed within child's care plan.

## Band Level 2 – Advanced

<b>Entry Requirements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence significant child care experience e.g. parenting, paid or voluntary work in child care, previous fostering experience or experience in a related field such as youth work or teaching.</li> <li>• Demonstrate an ability to take challenging children with more complex needs, showing greater levels of vulnerability and where there is a greater risk or barriers to overcome.</li> <li>• Have completed skills to foster training.</li> <li>• Have a completed fostering assessment and been approved by the ADM following Fostering Panel.</li> </ul>
<b>Training Requirements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have completed or if direct entry plan to complete the TSDS standards within 18 month, if a Connected Person Foster Carer or 12 month Mainstream Foster Carer</li> <li>• Have completed their mandatory and core training and ensure it is refreshed on a 3 yearly basis. If direct entry core training to be completed within 1 year of approval. This includes Solihull training</li> <li>• Completed or plan to complete the Children’s and Young Peoples Workforce Social Care Diploma Level 3</li> <li>• Ensure that their personal development plan is completed annually</li> <li>• Therapeutic Parenting programme; which will inform practice</li> <li>• Any further training considered to be appropriate to support practice i.e. Youth Justice, Substance Misuse, Mental Health</li> <li>• Attend a minimum of six development session per year; this can include support groups, Foster Carer’s consultation meetings and training</li> </ul>
<b>Evidence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supervision records</li> <li>• Foster Care Review</li> <li>• Diary recording</li> <li>• Observations of practice</li> <li>• Demonstrate reflective practice from training and learning</li> <li>• Attendance and contributions to meeting</li> <li>• Personal Development Plan PDP</li> <li>• Training engagement and feedback</li> </ul>

### **1. Availability**

1. Provide and maintain suitable fostering arrangements for the number, needs and age of the child or children in their care.
2. To be available, accessible and meet unexpected situations that will come up in caring for children/young people with advanced needs. If advanced carers are in employment this needs to be on the basis that it provides flexibility to meet the demands of fostering.

3. An additional child can be taken subject to appropriate matching, stability and space.
4. If a child/young person is still in their care and has been reassessed as no longer meeting this level of need, and the reduction in need is not attributable to the care provided, the carer will retain their fee for a maximum of three weeks and then choose to either:
  - a. Receive the lower fee.
  - b. Offer a new advanced foster care arrangement with appropriate matching.
  - c. Make themselves available to offer support to other Foster Carers as part of an agreed support package working alongside of the Foster Carers and in conjunction with the Fostering Service.
5. Have in place a robust support network to assist in an emergency situation.

## **2. Care / Behaviour Support**

1. Provide a high standard of care to the child in placement in a safe , healthy and nurturing environment meeting Fostering Regulations and National Minimum Standards
2. Understand the implications of delegated authority
3. Care for the child as if s/he was a member of your family.
4. Contribute to Life Story and maintain a Memory Box for child in placement.
5. Ensure the physical condition of the home is conducive to fostering.
6. Establish and maintain daily routines for children e.g. school attendance, mealtimes, bedtimes, homework completion.
7. Provide a range of age appropriate activities and opportunities for developing interests.
8. Maintain confidentiality.
9. To meet the transport requirements of the child
10. Significant events such as unauthorised absences from the foster home; family time, child behaviours are managed well maintaining perspective and following procedures as required
11. Be aware of how they respond to stress and have effective support/ strategies in place to sustain positive relationships and effective functioning during periods of stress
12. Demonstrate an ability to manage stress and maintain functioning during prolonged periods of difficulty and pressure
13. Provide a positive parenting experience which contributes to the child's wellbeing and sense of self -esteem
14. To attend and support child with all appropriate appointments.
15. Help children cope with separation and loss and assist them with coming to terms with previous experiences.
16. Act in the best interests of the child in co-operation with other professional and agencies e.g. education, health, police.
17. Provide foster care that positively values and promotes diversity and equality of the child.
18. Enable children to move on positively to other care arrangements when required and as part of their child in care plan e.g. return to a birth parent, to other fostering household or to adoption.

19. Promote and encourage the development of life skills to help young people develop the skills, confidence and knowledge necessary for independent living.
20. Be committed to working with children/young people with complex needs and be confident in positively managing challenging behaviour.
21. To be able to implement Safety Plan / Risk Assessment
22. Empathise with the children and young people in their care and have well developed skills in engaging, communicating and building relationships with these children and young people and ensure the child's voice is heard.
23. Utilise basic therapeutic parenting techniques under the guidance of Social Workers or other professionals.
24. Evidence ability to manage more challenging and demanding behaviours and support more specialist placement commitments such as aggression , sexualised behaviour, substance misuse, self-harm, diagnosed mental health issues, disability, parent and child placement subject to assessed levels of risk and need.
25. Be able to offer significant flexibility in meeting the child in care needs of more complex children/ young people e.g. ( but not exclusively) non school attendance , children / young people missing from home, young people at risk of sexual exploitation.
26. Carer can maintain perspective about the causes and influences of behaviour and remain child focused in their responses.
27. In their work consistently demonstrate an understanding of the reasons for development delay due to the impact of early life experiences of children and young people.

### **3. Health**

1. Promote children and young people to have a healthy lifestyle by encouraging a balanced diet of food and drinks, taking part in regular exercise and activities.
2. Support the child/ young person with all health needs such as arrange and attend any necessary health appointments (e.g. GP/dentist/ therapist/paediatrician), manage repeat prescriptions and taking of prescribed medications.
3. Positively engage with specialist practitioners with regards to supporting care of Children and young people with physical, emotional or mental health needs including trauma and attachment difficulties.
4. Work to establish routines for positive wellbeing and a healthy sense of self, including supporting a good sleep pattern and routine.
5. Facilitate prescribed specialist therapeutic interventions for emotional and mental health needs and behavioural support. Follow any care plans and interventions relating to therapeutic approaches to care. Be able to monitor interventions and feedback to therapists.
6. Promote the child/ young person to identify their own key priorities in developing independence skills to manage their health needs. Provide role modelling support to then enable the development of Children and young people's key health skills working towards independence.
7. Support good emotional and mental health and self- esteem by facilitating and modelling good attachments, play and development alongside recognising when children/ young people may need additional support.



8. Encourage awareness of drug and alcohol risks and support children and young people to identify problematic use of drug and alcohol and seek appropriate support to change.
9. Support the young person in all aspects of their sexuality including proactively negotiating healthy relationship choices and good sexual health including accessing services.
10. Support the child/young person to meet their short and long term health needs such as diabetes, epilepsy, asthma, allergies or eczema and administer prescribed medication. Alongside consider any health transition requirements for children and young people with long term conditions or complex health needs.
11. Facilitate the delivery and monitoring of any prescribed care or intervention such as speech and language therapy, physiotherapy, occupational therapy and psychotherapy.
12. Facilitate and promote statutory health checks and support meeting the actions from the health plan as appropriate, including Education, Health and Care Plan for children and young people with SEND.
13. Ensure child has an EASE card and promote the use of this if in North Tyneside.
14. Complete SDQ in a timely manner and encourage young person over the age of 11 to complete their SDQ.
15. Ensure the HIVE Team are notified if any concerns around Health

**For short break fostering:**

1. Deliver prescribed complex medical care and prescribed treatment e.g. suction, injections, tracheotomy care and administer emergency medication.
2. Facilitate care for a complex range of medical needs such as uncontrolled epilepsy, low/high muscle tone, oxygen saturation monitoring and end of life care.
3. Follow prescribed physiotherapy plans for Children and young people with mobility difficulties were there has been a skin breakdown, to provide a dressing regime in line with the care plan
4. As prescribed by a mental health professional as part of the care plan provide reassurance and support for children with extreme levels of stress, anxiety disorders or mental health issues.

**4. Education**

1. Support the child's aspirations and dreams by promoting learning at home and supporting involvement in enrichment activities. Maintain high expectations and seek support when needed.
2. Have effective working relationships with school, ensuring that all meetings are attended so that appropriate planning for the child is achieved.
3. Ensure children are transported to school in a consistent and timely manner.
4. Be pro-active in ensuring that any potential issues at school are raised at the earliest opportunity through school or The HIVE Team to ensure support is put in place and to prevent escalation.
5. Have an understanding of the impact of trauma and loss on learning.
6. To support the view that children in care shouldn't be excluded and alternatives should be used in the first instance, such as use of internal exclusion or First Day Response. Have an awareness of the impact of attachment needs in school.

7. Understand a child's Special Educational Needs and contribute to requests for advice and contributions to reviews.
8. Provide a suitable place for completing homework to include a desk and IT equipment appropriate to age of child.
9. Ensure a child's attendance at school ensuring that no holidays are booked within term time.
10. Support child with any learning needs in line with their Education, Health and Care Plan or SEN Support Plan.

#### **5. Records / Written Assessments**

1. Maintain systematic record of developments on child in their care.
2. To provide information for court reports if required.
3. Ensure the safe storage and confidentiality of all information given.

#### **6. Planning / Team Working**

1. Contribute to care planning.
2. Attend all meetings relating to the child and be prepared to contribute.
3. Work as part of a professional team and at times follow guidance and instruction in carrying out aspects of the care of the young people placed.
4. Attend court proceedings involving children and/or **contribute to court** statements when required.

#### **7. Foster Care Arrangement Stability**

1. To provide durable and stable placements.
2. In the event of a fostering arrangement having to end, this should be achieved in a considered way appropriate for the child or young person.

#### **8. Support / Supervision**

1. Attend local support groups regularly.
2. Make positive use of supervision and guidance from a Supervising Social Worker.
3. Demonstrate reflective practice from training, learning and supervisory visits and how this learning can shape future practice
4. Attend advanced/specialist focus groups.
5. Provide support to inexperienced Foster Carers.
6. Be involved in buddying /mentoring new Foster Carers.
7. Positively represent the Fostering Service to external partners and work in co-operation with the Fostering Service to achieve positive outcomes for children.

#### **9. Family Time**

1. Provide emotional support for a child having family time.
2. Keep appropriate written records of family time as per agency guidelines.
3. To take appropriate steps when required to facilitate and supervise family time with those important to the child and as detailed within child's care plan.

## **Band Level 3 – Specialist**

<p><b>Entry Requirements</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant formal childcare experience e.g. previous fostering experience caring for children with complex needs, employment in child care or related experience</li> <li>• Demonstrate an ability to reflect upon professional experience and relate this to the fostering task</li> <li>• Evidence experience of caring for children who are highly vulnerable where there are increased risks and where there is very likely to be on going challenges and set back in caring for them</li> <li>• One approved carer in the household must be available at all times in meeting the needs of the child or young person in their care.</li> <li>• Have completed skills to foster training.</li> <li>• Have a completed fostering assessment and been approved by the ADM following Fostering Panel.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Training Requirements</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have completed or if direct entry plan to complete the TSDS standards within 18 month, if a Connected Person Foster Carer or 12 month Mainstream Foster Carer</li> <li>• Have completed their mandatory and core training and ensure it is refreshed on a 3 yearly basis. If direct entry core training to be completed within 1 year of approval. This includes Solihull training</li> <li>• Completed or plan to complete the Children’s and Young Peoples Workforce Social Care Diploma Level 5</li> <li>• Ensure that their personal development plan is completed annually.</li> <li>• Therapeutic Parenting programme, which will inform practice</li> <li>• Any further training considered to be appropriate to support practice i.e. Youth Justice, Substance Misuse, Mental Health</li> <li>• Attend a minimum of eight development session per year; this can include support groups, Foster Carer’s consultation meetings and training</li> </ul>
<p><b>Evidence</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supervision records</li> <li>• Foster Care Review</li> <li>• Diary recording</li> <li>• Observations of practice</li> <li>• Demonstrate reflective practice from training and learning</li> <li>• Attendance and contributions to meeting</li> <li>• Personal Development Plan PDP</li> <li>• Training engagement and feedback</li> <li>• Engagement and implementation in therapeutic work</li> </ul>
<p><b>1. Availability</b></p>	

1. Provide and maintain suitable accommodation for the number, needs and age of the child or children in care.
2. To be available on a full time basis to care for the young person in their care.
3. An additional child can be taken subject to appropriate matching, stability and space.
4. If a carer is without a specialist fostering arrangement or the child/young person has been reassessed and no longer meets this level of need, and the reduction in presenting need is not attributable to the care provided. The carer will then be required to choose to either:
  - a. Receive the lower fee.
  - b. Offer a new specialist child in care with appropriate matching.
  - c. Make themselves available to offer support to other Foster Carers as part of a support package working alongside of the Foster Carers and in conjunction with the Fostering Service.
5. Specialist Foster Carers may be asked to support other Foster Carers out of hours.
6. On occasions and where appropriate provide a second short term holiday/short break arrangement for another child/young person placed with matched needs.
7. When specialist carers are 'between care arrangements' to provide time limited emergency care arrangements or carry out additional tasks to assist young people and other Foster Carers.
8. Have in place a robust support network to assist in an emergency situation.

## **2. Care / Behaviour Support**

1. Provide a high standard of care to the child in care in a safe , healthy and nurturing environment meeting Fostering Regulations and National Minimum Standards
2. Understand the implications of delegated authority
3. Care for the child as if s/he was a member of your family.
4. Contribute to Life Story and maintain a Memory Box for child in care.
5. Ensure the physical condition of the home is conducive to fostering.
6. Establish and maintain daily routines for children e.g. school attendance, mealtimes, bedtimes, homework completion.
7. Provide a range of age appropriate activities and opportunities for developing interests.
8. Maintain confidentiality.
9. To meet the transport requirements of the child
10. Significant events such as unauthorised absences from the foster home; family time, child behaviours are managed well maintaining perspective and following procedures as required
11. Be aware of how they respond to stress and have effective support/ strategies in place to sustain positive relationships and effective functioning during periods of stress
12. Demonstrate an ability to manage stress and maintain functioning during prolonged periods of difficulty and pressure
13. Provide a positive parenting experience which contributes to the child's wellbeing and sense of self -esteem
14. To attend and support child with all appropriate appointments.

15. Help children cope with separation and loss and assist them with coming to terms with previous experiences.
16. Act in the best interests of the child in co-operation with other professional and agencies e.g. education, health, police.
17. Provide foster care that positively values and promotes diversity and equality of the child.
18. Enable children to move on positively to other care arrangements when required and as part of their child in care plan e.g. return to a birth parent, to other foster care arrangement or to adoption.
19. Promote and encourage the development of life skills to help young people develop the skills, confidence and knowledge necessary for independent living.
20. To be able to implement Safety Plan / Risk Assessment
21. Specialist carers must have the required confidence and skills in positively managing extremes of challenging behaviour.
22. Provide a Therapeutic Parenting approach which contributes to the child's wellbeing and sense of self -esteem
- 23.** Be committed to working with very complex and vulnerable groups of children or severely disabled children. Note the range of complex needs specialist carers are likely to be expected to meet as listed below.
- 24.** Empathise with the troubled and disadvantaged young people placed and have highly developed skills in communicating and building relationships with these young people.
- 25.** To take part in intensive therapeutic work with children following appropriate advice and direction or to work closely with other professionals in carrying out individualised therapeutic programmes, skills development or educational programmes.
26. Challenge constructively opinions and views of other professionals and agencies.
27. Effectively manage persistently challenging and anti-social behaviours of children / young people placed
28. Provide commitment to specialist foster care arrangements of children / young people with the most complex needs e.g. Parent / Child ; Assessment ; Permanence; Children with a disability; Children / Young people having experienced significant disruption; Single children in the household; Children / Young People who might otherwise require a residential placement
29. Carer is able to maintain perspective and unconditional positive regard in their care of children and young people during periods of stress and pressure while remaining resilient about addressing pertinent issues
30. Demonstrate considerable resilience and skill in daily practice to achieve desired outcomes for children and young people
31. Can anticipate and prepare for setbacks , struggles, barriers and provide continuity of care during these times.

### **3. Health**

1. Promote children and young people to have a healthy lifestyle by encouraging a balanced diet of food and drinks, taking part in regular exercise and activities.
2. Support the child/ young person with all health needs such as arrange and attend any necessary health appointments (e.g. GP/dentist/ therapist/paediatrician), manage repeat prescriptions and taking of prescribed medications.

3. Positively engage with specialist practitioners with regards to supporting care of Children and young people with physical, emotional or mental health needs including trauma and attachment difficulties.
4. Work to establish routines for positive wellbeing and a healthy sense of self, including supporting a good sleep pattern and routine.
5. Facilitate prescribed specialist therapeutic interventions for emotional and mental health needs and behavioural support. Follow any care plans and interventions relating to therapeutic approaches to care. Be able to monitor interventions and feedback to therapists.
6. Promote the child/ young person to identify their own key priorities in developing independence skills to manage their health needs. Provide role modelling support to then enable the development of Children and young people's key health skills working towards independence.
7. Support good emotional and mental health and self- esteem by facilitating and modelling good attachments, play and development alongside recognising when children/ young people may need additional support.
8. Encourage awareness of drug and alcohol risks and support children and young people to identify problematic use of drug and alcohol and seek appropriate support to change.
9. Support the young person in all aspects of their sexuality including proactively negotiating healthy relationship choices and good sexual health including accessing services.
10. Support the child/young person to meet their short and long term health needs such as diabetes, epilepsy, asthma, allergies or eczema and administer prescribed medication. Alongside consider any
11. Health transition requirements for children and young people with long term conditions or complex health needs.
12. Facilitate the delivery and monitoring of any prescribed care or intervention such as speech and language therapy, physiotherapy, occupational therapy and psychotherapy.
13. Facilitate and promote statutory health checks and support meeting the actions from the health plan as appropriate, including Education, Health and Care Plan for Children and young people with SEND.
14. Ensure child has an EASE card and promote the use of this if in North Tyneside.
15. Complete SDQ in a timely manner and encourage young person over the age of 11 to complete their SDQ.
16. Ensure the HIVE Team are notified if any concerns around Health
17. Make pro-active contributions to issues around emotional, mental or physical care resolution in school or other settings alongside supporting birth parents in problem resolution where appropriate.

**For short break fostering:**

1. Facilitate care for a complex range of medical needs such as uncontrolled epilepsy, low/high muscle tone, oxygen saturation monitoring and end of life care.
2. Receive individualised training for the management of emergency/ urgent situations eg seizures including administering emergency medication.

3. Following individualised training deliver proactive personalised care to children and young people with profound cognitive and complex physical needs according to written care plans
4. Follow prescribed Physiotherapy/Occupational Therapy/ Speech and Language Therapy or other specialist care plans. Liaise with specialists as required and facilitate all health appointments.
5. Follow prescribed physiotherapy plans for children and young people with mobility difficulties were there has been a skin breakdown, to provide a dressing regime in line with the care plan
6. Provide reassurance and support for children with complex stress and anxiety disorders to help them understand and manage their emotions and responses to stressful situations and triggers.
7. Be able to deliver a sensory approach to care for Children and young people with additional and complex sensory needs related to ASD/ADHD or other conditions.

#### **4. Education**

1. Support the child's aspirations and dreams by promoting learning at home and supporting involvement in enrichment activities. Maintain high expectations and seek support when needed.
2. Have effective working relationships with school, ensuring that all meetings are attended so that appropriate planning for the child is achieved.
3. Ensure children are transported to school in a consistent and timely manner.
4. Be pro-active in ensuring that any potential issues at school are raised at the earliest opportunity through school or The HIVE Team to ensure support is put in place and to prevent escalation.
5. To support the view that children in care shouldn't be excluded and alternatives should be used in the first instance, such as use of internal exclusion or First Day Response.
6. Have an awareness of the impact of attachment needs in school and demonstrate an ability to put learning of these issues into practice.
7. To provide advice and support to other Foster Carers about the education of children in care.
8. Have an understanding of the impact of trauma and loss on learning.
9. Understand a child's Special Educational Needs and contribute to requests for advice and contributions to reviews.
10. Provide a suitable place for completing homework to include a desk and IT equipment appropriate to age of child.
11. Ensure a child's attendance at school ensuring that no holidays are booked within term time.
12. Support child with any learning needs in line with their Education, Health and Care Plan or SEN Support Plan.

#### **5. Records / Written Assessments**

1. Maintain systematic record of developments on child in care.
2. To provide information for court reports if required.

3. Ensure the safe storage and confidentiality of all information given.

#### **6. Planning / Team Working**

1. Work as part of a professional team and at times follow guidance and instruction in carrying out aspects of the care of the young people placed.
2. Attend court proceedings involving children and/or **contribute to court** statements when required.
3. Contribute to high level discussions / meetings
4. To promote / project a proactive approach to working intensively and cohesively with care team members
5. To respond appropriately to frequently changing circumstances and short notice occurrences/requirements.

#### **7. Foster Care Arrangement Stability**

1. There is a strong expectation that specialist foster care arrangements will be robust and durable and unplanned care arrangement endings or crisis disruptions will be an exceptional event.
2. In the event of a fostering care arrangement having to end, this should be achieved in a considered way appropriate for the child or young person.

#### **8. Support / Supervision**

8. Attend local support groups regularly.
9. Make positive use of supervision and guidance from a Supervising Social Worker.
10. Demonstrate reflective practice from training, learning and supervisory visits and how this learning can shape future practice
11. Be involved in buddying /mentoring new Foster Carers.
12. Attend and help to facilitate local support groups with the Fostering Service.
13. Specialist carers need to have an advanced capacity to reflect on their work and take responsibility for their own training requirements and their professional development.
14. Uphold high professional standards
15. Participate in the delivery of training and support of Foster Carers and Social Workers.
16. Mentoring newly approved Foster Carers.
17. Positively represent the Fostering Service to external partners and work in co-operation with the Fostering Service to achieve positive outcomes for children.

#### **9. Family Time**

1. Provide emotional support for a child having family time.
2. Keep appropriate written records of family time as per agency guidelines
3. To take appropriate steps when required to facilitate and supervise family time with those important to the child and as detailed within child's care plan
4. Work professionally with parents even where there is conflict.





**North Tyneside Council**

# **Fostering Framework**

## **Introduction**

This document sets out the revised level of payments for Foster Carer's and the rationale for the introduction of Payments for Skills framework.

The framework underpins North Tyneside Fostering Services commitment to achieving best possible outcomes for children who are fostered by ensuring they are supported by skilled, motivated and rewarded Foster Carers.

The payments for skills framework incorporates:

- The Foster Carer's experience of the fostering task
- Training the Foster Carer has completed and qualifications they have received
- The range of the fostering tasks the Foster Carer is willing and able to undertake
- Fees linked to accreditation level

Our primary aim is:

- To provide choice in high quality, in-house, child-centred fostering arrangements for children of all ages, ensuring safety, stability and positive outcomes for them.
- To recruit and retain skilled Foster Carers.
- To provide a clear, fair, consistent framework for all carers.

- To provide motivation for the continued personal development and training of carers.
- To promote the delegation of authority to Foster Carers.
- To develop a wide range of fostering arrangement options for children in care
- To provide a range of quality Foster Carers who deliver a wide choice of fostering arrangement options to meet the needs of children and Young People in care in North Tyneside
- To provide appropriate remuneration to competent and skilled carers in a competitive fostering market

The framework contains three band levels; the three levels are based on the complexity of fostering arrangements and on the Foster Carers' skills and experience.

Band Level 1 - Accredited

Band Level 2 - Advanced

Band Level 3 - Specialist

Each band provides entry requirements and clearly sets out expectations regarding carer training, skills development and reflective learning. The model also supports existing carers wishing to progress to a higher level; to progress up through the bands if they meet the task, skills and competencies requirements.

This framework supersedes all previous policies on the provision of payments to persons approved by North Tyneside Fostering Service as Foster Carers in accordance with regulation 27 of the 2011 Regulations, or temporarily approved under regulation 24 of the 2010 Regulations. It applies to both related (Connected Person/Family and Friend Foster Carers) and unrelated Foster Carers and to both long term and short-term arrangements. This framework will be reviewed at least every two years

**Progression:**

A Foster Carer can be a person who is approved as a Local Authority foster parent in accordance with Regulation 27 of the 2011 Regulations, or temporarily approved under Regulation 24 of the 2010 Regulations but who has not yet progressed via completed Training and Development Standards and Core Training to become an accredited Foster Carer.

The competencies identified as essential for each level must be clearly demonstrated in the care offered to children.

Foster Carers wishing to be considered for progression to another grade should discuss this with their Supervising Social Worker who will be able to provide further advice on progression requirements and procedure.

Foster Carers will be required to provide evidence for their Foster Carer Review that they meet, or continue to meet, the requirements of the respective grade.

Transferring between levels will also be considered via a Foster Carer Review; depending on how many spaces at each band. The review will consider whether the criteria is met for ongoing approval in a particular band or indeed whether progression or regression between bands is evidenced. Recommendations from previous reviews must be fulfilled. Recommendations from the Independent Chair of Foster Carers Reviews will then be presented to the Agency Decision Maker for ratification.

Where a Foster Carer applicant expresses a commitment to being 'fast tracked' to a specific Foster Carer band due to their previous experience (e.g. Foster Carers from other agencies), they may be initially recognised at that band. There will be a stipulation that the Foster Carer demonstrates within a six-month time limit, that they can fully meet the tasks, skills and competencies required of that band, enabling verification of banding and a continuation at this band.

If a Foster Carer fails to meet or retain grade requirements (including training), a Foster Carer Review will be undertaken with a time limited action plan of no more than a 6-month period in place to support recovery. If this plan proves to be unsuccessful; a recommendation of a reduction in band level will be presented to the Agency Decision Maker for ratification.

### **Payment:**

The weekly skills related fee is paid to all bands of carer; this fee is paid in addition to weekly fostering allowance payments, Foster Carers who are at the pre-accreditation level will receive the age-related weekly fostering allowance but no skills related fee.

Fees are paid 52 weeks per year and are payable for the first two weeks of any holiday taken without the Child in Care.

**Band 1 - Accredited Carer** – Once you are approved as a Foster Carer in accordance with Regulation 27 of the Fostering Services (England) Regulation 2011 and completed the relevant skills to foster training you will qualify for a fee by fulfilling the criteria requirements for Foster Carers as detailed in the framework.

**Band 2 - Advanced Carer** - Foster Carers who have attended training and are assessed as having demonstrated their ability to offer care to complex children and young people, including (not exclusively) UAAS children, children with complex health and/or behavioural needs.

**Band 3 - Specialist Carer** - Foster Carers who have attended training and are assessed as able to demonstrate their ability to meet the needs of children and young people who may display significantly challenging behaviour that might otherwise require residential childcare.

**Foster Carer Fees**

Payment for Skills (PFS) Bandings 1, 2, & 3 Foster Carers are paid a weekly fee, based on the PFS level for which the Foster Carer is approved. Each fee levels reflect the PFS Tasks, Skills and Competencies (TSC) requirements for that level.

Skills and competencies will be assessed annually at Foster Care Review to ensure all training requirements are complete and skills are maintained.

**Table 1 – Payment for Skills (PFS) Fee Structure**

<b>Band Levels</b>	<b>Fees</b>
Band 1 - Accredited Carer	£110.00
Band 2 - Advanced Carer	£380.00
Band 3 - Specialist Carer	£550.00

<b>Additional Premiums – per child</b>	<b>Fees</b>
Siblings ( 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> child only)	£75.00
Disability	£50.00
Mother & Baby (only mother LAC )	£90.00
Out of Hours placement	£50 (one off)

In exceptional circumstances, there will be social work practice issues that will necessitate consideration of placing a child/young person with assessed advanced or specialist needs with an accredited Foster Carer. In such circumstances the Foster Carer may temporarily be paid as an advanced Foster Carer or specialist Foster Carer for the duration of the arrangement by recommendation of the Resource Allocation Panel and then to the monthly higher cost financial meeting which is chaired by the Assistant Director Children's Services. Decisions outside of this timeframe will also be made by Assistant Director Children's Services or the delegated Senior Manager.

For advanced carers, there will also be an expectation that there is a decrease in working hours/income that is compensated for by then receiving the advanced fee. The carer will return to the accredited or advanced level unless there is a requirement for new advanced or specialist Foster Carers and they meet the criteria for the level.

Carers in receipt of a fee but with a vacancy may be asked to contribute support to other carers i.e. supporting family time, mentoring and short breaks.

Traditional short break carers for children with disabilities offer in the range of 24 – 50+ nights care a year and are paid for each night of care given. For advanced and Specialist short break carers an agreement to give up to 200 nights of care a year. All short break carers will receive a payment for each night of care they provide based on the age of the children, they also receive a pro rota annual fee depending on skill band level identified if not already provided full time care to other children.

**Table 2 – Fostering Allowances 2024-2025 in line with the National Minimum Fostering Allowances**

<b>Age</b>	<b>Weekly Standard Fostering Allowance</b>
0 – 4	£170.00
5– 10	£187.00
11 – 15	£213.00
To Carer for 16+	£249.00
To Young Person 16+	£15

In addition, payment equivalent to four week’s age-related fostering allowance is payable annually towards the cost of birthday, Christmas/religious festival and holiday costs; as outlined in the table below:

**Table 3 – Annual Allowances**

<b>Age</b>	<b>Birthday</b>	<b>Christmas / Festivals</b>	<b>Holidays</b>
0 -4	£170.00	£170.00	£170.00 x 2
5 - 10	£187.00	£187.00	£187.00 x 2
11 - 15	£213.00	£213.00	£213.00 x 2
16+	£249.00	£249.00	£249.00 x 2
Staying Put (18-21 in full time education or training)	£249.00	£249.00	£249.00

The competency framework aims to assist Foster Carers by providing clarity about expectations and requirements at each level both for new entrants and for those approved carers wishing to progress to a higher level.

There are nine essential competency areas identified in each band; with overarching criteria that must be met to attain each level:

1. Availability
2. Care / Behaviour Support
3. Health
4. Education
5. Records / Written Assessments
6. Planning / Team Working
7. Fostering Arrangement Stability
8. Support / Supervision
9. Family Time

## Pre-Accredited

<b>Entry Requirements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connected Person Foster Carer/ Foster to Adopt Carers, who have been granted temporary approval via the agency decision maker</li> </ul>
<b>Training Requirements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan to complete the TSDS standards within 18 months if a Connected Person Foster Carer or 12 months if mainstream Foster Carer</li> <li>• Have completed or plan to complete the training identified for them in line with their assessment</li> <li>• Complete the relevant Skills to Foster Training</li> <li>• Attend a minimum of one development session per year; this can include support groups, Foster Carer's consultation meetings and training</li> </ul>
<b>Evidence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supervision records</li> <li>• Foster Care Review</li> <li>• Diary recording</li> <li>• Observations of practice</li> <li>• Demonstrate reflective practice from training and learning</li> <li>• Attendance and contributions to meeting</li> </ul>

### 1. Availability

1. Meet Fostering Regulations and National Minimum Standards.
2. Provide and maintain suitable accommodation for the number, needs and age of the child or children in their care.

### 2. Care / Behaviour Support

1. Care for the child as if s/he was a member of your family.
2. Respond to all basic care needs of child in their care including providing appropriate levels and standards of clothing.
3. Keep to Safer Caring Agreement for each child placed.
4. Contribute to Life Story and maintain a Memory Box for child in their care.
5. Ensure the physical condition of the home is conducive to fostering.
6. Establish and maintain daily routines for children e.g. school attendance, mealtimes, bedtimes, homework completion.
7. Provide a range of age-appropriate activities and opportunities for developing interests.
8. Maintain confidentiality.
9. Provide a pattern of care designed to meet the cultural needs of the child.
10. To meet the transport requirements of the child
11. Empathise with the children and young people placed and have well developed skills in engaging, communicating and building relationships with these children and young people.
12. Ensure emotional resilience in children and young people is developed and the child's voice is heard.

13. Significant events such as unauthorised absences from the foster home; family time, child behaviours are managed well maintaining perspective and following procedures as required
14. Be aware of how they respond to stress and have effective support/ strategies in place to sustain positive relationships and effective functioning during periods of stress
15. Demonstrate an ability to manage stress and maintain functioning during prolonged periods of difficulty and pressure

### **3. Health**

1. Support children and young people to have a healthy lifestyle by encouraging a balanced diet of food and drinks, taking part in regular exercise and activities.
2. Support the child/ young person with all health needs such as arrange and attend any necessary health appointments (e.g. GP/dentist/ therapist/paediatrician), manage repeat prescriptions and taking of prescribed medications.
3. Support good emotional and mental health by facilitating and modelling good attachments, play and development.
4. Work to establish routines for positive wellbeing and a healthy sense of self, including supporting a good sleep pattern and routine.
5. Encourage awareness of drug and alcohol risks and positively promote healthy relationships.
6. To be able to have healthy conversations about growing up, puberty and sexual relationships.
7. Support the child/young person to meet their short and long term health needs such as diabetes, epilepsy, asthma, allergies or eczema and administer prescribed medication.
8. Facilitate and promote statutory health checks and support meeting the actions from the health plan as appropriate, including Education, Health and Care Plan for Children and young people with SEND.
9. Ensure child has an EASE card if in North Tyneside.
10. Complete SDQ in a timely manner and encourage young person over the age of 11 to complete their SDQ.
11. Ensure the HIVE Team are notified if any concerns around Health

### **4. Education**

1. Support the child's education by promoting learning at home, maintaining links with school, including attending parents evening, and attending PEP meetings.
2. Ensure children are transported to school in a consistent and timely manner.
3. Support child's attendance at school ensuring that no holidays are booked within term time.



4. Ensure the HIVE Team are notified if any concerns around education. This can be via supporting Social Worker.
5. Support child with any learning needs in line with their Education, Health and Care Plan or SEN Support Plan

#### **5. Records / Written Assessments**

1. Maintain systematic record of developments on child in their care.
2. To provide information for court reports if required.
3. Ensure the safe storage and confidentiality of all information given.

#### **6. Planning / Team Working**

1. Contribute to care planning.
2. Attend all meetings relating to the child and be prepared to contribute.
3. Work as part of a professional team and at times follow guidance and instruction in carrying out aspects of the care of the young people placed.

#### **7. Foster Care Arrangement Stability**

1. To sustain and provide stability for the children.
2. To end fostering arrangements in a planned way unless it is unsafe.

#### **8. Support / Supervision**

1. Prepare for supervision and accept guidance from a Supervising Social Worker.
2. Undertake actions agreed in supervision with Supervising Social Worker.

#### **9. Family Time**

1. Promote contact with the child's family network in line with the care plan.
2. Provide emotional support for a child having family time
3. If appropriate support family time within the foster carer home subject to a risk assessment
4. Keep appropriate written records of family time as per agency guidelines.

## Band Level 1 – Accredited

<b>Entry Requirements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence and ability to meet the needs of a range of children.</li> <li>• Have completed skills to foster training,</li> <li>• Have a completed fostering assessment and been approved by the ADM following fostering panel.</li> </ul>
<b>Training Requirements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have completed or plan to complete the TSDS standards within 18 months, if a Connected Person Foster Carer or 12-month mainstream Foster Carer</li> <li>• Have completed or plan to complete with 12 months of approval, their mandatory and core training alongside other identified training from the assessment</li> <li>• Ensure that their personal development plan is completed annually</li> <li>• Attend a minimum of two development session per year; this can include support groups, Foster Carer's consultation meetings and training</li> </ul>
<b>Evidence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supervision records</li> <li>• Foster Care Review</li> <li>• Diary recording</li> <li>• Observations of practice</li> <li>• Demonstrate reflective practice from training and learning</li> <li>• Attendance and contributions to meeting</li> <li>• Personal Development Plan PDP</li> <li>• Training engagement and feedback</li> </ul>

### 1. Availability

1. Provide and maintain suitable accommodation for the number, needs and age of the child or children in their care.
2. Remain available to foster existing or new children on request within approval category and preference.

### 2. Care / Behaviour Support

1. Provide a high standard of care to the child in placement in a safe, healthy and nurturing environment meeting Fostering Regulations and National Minimum Standards
2. Understand the implications of delegated authority
3. Care for the child as if s/he was a member of your family.
4. Contribute to Life Story and maintain a Memory Box for child in your care.
5. Ensure the physical condition of the home is conducive to fostering.
6. Establish and maintain daily routines for children e.g. school attendance, mealtimes, bedtimes, homework completion.
7. Provide a range of age-appropriate activities and opportunities for developing interests.
8. Maintain confidentiality.
9. To meet the transport requirements of the child

10. Ensure emotional resilience in children and young people is developed and the child's voice is heard.
11. Significant events such as unauthorised absences from the foster home; family time, child behaviours are managed well maintaining perspective and following procedures as required
12. Be aware of how they respond to stress and have effective support/ strategies in place to sustain positive relationships and effective functioning during periods of stress
13. Demonstrate an ability to manage stress and maintain functioning during prolonged periods of difficulty and pressure
14. Provide a positive parenting experience which contributes to the child's wellbeing and sense of self -esteem
15. To attend and support child with all appropriate appointments.
16. Promote positive behaviour and provide clearly understood boundaries
17. Help children cope with separation and loss and assist them with coming to terms with previous experiences.
18. Act in the best interests of the child in co-operation with other professional and agencies e.g. education, health, police.
19. Maintain a Safe Care plan to protect each child placed from all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation and deprivation.
20. Provide Foster Care that positively values and promotes diversity and equality of the child.
21. Enable children to move on positively to other care arrangements when required and as part of their child in care plan e.g. return to a birth parent, to other fostering arrangements or to adoptio.
22. Promote and encourage the development of life skills to help young people develop the skills, confidence and knowledge necessary for independent living.

### **3. Health**

1. Promote children and young people to have a healthy lifestyle by encouraging a balanced diet of food and drinks, taking part in regular exercise and activities.
2. Support the child/ young person with all health needs such as arrange and attend any necessary health appointments (e.g. GP/dentist/ therapist/paediatrician), manage repeat prescriptions and taking of prescribed medications.
3. Work to establish routines for positive wellbeing and a healthy sense of self, including supporting a good sleep pattern and routine.
4. Promote the child/ young person to identify their own key priorities in developing independence skills to manage their health needs. Provide role modelling support to then enable the development of Children and young people's key health skills working towards independence.
5. Support good emotional and mental health and self- esteem by facilitating and modelling good attachments, play and development alongside recognising when children/ young people may need additional support.

6. Encourage awareness of drug and alcohol risks and support children and young people to identify problematic use of drug and alcohol and seek appropriate support to change.
7. Support the young person in all aspects of their sexuality including proactively negotiating healthy relationship choices and good sexual health including accessing services.
8. Support the child/young person to meet their short- and long-term health needs such as diabetes, epilepsy, asthma, allergies or eczema and administer prescribed medication. Alongside consider any health transition requirements for children and young people with long term conditions or complex health needs.
9. Facilitate the delivery and monitoring of any prescribed care or intervention such as speech and language therapy, physiotherapy, occupational therapy and psychotherapy.
10. Facilitate and promote statutory health checks and support meeting the actions from the health plan as appropriate, including Education, Health and Care Plan for Children and young people with SEND.
11. Ensure child has an EASE card and promote the use of this if in North Tyneside.
12. Complete SDQ in a timely manner and encourage young person over the age of 11 to complete their SDQ.
13. Ensure the HIVE Team are notified if any concerns around Health

**For short break fostering:**

1. Support the child with any additional health needs in line with any plan including an Education, Health and Care Plan.
2. Support child with emotional, mental, physical or sensory needs including use of any specialist equipment and bespoke approaches to care delivery.
3. Understand and administer individual child/ young person therapy plans including liaison with therapists.

**4. Education**

1. Support the child's education by promoting learning at home, maintaining links with school, including attending parents evening, and attending PEP meetings.
2. Ensure children are transported to school in a consistent and timely manner.
3. Support child's attendance at school ensuring that no holidays are booked within term time.
4. Ensure the HIVE Team are notified if any concerns around education. This can be via Supervising Social Worker
5. Support child with any learning needs in line with their Education, Health and Care Plan or SEN Support Plan.
6. Play an active role in relationships with education providers contributing and commenting on school reports and actively supporting school-home agreements.
7. Understand a child's Special Educational Needs and contribute to requests for advice and contributions to reviews.
4. Provide a suitable place for completing homework to include a desk and IT equipment appropriate to age of child.

#### **5. Records / Written Assessments**

1. Maintain systematic record of developments on child in their care.
2. To provide information for court reports if required.
3. Ensure the safe storage and confidentiality of all information given.

#### **6. Planning / Team Working**

1. Contribute to care planning.
2. Attend all meetings relating to the child and be prepared to contribute.
3. Work as part of a professional team and at times follow guidance and instruction in carrying out aspects of the care of the young people placed.
4. Attend court proceedings involving children and/or **contribute to court** statements when required.

#### **7. Foster Care Arrangement Stability**

1. To provide durable and stable placements.
2. Demonstrate commitment to sustaining a placement as agreed in the child's care plan.
3. Demonstrate a commitment to ending care arrangements, where needed, in a planned way and in the best interests of the child.

#### **8. Support / Supervision**

1. Prepare for supervision and accept guidance from a Supervising Social Worker.
2. Undertake actions agreed in supervision with Supervising Social Worker.
3. Attend local support groups regularly.
4. Make positive use of supervision and guidance from a Supervising Social Worker.
5. Demonstrate reflective practice from training, learning and supervisory visits and how this learning can shape future practice.
6. Positively represent the Fostering Service to external partners and work in co-operation with the Fostering Service to achieve positive outcomes for children.

#### **9. Family Time**

1. Provide emotional support for a child having family time.
2. If appropriate support family time within the foster carer home subject to a risk assessment
3. Keep appropriate written records of family time as per agency guidelines
4. To take appropriate steps when required to facilitate and supervise family time with those important to the child and as detailed within child's care plan.

## Band Level 2 – Advanced

<b>Entry Requirements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence significant child care experience e.g. parenting, paid or voluntary work in child care, previous fostering experience or experience in a related field such as youth work or teaching.</li> <li>• Demonstrate an ability to take challenging children with more complex needs, showing greater levels of vulnerability and where there is a greater risk or barriers to overcome.</li> <li>• One approved carer in the household must have a full time commitment to fostering with no other paid work commitments outside of the Fostering Service.</li> <li>• Have completed skills to foster training.</li> <li>• Have a completed fostering assessment and been approved by the ADM following Fostering Panel.</li> </ul>
<b>Training Requirements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have completed or if direct entry plan to complete the TSDS standards within 18 month, if a Connected Person Foster Carer or 12 month Mainstream Foster Carer</li> <li>• Have completed their mandatory and core training and ensure it is refreshed on a 3 yearly basis. If direct entry core training to be completed within 1 year of approval. This includes Solihull training</li> <li>• Completed or plan to complete the Children’s and Young Peoples Workforce Social Care Diploma Level 3</li> <li>• Ensure that their personal development plan is completed annually</li> <li>• Therapeutic Parenting programme; which will inform practice</li> <li>• Any further training considered to be appropriate to support practice i.e. Youth Justice, Substance Misuse, Mental Health</li> <li>• Attend a minimum of six development session per year; this can include support groups, Foster Carer’s consultation meetings and training</li> </ul>
<b>Evidence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supervision records</li> <li>• Foster Care Review</li> <li>• Diary recording</li> <li>• Observations of practice</li> <li>• Demonstrate reflective practice from training and learning</li> <li>• Attendance and contributions to meeting</li> <li>• Personal Development Plan PDP</li> <li>• Training engagement and feedback</li> </ul>
<b>1. Availability</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide and maintain suitable fostering arrangements for the number, needs and age of the child or children in their care.</li> <li>2. To be available, accessible and meet unexpected situations that will come up in caring for children/young people with advanced needs. If advanced carers are in</li> </ol>	

employment this needs to be on the basis that it provides flexibility to meet the demands of fostering.

3. An additional child can be taken subject to appropriate matching, stability and space.
4. If a child/young person is still in their care and has been reassessed as no longer meeting this level of need, and the reduction in need is not attributable to the care provided, the carer will retain their fee for a maximum of three weeks and then choose to either:
  - a. Receive the lower fee.
  - b. Offer a new advanced foster care arrangement with appropriate matching.
  - c. Make themselves available to offer support to other Foster Carers as part of an agreed support package working alongside of the Foster Carers and in conjunction with the Fostering Service.
5. Have in place a robust support network to assist in an emergency situation.

## **2. Care / Behaviour Support**

1. Provide a high standard of care to the child in placement in a safe , healthy and nurturing environment meeting Fostering Regulations and National Minimum Standards
2. Understand the implications of delegated authority
3. Care for the child as if s/he was a member of your family.
4. Contribute to Life Story and maintain a Memory Box for child in placement.
5. Ensure the physical condition of the home is conducive to fostering.
6. Establish and maintain daily routines for children e.g. school attendance, mealtimes, bedtimes, homework completion.
7. Provide a range of age appropriate activities and opportunities for developing interests.
8. Maintain confidentiality.
9. To meet the transport requirements of the child
10. Significant events such as unauthorised absences from the foster home; family time, child behaviours are managed well maintaining perspective and following procedures as required
11. Be aware of how they respond to stress and have effective support/ strategies in place to sustain positive relationships and effective functioning during periods of stress
12. Demonstrate an ability to manage stress and maintain functioning during prolonged periods of difficulty and pressure
13. Provide a positive parenting experience which contributes to the child's wellbeing and sense of self -esteem
14. To attend and support child with all appropriate appointments.
15. Help children cope with separation and loss and assist them with coming to terms with previous experiences.
16. Act in the best interests of the child in co-operation with other professional and agencies e.g. education, health, police.
17. Provide foster care that positively values and promotes diversity and equality of the child.

18. Enable children to move on positively to other care arrangements when required and as part of their child in care plan e.g. return to a birth parent, to other fostering household or to adoption.
19. Promote and encourage the development of life skills to help young people develop the skills, confidence and knowledge necessary for independent living.
20. Be committed to working with children/young people with complex needs and be confident in positively managing challenging behaviour.
21. To be able to implement Safety Plan / Risk Assessment
22. Empathise with the children and young people in their care and have well developed skills in engaging, communicating and building relationships with these children and young people and ensure the child's voice is heard.
23. Utilise basic therapeutic parenting techniques under the guidance of Social Workers or other professionals.
24. Evidence ability to manage more challenging and demanding behaviours and support more specialist placement commitments such as aggression , sexualised behaviour, substance misuse, self-harm, diagnosed mental health issues, disability, parent and child placement subject to assessed levels of risk and need.
25. Be able to offer significant flexibility in meeting the child in care needs of more complex children/ young people e.g. ( but not exclusively) non school attendance , children / young people missing from home, young people at risk of sexual exploitation.
26. Carer can maintain perspective about the causes and influences of behaviour and remain child focused in their responses.
27. In their work consistently demonstrate an understanding of the reasons for development delay due to the impact of early life experiences of children and young people.

### **3. Health**

1. Promote children and young people to have a healthy lifestyle by encouraging a balanced diet of food and drinks, taking part in regular exercise and activities.
2. Support the child/ young person with all health needs such as arrange and attend any necessary health appointments (e.g. GP/dentist/ therapist/paediatrician), manage repeat prescriptions and taking of prescribed medications.
3. Positively engage with specialist practitioners with regards to supporting care of Children and young people with physical, emotional or mental health needs including trauma and attachment difficulties.
4. Work to establish routines for positive wellbeing and a healthy sense of self, including supporting a good sleep pattern and routine.
5. Facilitate prescribed specialist therapeutic interventions for emotional and mental health needs and behavioural support. Follow any care plans and interventions relating to therapeutic approaches to care. Be able to monitor interventions and feedback to therapists.
6. Promote the child/ young person to identify their own key priorities in developing independence skills to manage their health needs. Provide role modelling support to then enable the development of Children and young people's key health skills working towards independence.



7. Support good emotional and mental health and self- esteem by facilitating and modelling good attachments, play and development alongside recognising when children/ young people may need additional support.
8. Encourage awareness of drug and alcohol risks and support children and young people to identify problematic use of drug and alcohol and seek appropriate support to change.
9. Support the young person in all aspects of their sexuality including proactively negotiating healthy relationship choices and good sexual health including accessing services.
10. Support the child/young person to meet their short and long term health needs such as diabetes, epilepsy, asthma, allergies or eczema and administer prescribed medication. Alongside consider any health transition requirements for children and young people with long term conditions or complex health needs.
11. Facilitate the delivery and monitoring of any prescribed care or intervention such as speech and language therapy, physiotherapy, occupational therapy and psychotherapy.
12. Facilitate and promote statutory health checks and support meeting the actions from the health plan as appropriate, including Education, Health and Care Plan for children and young people with SEND.
13. Ensure child has an EASE card and promote the use of this if in North Tyneside.
14. Complete SDQ in a timely manner and encourage young person over the age of 11 to complete their SDQ.
15. Ensure the HIVE Team are notified if any concerns around Health

**For short break fostering:**

1. Deliver prescribed complex medical care and prescribed treatment e.g. suction, injections, tracheotomy care and administer emergency medication.
2. Facilitate care for a complex range of medical needs such as uncontrolled epilepsy, low/high muscle tone, oxygen saturation monitoring and end of life care.
3. Follow prescribed physiotherapy plans for Children and young people with mobility difficulties were there has been a skin breakdown, to provide a dressing regime in line with the care plan
4. As prescribed by a mental health professional as part of the care plan provide reassurance and support for children with extreme levels of stress, anxiety disorders or mental health issues.

**4. Education**

1. Support the child's aspirations and dreams by promoting learning at home and supporting involvement in enrichment activities. Maintain high expectations and seek support when needed.
2. Have effective working relationships with school, ensuring that all meetings are attended so that appropriate planning for the child is achieved.
3. Ensure children are transported to school in a consistent and timely manner.
4. Be pro-active in ensuring that any potential issues at school are raised at the earliest opportunity through school or The HIVE Team to ensure support is put in place and to prevent escalation.
5. Have an understanding of the impact of trauma and loss on learning.

6. To support the view that children in care shouldn't be excluded and alternatives should be used in the first instance, such as use of internal exclusion or First Day Response. Have an awareness of the impact of attachment needs in school.
7. Understand a child's Special Educational Needs and contribute to requests for advice and contributions to reviews.
8. Provide a suitable place for completing homework to include a desk and IT equipment appropriate to age of child.
9. Ensure a child's attendance at school ensuring that no holidays are booked within term time.
10. Support child with any learning needs in line with their Education, Health and Care Plan or SEN Support Plan.

#### **5. Records / Written Assessments**

1. Maintain systematic record of developments on child in their care.
2. To provide information for court reports if required.
3. Ensure the safe storage and confidentiality of all information given.

#### **6. Planning / Team Working**

1. Contribute to care planning.
2. Attend all meetings relating to the child and be prepared to contribute.
3. Work as part of a professional team and at times follow guidance and instruction in carrying out aspects of the care of the young people placed.
4. Attend court proceedings involving children and/or **contribute to court** statements when required.

#### **7. Foster Care Arrangement Stability**

1. To provide durable and stable placements.
2. In the event of a fostering arrangement having to end, this should be achieved in a considered way appropriate for the child or young person.

#### **8. Support / Supervision**

1. Attend local support groups regularly.
2. Make positive use of supervision and guidance from a Supervising Social Worker.
3. Demonstrate reflective practice from training, learning and supervisory visits and how this learning can shape future practice
4. Attend advanced/specialist focus groups.
5. Provide support to inexperienced Foster Carers.
6. Be involved in buddying /mentoring new Foster Carers.
7. Positively represent the Fostering Service to external partners and work in co-operation with the Fostering Service to achieve positive outcomes for children.

#### **9. Family Time**

1. Provide emotional support for a child having family time.
2. Keep appropriate written records of family time as per agency guidelines.
3. To take appropriate steps when required to facilitate and supervise family time with those important to the child and as detailed within child's care plan.

## Band Level 3 – Specialist

<b>Entry Requirements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant formal childcare experience e.g. previous fostering experience caring for children with complex needs, employment in child care or related experience</li> <li>• Demonstrate an ability to reflect upon professional experience and relate this to the fostering task</li> <li>• Evidence experience of caring for children who are highly vulnerable where there are increased risks and where there is very likely to be on going challenges and set back in caring for them</li> <li>• One approved carer in the household must have a full-time commitment to fostering with no other paid work commitments outside of the Fostering Service.</li> <li>• Have completed skills to foster training.</li> <li>• Have a completed fostering assessment and been approved by the ADM following Fostering Panel.</li> </ul>
<b>Training Requirements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have completed or if direct entry plan to complete the TSDS standards within 18 month, if a Connected Person Foster Carer or 12 month Mainstream Foster Carer</li> <li>• Have completed their mandatory and core training and ensure it is refreshed on a 3 yearly basis. If direct entry core training to be completed within 1 year of approval. This includes Solihull training</li> <li>• Completed or plan to complete the Children’s and Young Peoples Workforce Social Care Diploma Level 5</li> <li>• Ensure that their personal development plan is completed annually.</li> <li>• Therapeutic Parenting programme, which will inform practice</li> <li>• Any further training considered to be appropriate to support practice i.e. Youth Justice, Substance Misuse, Mental Health</li> <li>• Attend a minimum of eight development session per year; this can include support groups, Foster Carer’s consultation meetings and training</li> </ul>
<b>Evidence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supervision records</li> <li>• Foster Care Review</li> <li>• Diary recording</li> <li>• Observations of practice</li> <li>• Demonstrate reflective practice from training and learning</li> <li>• Attendance and contributions to meeting</li> <li>• Personal Development Plan PDP</li> <li>• Training engagement and feedback</li> <li>• Engagement and implementation in therapeutic work</li> </ul>

## **1. Availability**

1. Provide and maintain suitable accommodation for the number, needs and age of the child or children in care.
2. To be available on a full time basis to care for the young person in their care.
3. An additional child can be taken subject to appropriate matching, stability and space.
4. If a carer is without a specialist fostering arrangement or the child/young person has been reassessed and no longer meets this level of need, and the reduction in presenting need is not attributable to the care provided. The carer will then be required to choose to either:
  - a. Receive the lower fee.
  - b. Offer a new specialist child in care with appropriate matching.
  - c. Make themselves available to offer support to other Foster Carers as part of a support package working alongside of the Foster Carers and in conjunction with the Fostering Service.
5. Specialist Foster Carers may be asked to support other Foster Carers out of hours.
6. On occasions and where appropriate provide a second short term holiday/short break arrangement for another child/young person placed with matched needs.
7. When specialist carers are 'between care arrangements' to provide time limited emergency care arrangements or carry out additional tasks to assist young people and other Foster Carers.
8. Have in place a robust support network to assist in an emergency situation.

## **2. Care / Behaviour Support**

1. Provide a high standard of care to the child in care in a safe , healthy and nurturing environment meeting Fostering Regulations and National Minimum Standards
2. Understand the implications of delegated authority
3. Care for the child as if s/he was a member of your family.
4. Contribute to Life Story and maintain a Memory Box for child in care.
5. Ensure the physical condition of the home is conducive to fostering.
6. Establish and maintain daily routines for children e.g. school attendance, mealtimes, bedtimes, homework completion.
7. Provide a range of age appropriate activities and opportunities for developing interests.
8. Maintain confidentiality.
9. To meet the transport requirements of the child
10. Significant events such as unauthorised absences from the foster home; family time, child behaviours are managed well maintaining perspective and following procedures as required
11. Be aware of how they respond to stress and have effective support/ strategies in place to sustain positive relationships and effective functioning during periods of stress
12. Demonstrate an ability to manage stress and maintain functioning during prolonged periods of difficulty and pressure
13. Provide a positive parenting experience which contributes to the child's wellbeing and sense of self -esteem
14. To attend and support child with all appropriate appointments.

15. Help children cope with separation and loss and assist them with coming to terms with previous experiences.
16. Act in the best interests of the child in co-operation with other professional and agencies e.g. education, health, police.
17. Provide foster care that positively values and promotes diversity and equality of the child.
18. Enable children to move on positively to other care arrangements when required and as part of their child in care plan e.g. return to a birth parent, to other foster care arrangement or to adoption.
19. Promote and encourage the development of life skills to help young people develop the skills, confidence and knowledge necessary for independent living.
20. To be able to implement Safety Plan / Risk Assessment
21. Specialist carers must have the required confidence and skills in positively managing extremes of challenging behaviour.
22. Provide a Therapeutic Parenting approach which contributes to the child's wellbeing and sense of self -esteem
- 23.** Be committed to working with very complex and vulnerable groups of children or severely disabled children. Note the range of complex needs specialist carers are likely to be expected to meet as listed below.
- 24.** Empathise with the troubled and disadvantaged young people placed and have highly developed skills in communicating and building relationships with these young people.
- 25.** To take part in intensive therapeutic work with children following appropriate advice and direction or to work closely with other professionals in carrying out individualised therapeutic programmes, skills development or educational programmes.
26. Challenge constructively opinions and views of other professionals and agencies.
27. Effectively manage persistently challenging and anti-social behaviours of children / young people placed
28. Provide commitment to specialist foster care arrangements of children / young people with the most complex needs e.g. Parent / Child ; Assessment ; Permanence; Children with a disability; Children / Young people having experienced significant disruption; Single children in the household; Children / Young People who might otherwise require a residential placement
29. Carer is able to maintain perspective and unconditional positive regard in their care of children and young people during periods of stress and pressure while remaining resilient about addressing pertinent issues
30. Demonstrate considerable resilience and skill in daily practice to achieve desired outcomes for children and young people
31. Can anticipate and prepare for setbacks , struggles, barriers and provide continuity of care during these times.

### **3. Health**

1. Promote children and young people to have a healthy lifestyle by encouraging a balanced diet of food and drinks, taking part in regular exercise and activities.
2. Support the child/ young person with all health needs such as arrange and attend any necessary health appointments (e.g. GP/dentist/ therapist/paediatrician), manage repeat prescriptions and taking of prescribed medications.

3. Positively engage with specialist practitioners with regards to supporting care of Children and young people with physical, emotional or mental health needs including trauma and attachment difficulties.
4. Work to establish routines for positive wellbeing and a healthy sense of self, including supporting a good sleep pattern and routine.
5. Facilitate prescribed specialist therapeutic interventions for emotional and mental health needs and behavioural support. Follow any care plans and interventions relating to therapeutic approaches to care. Be able to monitor interventions and feedback to therapists.
6. Promote the child/ young person to identify their own key priorities in developing independence skills to manage their health needs. Provide role modelling support to then enable the development of Children and young people's key health skills working towards independence.
7. Support good emotional and mental health and self- esteem by facilitating and modelling good attachments, play and development alongside recognising when children/ young people may need additional support.
8. Encourage awareness of drug and alcohol risks and support children and young people to identify problematic use of drug and alcohol and seek appropriate support to change.
9. Support the young person in all aspects of their sexuality including proactively negotiating healthy relationship choices and good sexual health including accessing services.
10. Support the child/young person to meet their short and long term health needs such as diabetes, epilepsy, asthma, allergies or eczema and administer prescribed medication. Alongside consider any
11. Health transition requirements for children and young people with long term conditions or complex health needs.
12. Facilitate the delivery and monitoring of any prescribed care or intervention such as speech and language therapy, physiotherapy, occupational therapy and psychotherapy.
13. Facilitate and promote statutory health checks and support meeting the actions from the health plan as appropriate, including Education, Health and Care Plan for Children and young people with SEND.
14. Ensure child has an EASE card and promote the use of this if in North Tyneside.
15. Complete SDQ in a timely manner and encourage young person over the age of 11 to complete their SDQ.
16. Ensure the HIVE Team are notified if any concerns around Health
17. Make pro-active contributions to issues around emotional, mental or physical care resolution in school or other settings alongside supporting birth parents in problem resolution where appropriate.

**For short break fostering:**

1. Facilitate care for a complex range of medical needs such as uncontrolled epilepsy, low/high muscle tone, oxygen saturation monitoring and end of life care.
2. Receive individualised training for the management of emergency/ urgent situations eg seizures including administering emergency medication.

3. Following individualised training deliver proactive personalised care to children and young people with profound cognitive and complex physical needs according to written care plans
4. Follow prescribed Physiotherapy/Occupational Therapy/ Speech and Language Therapy or other specialist care plans. Liaise with specialists as required and facilitate all health appointments.
5. Follow prescribed physiotherapy plans for children and young people with mobility difficulties were there has been a skin breakdown, to provide a dressing regime in line with the care plan
6. Provide reassurance and support for children with complex stress and anxiety disorders to help them understand and manage their emotions and responses to stressful situations and triggers.
7. Be able to deliver a sensory approach to care for Children and young people with additional and complex sensory needs related to ASD/ADHD or other conditions.

#### **4. Education**

1. Support the child's aspirations and dreams by promoting learning at home and supporting involvement in enrichment activities. Maintain high expectations and seek support when needed.
2. Have effective working relationships with school, ensuring that all meetings are attended so that appropriate planning for the child is achieved.
3. Ensure children are transported to school in a consistent and timely manner.
4. Be pro-active in ensuring that any potential issues at school are raised at the earliest opportunity through school or The HIVE Team to ensure support is put in place and to prevent escalation.
5. To support the view that children in care shouldn't be excluded and alternatives should be used in the first instance, such as use of internal exclusion or First Day Response.
6. Have an awareness of the impact of attachment needs in school and demonstrate an ability to put learning of these issues into practice.
7. To provide advice and support to other Foster Carers about the education of children in care.
8. Have an understanding of the impact of trauma and loss on learning.
9. Understand a child's Special Educational Needs and contribute to requests for advice and contributions to reviews.
10. Provide a suitable place for completing homework to include a desk and IT equipment appropriate to age of child.
11. Ensure a child's attendance at school ensuring that no holidays are booked within term time.
12. Support child with any learning needs in line with their Education, Health and Care Plan or SEN Support Plan.

#### **5. Records / Written Assessments**

1. Maintain systematic record of developments on child in care.
2. To provide information for court reports if required.

3. Ensure the safe storage and confidentiality of all information given.

#### **6. Planning / Team Working**

1. Work as part of a professional team and at times follow guidance and instruction in carrying out aspects of the care of the young people placed.
2. Attend court proceedings involving children and/or **contribute to court** statements when required.
3. Contribute to high level discussions / meetings
4. To promote / project a proactive approach to working intensively and cohesively with care team members
5. To respond appropriately to frequently changing circumstances and short notice occurrences/requirements.

#### **7. Foster Care Arrangement Stability**

1. There is a strong expectation that specialist foster care arrangements will be robust and durable and unplanned care arrangement endings or crisis disruptions will be an exceptional event.
2. In the event of a fostering care arrangement having to end, this should be achieved in a considered way appropriate for the child or young person.

#### **8. Support / Supervision**

8. Attend local support groups regularly.
9. Make positive use of supervision and guidance from a Supervising Social Worker.
10. Demonstrate reflective practice from training, learning and supervisory visits and how this learning can shape future practice
11. Be involved in buddying /mentoring new Foster Carers.
12. Attend and help to facilitate local support groups with the Fostering Service.
13. Specialist carers need to have an advanced capacity to reflect on their work and take responsibility for their own training requirements and their professional development.
14. Uphold high professional standards
15. Participate in the delivery of training and support of Foster Carers and Social Workers.
16. Mentoring newly approved Foster Carers.
17. Positively represent the Fostering Service to external partners and work in co-operation with the Fostering Service to achieve positive outcomes for children.

#### **9. Family Time**

1. Provide emotional support for a child having family time.
2. Keep appropriate written records of family time as per agency guidelines
3. To take appropriate steps when required to facilitate and supervise family time with those important to the child and as detailed within child's care plan
4. Work professionally with parents even where there is conflict.



# North Tyneside Council

## Foster Carer Payment Guide

**Date:** April 2024 **Version:** 5 **Author:** C Brownlee

Foster Carers Payment Guide – April 2024 V.5



North Tyneside Council

## Contents

	<b>Page</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Principles of Payment to Foster Carers</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Fostering Fees</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Fostering Allowance</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Foster Children Aged 16+</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Pocket Money</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Additional Allowances</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Staying Put / Shared Lives</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>School Organised Holidays and Trips</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Emergency Clothing</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>School Uniform</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Insurance Claims</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Outreach / Babysitting</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Equipment / Furniture</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Ethnic, Racial and Cultural Costs</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Travel and Transport</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Mileage Allowance / Transport Expenses</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Family Time Facilitation</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Carers' Own Holidays</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Carer Respite</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Children Placed with Carers who Attend Residential Schools</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Out of School Schemes</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Short Break Services for Children with Disabilities</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Fostering Allowance Overpayment</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Luggage</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Foster Carer's Responsibilities</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Disability Living Allowance</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Junior ISA Eligibility</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Paying Income Tax</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Claiming Benefits</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Pensions</b>	<b>20</b>

## **Introduction**

This guide is for Foster Carers, Supervising Social Workers and other staff members involved in the supervision of children in fostering arrangements.

This guide outlines the nature and details of payments to be made to Foster Carers. Please ensure that you read and understand this guidance. Advice on any aspect of the fees and allowances is available from your Supervising Social Worker.

Payments of fees, allowances, premiums and other payments to foster carers are made through the Authority's ContrOCC system and must be authorised by the Fostering Services Team Managers.

Payments are paid directly into a nominated bank account weekly; one week in arrears.

If you have any queries about fees allowances or if you think you have been under or over paid, contact the Fostering Service as soon as possible.

## **Principles of Payment to Foster Carers**

The following principles underpin the payment scheme:

- It is simple, fair and easy to understand
- It enables North Tyneside Council to be competitive with other local authorities and local independent fostering agencies
- It recognises the complex task of fostering children
- The care payment will meet the Department for Education's national minimum fostering allowance

Payments to Carers are divided into two categories:

- Fees
- Allowances

## **Fostering Fees**

All Foster Carers who have been approved and trained (completed and maintained skills training) are paid at the appropriate accredited band. Fees

are paid on top of fostering allowances to recognise a Foster Carers' time, skills and experience.

Continuous professional development is a requirement for all Foster Carers; non-compliance within each twelve-month annual review period, will result in the fee not being paid the following year. Joint carers will both be expected to engage in this process.

From November 2019 Foster Carers will receive payments based on the fostering framework outlined below:

**Pre-Accredited Carer** – If a child is placed with you under Regulation 24 Care Planning, Placement and Review (England) Regulations 2010 a weekly fostering allowance per child will be paid.

**Accredited Carer** – Once you are approved as a Foster Carer in accordance with Regulation 27 of the Fostering Services (England) Regulation 2011 and have completed the relevant skills to Foster Training you will qualify for a fee by fulfilling the requirements for all foster carers as detailed in the Fostering Framework.

**Advanced Carer** – Foster Carers who have attended training and are assessed as having demonstrated their ability to offer care to children and young people assessed as having complex needs, including (not exclusively) UAAS children, children with complex health and/or behavioural needs.

**Specialist Carer** – Foster Carers who have attended training and are assessed as able to demonstrate their ability to meet the needs of children and young people who may display significantly challenging behaviour or needs that might otherwise require residential child care.

Skills and competencies will be assessed annually at Foster Care review to ensure all training requirements are complete and skills are maintained.

**Table 1**

<b>Band Levels</b>	<b>Fees</b>
Band 1 – Pre-Accredited	£0
Band 2 – Accredited Carer	£110.00
Band 3 – Advanced Carer	£380.00
Band 4 – Specialist Carer	£550.00

**Table 2**

<b>Additional Premiums – per child</b>	<b>Fees</b>
Siblings (2 <sup>nd</sup> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> child only)	£75.00
Disability	£50.00
Mother & Baby (only mother CiC)	£90.00
Out of Hours care arrangement starting	£50 (one off)

Fees are paid 52 weeks per year and are payable for the first two weeks of any holiday taken without the Child in Care.

Foster Carers who are undergoing an investigation that prevents them having children within their care will continue to be paid a fee (but not the child related allowance) until the investigation is completed.

### **Fostering Allowances**

All Foster Carers who are 'approved' (including those subject to on-going assessment) will be paid the child age related allowance.

Fostering allowance will be paid from the day a child is placed with you until the day the child leaves your care.

Allowances are remuneration and reimbursement payments. They are paid to cover the daily costs of caring for a child or young person and other payments are made to cover specific costs incurred.

**Table 3 – Fostering Allowances 2024-2025**

<b>Age</b>	<b>Weekly Fostering Allowance</b>
0 – 4	<b>£170.00</b>
5– 10	<b>£187.00</b>
11 – 15	<b>£213.00</b>
To Carer for 16+	<b>£249.00</b>

The Foster Carer weekly allowance is intended to cover the average costs of looking after a child as part of the Foster Carer’s family. No specified amounts for particular items are given since expenditure will vary from one foster household to another. The fostering allowance is designed to cover the following costs: –

- Food and accommodation (including a contribution towards heating and lighting costs);
- Clothing;
- Pocket money;
- Transport usually associated with any child living in a family including to and from a local school and out-of-school activities;
- Leisure activities;
- Keeping a record of events and memories about the child;
- School meals.

### **Foster Children aged 16+**

The Foster Carer receives an allowance of £249.00 with an additional weekly payment of £15 being made directly to the young person; to be used for pocket money.

From the 1<sup>st</sup> September following a young person becoming 16 years old the allowances for 16+ will be initiated. As part of the Staying Put Scheme financial support with holidays, birthday and Christmas will continue.

Should a young person remain in your care under staying put arrangements and no other young people requiring a fostering care arrangement are being placed with you, than all carers will receive the accredited carer fee of £110 per week until the end of this staying put arrangement. Should you continue to

provide additional care arrangements to children requiring Foster Care your fee will remain on the band that you have been assessed to receive.

The Fostering Network previously considered the various components of the weekly allowance. The table below shows how the weekly basic allowance breaks down under various component headings. Foster Carers may find the information useful.

**Table 5 (correct at April 2015)**

Age	Food	Clothing	Transport	Personal	Household	Total
0-4	34%	22%	8%	6%	30%	100%
5-10	32%	26%	7%	8%	27%	100%
11-15	32%	26%	11%	10%	21%	100%
16+	32%	26%	8%	16%	18%	100%

### Pocket Money

The weekly fostering allowance contains a personal element, which is predominantly viewed as pocket money. It is expected that all foster children will receive pocket money. Young people and children should be generally free to choose how they spend the pocket money allowance and must not be expected to pay for basic living or accommodation costs. The pocket money allowance can be given to the child as cash each week, or some can be given to the child and the rest saved. Supervising Social Workers will discuss pocket money allowance and how this is given within Supervisory visits.

**Table 6 - outlines the age-related recommended pocket money allowance.**

Age	Amount per week
5- 9	£5
10-12	£6
13-14	£8
15	£10
16+ (Paid directly to the young person)	£15

Foster Carers must open bank accounts for children and young people who have been in their care for 4 weeks or more. Any money that has been saved for the child/young person whilst in your care must be transferred to the new carer or parents where applicable. The details of any bank accounts for the child/ young person must also be shared. The Social Worker for the child is to also be notified of this. The role of a Foster Carer is to encourage the child/ young person in their care to spend wisely and encourage the child to save. It is at the discretion of the carer as to how much this is.

### **Additional Allowances**

In addition, payment equivalent to four week’s age-related fostering allowance is payable annually towards the cost of birthdays, Christmas/religious festival and holiday costs; as outlined in the table below:

**Table 4**

<b>Age</b>	<b>Birthday</b>	<b>Christmas / Festivals</b>	<b>Holidays (2 weeks)</b>
0 -4	£170	£170	£170 x 2
5 - 10	£187	£187	£187 x 2
11 - 15	£213	£213	£213 x 2
16+	£249	£249	£249 x 2

**Birthday Allowance** - A payment equivalent to one week’s age-related fostering allowance is automatically paid prior to the child’s birthday. This payment will only be made once annually.

**Christmas / Festivals** - An annual celebration or festival allowance is linked to child’s cultural heritage. This payment is equivalent to one week’s age-related fostering allowance and is automatically paid prior to the child’s selected annual celebration.

**Holiday Allowance** - Each Foster Carer receives a payment equivalent to two weeks’ age-related fostering allowance; prior to the summer holidays. The holiday allowance is paid to allow Carers to take a child on holiday or to be used for holiday activities.



**Note:** We will not support any Child in Care being taken on holiday during school term time. A Foster Carer, in common with other parents and carers must ensure that all children in care attend school during the school term.

Holiday payment is made automatically 28 days before the summer holidays start; payment may be requested at an earlier date to pay towards an earlier holiday.

Where a child's care arrangement changes, following a holiday payment being made and before the school holiday begins, the full allowance will be required to be repaid. Where a Foster Carer has taken a child on holiday earlier in the financial year; evidence of spending will be required.

Foster Carers can claim for the cost incurred in purchasing a passport for the child and any visa, which may be required for holiday travel. Advice regarding how to arrange reimbursement of this expenditure is available from the child's Social Worker.

### **Staying Put / Shared Lives**

Staying Put is to enable young people to stay with their Foster Carers post 18, up until their 21st birthday. Young people who are assessed as needing a service from adults' social care can access the shared lives scheme run by adult services. This may meet the young person's needs more fully than staying put and should be considered. The shared lives scheme will run for as long as they are assessed as needing it, rather than ending at 21 years old as Staying Put does.

Staying Put is to develop skills for adulthood, improve self-care skills, enhance life skills, improve social resilience, enhance employability and protect against vulnerability. The idea is that at 21 years old, the young person would be able to move on into their own living arrangement or tenancy.

### **School Organised Holidays and Trips**

Though the Council recognises the benefits to children and young people of participating in the above; where funding of such events is deemed difficult, this must be discussed with the child's school and Social Worker to ensure all funding avenues are appropriately explored. Please note costs cannot be met retrospectively.

## **Activities and Interests**

Children are encouraged to enjoy out of school activities which enrich their leisure and play. Examples have been drama, horse riding, singing, instrument lessons, sport, swimming, dance and arts and crafts. These costs should be met through the child's weekly allowance; however, where additional costs are expected, additional funding can be sought through the child's social worker via Pupil Premium Plus. Please note costs cannot be met retrospectively.

## **Emergency Clothing**

A child or young person who arrives in a new foster care arrangement without adequate clothing is likely to incur additional clothing costs. A Foster Carer can claim a clothing allowance at the commencement of the new care episode starting for a child who has recently entered foster care up to a maximum equivalent of £50 (0-4), £75 (5-10), £100 (11+).

The Social Worker will endeavour to get clothes from the child's home and the above allowance is intended to provide essential items whilst this happens. Any monies spent over the maximum age-related allowance, will not be reimbursed and should be subtracted from the first Fostering Allowance payment.

## **School Uniform**

A Foster Carer is expected to consider a school uniform for a child who has recently commenced at a new school as part of the clothing allowance. For planned changes in school uniform, for example in moving from lower to upper school, it is expected that Foster Carers will budget accordingly.

## **Insurance Claims**

Foster Carers are required to inform their Home, Building and Contents and Car insurance company once they have been approved as a Foster Carer. It is important that you inform them about the numbers of children and age ranges you expect to care for. You should ask the insurance companies for written confirmation that they have included foster children on your policies.

**Damage to a Vehicle** – Where a vehicle has been damaged by a fostered child and requires repair, the Fostering Service should be notified as soon as practicable. Damage excludes normal wear and tear of a vehicle in the course of fostering activity. Evidence that damage was caused by a fostered child may be required. Upon acceptance by the Service that the damage was caused by

a fostered child, the Service will work with the Foster Carer to agree the most cost-effective resolution to the damage caused. For vehicle damage ordinarily the Foster Carer will be required to claim the costs of the repair through their own insurance for the vehicle. Where the Foster Carer is liable under their policy to pay an insurance excess, upon written proof of the requirement, the Local Authority will pay the full amount of the excess. Exceptionally, if the value of the damage is independently verified as less than the excess payment, then the relevant Senior Manager may decide to pay the costs associated with repairing the damage caused. Likewise, where an insurance company will not cover the costs of damage then, upon written proof of the refusal, the relevant Senior Manager will consider whether the Foster Carer is provided with some or all of the costs associated with repairing the damage caused.

**Damage to Equipment and/or Household Goods** - Where equipment or household goods have been damaged by a fostered child and require repair or replacement, the Fostering Service should be notified as soon as practicable. Damage excludes normal wear and tear of items in the course of fostering activity. Evidence that damage was caused by a fostered child may be required. Upon acceptance by the Service that the damage was caused by a fostered child, the Service will work with the Foster Carer to agree the most cost-effective resolution to the damage caused. This will depend on the value of the damage and the timeliness of replacement or repair. The relevant Senior Manager will determine whether:

- a) The Foster Carer must claim the costs of repair or replacement of the item through their own home contents insurance. Where the Foster Carer is liable under their policy to pay an insurance excess, upon written proof of the requirement, the Local Authority will pay the full amount of the excess.
- b) The full or partial cost of replacement of the item will be paid by the Local Authority
- c) The full or partial cost of repair of the item will be paid by the Local Authority

**Damage to Fabric of the Home** - Where the fabric of a home has been damaged by a fostered child and requires repair, the Fostering Service should be notified as soon as practicable. Damage excludes normal wear and tear of the home in the course of fostering activity. Evidence that damage was caused by a fostered child may be required. Upon acceptance by the Service that the damage was caused by a fostered child, the Service will work with the Foster

Carer to agree the most cost-effective resolution to the damage caused. This will depend on the value of the damage and the timeliness of repair. The relevant Senior Manager will determine whether:

- a) The Foster Carer must claim the costs of repair through their own home insurance. Where the Foster Carer is liable under their policy to pay an insurance excess, upon written proof of the requirement, the Local Authority will pay the full amount of the excess.
- b) The full or partial cost of repair will be paid by the Local Authority

## **Childcare**

Childcare for a child/young person in foster care to cover, for example attendance at a training event or meetings, is paid at a rate of £5 per hour.

## **Outreach**

When the Fostering Service requests support from alternative Foster Carers, to those the young person lives with, in line with a young person’s plan this support can be either overnight or care through the day for those children and young people with additional and or complex behaviours.

This support will be paid at a rate of £13 per hour for the hours 7am till 11pm. Should the support include overnight outside of the carers home, a payment of £30 will be made. Should the overnight support be within your own home, then the usual short break payments will be made.

## **Equipment and Furniture**

Foster carers may need additional furniture and equipment before having children in care placed with them. This may include beds, bedding, storage for clothes, car seats, baby equipment (where applicable). Once approved as a Foster Carer, North Tyneside Council will provide following per child if required:

Table 7 - outlines the maximum amount paid towards the purchase of equipment

Bed and mattress	up to £135
------------------	------------

Bunkbed	Up to £220
Wardrobe	up to £ 70
Set of drawers	up to £ 40
Pram	up to £150
Car Seat	up to £130
Stair Gate	up to £ 25
Replacement Cot Mattress (new placement under 1's)	up to £ 50

This is the maximum amount and receipts must be provided.

There is scope for Carers to purchase their choice of item and have the option to pay the difference.

Each Foster Carer is responsible for ensuring that any car seats used by them are appropriate for the age/weight of the child using it and the car in which the car seat is fixed. Foster Carers are to seek advice from appropriate retailers.

Any equipment provided in full by the Fostering Service can be transferred to another carer if not in use. In circumstances where the carer ceases fostering, any equipment must be returned to the Fostering Service.

### **Costs related to faith**

There may be specific expenses that arise because of a child or young person's cultural or ethnic background. These expenses should be discussed with the Supervising Social Worker and agreement sought by the Team Manager prior to spend.

### **Travel and Transport**

The basic fostering allowance includes an element for travelling costs, which are part of the normal pattern of expenditure incurred in the care of the child. Travel and transport arrangements are expected to be discussed as part of the initial planning of all care arrangements. Where circumstances change significantly then Foster Carers are expected to discuss those changes with their fostering Supervising Social Worker.

There is general assumption that children in care and Foster Carers will undertake most journeys in their day-to-day fostering lives, by walking, cycling, and using public transport or in the foster family's car. The cost of local and family journeys are included as part of the weekly fostering allowance.

It is assumed that young people aged 12 and over will make use of public transport where necessary for school and leisure activities. It is expected that these costs are met as part of the weekly fostering allowance. If a child has additional needs, then by prior agreement there may be alteration to the transport requirements of the child.

## **Mileage Allowance**

A Foster Carer may request reimbursement of their mileage allowance for all journeys related to the child, which are above and beyond family journeys. This is paid at 42 pence per mile. Mileage claims must be submitted monthly to the Fostering Service.

The following are either reimbursed at the Foster Carer mileage rate of 42 pence per mile or full reimbursement of public transport costs (all receipts to accompany claim).

- Travel to and from the school where the Foster Carer takes a child unable to travel alone.
- Transport to and from family time.
- Attendance at meetings.
- The cost of travel to and from hospital/medical where the Foster Carer takes the child.
- Training Courses and support groups.

Mileage, tunnel and bus fares claims must be submitted on an Expenses Claim Form.

All claims must be submitted within one month of the date the expenses were incurred. Where an expense claim falls to the end of the financial year, the claim must be submitted before the end of the financial year. Any claims made after this date will not be paid.

## **Family Time Facilitation**

A Foster Carer may claim the reasonable costs incurred to facilitate young people maintaining and promoting family time with their parents, siblings or other significant family members.

Foster Carers who supervise a child's family time must have attended the Supervised Family Time training. Foster Carers must appropriately complete the supervision form (duplicating) in the Supervising Family Time book and provide the original top copy to the Social Worker for child's file.

Foster Carers who supervise family time can claim additional payments of:

- £15 for up to 5 hours per week of supervised family time
- £25 for up to 10 hours per week of supervised family time
- £35 for up 15 hours or more per week of supervised family time

To claim family time expenses a 'Weekly Claim for Foster Care Childminding/ family time' should be completed and submitted to Supervising Social Worker. All claims must be submitted within one month of the date the family time took place. Where a claim falls to the end of the financial year, the claim must be submitted before the end of the financial year. Any claims made after this date will not be paid.

Foster Carers cannot be reimbursed for hospitality expenses from the Fostering Service for those having family time with the child i.e. parent. Where family time is supervised in the community, Foster Carers are expected to utilise free venues (Max Cards can be used for this purpose).

## **Carers' Own Holidays**

If a Foster Carer wishes to take a holiday without the child(ren) they have in their care with them, they may take up to two weeks per year without loss of their fee; specialist carers may take up to 4 weeks per year. They will also retain the clothing element of the Fostering Allowance applicable to the age of the child.

Short Break carers receive a pro rata fee appropriate to their own band level when child is in their care.

Where a Foster Carer is in receipt of the £50 disability premium; this will transfer to the carer offering the holiday placement.

For any period in excess of their holiday entitlement the Foster Carer will not receive their fee.

Where a Foster Carer proposes the child in their care be cared for by a relative or friend; the person being proposed to provide the holiday care must have a current DBS disclosure alongside a backup carers assessment and be cleared by the Fostering Team Manager as being suitable.

Where the person proposed to care for the child is already an approved North Tyneside Council Foster Carer; they are still expected to be able to offer/have another child if required. The fee, fostering allowance and any enhancement will not be affected no matter how long the holiday is.

A Holiday/Short Break Request Form and Essential Information Sheet must be sent to Placement Duty Worker as soon as possible to enable Short Break/holiday placement to be arranged with another Foster Carer.

Only in cases where the Fostering Service are unable to arrange a suitable holiday carer; following the submission of a Holiday/Short Break Request Form and Essential Information Sheet then the holiday payment will be made to a Foster Carer where no actual holiday break has been taken.

### **Carer Short breaks - (Note this can only be arranged via the Fostering Service)**

Short breaks must form part of the Care Plan for the child. A Short break is only for a period of up to two nights and three days, any longer and it is considered as holiday. The Foster Carer receiving short break fee will not be affected

Short break: where fee is not affected, can only be agreed where a child is in a fostering arrangement and the demands of this arrangement require the Foster Carer to need a break. A short break is not available to supplement holiday entitlements.

The fostering allowance (excluding clothing element) for the child will be reduced by 1/7<sup>th</sup> per night and will be paid to the short break carer.



Should Short break episodes exceed 4 times per year the fee and fostering allowance may be deducted

The Carer offering the short break will receive the full fostering allowance payment minus clothing element per night applicable to the child's age and pro rata fee appropriate to their own band level.

### **Children Placed with Carers and attending Residential School**

There are cases where a child placed with Foster Carers attends a residential school. The time spent by the child at either school or with their Carers varies from child to child as do the parenting responsibilities undertaken by the Carer.

The Foster Carer will receive the full allowance and fee if they are providing the main care for the child regardless of the number of days the child spends at the residential school; as it is acknowledged that the Carer will be undertaking full and active parenting responsibilities, e.g. the provision of clothing, attendance at parents' evenings, caring for the child if he/she is ill, during school holidays etc.

Where a child spends part of the time at school and part of the time with their Carers, but the Carer is not taking full parental responsibilities, the Carer will only receive fees and allowances for the time the child is in placement with them.

### **Out of School Schemes**

An EASE card entitles a child or young person to access many out of school schemes without charge.

Any cost of Out of School Schemes because of Foster Carers' unavailability due to working as well as fostering is the sole responsibility of the Carer.

### **Short Break Services for Children with Disabilities**

Carers providing short breaks for children with disabilities receive a daily payment of:

- Up to 5 hours                                £15
- Up to 12 hours                                £23

Overnight payments will be paid in the event the child receives overnight care (and in this instance the day care rate will not apply) this payment is based on the age-related allowance per child and the fostering fee (per night) based on the carers assessed skills to payment rate.

### **Fostering Allowance Overpayment**

The fostering allowance in respect of a child ceases on the day they leave the foster home. On occasions, due to our finance systems and frequency of payments, an overpayment can happen, particularly when the end of an arrangement has not been foreseen. Where the Foster Carer continues to receive payments after a child has left their care, they should contact the placement duty worker immediately and make arrangements to repay the monies.

Any overpayments must be repaid. Overpayments will either be deducted from the carers ongoing allowances, or an invoice will be raised to request full settlement. Carers who become aware they are being overpaid should inform the Finance Department. Where payments are made to those who are no longer caring, an invoice will be raised to recover the overpayment. In the event we are unable to reclaim the overpayment, the matter will be passed to the Credit Control and Debt Recovery team.

### **Luggage**

No child should ever leave a Foster Carer's home with their belongings in bin bags. Carers are required to purchase an appropriate bag(s) to move the child's belongings from the weekly Fostering Allowance.

### **Foster Carer's Responsibilities**

All Foster Carers have a responsibility to maintain accurate financial records for all finances received in respect of a child. It is appropriate for this information to be recorded in the daily recording sheets provided for each child in care.

Clothing – Carers must keep receipts for all clothing purchased from the Fostering Allowance payment. In doing so, Carers will be able to provide evidence of monies spent in response to complaints or concerns.

Receipts must be provided for all additional payments as North Tyneside Council has a duty to provide evidence of spending for audit purposes. Before

any claims are made in respect of benefits for a Child in Care, the Foster Carer must discuss their wish to claim the benefit with both the Supervising Social Worker and the child's Social Worker. If as a result of the original claim subsequent benefits become payable, the Foster Carer must inform their Supervising Social Worker immediately of all benefits at their outset.

### **Disability Living Allowance/ PIP (including Mobility Allowance) and Invalid Care Allowance**

Foster Carers who look after a disabled child on a long-term basis may be eligible to claim these allowances. Foster carers who offer short break care to a disabled child do not receive Disability Living Allowance as this remains with the child's parents.

Disability Living Allowance/ PIP is paid to the Foster Carers for children aged 3-16. The allowance must be spent as stipulated in the children's care plan. Once a young person reaches the age of 16, the allowance is theirs, where the young person is not able to control the expenditure of this money by him or herself, the Foster Carer should be able to account for the expenditure and records must be kept. Once the young person is 18 this money will be taken into account to determine their contribution to various services.

Foster Carers should discuss applying for Disability Living Allowance and Invalid Care Allowance/ PIP with the Supervising Social Worker.

The Foster Carer should set up a bank account in their name for the specific purpose of managing the child's DLA/ PIP and any other financial support and in order to provide an audit trail of income and expenditure.

### **Eligibility for a Junior ISA**

- The Junior ISA for Children in Care scheme replaces the support previously provided through the Child's Trust Funds (CTFs).
- If a child was born between 1st September 2002 and 2nd January 2011 and became a Child in Care then they would have benefitted from a Child Trust Fund and are not eligible for a Junior ISA.

- A child was born on or after 3rd January 2011 and has been made Looked After for a continuous period of more than 12 months or more are entitled to a £200 payment from the Government into a Junior ISA.
- If a child was born prior to 1st September 2002 they would not have had a Child Trust Fund. However, if they subsequently became a Child in Care for a continuous period of 12 months on or after 3rd January 2011 they would be eligible for a Junior ISA.

Further advice and information can be accessed from the following government website

### [Junior ISA Information](#)

#### **Income Tax**

All Foster Carers should register for tax purposes. You could be exempt from tax on all of your fostering income, depending on:

- How many children you look after;
- Whether or not it is a full tax year;
- Whether or not there are other Foster Carers in the same household.

Foster Carers are self-employed and as a result do not receive a P60 at the end of the financial year. A weekly payment remittance and an annual payment statement are provided; itemising all payments made. You should keep this information as a record for income tax purposes.

Please see: [Foster Carers Relief Information \(HMRC\)](#)

#### **Claiming Benefits**

Foster Carers are not entitled to claim for any child related benefits other than DLA.

Under the current system, allowances and fees received by Foster Carers in return for fostering are fully disregarded for the purposes of calculating entitlement to means tested benefits for the purposes of calculating income related benefits for the adult, foster children are not included in the benefit assessment.

For further information please visit: [Benefits for foster carers](#)

## **Pensions**

If you foster you may be eligible for [National Insurance Credits](#) which count towards your State Pension. Your Supervising Social Worker will be happy to provide you with a letter to confirm your approved fostering status if required.

# North Tyneside Council

## Foster Carer Payment Guide

**Date:** April 2024 **Version:** 5 **Author:** C Brownlee

Foster Carers Payment Guide – April 2024 V.5



North Tyneside Council

## Contents

	<b>Page</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Principles of Payment to Foster Carers</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Fostering Fees</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Fostering Allowance</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Foster Children Aged 16+</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Pocket Money</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Additional Allowances</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Staying Put / Shared Lives</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>School Organised Holidays and Trips</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Emergency Clothing</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>School Uniform</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Insurance Claims</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Outreach / Babysitting</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Equipment / Furniture</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Ethnic, Racial and Cultural Costs</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Travel and Transport</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Mileage Allowance / Transport Expenses</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Family Time Facilitation</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Carers' Own Holidays</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Carer Respite</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Children Placed with Carers who Attend Residential Schools</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Out of School Schemes</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Short Break Services for Children with Disabilities</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Fostering Allowance Overpayment</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Luggage</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Foster Carer's Responsibilities</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Disability Living Allowance</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Junior ISA Eligibility</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Paying Income Tax</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Claiming Benefits</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Pensions</b>	<b>20</b>

## **Introduction**

This guide is for Foster Carers, Supervising Social Workers and other staff members involved in the supervision of children in fostering arrangements.

This guide outlines the nature and details of payments to be made to Foster Carers. Please ensure that you read and understand this guidance. Advice on any aspect of the fees and allowances is available from your Supervising Social Worker.

Payments of fees, allowances, premiums and other payments to foster carers are made through the Authority's ContrOCC system and must be authorised by the Fostering Services Team Managers.

Payments are paid directly into a nominated bank account weekly; one week in arrears.

If you have any queries about fees allowances or if you think you have been under or over paid, contact the Fostering Service as soon as possible.

## **Principles of Payment to Foster Carers**

The following principles underpin the payment scheme:

- It is simple, fair and easy to understand
- It enables North Tyneside Council to be competitive with other local authorities and local independent fostering agencies
- It recognises the complex task of fostering children
- The care payment will meet the Department for Education's national minimum fostering allowance

Payments to Carers are divided into two categories:

- Fees
- Allowances

## **Fostering Fees**

All Foster Carers who have been approved and trained (completed and maintained skills training) are paid at the appropriate accredited band. Fees



are paid on top of fostering allowances to recognise a Foster Carers' time, skills and experience.

Continuous professional development is a requirement for all Foster Carers; non-compliance within each twelve-month annual review period, will result in the fee not being paid the following year. Joint carers will both be expected to engage in this process.

From November 2019 Foster Carers will receive payments based on the fostering framework outlined below:

**Pre-Accredited Carer** – If a child is placed with you under Regulation 24 Care Planning, Placement and Review (England) Regulations 2010 a weekly fostering allowance per child will be paid.

**Accredited Carer** – Once you are approved as a Foster Carer in accordance with Regulation 27 of the Fostering Services (England) Regulation 2011 and have completed the relevant skills to Foster Training you will qualify for a fee by fulfilling the requirements for all foster carers as detailed in the Fostering Framework.

**Advanced Carer** – Foster Carers who have attended training and are assessed as having demonstrated their ability to offer care to children and young people assessed as having complex needs, including (not exclusively) UAAS children, children with complex health and/or behavioural needs.

**Specialist Carer** – Foster Carers who have attended training and are assessed as able to demonstrate their ability to meet the needs of children and young people who may display significantly challenging behaviour or needs that might otherwise require residential child care.

Skills and competencies will be assessed annually at Foster Care review to ensure all training requirements are complete and skills are maintained.

**Table 1**

<b>Band Levels</b>	<b>Fees</b>
Band 1 – Pre-Accredited	£0
Band 2 – Accredited Carer	£110.00
Band 3 – Advanced Carer	£380.00
Band 4 – Specialist Carer	£550.00

**Table 2**

<b>Additional Premiums – per child</b>	<b>Fees</b>
Siblings (2 <sup>nd</sup> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> child only)	£75.00
Disability	£50.00
Mother & Baby (only mother CiC)	£90.00
Out of Hours care arrangement starting	£50 (one off)

Fees are paid 52 weeks per year and are payable for the first two weeks of any holiday taken without the Child in Care.

Foster Carers who are undergoing an investigation that prevents them having children within their care will continue to be paid a fee (but not the child related allowance) until the investigation is completed.

### **Fostering Allowances**

All Foster Carers who are 'approved' (including those subject to on-going assessment) will be paid the child age related allowance.

Fostering allowance will be paid from the day a child is placed with you until the day the child leaves your care.

Allowances are remuneration and reimbursement payments. They are paid to cover the daily costs of caring for a child or young person and other payments are made to cover specific costs incurred.

**Table 3 – Fostering Allowances 2024-2025**

<b>Age</b>	<b>Weekly Fostering Allowance</b>
0 – 4	<b>£170.00</b>
5– 10	<b>£187.00</b>
11 – 15	<b>£213.00</b>
To Carer for 16+	<b>£249.00</b>

The Foster Carer weekly allowance is intended to cover the average costs of looking after a child as part of the Foster Carer’s family. No specified amounts for particular items are given since expenditure will vary from one foster household to another. The fostering allowance is designed to cover the following costs: –

- Food and accommodation (including a contribution towards heating and lighting costs);
- Clothing;
- Pocket money;
- Transport usually associated with any child living in a family including to and from a local school and out-of-school activities;
- Leisure activities;
- Keeping a record of events and memories about the child;
- School meals.

### **Foster Children aged 16+**

The Foster Carer receives an allowance of £249.00 with an additional weekly payment of £15 being made directly to the young person; to be used for pocket money.

From the 1<sup>st</sup> September following a young person becoming 16 years old the allowances for 16+ will be initiated. As part of the Staying Put Scheme financial support with holidays, birthday and Christmas will continue.

Should a young person remain in your care under staying put arrangements and no other young people requiring a fostering care arrangement are being placed with you, than all carers will receive the accredited carer fee of £110 per week until the end of this staying put arrangement. Should you continue to

provide additional care arrangements to children requiring Foster Care your fee will remain on the band that you have been assessed to receive.

The Fostering Network previously considered the various components of the weekly allowance. The table below shows how the weekly basic allowance breaks down under various component headings. Foster Carers may find the information useful.

**Table 5 (correct at April 2015)**

Age	Food	Clothing	Transport	Personal	Household	Total
0-4	34%	22%	8%	6%	30%	100%
5-10	32%	26%	7%	8%	27%	100%
11-15	32%	26%	11%	10%	21%	100%
16+	32%	26%	8%	16%	18%	100%

### Pocket Money

The weekly fostering allowance contains a personal element, which is predominantly viewed as pocket money. It is expected that all foster children will receive pocket money. Young people and children should be generally free to choose how they spend the pocket money allowance and must not be expected to pay for basic living or accommodation costs. The pocket money allowance can be given to the child as cash each week, or some can be given to the child and the rest saved. Supervising Social Workers will discuss pocket money allowance and how this is given within Supervisory visits.

**Table 6 - outlines the age-related recommended pocket money allowance.**

Age	Amount per week
5- 9	£5
10-12	£6
13-14	£8
15	£10
16+ (Paid directly to the young person)	£15

Foster Carers must open bank accounts for young people who have been in their care for 4 weeks or more. The bank account needs to be opened in the child/young person’s name and handed over to the Social Worker once the child leaves your care. Saved pocket money should go with the child if they have to move carers or if they return home. Table 5 outlines the age-related minimum recommended pocket money allowance. Foster Carers can pay more than this if they wish but should discuss this with their Supervising Social Worker.

### Additional Allowances

In addition, payment equivalent to four week’s age-related fostering allowance is payable annually towards the cost of birthdays, Christmas/religious festival and holiday costs; as outlined in the table below:

**Table 4**

Age	Birthday	Christmas / Festivals	Holidays (2 weeks)
0 -4	£170	£170	£170 x 2
5 - 10	£187	£187	£187 x 2
11 - 15	£213	£213	£213 x 2
16+	£249	£249	£249 x 2

**Birthday Allowance** - A payment equivalent to one week’s age-related fostering allowance is automatically paid prior to the child’s birthday. This payment will only be made once annually.

**Christmas / Festivals** - An annual celebration or festival allowance is linked to child’s cultural heritage. This payment is equivalent to one week’s age-related fostering allowance and is automatically paid prior to the child’s selected annual celebration.

**Holiday Allowance** - Each Foster Carer receives a payment equivalent to two weeks’ age-related fostering allowance; prior to the summer holidays. The holiday allowance is paid to allow Carers to take a child on holiday or to be used for holiday activities.

**Note:** We will not support any Child in Care being taken on holiday during school term time. A Foster Carer, in common with other parents and carers must ensure that all children in care attend school during the school term.

Holiday payment is made automatically 28 days before the summer holidays start; payment may be requested at an earlier date to pay towards an earlier holiday.

Where a child's care arrangement changes, following a holiday payment being made and before the school holiday begins, the full allowance will be required to be repaid. Where a Foster Carer has taken a child on holiday earlier in the financial year; evidence of spending will be required.

Foster Carers can claim for the cost incurred in purchasing a passport for the child and any visa, which may be required for holiday travel. Advice regarding how to arrange reimbursement of this expenditure is available from the child's Social Worker.

### **Staying Put / Shared Lives**

Staying Put is to enable young people to stay with their Foster Carers post 18, up until their 21st birthday. Young people who are assessed as needing a service from adults' social care can access the shared lives scheme run by adult services. This may meet the young person's needs more fully than staying put and should be considered. The shared lives scheme will run for as long as they are assessed as needing it, rather than ending at 21 years old as Staying Put does.

Staying Put is to develop skills for adulthood, improve self-care skills, enhance life skills, improve social resilience, enhance employability and protect against vulnerability. The idea is that at 21 years old, the young person would be able to move on into their own living arrangement or tenancy.

### **School Organised Holidays and Trips**

Though the Council recognises the benefits to children and young people of participating in the above; where funding of such events is deemed difficult, this must be discussed with the child's school and Social Worker to ensure all funding avenues are appropriately explored. Please note costs cannot be met retrospectively.

## **Activities and Interests**

Children are encouraged to enjoy out of school activities which enrich their leisure and play. Examples have been drama, horse riding, singing, instrument lessons, sport, swimming, dance and arts and crafts. These costs should be met through the child's weekly allowance; however, where additional costs are expected, additional funding can be sought through the child's social worker via Pupil Premium Plus. Please note costs cannot be met retrospectively.

## **Emergency Clothing**

A child or young person who arrives in a new foster care arrangement without adequate clothing is likely to incur additional clothing costs. A Foster Carer can claim a clothing allowance at the commencement of the new care episode starting for a child who has recently entered foster care up to a maximum equivalent of £50 (0-4), £75 (5-10), £100 (11+).

The Social Worker will endeavour to get clothes from the child's home and the above allowance is intended to provide essential items whilst this happens. Any monies spent over the maximum age-related allowance, will not be reimbursed and should be subtracted from the first Fostering Allowance payment.

## **School Uniform**

A Foster Carer is expected to consider a school uniform for a child who has recently commenced at a new school as part of the clothing allowance. For planned changes in school uniform, for example in moving from lower to upper school, it is expected that Foster Carers will budget accordingly.

## **Insurance Claims**

Foster Carers are required to inform their Home, Building and Contents and Car insurance company once they have been approved as a Foster Carer. It is important that you inform them about the numbers of children and age ranges you expect to care for. You should ask the insurance companies for written confirmation that they have included foster children on your policies.

**Damage to a Vehicle** – Where a vehicle has been damaged by a fostered child and requires repair, the Fostering Service should be notified as soon as practicable. Damage excludes normal wear and tear of a vehicle in the course of fostering activity. Evidence that damage was caused by a fostered child may be required. Upon acceptance by the Service that the damage was caused by

a fostered child, the Service will work with the Foster Carer to agree the most cost-effective resolution to the damage caused. For vehicle damage ordinarily the Foster Carer will be required to claim the costs of the repair through their own insurance for the vehicle. Where the Foster Carer is liable under their policy to pay an insurance excess, upon written proof of the requirement, the Local Authority will pay the full amount of the excess. Exceptionally, if the value of the damage is independently verified as less than the excess payment, then the relevant Senior Manager may decide to pay the costs associated with repairing the damage caused. Likewise, where an insurance company will not cover the costs of damage then, upon written proof of the refusal, the relevant Senior Manager will consider whether the Foster Carer is provided with some or all of the costs associated with repairing the damage caused.

**Damage to Equipment and/or Household Goods** - Where equipment or household goods have been damaged by a fostered child and require repair or replacement, the Fostering Service should be notified as soon as practicable. Damage excludes normal wear and tear of items in the course of fostering activity. Evidence that damage was caused by a fostered child may be required. Upon acceptance by the Service that the damage was caused by a fostered child, the Service will work with the Foster Carer to agree the most cost-effective resolution to the damage caused. This will depend on the value of the damage and the timeliness of replacement or repair. The relevant Senior Manager will determine whether:

- a) The Foster Carer must claim the costs of repair or replacement of the item through their own home contents insurance. Where the Foster Carer is liable under their policy to pay an insurance excess, upon written proof of the requirement, the Local Authority will pay the full amount of the excess.
- b) The full or partial cost of replacement of the item will be paid by the Local Authority
- c) The full or partial cost of repair of the item will be paid by the Local Authority

**Damage to Fabric of the Home** - Where the fabric of a home has been damaged by a fostered child and requires repair, the Fostering Service should be notified as soon as practicable. Damage excludes normal wear and tear of the home in the course of fostering activity. Evidence that damage was caused by a fostered child may be required. Upon acceptance by the Service that the damage was caused by a fostered child, the Service will work with the Foster



Carer to agree the most cost-effective resolution to the damage caused. This will depend on the value of the damage and the timeliness of repair. The relevant Senior Manager will determine whether:

- a) The Foster Carer must claim the costs of repair through their own home insurance. Where the Foster Carer is liable under their policy to pay an insurance excess, upon written proof of the requirement, the Local Authority will pay the full amount of the excess.
- b) The full or partial cost of repair will be paid by the Local Authority

## **Baby Sitting**

Additional Day Care of a child/young person in foster care; to cover for example, attendance at a training event or meetings is paid at a rate of £5 per hour.

## **Outreach**

When the Fostering Service request support from alternative Foster Carers, to those the young person lives with, in line with a young person's plan. This support can be either overnight or care through the day for those children and young people with additional and or complex behaviours.

This support will be paid at a rate of £13 per hour for the hours 7am till 11pm. Should the support include overnight outside of the carers home, a payment of £30 will be made. Should the overnight support be within your own home, then the usual short break payments will be made.

## **Equipment and Furniture**

Foster carers may need additional furniture and equipment before having children in care placed with them. This may include beds, bedding, storage for clothes, car seats, baby equipment (where applicable). Once approved as a Foster Carer, North Tyneside Council will provide following per child if required:

Table 7 - outlines the maximum amount paid towards the purchase of equipment

Bed and mattress	up to £135
Bunkbed	Up to £220
Wardrobe	up to £ 70
Set of drawers	up to £ 40
Pram	up to £150
Car Seat	up to £100
Stair Gate	up to £ 25
Replacement Cot Mattress (new placement under 1's)	up to £ 50

This is the maximum amount and receipts must be provided.

There is scope for Carers to purchase their choice of item and have the option to pay the difference.

Each Foster Carer is responsible for ensuring that any car seats used by them are appropriate for the age/weight of the child using it and the car in which the car seat is fixed. Foster Carers are to seek advice from appropriate retailers.

All of these items will belong to North Tyneside Council and can be transferred if not in use and will be removed when a Carer stops fostering for North Tyneside Council.

### **Costs related to faith**

There may be specific expenses that arise because of a child or young person's cultural or ethnic background. These expenses should be discussed with the Supervising Social Worker and agreement sought by the Team Manager prior to spend.

### **Travel and Transport**

The basic fostering allowance includes an element for travelling costs, which are part of the normal pattern of expenditure incurred in the care of the child. Travel and transport arrangements are expected to be discussed as part of the initial planning of all placements. Where circumstances change significantly then Foster Carers are expected to discuss those changes with their fostering Supervising Social Worker.

There is general assumption that children in care and Foster Carers will undertake most journeys in their day-to-day fostering lives, by walking, cycling, and using public transport or in the foster family's car. The cost of local and family journeys are included as part of the weekly fostering allowance.

It is assumed that young people aged 12 and over will make use of public transport where necessary for school and leisure activities. It is expected that these costs are met as part of the weekly fostering allowance. If a child has additional needs, then by prior agreement there may be alteration to the transport requirements of the child.

### **Mileage Allowance**

A Foster Carer may request reimbursement of their mileage allowance for all journeys related to the child, which are above and beyond family journeys. This is paid at 42 pence per mile. Mileage claims must be submitted monthly to the Fostering Service.

The following are either reimbursed at the Foster Carer mileage rate of 42 pence per mile or full reimbursement of public transport costs (all receipts to accompany claim).

- Travel to and from the school where the Foster Carer takes a child unable to travel alone.
- Transport to and from family time.
- Attendance at meetings.
- The cost of travel to and from hospital/medical where the Foster Carer takes the child.
- Training Courses and support groups.

Mileage, tunnel and bus fares claims must be submitted on an Expenses Claim Form.

All claims must be submitted within one month of the date the expenses were incurred and in the case of the end of the financial year they must be submitted no later than one week after the 31<sup>st</sup> March. Any claims made after this date will not be paid.

## **Family Time Facilitation**

A Foster Carer may claim the reasonable costs incurred to facilitate young people maintaining and promoting family time with their parents, siblings or other significant family members.

Foster Carers who supervise a child's family time must have attended the Supervised Family Time training. Foster Carers must appropriately complete the supervision form (duplicating) in the Supervising Family Time book and provide the original top copy to the Social Worker for child's file.

Foster Carers who supervise family time can claim additional payments of:

- £15 for up to 5 hours per week of supervised family time
- £25 for up to 10 hours per week of supervised family time
- £50 for up 11 hours or more per week of supervised family time

To claim family time expenses a 'Weekly Claim for Foster Care Childminding/ family time' should be completed and submitted to Supervising Social Worker. Claims must be submitted within one month of the date of the family time and in the case of the end of the financial year they must be submitted no later than one week after the 31<sup>st</sup> March. Claims submitted after this date will not be paid.

Foster Carers cannot be reimbursed for hospitality expenses from the Fostering Service for those having family time with the child, i.e. parent. Where family time is supervised in the community, Foster Carers are expected to utilise free venues (Max Cards can be used for this purpose).

## **Carers' Own Holidays**

If a Foster Carer wishes to take a holiday without the child(ren) they have in their care with them, they may take up to two weeks per year without loss of their fee; specialist carers may take up to 4 weeks per year. They will also retain the clothing element of the Fostering Allowance applicable to the age of the child.

Short Break carers receive a pro rata fee appropriate to their own band level when child is in their care.

Where a Foster Carer is in receipt of the £50 disability premium; this will transfer to the carer offering the holiday placement.

For any period in excess of their holiday entitlement the Foster Carer will not receive their fee.

Where a Foster Carer proposes the child in their care be cared for by a relative or friend; the person being proposed to provide the holiday care must have a current DBS disclosure alongside a backup carers assessment and be cleared by the Fostering Team Manager as being suitable.

Where the person proposed to care for the child is already an approved North Tyneside Council Foster Carer; they are still expected to be able to offer/have another child if required. The fee, fostering allowance and any enhancement will not be affected no matter how long the holiday is.

A Holiday/Short Break Request Form and Essential Information Sheet must be sent to Placement Duty Worker as soon as possible to enable Short Break/holiday placement to be arranged with another Foster Carer.

Only in cases where the Fostering Service are unable to arrange a suitable holiday carer; following the submission of a Holiday/Short Break Request Form and Essential Information Sheet then the holiday payment will be made to a Foster Carer where no actual holiday break has been taken.

### **Carer Short breaks - (Note this can only be arranged via the Fostering Service)**

Short breaks must form part of the Care Plan for the child. A Short break is only for a period of up to two nights and three days, any longer and it is considered as holiday. The Foster Carer receiving short break fee will not be affected

Short break: where fee is not affected, can only be agreed where a child is in a fostering arrangement and the demands of this arrangement require the Foster Carer to need a break. A short break is not available to supplement holiday entitlements.

The fostering allowance (excluding clothing element) for the child will be reduced by 1/7<sup>th</sup> per night and will be paid to the short break carer.

Should Short break episodes exceed 4 times per year the fee and fostering allowance may be deducted

The Carer offering the short break will receive the full fostering allowance payment minus clothing element per night applicable to the child's age and pro rata fee appropriate to their own band level.

**Children Placed with Carers and attending Residential School**

There are cases where a child placed with Foster Carers attends a residential school. The time spent by the child at either school or with their Carers varies from child to child as do the parenting responsibilities undertaken by the Carer.

The Foster Carer will receive the full allowance and fee if they are providing the main care for the child regardless of the number of days the child spends at the residential school; as it is acknowledged that the Carer will be undertaking full and active parenting responsibilities, e.g. the provision of clothing, attendance at parents' evenings, caring for the child if he/she is ill, during school holidays etc.

Where a child spends part of the time at school and part of the time with their Carers, but the Carer is not taking full parental responsibilities, the Carer will only receive fees and allowances for the time the child is in placement with them.

**Out of School Schemes**

An EASE card entitles a child or young person to access many out of school schemes without charge.

Any cost of Out of School Schemes because of Foster Carers' unavailability due to working as well as fostering is the sole responsibility of the Carer.

**Short Break Services for Children with Disabilities**

Carers providing short breaks for children with disabilities receive a daily payment of:

- Up to 5 hours                            £15
- Up to 12 hours                           £23

Overnight payments will be paid in the event the child receives overnight care (and in this instance the day care rate will not apply) this payment is based on the age-related allowance per child and the fostering fee (per night) based on the carers assessed skills to payment rate.

### **Fostering Allowance Overpayment**

The fostering allowance in respect of a child ceases on the day they leave the foster home. As a result of the necessity to process payments and to avoid delay in payments to Foster Carers, there is sometimes a risk of overpayment to Foster Carers, particularly when the end of an arrangement has not been foreseen. Where the Foster Carer continues to receive payments after a child has left their care, they should contact the placement duty worker immediately.

Any overpayments must be repaid. Overpayments will either be deducted from on-going allowances or an invoice will be sent for full settlement. Foster Carers who become aware they are being overpaid should inform the Finance Department. In the event we are unable to reclaim the overpayment the matter will be passed to the Credit Control and Debt Recovery team.

### **Luggage**

No child should ever leave a Foster Carer's home with their belongings in bin bags. Carers are required to purchase an appropriate bag(s) to move the child's belongings from the weekly Fostering Allowance.

### **Foster Carer's Responsibilities**

All Foster Carers have a responsibility to maintain accurate financial records for all finances received in respect of a child. It is appropriate for this information to be recorded in the daily recording sheets provided for each child in care.

Clothing – Carers must keep receipts for all clothing purchased from the Fostering Allowance payment. In doing so, Carers will be able to provide evidence of monies spent in response to complaints or concerns.

Receipts must be provided for all additional payments as North Tyneside Council has a duty to provide evidence of spending for audit purposes. Before any claims are made in respect of benefits for a Child in Care, the Foster Carer must discuss their wish to claim the benefit with both the Supervising Social Worker and the child's Social Worker. If as a result of the original claim

subsequent benefits become payable, the Foster Carer must inform their Supervising Social Worker immediately of all benefits at their outset.

### **Disability Living Allowance/ PIP (including Mobility Allowance) and Invalid Care Allowance**

Foster Carers who look after a disabled child on a long-term basis may be eligible to claim these allowances. Foster carers who offer short break care to a disabled child do not receive Disability Living Allowance as this remains with the child's parents.

Disability Living Allowance/ PIP is paid to the Foster Carers for children aged 3-16. The allowance must be spent as stipulated in the children's care plan. Once a young person reaches the age of 16, the allowance is theirs, where the young person is not able to control the expenditure of this money by him or herself, the Foster Carer should be able to account for the expenditure and records must be kept. Once the young person is 18 this money will be taken into account to determine their contribution to various services.

Foster Carers should discuss applying for Disability Living Allowance and Invalid Care Allowance/ PIP with the Supervising Social Worker.

The Foster Carer should set up a bank account in their name for the specific purpose of managing the child's DLA/ PIP and any other financial support and in order to provide an audit trail of income and expenditure.

### **Eligibility for a Junior ISA**

- The Junior ISA for Children in Care scheme replaces the support previously provided through the Child's Trust Funds (CTFs).
- If a child was born between 1st September 2002 and 2nd January 2011 and became a Child in Care then they would have benefitted from a Child Trust Fund and are not eligible for a Junior ISA.
- A child was born on or after 3rd January 2011 and has been made Looked After for a continuous period of more than 12 months or more are entitled to a £200 payment from the Government into a Junior ISA.



- If a child was born prior to 1st September 2002 they would not have had a Child Trust Fund. However, if they subsequently became a Child in Care for a continuous period of 12 months on or after 3rd January 2011 they would be eligible for a Junior ISA.

Further advice and information can be accessed from the following government website

### [Junior ISA Information](#)

#### **Income Tax**

All Foster Carers should register for tax purposes. You could be exempt from tax on all of your fostering income, depending on:

- How many children you look after;
- Whether or not it is a full tax year;
- Whether or not there are other Foster Carers in the same household.

Foster Carers are self-employed and as a result do not receive a P60 at the end of the financial year. A weekly payment remittance and an annual payment statement are provided; itemising all payments made. You should keep this information as a record for income tax purposes.

Please see: [Foster Carers Relief Information \(HMRC\)](#)

#### **Claiming Benefits**

Foster Carers are not entitled to claim for any child related benefits other than DLA.

Under the current system, allowances and fees received by Foster Carers in return for fostering are fully disregarded for the purposes of calculating entitlement to means tested benefits for the purposes of calculating income related benefits for the adult, foster children are not included in the benefit assessment.

For further information please visit: [Benefits for foster carers](#)

#### **Pensions**

If you foster you may be eligible for [National Insurance Credits](#) which count towards your State Pension. Your Supervising Social Worker will be happy to provide you with a letter to confirm your approved fostering status if required.

**CHILD'S NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**CHILD'S SOCIAL WORKER:** \_\_\_\_\_

**NAME OF FOSTER CARER:** \_\_\_\_\_

**ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**WEEK ENDING SUNDAY:** \_\_\_\_\_

**CHILDMINDING/OUTERACH**  
**ACTUAL NUMBER OF HOURS CHILD ATTENDED**

	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN
NO OF HOURS							

**FAMILY TIME**  
**ACTUAL NUMBER OF HOURS CHILD ATTENDED**

	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN
NO OF HOURS							

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Approved by \_\_\_\_\_  
*Supervising Social Worker* *Team Manager - Fostering*

# North Tyneside Council Children's Services

## Fostering Service

### REQUEST FOR HOLIDAY/SHORT BREAK CARE

<b>Date of Request:</b>				
<b>Foster Carers Name</b>				
<b>Children:</b>	<b>Name:</b>			
	<b>DOB:</b>			
	<b>Name:</b>			
	<b>DOB:</b>			
	<b>Name:</b>			
	<b>DOB:</b>			
<b>Social Worker:</b>	<b>Name</b>			
	<b>Team</b>			
		<b>Is the Social Worker aware of this request?</b>		
		<b>Is the CIC aware of this request?</b>		
<b>INCLUSIVE HOLIDAY/SBC DATES:</b>		Day	Date	Time
		<b>FROM</b>	Monday	
		<b>TO</b>	Saturday	
			<b>Number of Nights</b>	

**Foster Carers Signature:**

**Date:**

**To be completed by PDW Fostering**

<b>Date Received By PDW</b>	
<b>Foster Carer Leave Sheet Updated</b>	
<b>Name of Identified Foster Carers</b>	
<b>Information Sent to SBC carers</b>	
<b>SBC Log updated</b>	
<b>Finance informed (note if minus Advise Finance)</b>	

**This sheet is blank**

## HOLIDAY/SBC FOR FOSTER CARERS INFORMATION SHEET

(This form is to be fully completed by the Foster Carers and Returned to the Fostering Placement Duty Worker.  
PLEASE NOTE: Incomplete Forms will not be accepted)

<b>Children:</b>	Name:	
	DOB:	
	School/Nursery	
	Start & End Time	
	Travel arrangements to school/Nursery	
	Name:	
	DOB:	
	School/Nursery	
	Start & End Time	
	Travel arrangements to school/Nursery	
	Name:	
	DOB:	
	School/Nursery	
	Start & End Time	
	Travel arrangements to school/Nursery	

### Current Foster Carer(s):

Name	
Address	
Telephone Number	

### Child/rens Family Details

Parents Names	
Parents Address	
Parents Telephone Number	
Siblings Names:	
Siblings Address:	

### FAMILY TIME ARRANGEMENTS

**Include as much detail as possible of family time arrangements with family and friends with places/people child should not be in family time with.**

		Who with
<b>Monday</b> Date	Who is Family time with? Venue? Time? Who transports child to family time? Who picks up child from family time? Who supervises Family time?	
<b>Tuesday</b> Date	Who is Family time with? Venue? Time? Who transports child to family time? Who picks up child from family time? Who supervises Family time?	
<b>Wednesday</b> Date	Who is Family time with? Venue? Time? Who transports child to family time? Who picks up child from family time? Who supervises Family time?	
<b>Thursday</b> Date	Who is Family time with? Venue? Time? Who transports child to family time? Who picks up child from family time? Who supervises Family time?	
<b>Friday</b> Date	Who is Family time with? Venue? Time? Who transports child to family time? Who picks up child from family time? Who supervises Family time?	

<b>Child's Social Worker</b> Name and Family time Telephone Number	
<b>Child/ren's GP</b> Name and Family time Telephone Number	
<b>Medication</b> Please list all medication take by child/ren	
<b>Allergies:</b>	
<b>Religion</b> Practising/Non Practising	

<b>Cultural needs</b>	
<b>Can the child/ren live with a foster carer with pets?</b> Please give as much information as possible.	
<b>Dietary needs</b>	
<b>Does the child/ren sleep in a bed/bunkbed or cot?</b>	
<b>Brief Details of any Routines</b>	
<b>Any planned activities during short break/holiday period.</b> Please include as much information as possible including dates times, transport arrangement etc	
<b>Likes</b>	
<b>Dislikes</b>	
<b>Will child/ren / Young person be given pocket money?</b>	
<b>Any other information that should be taking into account when service identify a suitable short break carer</b>	

### **Risk Factors**

**(Please provide details of any behaviours listed below that are features of the child/young persons life)**

<b>Allegations</b>	
<b>Absconding</b>	
<b>Alcohol Use</b>	
<b>Drug Use</b>	
<b>Sexual Abuse</b>	
<b>Safety Risk to Self</b>	
<b>Stealing/Theft</b>	

--	--

<b>Safety risk to other children</b>	
<b>Safety risk to adults</b>	
<b>Use of internet and social media.</b>	
<b>ANY OTHER INFORMATION</b>	

**To be undertaken by the Foster Carer offering the arrangement**

As the short break care/holiday foster carer please keep a record of the medication issued during the time caring for child and return this to the main Foster Carer at the end of the arrangement.

*Example of what you should include in your record:*

<b>Date</b>	<b>Name of Medication</b>	<b>Dose</b>	<b>Time Given</b>	<b>Comments e.g. given late, child refused to take, any reactions</b>	<b>Carer(s) Signature</b>



**Medication Hand Over**

**THIS FORM SHOULD BE COMPLETED BY THE MAIN FOSTER CARER.**

**PLEASE DETACHED THIS SHEET AND HAND IT TO THE SHORT BREAK CARE/HOLIDAY FOSTER CARER AT THE START OF THE ARRANGEMENT WITH THE MEDICATION.**

Name of Medication and name of child	Strength & Form (e.g. tabs, inhaler, liquid, cream etc.)	Amount handed over	Dose to be given	Route to be given (eg oral, topical, inhaled etc.)	When to be given
<i>Example</i> Sodium Valporate(Epilim)  (name of Child)	200mg Tablet	26 tablets	300mg (1 1/2 tablets)	By mouth	Twice daily (morning & evening)

**Signed:** .....(Signature)

.....(Print name)

.....(Date)

**Received by:** .....(Signature)

.....(Print name)

.....(Date)

**NORTH TYNESIDE COUNCIL**  
**HECS Directorate**

**MILEAGE EXPENSES**  
**CLAIM FORM**

**CLAIM FORMS TO BE SUBMITTED NO LESS THAN MONTHLY**

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_ **Address** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Child** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

<u>Date</u>	<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>	<u>Purpose of Journey</u>	<u>Total Miles</u>	<u>Bus/Tunnel</u>
<b>TOTAL OF CLAIM</b>					

**Signature of Claimant** .....

**Approved by SSW** .....

**Approved by Manager** .....

**NORTH TYNESIDE COUNCIL**  
**HECS Directorate**

**MILEAGE EXPENSES**  
**CLAIM FORM**

**CLAIM FORMS TO BE SUBMITTED NO LESS THAN MONTHLY**

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_ **Address** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Child** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

<u>Date</u>	<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>	<u>Purpose of Journey</u>	<u>Total Miles</u>	<u>Bus/Tunnel</u>
<b>TOTAL OF CLAIM</b>					

**Signature of Claimant** .....

**Approved by SSW** .....

**Approved by Manager** .....

**NORTH TYNESIDE COUNCIL  
HEALTH, EDUCATION, CARE & SAFEGUARDING DIRECTORATE  
FOSTERING SERVICE**

**SHORT BREAK CARE TIME SHEET/CLAIM FORM**

**NAME OF CHILD .....** **NAME OF SOCIAL WORKER .....**

**NAME OF FOSTER CARER .....**

DATE FROM	TIME	DATE TO	TIME	HOURS	FOR ADMIN PURPOSES

**I/we the undersigned hereby certify that I/we cared for the named child for the periods stated and incurred travelling expenses (as shown on separate expenses claim form)**

**Signed: .....** **Date: .....**

**Name and address of carer(s) (Please Print)**

.....  
.....

**PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED FORM by email to: [fostering@northtyneside.gov.uk](mailto:fostering@northtyneside.gov.uk)**  
**Or post to : LISA SMITH, FOSTERING SERVICE, QUADRANT EAST, 2<sup>ND</sup> FLOOR LEFT, NORTH TYNESIDE COUNCIL, COBALT BUSINESS PARK, NORTH TYNESIDE. NE27 0BY**

**FOR ADMIN PURPOSES :**  
**AUTHORISED FOR PAYMENT: \_\_\_\_\_ SIGNED**  
**DATED \_\_\_\_\_**

# DISABILITY LIVING ALLOWANCE

## POLICY AND GUIDANCE

### Contents

1. Introduction
2. Definition of additional needs
3. Claims for DLA
4. Foster Carers status as appointee
5. Using Disability Living Allowance
6. Managing Disability Living Allowance
7. Additional premiums for Foster Carers

### Introduction

Fostering a child on behalf of North Tyneside Council is an important and responsible role and children with a disability are perhaps some of the most vulnerable in our care.

As a Foster Carer, you make a wide variety of decisions on a day to day basis on behalf of your child. Management of your child in care's Disability Living Allowance is a small part of this. As with all things, good recording is important to evidence your practice and to safeguard both the child and you. This Disability Living Allowance Policy and Practice Guidance is to help you do this effectively.

Disability Living Allowance is a benefit paid to children and young people under 16-years old who have care or mobility needs as a result of a disability or ill-health and is paid on top of any benefits, tax credits or income carers may have.

Children and young people receiving Disability Living Allowance who reach 16-years old will be reassessed for either continued Disability Living Allowance or a [Personal Independence Payment](#), depending on which part of the United Kingdom they live in. Although eventually all Disability Living Allowance claimants will be reassessed for Personal Independence Payment, this is a similar benefit but is based on a different type of assessment.

The criteria for Disability Living Allowance is complicated and there are many organisations, including the department of work and pensions, which offer support and advice. <https://www.gov.uk/disability-living-allowance-children>

Full information about the criteria and current payment rates are available on the department for work and pension [website](#). If you think your foster child might qualify for Disability Living Allowance, you should discuss this with their Social Worker and your Fostering Social Worker. As a Foster Carer, if you submit a claim on behalf of a child in care, you must advise the child's Social Worker and Fostering Social Worker that this has been completed.

Disability Living Allowance and Personal Independence Payment are both non-means tested, tax-free benefits, which you do not have to declare on your tax return, as the benefit belongs to the child. Disability Living Allowance can't be back dated, and a claim usually takes approximately 40-days to process.

You can claim an additional benefit called [Carer's Allowance](#) if you care for a child who receives the middle or higher rate of the care component of Disability Living Allowance, or Personal Independence Payment - daily living component, as long as you care for them 35-hours a week, and you earn under £110 net per week, foster payments are ignored as earnings.

Your income from fostering is disregarded for calculating Carer's Allowance, but it is taxable, so you would need to declare it on your tax return. The payment of Disability Living Allowance and Carer's Allowance by the department for work and pension is over and above your fostering allowances.

### **Definition of Additional Needs**

To qualify for DLA, a child must need additional help, above those of an average child of the same age, during the day and/or with everyday living tasks such as:

- They must need care, attention or supervision because of a physical or emotional health condition;
- They must have needed this care, attention or supervision for at least three months, and be likely to need this care, attention or supervision for a further six months;
- They must need substantially more care, attention or supervision than other children of the same age who do not have a disability or health condition;

- They must have no immigration conditions attached to their stay in the UK subject to some exceptions (if they have immigration restrictions on their stay in the UK claiming benefits may affect their future right to remain in the UK, so seek specialist immigration advice before claiming).
- Note: If the child is terminally ill there are simpler rules which make it easier to apply.
- The child may need someone with them to:
  - Stop the child from hurting themselves, or other people, because of behavioural difficulties;
  - Protect the child from dangers of which the child is unaware;
  - Prevent accidents. Children with little road sense could be at risk out of doors. This could be the case with children with learning disabilities or children with autism;
  - Guide a hearing impaired or a partially sighted child to walk out of doors safely;
  - Support a child with mental health problems to avoid becoming anxious and panicky in group/crowd situations.

### **Claims for DLA**

- If a child is not already in receipt of DLA, upon the child's admission to foster care, a claim for DLA should always be considered, at the beginning of a foster placement, by the child's social worker in conjunction with the child's Foster Carer and supervising social worker.
- If a decision is made to make a claim for DLA, the Child's social worker should obtain an application form by making a telephone call to the Disability Living Allowance Helpline on 0800 121 4600 (textphone: 0800 121 4523).
- The child should have his/her own bank account into which the DLA should be paid. The Foster Carer(s) for the child should be named as the appointee for the account.



- Advice about completion of a claim can be sought of the child's social worker

### **Foster Carers status as appointee**

The department for work and pension requires for all children under the age of 16-years old to have a parent or guardian appointed to manage their Disability Living Allowance, even if they can manage their own affairs. Your role as Foster Carer is to act as the nominated appointee for your child in care.

The Disability Living Allowance, or Personal Independence Payment, should be paid directly into a bank account that is in the child's name. This should be a specific account that only the DLA or PIP is paid into. The Foster Carer will manage this account. Please note that the child should have a separate bank account for any pocket money or savings.

As the appointed person, you are considered by North Tyneside Council and the department for work and pension to be in a position of trust. The department for work and pension list the following as your key responsibilities:

- You **must always** act in the best interest of the child or young person when managing and spending the Disability Living Allowance money you receive for them;
- You **must** report any changes in the child's circumstances which could affect their entitlement to Disability Living Allowance;
- You **must** report any changes in your own circumstances which may affect your ability to act as an appointed person, for example, if the child or young person no longer lives with you;
- You **must not** take a fee or any payment from the Disability Living Allowance for acting as an appointed person.

### **Using Disability Living Allowance**

There are no conditions laid down by department for work and pension as to how the Disability Living Allowance should be spent. It is awarded to enhance the child's quality of life and to help with extra costs of caring for a sick or disabled child or young person.

The way in which you use a child or young person's Disability Living Allowance will depend on their individual needs and is to be agreed by the care team but should always support their practical and emotional needs.

It might be used in a wide variety of ways; the list below includes some possible uses:

- Outings and activities;
- Special toys and equipment not available through universal services;
- Extra costs involved in daily living, for example, laundry and heating expenses;
- Additional clothing and footwear for those children who need specialist provision or where there is heavy wear and tear;
- Special dietary requirements or allergy free products;
- Repair to property if caused by the child or young person;
- Looking after services or an extra helper for holidays or outings;
- Specialist holiday accommodation to allow the fostering family to go away with their child or young person;
- Appropriate use of the mobility component;
- Petrol costs or taxis;
- Adaptations to cars;
- Car seats;
- The full mobility component may be used to lease a Motability vehicle.

Disability Living Allowance is not to be used to fund support usually available through statutory services, for example, equipment or therapies normally provided by health, education or social services.

Nor should the Disability Living Allowance be used to fund placement support which would otherwise be provided through fostering services or the children's social work team, for example, to fund an assessed need for respite or transport to school or medical appointments.

Disability Living Allowance is not intended to be saved for the child or young person to use in later years as this could result in them being penalised if they need to apply for other benefits once they reach adulthood however, the benefit can be saved to fund larger specific items and activities which would benefit the child, for example, aids and adaptations not eligible for funding through universal services.

If you are considering spending a large amount on a specific item or activity you must discuss this with your Fostering Social Worker and the Child's Social Worker.

### **Managing Disability Living Allowance**

The Department for Work and Pension is responsible for monitoring the use of Disability Living Allowance and it is important that you as the appointee can give an account of how it is spent.

This will safeguard you from allegations of misappropriation and provide evidence for the Department for Work and Pension which may be needed at a future date, for example, if the child is reassessed or transferring from Disability Living Allowance to Personal Independence Payment.

To aid this, you are advised to set up a specific bank account in the child's own name for each individual child into which their Disability Living Allowance can be paid, this account will act as a record of expenditure.

Whilst Foster Carers cannot be expected to evidence exact use of funds in all situations, for example, contributions towards costs of household cleaning products for children with incontinence, it is expected that they will be able to identify expenditure on larger items and give a general picture of how the regular contributions towards household budgets are used. Receipts should be kept for larger items and recorded separately, so there is an ongoing account with dates, of how the Disability Living allowance has been used. This information might be requested by the Child's Social Worker, Independent Reviewing Officer or the Fostering Social Worker and discussed at Child in Care reviews.

If the child changes placement, it is expected that the bank account and any important documents associates with DLA is handed to the new carer.

- The Service Manager for the Fostering Service will be responsible for the overview regarding the claims and use of DLA.
- Children's Services Team Managers will be responsible for ensuring that Children's social workers are made aware of the policy and complete their duties within the policy.
- Supervising social workers will be responsible for ensuring that Foster Carers are aware of their duties within the policy.
- Independent Reviewing Officers will have an overview of DLA claims and its use within individual care plans for children and young people.

### **Additional premiums for Foster Carers**

If a Foster Carer is looking after a child who is currently receiving Disability Living Allowance, then the Foster Carer is entitled to a premium of £50. This premium is additional to the Foster Carers fee and is paid weekly to the carer.



North Tyneside Council

# Policy for the Calculation and Payment of Special Guardianship Allowances

Document Control	
Document Title	Policy for the Calculation and Payment of Special Guardianship Allowances
Service Area/s	Fostering Service
Version	3.0
Authors	Claire Brodie Senior Manager Children in Care, Carly Brownlee Team Manager Fostering Service
Owner	Julie Firth, Director of Children's Services
Date Revised	1 December 2022
Approval Process	Cabinet delegated authority to DCS, DCS Approval
Date to be Reviewed	01 December 2023
Date reviewed	01 September 2023
Expiry Date	01 September 2024

## Eligibility for Financial Support

1.1 A Special Guardianship Allowance (on-going financial support paid periodically to meet a need which is likely to give rise to recurring expenditure) will be payable where:

- The Council consider that it is necessary to ensure that the Special Guardian can look after the child; and/or
- The Council consider that the child's assessed needs require a greater expenditure of resources than would otherwise be the case because of his illness, disability, emotional or behavioural difficulties or the consequences of past abuse or neglect.

## Determination of Eligibility and Amount of Allowance

1.2 When considering providing financial support the Council will:

- Endeavour to ensure that the Special Guardian is aware of and taking advantage of all other benefits and tax credits (and any other grants, allowances or resources) available to them; and
- Consider the financial means of the Special Guardian; and
- Consider the financial needs and resources of the child.

- 1.3 When determining the amount of any Special Guardianship Allowance, the Council will have regard to the amount of fostering allowance which would have been payable if the child were fostered. The fostering allowances will increase annually in line with the National Minimum allowances set by the Department of Education (DfE).
- 1.4 The maximum amount payable by way of Special Guardianship Allowance will be equivalent to the Fostering Allowance (less child benefit and any child tax credit or child element from Universal Credit for the child/ren subject to a Special Guardianship Order) based on the child's age plus any enhancement that would be payable to meet any assessed additional needs of the child or exceptional circumstances which will require such an enhancement which is at the discretion of the responsible Senior Manager. Special Guardians are not eligible for fees paid as remuneration to Foster Carers.

The actual amount payable by way of Special Guardianship Allowance will be determined using a means-testing model

- 1.5 The initial amount of financial support calculated as payable by the Council is based upon the Special Guardian's financial circumstances at the time of their application. This is established through the completion by the Special Guardian of a Financial Assessment Form and the provision by them of appropriate evidence in support. This amount is a provisional amount and will be paid by the Council for a period up to three months from the date a Special Guardianship Order is made. The amount is provisional because it is not possible for the applicant or Council to know the amount of Child Tax Credits or Universal Credit that the Special Guardian may be eligible for.

During the three month period from the making of the Order the Local Authority expects the Special Guardian to apply for all benefits and tax credits / Universal Credits if applicable, (and any other grants, allowances or resources) available to them for the child or children subject to Special Guardianship Orders. Within three months of the making of an Order, the Special Guardian must submit a new completed Financial Assessment Form which details any income they are now in receipt of in respect of the child or children subject to Special Guardianship Orders.

- 1.6 The following Table details assessable income and outgoings that will be considered by the Council in determining the amount of financial support to which Special Guardians are eligible:

## Assessable Income prior to Special Guardianship Order being made

Pay	Evidence
<p>Salary/Wages</p> <p>Average net weekly income before deductions for savings schemes, social clubs. The LA will calculate net weekly income as 52.143 weeks of annualised income.</p> <p>The income figure will exclude payments into pension funds.</p> <p>This can include overtime, fees, commission, gratuities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 wage slips if paid monthly;</li> <li>• 8 wage slips if paid weekly.</li> </ul>
<p>Self-Employment</p> <p>Where one or both applicants are self-employed the only income that can be considered is "drawings" as this is equivalent of pay from an employer. Any profit from the business that has not been reinvested should be considered as capital - see other sources of income.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tax return prepared for Inland Revenue.</li> </ul>
Benefits & Pensions	Evidence
<p>The following benefits and pensions are assessable income:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employer's sick pay;</li> <li>• ESA</li> <li>• Statutory maternity, paternity and/or adoption pay and/or maternity allowance;</li> <li>• Bereavement Benefit.</li> <li>• Universal Credit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wage slip;</li> <li>• Notification from DWP;</li> <li>• Award Notice from DWP (with breakdown)</li> </ul>
<p>Housing Benefit - disregarded</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Award notice from Local Authority.</li> </ul>
<p>State, Occupational and/or private pensions received</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statement from pension provider;</li> <li>• Bank statement.</li> </ul>
<p>Working Tax Credit</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Award notice from DWP.</li> </ul>

Benefits (payable to the family and other children) this is excluding the child/ren subject to the SGO but includes any benefits derived for children in the care of a Special Guardian including Disability Living Allowance and any other benefits received by a Special Guardian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Award Notice from DWP</li> </ul>
Total Child Tax credit received	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Award notice from HMRC.</li> </ul>
Total Child Benefit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notification from HMRC;</li> <li>• Bank statement.</li> </ul>
Wages, Income Support or Jobseekers Allowance paid within the household over 18years of age.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wage Slips</li> <li>• Notification from DWP</li> </ul>
<b>Other Sources of Income</b>	<b>Evidence</b>
Capital - Income from capital, savings and investments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bank statements;</li> <li>• Statements of holdings of shares;</li> <li>• Savings accounts.</li> </ul>
Income from Boarders & Lodgers. Include aged 18 years and over.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rent Agreement.</li> </ul>
Income from rented property	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tax return prepared for Inland Revenue;</li> <li>• Bank statements.</li> </ul>
Maintenance payments for child in household	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Correspondence;</li> <li>• Bank account.</li> </ul>
Special Guardianship allowance for a child placed with the family whether by the Council or another local authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Correspondence;</li> <li>• Bank account.</li> </ul>
<b>Income Related to the Special Guardianship Child</b>	<b>Evidence</b>
Regular interest or income to which the child has a legal interest and entitlement e.g. savings account, trust fund, property legacy Existing allowances' (including any enhancements or specific payments for special needs) paid for the child.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bank statements;</li> <li>• Statements of holdings of shares;</li> <li>• Savings accounts.</li> </ul>

Payments from Criminal injuries and/or Medical Compensation Awards - exempt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N/A</li> </ul>
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------

### Assessable Outgoings

Home Expenditure	Evidence
Mortgage payments - capital & interest. This may include endowment payments linked to the mortgage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Correspondence/statements from mortgage provider/endowment</li> </ul>
Rent - amount payable after deduction of Housing Benefit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rent book;</li> <li>• Award notice of housing benefit</li> <li>• Bank statement.</li> </ul>
Council Tax - amount payable after deduction of Council Tax benefit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council Tax statement;</li> <li>• Bank statement.</li> </ul>
Other Outgoings	Evidence
Repayments of loans taken out as part of meeting the need incurred as a result of a Special Guardianship Order (e.g. buying a larger car/extension). Note - this will apply to loans taken out at the start of the living arrangements for the child . The decision to include a loan as an outgoing expense must be made by the Senior Manager, Looked After Children Resources in writing before the placement is made, this will then be considered at the friends and family panel.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Correspondence /Statement from Loan provider.</li> </ul>
Maintenance Payments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Court Orders;</li> <li>• Correspondence with Child Maintenance Service;</li> <li>• Bank statements.</li> </ul>
Court Orders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Court Order</li> </ul>
Private pension contributions and National Insurance if self-employed or not working.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Correspondence;</li> <li>• Bank statements.</li> </ul>



<p>Work related travel expenses - these are for purpose of travel between home and work. They can include:</p> <p>Either</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public transport costs - actual cost;</li> <li>or</li> <li>• Mileage when one own vehicle is used - based on Inland Revenue- Mileage Allowance Payment rate for use of own vehicle at work.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Photocopy of season ticket, Metro pass;</li> <li>• Mileage- details journey, car log book.</li> </ul>
<p>Childcare costs (for children of Special Guardian) (after any childcare element paid as part of Working Tax Credit) not exempt</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statement of costs</li> </ul>
<p>School fees and further education costs of dependent children (for children of Special Guardian) - not exempt</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statement of costs</li> </ul>

- 1.8 The guidance detailed above does not deal with all possible financial circumstances. Where a situation arises where there is a need to make a judgement as to whether a matter of income or outgoing is deemed to be assessable, the matter will be referred to the responsible Senior Manager for a decision. This decision will be confirmed with the Special Guardian in writing within 28 days. The letter will afford the Special Guardian the opportunity and sufficient time to make representations to the Council regarding its decision. The Council will then consider the representation and determine whether to include or exclude the financial circumstance from assessment and inform the Special Guardian in writing of its decision.
- 1.9 The means-testing model calculates assessable income of the Special Guardian's family. 20% of this amount is then disregarded. It then considers the assessable family outgoings, adding an amount of money the Benefits Agency identifies as the 'core expenditure' for any family and then adds an additional 25% to this figure.
- 1.10 Where Special Guardian's disposable income is calculated to be less than £0.00, the Local Authority accepts that the Special Guardians do not have the means to care or continue to care for a child or children subject to a Special Guardianship Order. Accordingly, they will therefore be entitled to an Allowance from the Council equivalent to the Fostering Allowance (less child benefit and any child tax credit or child element from Universal Credit for the child/ren subject to a Special Guardianship Order) based on the child's age plus any

enhancement that would be payable to meet any assessed additional needs of the child or exceptional circumstances which require such an enhancement which is at the discretion of the responsible Senior Manager.

- 1.11 Where the Special Guardian's disposable income is calculated to be higher than £0.00, the Local Authority accepts that the Special Guardians have the means to meet some or all of the expenditure to care or continue to care for a child or children subject to a Special Guardianship Order. The amount of disposable income evidenced will determine the amount to which the Special Guardians will be financially supported. The amount of disposable income is tapered at a set rate of 50%. This means that for every £1.00 of disposable income a Special Guardian is calculated to have, 50 pence is deducted from the Fostering Allowance (less child benefit and any child tax credit for the child/ren subject to a Special Guardianship Order) based on the child's age plus any enhancement that would be payable to meet any assessed additional needs of the child or exceptional circumstances which require such an enhancement which is at the discretion of the responsible Senior Manager. This means that the higher the amount of disposable income, the less financial support a Special Guardian is entitled to.
- 1.12 Where the Special Guardian's disposable income is calculated to be such that the Allowance tapers to less than £0.00 of the Fostering Allowance (less child benefit and any child tax credit for the child/ren subject to a Special Guardianship Order) based on the child's age plus any enhancement that would be payable to meet any assessed additional needs of the child or exceptional circumstances which require such an enhancement which is at the discretion of the responsible Senior Manager, the Special Guardian is not eligible for an Allowance. The Special Guardian has been determined to have provided evidence that they have the means to accommodate all of the expenditure that would be reasonably required to care or continue to care for a child or children subject to a Special Guardianship Order.
- 1.13 Where it is calculated that no Allowance will be paid, the Special Guardian can make representations to the responsible Senior Manager that their circumstances are such that an amount payable by way of an Allowance is necessary in order to ensure that the Special Guardian can look after the child having regard to the exceptional needs of the child or any other exceptional circumstances; in which case an amount shall be paid at the discretion of the responsible Senior Manager. Confirmation of any discretionary payment deemed necessary will be provided to the Special Guardian in writing. The discretionary payment will not, ordinarily, exceed the maximum Fostering Allowance (less child benefit and any child tax credit or child element from Universal Credit for the child/ren subject to a Special Guardianship Order) based on the child's age plus any enhancement that would be payable to meet

any assessed additional needs of the child or exceptional circumstances which require such an enhancement which is at the discretion of the responsible Senior Manager.

### **Use of Allowance paid to Special Guardians**

1.14 The Special Guardianship Allowance paid by the Council is intended to ensure that the average costs of caring for a child or children subject to a Special Guardianship Order are met. The Council does not prescribe how Special Guardians should spend the allowance or specify the amounts that should be spent on particular items or elements of care, as expenditure will vary from one Special Guardian to another. However, the Allowance is intended by the Council to cover the following costs:

- Food and accommodation (including a contribution towards heating and lighting costs);
- Clothing;
- Age-appropriate pocket money;
- Transport usually associated with any child living in a family including to and from education and out-of-school activities;
- Leisure activities;
- School meals and other education costs;
- Reasonable costs associated with the promotion of family time.

1.15 It is accepted that there are important events in the lives of a child subject to a Special Guardianship Order which incur additional costs for Special Guardians. As an example, to cover holidays, religious festivals etc. Therefore, Special Guardians will receive an additional four weeks child allowance which is incorporated within their weekly payments over a 52 week period.

1.16 Any other costs incurred by a Special Guardian associated with the care of a child subject to a Special Guardianship Order are expected to be met from the allowance paid. Where Special Guardians feel that they are occurring an exceptional cost relating to the child a written request can be made to the SGO Finance Team for a Senior Manager to review. The outcome of the review for any discretionary payment deemed necessary for the child will be provided to the Special Guardian in writing. A Special Guardian should not enter into any commitment to an exceptional expense without prior, written agreement to reimbursement having been given by the Senior Manager. Exceptional costs will not, ordinarily, include payments for household items or other related expenditure.

## **Financial Support in addition to that paid to Special Guardians by way of an Allowance**

- 1.17 Legal costs incurred by a Special Guardian associated with the care of a child subject to a Special Guardianship Order are not expected to be paid by the Special Guardian from the amount paid by way of an Allowance. Legal costs can, on occasions, be significant. Special Guardians will need to evidence to the Council that they are not eligible for Legal Aid. The Council will then pay for reasonable legal costs at the equivalent to legal aid rates. A Special Guardian should not enter into any commitment to pay legal expenses without prior, written agreement to reimbursement having been given by the responsible Senior Manager.
- 1.18 Exceptional transport costs related to the promotion of family time and other associated exceptional costs relating to the promotion of family time are not expected to be paid by the Special Guardian from the amount paid by way of an Allowance. Exceptional family time arrangements and costs must be detailed within the SGO Support Plan. A Special Guardian should not however enter into any commitment to pay exceptional family time costs without prior, written agreement to reimbursement having been given by the responsible Senior Manager. Costs of transporting to and from family time within the Borough, hosting family time within the family home or at a free public venue will not be considered exceptional.

## **Additional Financial Support to Former Foster Carers who were in receipt of Fees**

- 1.19 The Council makes additional financial provision to Foster Carers who become Special Guardians where their financial circumstances are such that they have been assessed as eligible for a Special Guardianship Order Allowance.
- 1.20 Additional to the Special Guardianship Order Allowance, Special Guardians will be paid for a transitional period of two years from the date of the Special Guardianship Order any fee-based component of the Fostering payments that they were formerly paid as remuneration to Foster Carers. This transitional additional financial support is provided to mitigate the impact of the reduction in income for the fee-based component of the Fostering payment the Special Guardians previously received as Foster Carers.

1.21 The amount payable will reduce during the two year period as follows

- 0-12 Months 100% of any fee element paid
- 12-24 months 50% of any fee element paid
- 24 months onwards No payment of any fee element

### **Exceptional Hardship Assistance for a Child in the care of a Special Guardian**

1.22 Where a Special Guardian's immediate financial circumstances are such that assessment by the Council is that they would not be able to remain a Special Guardian for the child, the responsible Senior Manager may consider a discretionary payment to support the maintenance of the care arrangement. Each case will be unique and based on the assessed needs of the child, the particular circumstances of the Special Guardian and the immediacy and level of risk to the care arrangement disrupting. A clear written agreement will be drawn up so all parties are clear about the intended purpose and use of the payment.

1.23 Where the Council offers a series of payments, these will be time-limited, and any further payments required will need to be reviewed by a Senior Manager. Any written agreement will also need to be updated at the time of review.

### **Review of Special Guardianship Financial Support**

1.24 The Council will review the financial support paid to a Special Guardian on an annual basis. In addition a review will be required when:

- The Council becomes aware of a significant change in the circumstances of the family; or
- The Special Guardian informs the Council that there has been or is to be a significant change in the circumstances of the family; or
- At any point the Council considers it would be appropriate to do so

1.25 Reviews are undertaken by the Finance Section of the Council. Special Guardians will be required to complete Financial Assessment Documentation and supply copies of required evidential documentation upon request. The Annual Review will be triggered at the ten month point from the previous Review, enabling the Special Guardian and the Council sufficient time to review the circumstances and establish eligibility and any amount to be paid within the next period.

1.26 Special Guardian's will receive a request in writing to complete their annual review and provide all of the requested evidential documentation. The financial review also requires written evidence that the child/ren is still in their care. Evidence that can be accepted includes correspondence from Health or Educational professionals.

### **Suspension of Financial Support**

1.27 Payments may be suspended by the Council where:

- The Special Guardian has failed to notify the Council of any significant change of circumstances; or
- The Special Guardian has not responded by the review date.
- The Council has reasonable cause to suspect that the Special Guardian may be making a fraudulent claim for the allowance.
- At any point the Council considers it would be appropriate to do so

1.28 Where a payment is suspended, for any other reason other than non return of review documents the Special Guardian will be informed in writing of the reasons for suspension. The Special Guardian may make representations to the responsible Senior Manager in writing and any decision to reinstate payments or back dated payments will be made on a case by case basis and the Special Guardian will be notified in writing.

1.29 Any over payment will be recovered. Where a special guardian is experiencing financial hardship the council may consider a payment plan to repay the outstanding debt.

1.30 Where there is suspected fraud the SGO Finance Team, will liaise with the Senior Manager and consideration will be given to a referral to the Anti-Fraud Team within the council for further guidance.

### **Ending of Financial Support**

1.31 Financial support will no longer be payable by the Council if:

- The child turns 18, unless the Special Guardian has made a request for this to continue as the child remains in full time education or training.
- The child is no longer living at the address of the Special Guardian
- The child ceases full time education or training and commences employment; or
- The child qualifies for benefits in his/her own right; or
- The child dies; or

- The Special Guardian's financial circumstances are such that their means no longer require the financial support of the Council to care for the child; or
- The Special Guardian refuses to engage in the review process.

1.32 If the Council proposes to terminate financial support it will give the Special Guardian written Notice of the proposed termination and afford the Special Guardian the time and opportunity to making representations. The Council will then consider any representations received within the period specified in the Notice and then decide whether to continue, vary or terminate payment of financial support and inform the Special Guardian in writing of its decision. Please note that once a child reaches the age of 18 there will be no notification sent and payments will automatically stop.



North Tyneside Council

# Policy for the Calculation and Payment of Child Arrangements Order Allowances and Adoption Order Allowances

Document Control	
Document Title	Policy for the Calculation and Payment of Child Arrangements Order Allowances and Adoption Order Allowances
Service Area/s	Fostering Service
Version	1
Authors	Julie Firth, Assistant Director Children's Services / Jackie Ingram, Senior Manager Children in Care / Zoe Atkinson, Interim Team Manager Safeguarding and Litigation / Jill Dixon, Interim Service Manager Fostering Services / Colin Strutt, Business Process Manager
Owner	Jacqui Old, Director of Children's and Adult Services
Date Revised	February 2022
Approval Process	Cabinet delegated authority to DCS, DCS Approval
Date to be Reviewed	January 2024
Expiry Date	February 2024

## Introduction

This policy refers to those who care for children that are subject to Child Arrangements Orders and Adoption Orders, as parents / carers.

This policy refers to Child Arrangements Order Allowances and Adoption Order Allowances as 'Permanence Allowances' and may be paid to a parent / carer to support the permanent placement of a child.

The Council does not have a legal requirement to financially assess parents / carers who are awarded a Child Arrangements Order or Adoption Order but will do so. All allowances will be reviewed annually or when there is a change in circumstances.



Adoption Order Allowances will be considered at the point of a potential match, prior to a formal match being made at Panel. The Adoption Support Services Regulations 2005 sets out the circumstances in which financial support may be paid to an adoptive parent, following a means tested financial assessment of the adoptive parent.

### **Eligibility for Financial Support**

1.1 Permanence Allowances (on-going financial support paid periodically to meet a need which is likely to give rise to recurring expenditure) will be payable where:

- The Council consider that it is necessary to ensure that the parent / carer can look after the child; and/or
- The Council consider that the child's assessed needs require a greater expenditure of resources than would otherwise be the case because of his illness, disability, emotional or behavioural difficulties or the consequences of past abuse or neglect.

### **Determination of Eligibility and Amount of a Permanence Allowance**

1.2 When considering providing financial support the Council will:

- Endeavour to ensure that the parent / carer is aware of and taking advantage of all other benefits and tax credits (and any other grants, allowances or resources) available to them; and
- Consider the financial means of the parent / carer; and
- Consider the financial needs and resources of the child.

1.3 When determining the amount of any Permanence Allowance, the Council will have regard to the amount of Fostering Allowance which would have been payable if the child were fostered. The Council biannually review the Fostering Allowance payable.

1.4 The maximum amount payable by way of a Permanence Allowance will be equivalent to the Fostering Allowance (less child benefit and any child tax credit for the child/ren subject to an Order) based on the child's age plus any enhancement that would be payable to meet any assessed additional needs of the child or exceptional circumstances which will require such an enhancement which is at the discretion of the responsible Senior Manager. Parents / carers are not eligible for fees paid as remuneration to Foster Carers.

The actual amount payable by way of a Permanence Allowance will be determined using a means-testing model.

1.5 The initial amount of financial support calculated as payable by the Council is based upon the parent / carer's financial circumstances at the time of their application. This is established through the completion by the parent / carer of a Financial Assessment Form and the provision by them of appropriate evidence in support. This amount is a provisional amount and will be paid by the Council for a period of three months from the date an Order is made. The amount is provisional because it is not possible for the applicant or Council to know the amount of Child Tax Credits or Universal Credit that the parent / carer may be eligible for.

During the three month period from the making of the Order the Council expects the parent / carer to apply for all benefits and tax credits / Universal Credits if applicable, (and any other grants, allowances or resources) available to them for the child or children subject to an Order. Within three months of the making of an Order, the parent / carer must submit a new completed Financial Assessment Form which details any income they are now in receipt of in respect of the child or children subject to an Order.

1.6 The following Table details assessable income and outgoings that will be considered by the Council in determining the amount of financial support to which parents / carers are eligible:

**Assessable Income prior to an Order being made**

Pay	Evidence
<p>Salary / Wages</p> <p>Average net weekly income before deductions for savings schemes, social clubs. The LA will calculate net weekly income as 52.143 weeks of annualised income.</p> <p>The income figure will exclude payments into pension funds.</p> <p>This can include overtime, fees, commission, gratuities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 wage slips if paid monthly;</li> <li>• 8 wage slips if paid weekly.</li> </ul>

<p>Self-Employment</p> <p>Where one or both applicants are self-employed the only income that can be considered is "drawings" as this is equivalent of pay from an employer. Any profit from the business that has not been reinvested should be considered as capital - see other sources of income.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tax return prepared for Inland Revenue.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Benefits &amp; Pensions</b></p>	<p><b>Evidence</b></p>
<p>The following benefits and pensions are assessable income:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employer's sick pay;</li> <li>• ESA</li> <li>• Statutory maternity, paternity and / or adoption pay and / or maternity allowance;</li> <li>• Bereavement Benefit;</li> <li>• Universal Credit.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wage slip;</li> <li>• Notification from DWP;</li> <li>• Award Notice from DWP (with breakdown)</li> </ul>
<p>Housing Benefit - disregarded</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Award notice from Local Authority.</li> </ul>
<p>State, Occupational and / or private pensions received</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statement from pension provider;</li> <li>• Bank statement.</li> </ul>
<p>Working Tax Credit</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Award notice from DWP.</li> </ul>
<p>Benefits (payable to the family and other children) this is excluding the child/ren subject to the Order but includes any benefits derived for children in the care of a parent / carer including Disability Living Allowances and any other benefits received by a parent / carer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Award Notice from DWP.</li> </ul>
<p>Total Child Tax credit received</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Award notice from DWP.</li> </ul>
<p>Total Child Benefit</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notification from DWP;</li> <li>• Bank statement.</li> </ul>
<p>Wages, Income Support or Jobseekers Allowance paid within the household over 18 years of age</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wage Slips;</li> <li>• Notification from DWP.</li> </ul>

Other Sources of Income	Evidence
Capital - Income from capital, savings and investments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bank statements;</li> <li>• Statements of holdings of shares;</li> <li>• Savings accounts.</li> </ul>
Income from Boarders & Lodgers. Include aged 18 years and over.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rent Book.</li> </ul>
Income from rented property.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tax return prepared for Inland Revenue;</li> <li>• Bank statements.</li> </ul>
Maintenance payments for child in household.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Correspondence;</li> <li>• Bank account.</li> </ul>
Permanence Allowance for a child placed with the family whether by the Council or another local authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Correspondence;</li> <li>• Bank account.</li> </ul>
Income Related to the Child subject to an Order	Evidence
Regular interest or income to which the child has a legal interest and entitlement e.g. savings account, trust fund, property legacy Existing allowances' (including any enhancements or specific payments for special needs) paid for the child.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bank statements;</li> <li>• Statements of holdings of shares;</li> <li>• Savings accounts.</li> </ul>
Payments from Criminal injuries and / or Medical Compensation Awards - exempt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N/A</li> </ul>

### Assessable Outgoings

Home Expenditure	Evidence
Mortgage payments - capital & interest. This may include endowment payments linked to the mortgage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Correspondence / statements from mortgage provider / endowment</li> </ul>

Rent - amount payable after deduction of Housing Benefit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rent book;</li> <li>• Award notice of housing benefit</li> <li>• Bank statement.</li> </ul>
Council Tax - amount payable after deduction of Council Tax benefit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council Tax statement;</li> <li>• Bank statement.</li> </ul>
<b>Other Outgoings</b>	<b>Evidence</b>
Repayments of loans taken out as part of meeting the need incurred as a result of an Order (e.g. buying a larger car / extension). Note - this will usually apply to loans taken out at the start of the living arrangements for the child. The decision to include a loan as an outgoing expense must be made by the Senior Manager, Looked After Children Resources in writing before the placement is made, this will then be considered at the friends and family panel.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Correspondence / Statement from Loan provider.</li> </ul>
Maintenance Payments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Court Orders;</li> <li>• Correspondence with Child support Agency;</li> <li>• Bank statements.</li> </ul>
Court Orders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Court Order</li> </ul>
Private pension contributions and National Insurance if self-employed or not working.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Correspondence;</li> <li>• Bank statements.</li> </ul>
Work related travel expenses - these are for purpose of travel between home and work. They can include:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Photocopy of season ticket, Metro pass;</li> <li>• Mileage - details journey, car log book.</li> </ul>

<p>Either</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public transport costs - actual cost; or</li> <li>Mileage when one own vehicle is used - based on Inland Revenue- Mileage Allowance Payment rate for use of own vehicle at work.</li> </ul>	
<p>Childcare costs (for children of parent / carer) (after any childcare element paid as part of Working Tax Credit) not exempt</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Statement of costs</li> </ul>
<p>School fees and further education costs of dependent children (for children of parent / carer) - not exempt</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Statement of costs</li> </ul>

- 1.8 The guidance detailed above does not deal with all possible financial circumstances. Where a situation arises where there is a need to make a judgement as to whether a matter of income or outgoing is deemed to be assessable, the matter will be referred to the responsible Senior Manager for a decision. This decision will be confirmed with the parent / carer in writing within 28 days. The letter will afford the parent / carer the opportunity and sufficient time to make representations to the Council regarding its decision. The Council will then consider the representation and determine whether to include or exclude the financial circumstance from assessment and inform the parent / carer in writing of its decision.
- 1.9 The means-testing model calculates assessable income of the parent / carer's family. 20% of this amount is then disregarded. It then considers the assessable family outgoings, adding an amount of money the Benefits Agency identifies as the 'core expenditure' for any family and then adds an additional 25% to this figure.
- 1.10 Where parents' / carers' disposable income is calculated to be less than £0.00, the Council accepts that the parents / carers do not have the means to care or continue to care for a child or children subject to an Order. Accordingly, they will therefore be entitled to an allowance from the Council equivalent to the Fostering Allowance (less child benefit and any child tax credit for the child/ren subject to an Order) based on the child's age plus any enhancement that would be payable to meet any assessed additional needs of the child or exceptional circumstances which require such an enhancement which is at the discretion of the responsible Senior Manager.

- 1.11 Where the parents / carers disposable income is calculated to be higher than £0.00, the Council accepts that the parents / carers have the means to meet some or all of the expenditure to care or continue to care for a child or children subject to an Order. The amount of disposable income evidenced will determine the amount to which the parents / carers will be financially supported. The amount of disposable income is tapered at a set rate of 50%. This means that for every £1.00 of disposable income a parent / carer is calculated to have, 50 pence is deducted from the Fostering Allowance (less child benefit and any child tax credit for the child/ren subject to an Order) based on the child's age plus any enhancement that would be payable to meet any assessed additional needs of the child or exceptional circumstances which require such an enhancement which is at the discretion of the responsible Senior Manager. This means that the higher the amount of disposable income, the less financial support a parent / carer is entitled to.
- 1.12 Where the parent / carers' disposable income is calculated to be such that the allowance tapers to less than £0.00 of the Fostering Allowance (less child benefit and any child tax credit for the child/ren subject to an Order) based on the child's age plus any enhancement that would be payable to meet any assessed additional needs of the child or exceptional circumstances which require such an enhancement which is at the discretion of the responsible Senior Manager, the parent / carer is not eligible for an allowance. The parent / carer has been determined to have provided evidence that they have the means to accommodate all of the expenditure that would be reasonably required to care or continue to care for a child or children subject to an Order.
- 1.13 Where it is calculated that no allowance will be paid, the parent / carer can make representations to the responsible Senior Manager that their circumstances are such that an amount payable by way of an allowance is necessary in order to ensure that the parent / carer can look after the child having regard to the exceptional needs of the child or any other exceptional circumstances; in which case an amount shall be paid at the discretion of the responsible Senior Manager. Confirmation of any discretionary payment deemed necessary will be provided to the parent / carer in writing. The discretionary payment will not, ordinarily, exceed the maximum Fostering Allowance (less child benefit and any child tax credit for the child/ren subject to an Order) based on the child's age plus any enhancement that would be payable to meet any assessed additional needs of the child or exceptional circumstances which require such an enhancement which is at the discretion of the responsible Senior Manager.

#### **Use of Allowance paid to Parents / Carers**

- 1.14 An allowance paid by the Council is intended to ensure that the average costs of caring for a child or children subject to an Order are met. The Council does

not prescribe how parents / carers should spend the allowance or specify the amounts that should be spent on particular items or elements of care, as expenditure will vary from one parent / carer to another. However, the allowance is intended by the Council to cover the following costs:

- Food and accommodation (including a contribution towards heating and lighting costs);
- Clothing;
- Age-appropriate pocket money;
- Transport usually associated with any child living in a family including to and from education and out-of-school activities;
- Leisure activities;
- School meals and other education costs;
- Reasonable costs associated with the promotion of Contact.

1.15 Any other costs incurred by a parent / carer associated with the care of a child subject to an Order are expected to be met from the allowance paid. Exceptional cost relating to the child may be applied for by the parent / carer to the Family and Friends Panel. Confirmation of any discretionary payment deemed necessary for the child will be provided to the parent / carer in writing. A parent / carer should not enter into any commitment to an exceptional expense without prior, written agreement to reimbursement having been given by the Senior Manager. Exceptional costs will not, ordinarily, include payments for household items or other related expenditure.

### **Financial Support in addition to that paid to Parents / Carers by way of an Allowance**

1.17 Legal costs incurred by a parent / carer associated with the care of a child subject to an Order are not expected to be paid by the parent / carer from the amount paid by way of an allowance. Legal costs can, on occasions, be significant. Parents / carers will need to evidence to the Council that they are not eligible for Legal Aid. The Council will then pay for reasonable legal costs at the equivalent to legal aid rates. A parent / carer should not enter into any commitment to pay legal expenses without prior, written agreement to reimbursement having been given by the responsible Senior Manager.

1.18 Exceptional transport costs related to the promotion of family time and other associated exceptional costs relating to the promotion of family time are not expected to be paid by the parent / carer from the amount paid by way of an allowance. Exceptional contact arrangements and costs are expected to be



detailed within the Support Plan. The Council will then pay these additional costs. A parent / carer should not however enter into any commitment to pay exceptional contact costs without prior, written agreement to reimbursement having been given by the responsible Senior Manager. Costs of transporting to and from contact within the Borough, hosting contact within the family home or at a free public venue will not be considered exceptional.

### **Exceptional Hardship Assistance for a Child in the care of a Parent / Carer**

- 1.22 Where a parent / carer's immediate circumstances are such that assessment by the Council is that they would not be able to remain a parent / carer for the child, the responsible Senior Manager may consider a discretionary payment to support the maintenance of the care arrangement. Each case will be unique and based on the assessed needs of the child, the particular circumstances of the parent / carer and the immediacy and level of risk to the care arrangement disrupting.
- 1.23 Where the Council offers a single sum of over £250, a clear written agreement will be drawn up so all parties are clear about the intended purpose and use of the payment.
- 1.24 Where the Council offers a series of payments, these will be time-limited and will be reviewed every six weeks for the duration of the agreed period of payment. A clear written agreement will be drawn up so all parties are clear about the intended purpose and use of the payments.

### **Review of Financial Support**

- 1.25 The Council will review the financial support paid to a parent / carer when:
- The Council becomes aware of a significant change in the circumstances of the family; or
  - The parent / carer informs the Council that there has been or is to be a significant change in the circumstances of the family; or
  - On an annual basis; or
  - At any point the Council considers it would be appropriate to do so
- 1.26 Reviews are undertaken by the Finance Section of the Placement Service. Parents / carers will be required to complete Financial Assessment Documentation and supply copies of required evidential documentation upon request. The Annual Review will be triggered at the ten month point from the previous Review, enabling the parent / carer and the Council sufficient time to

review the circumstances and establish eligibility and any amount to be paid within the next period.

### **Suspension of Financial Support**

1.27 Payments may be suspended by the Council when:

- The parent / carer has failed to notify the Council of any significant change of circumstances; or
- The parent / carer has not responded within 28 days of request by the Council for information required as part of the Annual Review process; or
- The Council has reasonable cause to suspect that the parent / carer may be making a fraudulent claim for the allowance.

1.28 Where a payment is suspended, the parent / carer will be informed in writing of the reasons for suspension. The parent / carer may make representations to the responsible Senior Manager in writing. Any decision to reinstate payments will be notified in writing. No back payments to cover the period of suspension will be made unless it can be shown that the Council acted in error in making the suspension.

1.29 Where fraud is suspected, the responsible Senior Manager will decide whether to refer the matter to the Police.

### **Ending of Financial Support**

1.30 Financial support will no longer be payable by the Council if:

- The child no longer has a permanent home with the parent / carer; or
- The child ceases full time education or training and commences employment; or
- The child qualifies for benefits in his / her own right; or
- The child dies; or
- The parent / carer's financial circumstances are such that their means no longer require the financial support of the Council to care for the child; or
- The parent / carer refuses to engage in the review process.

1.31 If the Council proposes to terminate financial support it will give the parent / carer written Notice of the proposed termination and afford the parent / carer the time and opportunity to making representations. The Council will then consider any representations received within the period specified in the Notice

and then decide whether to continue, vary or terminate payment of financial support and inform the parent / carer in writing of its decision.

### **Conditions of Payment of Financial Support**

1.32 If it is agreed that financial support is to be paid by the Council, parents / carers must comply with the following conditions:

- That the parent / carer informs the Council if they change their address; or
- That the parent / carer informs the Council if the child dies; or
- That the parent / carer informs the Council if there is a significant change in their financial circumstances or the financial needs or resources of the child; or
- That the parent / carer completes and returns within 14 days any request by the Council for information detailing and evidencing their financial circumstances
- That the parent / carer uses the financial support for the purposes intended by the Council

## Children who foster

Children who foster are children who are Foster Carers' own children, nieces, nephews and grandchildren who play an important part in the success of fostering, often being the ones who welcome a new child into the home and help them to settle in.

But sharing you and your home with another child/young person can be hard for them, and they may need support to deal with the daily challenges of growing up in a fostering family. Your Supervising Social Worker will support and guide you as a fostering family to manage this and offer support and advice as necessary.

Children who Foster, depending on their age should be part of developing the Family Safer Caring policy so that everyone is clear on the boundaries of everyday life to make sure everybody feels safe.

When children don't get the support they need, we recognise that this may lead to unplanned endings for children placed in your care. This leads to instability for both your children and the children requiring foster care.

When you are considering caring for any child, it is important that you give consideration to all of the children's needs and how you will be able to meet these. Your Supervising Social Worker will support you in this process and be able to answer any questions you may have.

Your Supervising Social Worker will get to know your children as part of the fostering household, building up a relationship with them, sometimes spending 1-1 time with them to ensure that their voice is heard, and any worries are thoroughly discussed.

The Fostering Service also run a Children Who Foster Support Group for children aged 6 or over. This is an opportunity for children to come together to share their experiences while having fun. These take place within every school holiday- please encourage your children to attend this group as it can be a great source of support for them.

**NORTH TYNESIDE COUNCIL  
FOSTERING SERVICE**

**FOSTER CARER REVIEW  
CARER'S REPORT**

**Carer(s) Name(s):**

**Address:**

**PART 1**

**1. Support**

- a. **How often does your Supervising Social Worker visit?**
  
- b. **Is this often enough?**
  
- c. **Describe the quality of support from the Fostering Service and your Supervising Social Worker. How useful is it?**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- d. **If you have contacted the Out of Hours Fostering Worker, please comment on the response you received.**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- e. **Do you attend Support Groups?** **Yes/No**  
if yes, how useful do you find them? How many and which ones have you attended in the last year?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- f. **Where else do you get support from?**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- g. **What additional support would you identify as being necessary to enable you to provide care for children in care?**

**2. Fostering Household**

- a. Please describe the quality of the relationships between each household member and the role they play with the children placed with you?**
- b. Please describe your family lifestyle and how the children placed with you partake in this?**

**3. Training**

- a. What training have you been on in the last year, how have you put into practice learning from training? What other opportunities would you like in the next year?**

(NB. Question b and c are only applicable if you have yet to complete the Training, Support and Development Standards for Foster Carers)

- b. What progress have you made with the workbook?**
- c. Expected date of completion?**
- d. Have you received guidance/support and materials in undertaking Life Story Work?**  
If no, what additional support/materials would support you? **Yes/No**

**4. Agency Issues**

- a. Have you any comments about how payments and allowances are administered? Are you happy with your banding?**
- b. If you have had any complaints about finance since approval, how have they been dealt with?**

- c. Has anyone joined or left your household since the last review?**
- d. Has anyone in the household (excluding fostered children) reached the age of 18 years since last review?**
- e. Have there been any significant illnesses/injuries in your household since the last review to household members and children placed with you?**
- f. Has anyone in your household (excluding fostered children) had police involvement of any kind since the last review? If so, please detail, say what the outcome was and give the date you notified your supervising social worker.**
- g. For any children placed since last review, do you feel you received all necessary information? If no what was missing?**
- h. Has any current/previous children in placement made any threats or allegations?**  
**Yes/No**
- i. Has restraint been used since last review?** **Yes/No**  
If yes, please provide details:
- J. Would you like to suggest any changes to your terms of approval?**  
If yes, please provide details:

## 5. Carers development

(Please reflect on how you demonstrate empathy for the children in placement including how you understand experiences of loss, transition and changes children in care face. Please also comment on how you manage difficult situations and describe what is working well and what you are worried about. Please also comment on how effective your support network has been and how effective you find supervision)

**What is working well?**

**What are you worried about?**

**What needs to happen?**

## PART 2- National Minimum Standards

1. Caring for Children- In this section please comment how you provide a healthy environment, any changes to your own health which could impact on your ability to care for the children. Please also comment on how you promote the children's education, identity, independence and how you encourage participation in leisure activities. Please also note how you promote the children's place within your family.

**What is working well?**



**What are you worried about?**

**What needs to happen?**

2. **Safeguarding Children-** In this section please comment on your ability to ensure the children are safe from harm and abuse, how you are helping the children to develop skills to keep themselves safe and are providing a safe and secure home.

**What is working well?**

**What are you worried about?**

**What needs to happen?**

3. **Working as part of a team-** in this section please comment on how you work with the care team, support the children care plan including family time, maintain confidentiality, communicate effectively and promote equality, diversity and rights of individuals and groups.

**What is working well?**

**What are we worried about?**

**What needs to happen?**

4. **Own development-** In this section please reflect on your personal experiences, the quality of your support networks, your commitment to training and ability to put learning into practice. Please also comment on any supplementary roles you undertake including buddying, delivering training and committee.

**What is working well?**

**What are we worried about?**

**What needs to happen?**

**Recommendations**

**On a scale of 0-10, how safe do you consider the children in your care to be?  
10 means that this is a safe placement for the children.  
0 means that the children are not safe within the placement.**

**Please give a reason for your scaling:**

**Signature of Foster Carer:** .....

**Date:** .....

**Signature of Foster Carer:** .....

**Date:** .....

**NORTH TYNESIDE COUNCIL  
FOSTERING SERVICE**

**FOSTER CARER REVIEW**

**Views of the child in placement with family or friend carers**

**Name:**

**Age:**

**Foster Carers Name(s):**

**Date of completion:**



**1. Living with foster carers**

**Does your carer make meals you like? Do you help? Yes/No**

**Does your carer buy you the clothes you like? Yes/No**

**Does your carer buy you the toys/games you like? Yes/No**

**Do you share a bedroom? Yes/No**  
**Can you tell us why and who you share with?**

**Do you have access to a computer? Yes/No**

**Do you have access to the internet? Yes/No**

**Are there good rules about internet safety, to keep you safe? Yes/No**

**How does your Foster Carer support you with your homework?**

**Do you have a quiet space to do your homework? Yes/No**

**Do you attend any clubs or out of school activities? Yes/No**  
**If yes, which ones?**

**If no, would you like to?**

**Do you do any sport? Yes/No**  
**If yes, which ones**

If no, would you like to?

**Does your carer help you to have contact with the members of your family and friends who you want to see?**

**Yes/ No**

**Would you like to say more?**

**Does anyone help you to keep a record of information that is special to you, ie memories and events?**

**Yes/No**

If yes, who does this?

**2. People to talk to**

**If you were bothered or unhappy about living with your Carer who would you talk to?**

**Does your social worker talk to you by yourself sometimes to ask how you are feeling?**

**Can you talk to your carers if you are worried or unhappy?**

**Would you like to attend the Children In Care Council?**



**Have you got a copy of the Children's Guide to Fostering?**

**What do you enjoy about living with your carer?**

**Is there anything that you not enjoy about living with your carer?**

**Is there anything you can not do because you are 'Looked After in foster care'?**

**Anything else you want to say about living with your Carer?  
(feel free to add more pages if you want)**

**Thank you for filling in this Form**

**NORTH TYNESIDE COUNCIL  
FOSTERING SERVICE**

**FOSTER CARER REVIEW  
CHILDREN IN PLACEMENT REVIEW FORM**

**Name:**

**Age:**

**Foster Carers Name(s):**

**Date of completion:**



**1. Living with foster carers**

**Do you feel welcome and included by your foster carer and their family? Yes/No**

**Does your Foster Carer make meals you like? Yes/No**

**Does your Foster Carer buy you the clothes you like? Yes/No**

**Does your Foster Carer buy you the toys you like? Yes/No**

**If you share a bedroom, why and who with?**

**Do you have access to a computer and the internet? Yes/No**

**Does your Foster Carer support you with your homework? Yes/No**

**Does your Foster Carer have space for you to do your homework? Yes/No**

**Does your foster carer attend school events for you? Yes/ No**

**Do you attend any clubs or out of school activities? Yes/No**  
If yes, which ones?

If no, would you like to?

**Does your Foster Carer help you to have family time with your family and friends? Yes/No**

**Does anyone help you to keep a record of information that is special to you, ie memories and events? Yes/No**  
If yes, who?



**2. People to talk to**

**If you were worried or unhappy about living with your Foster Carer who would you talk to?**

**Does your social worker talk to you by yourself sometimes to ask how you are feeling?**

**Can you talk to your Foster Carers if you are worried or unhappy?      Yes/ No**

**Would you like to attend the Children In Care Council?      Yes/ No**



**What is the best thing about living with your Foster Carer?**

**What is the worst thing about living with your Foster Carer?**

**Is there anything you can not do because you are Looked After?**

**Anything else you want to say about living with your Foster Carer?**

**Thank you for filling in this form and helping towards your Foster Carers Review**

**NORTH TYNESIDE COUNCIL  
FOSTERING SERVICE**

**FOSTER CARER REVIEW**  
**CHILDREN WHO FOSTER REPORT**

**Name:**

**Age:**

**Parents/ carers names:**

**Date of completion:**

**1. People to talk to**

**If you were unhappy about things to do with fostering, who would you talk to?**

**Do you go to the 'Children Who Foster' meetings? Yes/No**

**If you do go, what do you think of them?**

**Do you know the name of your Supervising Social Worker? Yes/No**

**Do you think the Supervising Social Worker should talk to you by yourself sometimes to ask you how you feel about fostering? Yes/No**

**Do you need any more support? Yes/No**

**2. Living with in a fostering family**



**Do you get a say in who you foster? Yes/No**

**If no, do you think you should be asked?**



**Do you like being part of a fostering family?**

**Yes/No**

**If not, can you tell us the reasons?**

**When you're grown up do you think you will want to be a foster carer?**

**Yes/No**

**What has changed since you started fostering?**

**Of these, which bother you?**

**Any other comments?**

**Thank you for filling in this Form and contributing to your family's  
Foster Carer Review**



**NORTH TYNESIDE COUNCIL  
FOSTERING SERVICE**

**FOSTER CARER REVIEW  
YOUNG PERSON IN PLACEMENT REVIEW FORM**

**Name:**

**Age:**

**Foster Carers Names:**

**Date of completion:**

**1. Living with foster carers**

**Do you think you are treated fairly?**

**Are you responsible for buying your own clothes?**

**Do you prepare any meals yourself?**

**What is the food like?**

**If you share a bedroom, why and who with?**

**Do you have access to a computer?**

**Yes/No**

**Do you have access to the internet?**

**Yes/No**

**How does your Foster Carer support you with your education or employment?**

**Do you have room/space to study?**

**Yes/No**

**Do you attend any clubs or activities?**

**Yes/No**

**If yes, which ones?**

**If no, would you like to?**

**Do you do any sport?**

**Yes/No**

**If yes, which ones**

If no, would you like to?

**Does your Foster Carer help you to have contact with your family and friends? If yes, how?**

**Yes/No**

**Does anyone help you to keep a record of information that is special to you, ie memories and events? If yes, how?**

**Yes/No**

**2. People to talk to**

**If you were unhappy about living with your Foster Carer, who would you talk to?**

**Does your social worker talk to you by yourself sometimes to ask how you are feeling?**

**Can you talk to your Foster Carers if you are worried or unhappy?**

**Would you like to attend the Children In Care Council?**

**Have you got a copy of the Children's Guide to Fostering?**

**What do you enjoy about living with your Foster Carer?**

**What do you not enjoy about living with your Foster Carer?**

**Is there anything you can not do because you are Looked After?**

**Anything else you want to say about living with your Foster Carer?**

**Thank you for filling in this form and contributing to your Foster Carer(s) Review**

# Reviewing my approval and how to appeal

---

## 1. Introduction

---

Once you have been approved as a Foster Carer, your Supervising Social Worker will support you in caring for children who come to live within your family. Their role is also to supervise and help you in your development as a Foster Carer.

Your approval will be reviewed at these times:

- Annually - your first review will also go to the fostering panel;
- If there is a significant change to your family circumstances;
- Following an allegation; or
- If you or the Fostering Service want to change the terms of your approval.

## 2. Terminating Your Approval in Response to Your Resignation

---

You may at any point give notice in writing that you wish to resign from the role. The approval will be terminated automatically within 28 calendar days from when the resignation is received. Careful thought needs to be given prior to resigning as your notice cannot be withdrawn at a later date.

Your resignation will be taken to the next available panel following your 28 days' notice, after which you will receive a formal notification from the Agency Decision Maker that you are no longer a registered Foster Carer for North Tyneside Council.

If you resign and subsequently wish to foster again, you would need to go through the assessment process again.

## 3. The Annual Review Process

Your Supervising Social Worker is responsible for reviewing your approval which is reviewed at least once a year. The purpose of the review is to consider whether you continue to be suitable to be approved as a Foster Carer, whether your household is suitable, what progress has been made over the review period and what, if any, further support, training or development is required. The review also considers whether your terms of approval remain appropriate. If it is proposed, in consultation with you, to revise the terms of approval, a letter will be sent to you setting out whether under the new approval terms you or members of your household (including any children placed there) have additional support needs and how those needs will be met. Where your agreement is received, the decision to revise your terms of approval can be made immediately after the Agency Decision Maker has registered

their decision. If you do not agree there is a formal appeals process which will be included in the paperwork sent to you by the Agency Decision Maker.

## Step 1 - The Report

Your Supervising Social Worker, alongside yourself, will be responsible for writing your annual review report. They will include-

- Information from your supervisory visits and other communications with you during the review period.
- Reports from other professionals involved with your fostering family.
- Information in relation to any supporting role you undertake within the Fostering Service, this will include your involvement with the fostering committee, as a buddy or any training you have supported with.
- Any complaints or allegations made against you or your family;
- Your Personal Development Plan and future training needs;
- A recommendation of your continued suitability and any changes to terms of approval.

Your Supervising Social Worker will share the report with you.

You alongside the children you care for, your own children and any other members of the household will also be asked to complete a report which will be shared with the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO)

If you are not happy with any of the areas in the report, you must speak to your Supervising Social Worker in the first instance, if this is not possible or the issue remains unresolved please contact the relevant Team Manager.

Within each review period you will also have at least two unannounced visits completed, one by your Supervising Social Worker and one by another member of the Fostering Service.

### The Fostering Review

Foster Care Reviews are a formal process and should be attended by both Foster Carers, the Supervising Social Worker and chaired by the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO).

The review meeting usually takes around an hour and will work through all the information shared in each of the documents. The IRO will be interested in your views and will encourage you to demonstrate your skills, knowledge, experience and development during the review period. Following the review meeting the IRO will prepare a report of the meeting outlining any changes of your terms of approval and

any recommendations for either the Fostering Service or yourself to complete within the next review period.

## Step 2 - The decision making process

The documents from your review, together with the IRO's report will be forwarded to the relevant Team Manager of the Fostering Service. They will give recommendations to the Agency Decision Maker (ADM) about your continued approval as Foster Carers.

The Agency Decision Maker (ADM) will then review all of the information provided to them as part of your formal review process. From this the ADM will give a formal decision as to your continued approval as a Foster Carer alongside any changes to terms.

Should you not agree with this decision you can appeal, within 28 calendar days, by following the guidance below.

Reviews are presented to the Fostering Panel by your Supervising Social Worker. You will be encouraged to attend to share your views. Review are presented in the following circumstances-

- Your first review
- Any review following an allegation
- Any change in family circumstances
- Every three years

The panel will then make a recommendation to the ADM who after reviewing all of the information will make the decision about your approval and any changes of terms.

## 4. Appeals - What can you do if you Disagree with the Decision

If you do not agree with the decision, there are two routes you may chose in which to appeal. Any appeal must be made within 28 days of your receiving the Agency Decision.

You can write to the Agency Decision maker outlining why you disagree with their decision. The Agency Decision Maker will then refer this information back to the Fostering Panel to re consider their recommendation which you will be invited to attend. The Panel's second recommendation will then return to the Agency Decision Maker to make their final decision. There is no point of appeal following this.

Alternatively, you can contact The Independent Review Mechanism. This is a review process conducted by a review panel independent of the Fostering Service; it is not an appeal process. If you decide to refer to the Independent Review Mechanism (IRM), they will receive all the information that was presented to the original

Fostering Panel, alongside your appeal information and any further documents you or the Fostering Service wish to include.

The IRM will review recommendations made by the Fostering Service and make their own independent recommendation to the ADM. However, the Fostering Service's Agency Decision Maker will make the final decision after consideration of all the information and the IRM's recommendation. There is no point of appeal following this.

Written notice of the final decision and reasons must be sent to you within 7 working days of the receipt of the Independent Review Mechanism recommendation.

# Training and Development

All Foster Carers will complete Skills to Foster training as part of their fostering journey. It is then important for you to continue to build on this training, in order for you to increase your confidence, skills and knowledge. The support and training you will be offered will help you to become a more confident Foster Carer.

All Foster Carers are required as part of their registration to keep updated with their training in line with Fostering Regulations. Core training needs to be updated every three years and there are additional opportunities to enhancing your learning with additional training and courses, in line with your Personal Development Plan. You will be supported in this by your Supervising Social Worker and this will be reviewed annually within your Foster Carer review.

All new Foster Carers must complete a workbook which shows evidence of their ability to meet the [Training, Support and Development Standards for Foster Care](#). – Mainstream Foster Carers within 12 months of being approved and within 18 months for Connected Persons Foster Carers. If you are approved as part of a fostering couple then you may complete the same workbook, however, the evidence presented must reflect the gained experiences of both carers.

This evidence will begin to be gathered before you are approved, through the Skills to Foster course and will continue after you are approved. All Foster Carers are provided with a Training and Development Portfolio to evidence and record their ongoing training and development, and you will be supported in this by your Supervising Social Worker.

Training sessions are held during the working week, or on an evening or weekends. This is held in small groups within a centrally located venue.

The Fostering Service is committed to providing bespoke training and support to all its Foster Carers that is based on equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practice. This can be offered as face to face training or via other medium, such as webinars or workbooks. You will also be encouraged in your own self learning, for example with suggested reading materials.

The Fostering Service have an ongoing training schedule which is updated twice yearly and shared with all Foster Carers.





Department  
for Education

# **Training, Support and Development Standards for Foster Care**

**Evidence workbook**

**Refreshed: November 2012**

## Providing evidence

Welcome to your evidence workbook which should be used in conjunction with the [Training Support and Development Standards, Guidance](#). It provides you with a single place to capture all of your evidence against the standards.

You should enter a summary of the evidence that you have collected to meet a particular outcome(s) in this Evidence Booklet. Try to keep these entries short. You can write or type your evidence. If you are typing your evidence, please note that the evidence boxes only allow 2,000 characters (approx. the size of the box).

Continuation sheets have been provided at the end of the Evidence Booklet. It is good practice to keep a portfolio ring binder that contains your evidence for easy reference.

Evidence can include certificates from training you have undertaken, supervision notes, witness statements, records of observation (either you recording something you have observed or a colleague observing you at work), testimonials or references from current or previous employers or service users, reflective logs (something you have written reflecting on a piece of work you have done or training course you have attended), reports or records you have written, videos, photos. Copies of your annual review documentation, copy of your assessment (e.g. Form F), write ups of discussions with your supervising SW, write-ups of your reading or research on topics covered.

As a foster carer you will be demonstrating that you understand your role as a foster carer, so the evidence for the standards will be directly related to your parenting of any child in your care.

## Evidencing knowledge and skills

The following words are used in the workbook:

**Be aware of:** to know that something exists. For example, the importance of routines for children and what it is concerned with, at a general level rather than in detail.

**Know/knowhowto:** to have a clear and practical understanding of an area of work, with enough detail to be able to carry out any tasks or procedures linked with it.

**Show/demonstrate/be able to:** (examples of 'doing' words). To be able to provide practical evidence of an area of work (e.g. in communication) at a skill level appropriate to what is required in the role.

**Understand:** to grasp the meaning of a concept and to grasp its broad purpose and principles (such as with child development, policies).

## **Additional guidance**

Guidance and supporting materials are available to help supervising social workers implement the TSD Standards with foster carers. You may find some of these materials useful, which can be downloaded from our website using the following link: [Foster Care Standards](#) The guidance factsheets may be particularly useful in helping you to understand how to complete the standards and provide examples of the type and amount of evidence required.

**Please note that each box will fit approximately 1,100 characters in Arial 10 point.**

**Standard 1:** Understand the principles and values essential for fostering children and young people

**1.1 Principles and Values**

**Evidence** (summarise your evidence below)

**Supervisor sign off:**

**Date:**

**Standard 1:** Understand the principles and values essential for fostering children and young people

**1.2 Equality, inclusion and anti-discriminatory practice**

**Evidence** (summarise your evidence below)

**Supervisor sign off:**

**Date:**

**Standard 1:** Understand the principles and values essential for fostering children and young people

**1.3 Person centred approaches**

**Evidence** (summarise your evidence below)

**Supervisor sign off:**

**Date:**

**Standard 1:** Understand the principles and values essential for fostering children and young people

**1.4 Confidentiality and sharing information**

**Evidence** (summarise your evidence below)

**Supervisor sign off:**

**Date:**

**Standard 2:** Understand your role as a foster carer

**2.1 Fostering role**

**Evidence** (summarise your evidence below)

**Supervisor sign off:**

**Date:**

**Standard 2:** Understand your role as a foster carer

**2.2 Legislation, policies and procedures**

**Evidence** (summarise your evidence below)

**Supervisor sign off:**

**Date:**

**Standard 2:** Understand your role as a foster carer

**2.3 Relationships with parents and others**

**Evidence** (summarise your evidence below)

**Supervisor sign off:**

**Date:**

**Standard 2:** Understand your role as a foster carer

**2.4 Team working**

**Evidence** (summarise your evidence below)

**Supervisor sign off:**

**Date:**

**Standard 2:** Understand your role as a foster carer

**2.5**

**Evidence** (summarise your evidence below)

**Supervisor sign off:**

**Date:**

**Standard 2:** Understand your role as a foster carer

**2.6 Complaints and compliments**

**Evidence** (summarise your evidence below)

**Supervisor sign off:**

**Date:**



**Standard 3:** Understand health and safety, and health care

**3.1**

**Evidence** (summarise your evidence below)

**Supervisor sign off:**

**Date:**

**Standard 3:** Understand health and safety, and health care

**3.2 Accommodation**

**Evidence** (summarise your evidence below)

**Supervisor sign off:**

**Date:**

**Standard 3:** Understand health and safety, and health care

**3.3 Healthy care and medication**

**Evidence** (summarise your evidence below)

**Supervisor sign off:**

**Date:**

**Standard 3:** Understand health and safety, and health care

**3.4 Personal safety and security**

**Evidence** (summarise your evidence below)

**Supervisor sign off:**

**Date:**

**Standard 4:** Know how to communicate effectively

**4.3 Communication with parents, families and friends**

**Evidence** (summarise your evidence below)

**Supervisor sign off:**

**Date:**

**Standard 4:** Know how to communicate effectively

**4.2 Knowing about communication**

**Evidence** (summarise your evidence below)

**Supervisor sign off:**

**Date:**

**Standard 4:** Know how to communicate effectively

**4.3 Communication with parents, families and friends**

**Evidence** (summarise your evidence below)

**Supervisor sign off:**

**Date:**

**Standard 4:** Know how to communicate effectively

**4.4 Communication with organisations**

**Evidence** (summarise your evidence below)

**Supervisor sign off:**

**Date:**

**Standard 4:** Know how to communicate effectively

**4.5 Principles of keeping good records**

**Evidence** (summarise your evidence below)

**Supervisor sign off:**

**Date:**

**Standard 5:** Understanding the development of children and young people

**5.1 Attachment and stages of development**

**Evidence** (summarise your evidence below)

**Supervisor sign off:**

**Date:**

**Standard 5:** Understanding the development of children and young people

**5.2 Resilience**

**Evidence** (summarise your evidence below)

**Supervisor sign off:**

**Date:**

**Standard 5:** Understanding the development of children and young people

**5.3 Transitions**

**Evidence** (summarise your evidence below)

**Supervisor sign off:**

**Date:**

**Standard 5:** Understanding the development of children and young people

**5.4 Supporting play, activities and learning**

**Evidence** (summarise your evidence below)

**Supervisor sign off:**

**Date:**

**Standard 5:** Understanding the development of children and young people

**5.5 Supporting educational potential**

**Evidence** (summarise your evidence below)

**Supervisor sign off:**

**Date:**

**Standard 5:** Understanding the development of children and young people

**5.6 Understanding contexts**

**Evidence** (summarise your evidence below)

**Supervisor sign off:**

**Date:**



**Standard 5:** Understanding the development of children and young people

**5.7 Promoting positive health and sexuality**

**Evidence** (summarise your evidence below)

**Supervisor sign off:**

**Date:**

**Standard 5:** Understanding the development of children and young people

**5.8 Supporting disabled children and children with special educational needs**

**Evidence** (summarise your evidence below)

**Supervisor sign off:**

**Date:**

**Standard 6:** Keep children and young people safe from harm

**6.1 Legislation, policies and processes**

**Evidence** (summarise your evidence below)

**Supervisor sign off:**

**Date:**

**Standard 6:** Keep children and young people safe from harm

**6.2 Keeping children safe**

**Evidence** (summarise your evidence below)

**Supervisor sign off:**

**Date:**

**Standard 6:** Keep children and young people safe from harm

**6.5 'Whistle-blowing' (reporting failures in duty)**

**Evidence** (summarise your evidence below)

**Supervisor sign off:**

**Date:**

**Standard 6:** Keep children and young people safe from harm

**6.4 Working with other agencies**

**Evidence** (summarise your evidence below)

**Supervisor sign off:**

**Date:**

**Standard 6:** Keep children and young people safe from harm

**6.5 'Whistle-blowing' (reporting failures in duty)**

**Evidence** (summarise your evidence below)

**Supervisor sign off:**

**Date:**

**Standard 7: Develop yourself**

**7.1 Your role as a foster carer**

**Evidence** (summarise your evidence below)

**Supervisor sign off:**

**Date:**

**Standard 7: Develop yourself**

**7.2 Being aware of the impact of fostering on your sons and daughters and extended family**

**Evidence** (summarise your evidence below)

**Supervisor sign off:**

**Date:**

**Standard 7: Develop yourself**

**7.3 Using support and supervision to develop your role**

**Evidence** (summarise your evidence below)

**Supervisor sign off:**

**Date:**

**Standard 7: Develop yourself**

**7.4 Meeting learning needs as part of continuing professional development (CPD)**

**Evidence** (summarise your evidence below)

**Supervisor sign off:**

**Date:**

**Standard 7: Develop yourself**

**7.5 Career progression**

**Evidence** (summarise your evidence below)

**Supervisor sign off:**

**Date:**

**Continuation sheet for Standard no. \_\_\_\_\_**

**Skills and Knowledge no. \_\_\_\_\_**

**Evidence** (summarise your evidence below)

**Supervisor sign off:**

**Date:**

Continuation sheet for Standard no. \_\_\_\_\_  
Skills and Knowledge no. \_\_\_\_\_

**Evidence** (summarise your evidence below)

**Supervisor sign off:**

**Date:**

Continuation sheet for Standard no. \_\_\_\_\_  
Skills and Knowledge no. \_\_\_\_\_

**Evidence** (summarise your evidence below)

**Supervisor sign off:**

**Date:**



Continuation sheet for Standard no. \_\_\_\_\_  
Skills and Knowledge no. \_\_\_\_\_

**Evidence** (summarise your evidence below)

**Supervisor sign off:**

**Date:**

Continuation sheet for Standard no. \_\_\_\_\_  
Skills and Knowledge no. \_\_\_\_\_

**Evidence** (summarise your evidence below)

**Supervisor sign off:**

**Date:**

# Certificate of Successful Completion

Name of foster carer: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of foster care provider: \_\_\_\_\_

Address of foster care provider: \_\_\_\_\_

**I certify that the above named foster carer  
has successfully met all the outcomes in the  
*Training, Support and Development Standards for Foster Care***

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Job role: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



Department  
for Education

© Crown copyright 2012

You may re-use this information (excluding logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/> or e-mail: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at [FosterCare.CIC@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:FosterCare.CIC@education.gsi.gov.uk).

This document is also available from our website at: [www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/families/fostercare/fostercarestand](http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/families/fostercare/fostercarestand)



Department  
for Education

# **Training, Support and Development Standards for Family and Friends Foster Carers**

**Workbook**

**Refreshed: November 2012**

# Contents

Introduction	3
Training, support and development standards for family and friends foster carers	3- 4
The workbook	4
How to use this workbook	5
Evidencing knowledge and skills	6
Additional guidance	6
Principles and values statement	8

## **Standard 1:**

Understand your role as a family and friends carer

## **Standard 2:**

Know how to provide a safe environment and healthy care

## **Standard 3:**

Know how to communicate effectively

## **Standard 4:**

Understand the development of children and young people

## **Standard 5:**

Keep children and young people safe from harm

## **Standard 6:**

Develop yourself

## **Introduction**

Welcome to this workbook and guide to the Training, Support and Development Standards for Family and Friends Foster Carers, produced by the sector.

These standards were developed from the Training, Support and Development (TSD) Standards for Foster Care in response to feedback from family and friends foster carers and fostering services. Feedback suggested that, given the specific circumstances that bring family and friends carers into foster care, an adaptation of the TSD Standards for foster care would be more useful.

The aim is to simplify, and to reflect the experience of a family and friends foster carer, without losing the essence of what is required to meet the standards.

In recognition of their particular circumstances, family and friends foster carers, who are approved as foster carers, have an extended period in which to complete the standards. Family and friends carers are expected to complete the standards within 18 months of approval (National Minimum Standards – Fostering Services: April 2011).

A number of fostering services have already worked with their family and friends foster carers to complete the TSD Standards for Foster Care. For some carers this will be the right approach, and fostering services will need to work with their family and friends carers to establish what is appropriate.

Further information about the [TSD Standards for Foster Care](#) is available.

## **Training, support and development standards for family and friends foster carers**

These Standards have been adapted from the Training, Support and Development Standards for Foster Carers, to reflect the distinct role of family and friends foster carers. The areas that family and friends foster carers are required to evidence have been selected taking into account the nature and context of the family and friends caring role.

The Standards set out clearly what family and friends foster carers should know, understand and be able to do, and are 'proportionate' to the role and tasks of the family and friends foster carer.

There are six standards:

**Standard 1:** Understand your role as a family and friends carer

**Standard 2:** Know how to provide a safe environment and healthy care

**Standard 3:** Know how to communicate effectively

**Standard 4:** Understand the development of children and young people

**Standard 5:** Keep children and young people safe from harm

**Standard 6:** Develop yourself

Family and friends foster carers must evidence that they have met **all** these standards, where these apply to the specific child they are caring for.

### **The workbook**

The workbook explains what the Standards are and how you can show that you have met each Standard. Family and friends foster carers who have previous experience of working with children and young people can use their prior learning and experience as evidence to show that they can meet the Standards.

Experienced carers who may also be qualified in a care related or similar field (e.g. care work, nursing, schools, relevant degree or diploma) or who have relevant NVQ units are still required to complete the Standards, as they are tailored to the friends and family fostering role. You can use your qualifications and experience as evidence against specific outcomes in the Standards.

Your supervisor<sup>1</sup> will help you complete the workbook and will sign off each Standard when you have provided sufficient evidence to meet the Standard.

When you have completed all the Standards you will receive a certificate to evidence successful completion.

---

<sup>1</sup> We have used the term 'supervisor' throughout the workbook but you may be more familiar with 'supervising social worker', 'link worker' or 'support worker'

## How to use this workbook

### Skills and knowledge

These are the pieces of knowledge or skills that you have gained. You will need to provide evidence that you meet each of these outcomes.

### Evidence requirements

This section outlines what you need to do in order to provide evidence of your skills and knowledge. Your supervising social worker may ask you questions in order to check your understanding or you may prefer to write out your own response first to share with your supervisor.

### Providing evidence

You should enter a summary of the evidence that you have collected to meet a particular outcome(s) in the evidence box. Try to keep these entries short. You can write or type your evidence. If you are typing your evidence, please note that the evidence boxes only allow 2000 characters (approx. the size of the box). Continuation sheets have been provided at the end of the workbook. It is good practice to keep a portfolio ring binder that contains your evidence for easy reference.

Evidence can include certificates from training you have undertaken, supervision notes, witness statements, records of observation (either you recording something you have observed or a colleague observing you at work), testimonials or references from current or previous employers or service users, reflective logs (something you have written reflecting on a piece of work you have done), reports or records you have written, videos, photos.

As a family and friends foster carer you will be demonstrating that you understand your role as a family and friends foster carer and so the evidence for the standards will be directly related to your parenting of a specific child. Therefore it is likely that specific elements of some of the standards will not apply to your situation. Where this is the case, it is appropriate with the agreement of the supervising social worker, to note this in the workbook.

### Induction plan

When you start work on the standards you should draw up an induction plan with your supervisor, write down what you are going to do and find out and what evidence you are going to collect to prove you are able to meet each outcome.

Together with your supervisor, you should agree a timetable for completion of the standards. Your induction plan should be full of **actions** (i.e. things you are going to do or learn to evidence you meet the standards).

Useful sources of learning materials could include:

- Welcome-pack material you have been given by your agency
- Your handbook or manual



- Any other policy and procedure documents you have been given

## Evidencing knowledge and skills

The following words are used in the workbook:

**Be aware of:** to know that something exists. For example, the importance of routines for children, and what it is concerned with, at a general level rather than in detail.

**Know/know how to:** to have a clear and practical understanding of an area of work, with enough detail to be able to carry out any tasks or procedures linked with it.

**Show/demonstrate/be able to:** (examples of 'doing' words). To be able to provide practical evidence of an area of work (e.g. in communication) at a skill level appropriate to what is required in the role.

**Understand:** to grasp the meaning of a concept and to grasp its broad purpose and principles (such as with child development, policies).

## Additional guidance

Guidance and supporting materials to help supervising social workers support foster carers to meet the Standards are available [here](#).

## **Principles and values statement**

The same principles and values underpin all the induction standards for staff and carers who work with children, young people and their families.

### **Principles**

The welfare of the child or young person is paramount.

Carers contribute to children and young people's care, learning and development, and safeguarding. This is reflected in every aspect of practice and service provision.

Carers support parents and families who are partners in the care, learning, development and safeguarding of their children, recognising they are the child or young person's first, and in most situations, their most enduring carers and educators.

Carers are integral to the team supporting children and young people.

### **Values**

The needs, rights and views of the child or young person are at the centre of all practice and provision.

Individuality, difference and diversity are valued and celebrated.

Equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice are actively promoted.

Children and young people's health and well-being are actively promoted.

Children and young people's personal and physical safety is safeguarded, whilst allowing for risk and challenge, as appropriate to the capabilities of the child or young person.

Self-esteem and resilience are recognised as essential to every child and young person's development.

Confidentiality and agreements about confidential information are respected as appropriate unless a child or young person's protection and well-being are at stake.

Professional knowledge, skills and values are shared appropriately in order to enrich the experience of children and young people more widely.

Social inclusion and advancement of children and young people are actively promoted as specified in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

## Standard 1: Understand your role as a family and friends foster carer

### 1.1 Understand your role as a family and friends foster carer (TSD standard 2.1, 2.4)

#### Skills and knowledge

- 1.1a **Understand** your own role and responsibilities in relation to your fostering service
- 1.1b **Understand** the role of your supervising social worker and child's social worker
- 1.1c **Be able to** work in partnership with staff from the other organisations that support you and the child or young person in your care
- 1.1d **Know how to** contribute to planning for the child or young person including contributions to meetings and reviews

#### Evidence requirements

- 1.1a Describe what you do as a foster carer for your child/young person. Can you describe how the principles and values of your fostering agency relate to your role?
- 1.1b Describe what you must always inform your supervising social worker about and when e.g. child protection concerns
- 1.1c and d Explain how you work well with other important people in making plans for the child or young person in your care

**Evidence** (summarise your evidence below)

**Note:** Text box below limited to 2000 characters. Please use continuation sheets at the end of the workbook, if needed

<b>Supervisor sign off:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
-----------------------------	--------------

## 1.2 Equality, inclusion and anti-discriminatory practice (TSD standard 1.2)

### Skills and knowledge

- 1.2a **Understand** why it is important to provide care which respects and preserves each child's ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic background.
- 1.2b **Demonstrate** how you support and encourage the child /young person in your care to develop skills to deal with discrimination, enhance self-worth and make a positive contribution

### Evidence requirements

- 1.2a Describe why it is important to help a child feel good about who they are
- 1.2b Give an example of how you support the development of self worth and challenge prejudice with the child/young person in your care. This could include dealing with negative views from others to you, your family or even views expressed by the child or young person in your care to others, or as a general concept

**Evidence** (summarise your evidence below)

**Note:** Text box below limited to 2000 characters. Please use continuation sheets at the end of the workbook, if needed

<b>Supervisor sign off:</b>	<b>Date:</b>

### 1.3 Policies, procedures

(TSD standard 2.2, 2.6)

#### Skills and knowledge

- 1.3a **Know about** relevant legislation, policies and procedures relating to family and friends foster care, and where you can get further information
- 1.3b **Understand** the importance of confidentiality and how it applies to your role
- 1.3c **Know how to** make a complaint on your own behalf or on behalf of the child or young person in your care

#### Evidence requirements

- 1.3a Describe what you understand about being a family and friends foster carer and the importance of the safety and welfare of the child or young person in your care.

For example, give an example of how your local authority explained the law and the assessment process relating to becoming a family and friends foster carer. Who would you speak to get clear information about the law or a procedure relating to being a family and friends foster carer?

- 1.3b Why it is important to maintain good confidentiality
- 1.3c Explain who you are accountable to as a family and friends foster carer and what to do when things go wrong.

**Evidence** (summarise your evidence below)

**Note:** Text box below limited to 2000 characters. Please use continuation sheets at the end of the workbook, if needed

<b>Supervisor sign off:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
-----------------------------	--------------



## Standard 2: Understand health and safety, and healthy care

### 2.1 Legislation, policies and procedures

(TSD Standard 3.1)

#### Skills and knowledge

**2.1a Show** an awareness of the relevant health and safety legislation and guidance and your responsibilities.

**2.1b Know** your agency's procedures in relation to the health and safety of children and young people.

#### Evidence requirements

##### 2.1a and b

Give an example of how you use the health and safety policy of your fostering service to protect the child or young person in your care.

**Evidence** (summarise your evidence below)

**Note:** Text box below limited to 2000 characters. Please use continuation sheets at the end of the workbook, if needed

<b>Supervisor sign off:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
-----------------------------	--------------

## 2.2 Accommodation

(TSD Standard 3.2)

### Skills and knowledge

**2.2a Know** how to keep your home safe and free of avoidable hazards that might be a risk to children and young people.

**2.2b Know** the importance of maintaining a good standard of hygiene and cleanliness.

**2.2c Show** that you and those living in your household know what to do in case of a fire.

### Evidence requirements

**2.2a** Describe how you keep your home safe, secure and free of avoidable hazards, and keep your home clean and tidy

**2.2b** Describe what you would do in case of a fire in your home

**Evidence** (summarise your evidence below)

**Note:** Text box below limited to 2000 characters. Please use continuation sheets at the end of the workbook, if needed

<b>Supervisor sign off:</b>	<b>Date:</b>

## 2.3 Healthy care and medication

(TSD Standard 3.3)

### Skills and knowledge

- 2.3a** **Have an understanding** of the specific health and hygiene needs, including allergies and infection control procedures of the child /young person in your care.
- 2.3b** **Be able to** help the child /young person in your care understand about health issues and, where appropriate be able to help them with advice and information in relation to risk taking, substance abuse, relationships and sexual health.
- 2.3c** **Have an understanding** of first aid and know how to access emergency medical treatment
- 2.3d** **Know** what to do in relation to any medication or healthcare procedures required by the child or young person in your care.

### Evidence requirements

- 2.3a** Describe the health needs of the child or young person you care for, and where relevant, any procedures you have to follow to meet the child's or young persons health needs.

For example, the child or young person may have asthma, a life - limiting condition that could be compromised by exposure to infection or requires a specific medical regime such as peg feeding.

- 2.3b** Explain how you help the child or young person you care for to look after their own health.

For example, could you help them to understand about sexual health, understanding positive, non-abusive relationships, or awareness of substance abuse and the associated risks

- 2.3c** Explain what you would do in response to a medical emergency concerning the child or young person you care for.

**Evidence** (summarise your evidence below)

**Note:** Text box below limited to 2000 characters. Please use continuation sheets at the end of the workbook, if needed

<b>Supervisor sign off:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
-----------------------------	--------------

## 2.4 Managing risk, personal safety and security

(TSD Standard 3.4, 3.5)

### Skills and knowledge

**2.4a Be able to** identify examples of risks to the child or young person and take appropriate action

**2.4b Understand** potential risks to the safety and security of yourself and members of your family and what you can do to reduce or manage the risks.

**2.4c Understand** the need to manage challenging behaviour in a way that is safe without the use of physical or other inappropriate punishment

### Evidence requirements

**2.4a** Describe an example of a risk to your child or young person and how you take action to minimise this

For example, making sure a toddler is safe from an open fire helping an older child use the internet appropriately, helping a young person to understand that staying out late may be dangerous

**2.4b** Where this is relevant, describe an example of a situation where you or your family might be placed at risk. For example, this could include a risk to your safety from the child or young person you care for, or an extended family member.

What could you do to reduce or manage the risks? Where would you go for support and advice?

**2.4c** Describe how you would, with help and support if this is necessary, encourage positive behaviour with the child/young person in your care, and where necessary manage challenging behaviour

**Evidence** (summarise your evidence below)

**Note:** Text box below limited to 2000 characters. Please use continuation sheets at the end of the workbook, if needed

<b>Supervisor sign off:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
-----------------------------	--------------



## Standard 3: Know how to communicate effectively

### 3.1 Encourage communication

(TSD Standard 4.1, 4.2, 4.3)

#### Skills and knowledge

- 3.1a **Demonstrate** how you listen to and understand the wishes and feelings of the child /young person in your care
- 3.1b **Understand** some of the common difficulties in communicating with children and young people and give examples of how you try to overcome these.
- 3.1c **Show** how you help the child or young person in your care to make their own decisions
- 3.1d **Show** how you have promoted and supported the relationship between the child or young person, their parents or any other important relationships, where this is appropriate.

#### Evidence requirements

- 3.1a Describe how you listen to and understand the wishes and feelings of the child or young person in your care. How do you help them to share these wishes and feelings and how can you ensure they are taken into account?
- 3.1b Give an example of a common difficulty in communication with children and young people and how you try would to overcome this or describe a specific communication difficulty with the child or young person in your care and how you are working to overcome this.
- 3.1c Give an example
- 3.1d Give an example

**Evidence** (summarise your evidence below)

**Note:** Text box below limited to 2000 characters. Please use continuation sheets at the end of the workbook, if needed

<b>Supervisor sign off:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
-----------------------------	--------------

## 3.2 Principles of keeping good records

(TSD Standard 4.4, 4.5)

### Skills and knowledge

- 3.2a **Understand** the importance of effective communication with other organisations who are in contact with or about the child or young person in your care.
- 3.2b **Show** how you keep accurate written records in the way that your agency requires
- 3.2c **Know** how to enable the children or young people in your care to take part in record keeping and keep their important and treasured items for their life story

### Evidence requirements

- 3.2a Give an example of effective communication with another organisation that is in contact with, or about, the child in your care.
- 3.2b. Give an example of recording from your diary/ log book
- 3.2c Show how you might help the child or young person you care for, to gather and record their own views, memories and feelings (as appropriate to the age and understanding of the child).

**Evidence** (summarise your evidence below)

**Note:** Text box below limited to 2000 characters. Please use continuation sheets at the end of the workbook, if needed

<b>Supervisor sign off:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
-----------------------------	--------------

## Standard 4: Understand the development of children and young people

### 4.1 Attachment and stages of development

(TSD Standard 5.1)

#### Skills and knowledge

- 4.1a Understand** the basic principles of how children and young people of all ages form attachments, how these attachments affect their development, and the impact of interrupted development, trauma, abuse separation and loss.
- 4.1b Understand** the difference between chronological age and stages of development and how this may affect a child or young person

#### Evidence requirements

- 4.1** Describe your understanding of 4.1a and 4.1b in relation to the needs of the child/young person in your care, where this is relevant.

For example, if the child or young person in your care has been/ is affected by separation, loss, trauma or abuse how are you helping them to overcome this?

**Evidence** (summarise your evidence below)

**Note:** Text box below limited to 2000 characters. Please use continuation sheets at the end of the workbook, if needed

<b>Supervisor sign off:</b>	<b>Date:</b>

## 4.2 Building resilience and supporting children through change

(TSD Standard 5.2, 5.3)

### Skills and knowledge

- 4.2a **Understand** how you can help the child/young person you care for overcome and cope with major difficulties and develop positive self-esteem.
- 4.2b **Understand** how to support individual child or young person through significant life changes and challenges.
- 4.2c **Be able to** work with child or young person in your care to develop skills, self-confidence and knowledge to prepare them for adulthood and independent living

### Evidence requirements

#### 4.2a and b

Explain with an example, your understanding of how children and young people learn to cope with adversity. How can you help the child/young person in your care to overcome difficulties and have a positive view of themselves (taking into account the age and understanding of the child or young person).

- 4.2c Describe how you help the child or young person to develop their self confidence, their independence and where relevant how you are helping them prepare for adulthood

**Evidence** (summarise your evidence below)

**Note:** Text box below limited to 2000 characters. Please use continuation sheets at the end of the workbook, if needed

<b>Supervisor sign off:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
-----------------------------	--------------



## 4.3 Supporting play, activities and learning

(TSD Standard 5.4)

### Skills and knowledge

- 4.3a Know** how to encourage children and young people to participate in activities.
- 4.3b Explain** how play, hobbies and interests are important to social and personal development, and enjoyment of recreational activities.
- 4.3c Explain** the importance of adhering to appropriate routines for children and young people

### Evidence requirements

- 4.3a** Taking into account the age and understanding of the child or young person. How would you encourage the child or young person in your care to take part in activities:
- at home
  - sporting and outdoor activities
  - with friends
  - out of school activities
- 4.3b** Why are play, hobbies and interests important?
- 4.3c** How do routines benefit children and young people? What routines do you have in your household and why?

**Evidence** (summarise your evidence below)

**Note:** Text box below limited to 2000 characters. Please use continuation sheets at the end of the workbook, if needed

<b>Supervisor sign off:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
-----------------------------	--------------

## 4.4 Supporting educational potential

(TSD Standard 5.5)

### Skills and knowledge

- 4.4a **Show** how you can encourage and support the child / young person in your care with their education (including early years education) and help them overcome setbacks.
- 4.4b **Know** how to support the child or young person in your care in their further education and training, and employment.
- 4.4c **Be able to** advocate on behalf of the child/young person in your care to ensure their educational needs are met

### Evidence requirements

- 4.4 Give examples in relation to child /young person in your care (this may include where a child has special educational needs)

If you are caring for a baby the focus should be on helping their early learning and development

**Evidence** (summarise your evidence below)

**Note:** Text box below limited to 2000 characters. Please use continuation sheets at the end of the workbook, if needed

<b>Supervisor sign off:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
-----------------------------	--------------

## 4.5 Promote positive sexual health and sexual identity (TSD Standard 5.7)

### Skills and knowledge

- 4.5a **Understand** how to promote good sexual health with children and young people.
- 4.5b **Understand** how to enable children and young people to develop a positive sexual identity with regard to their own sexuality.

### Evidence requirements

- 4.5 Give an example of how you help the child /young person in your care to develop their understanding as they grow up (taking into account the age and understanding of the child or young person).

For example, what advice and information should be available to children and young people to promote good sexual health? What support do children and young people need to develop their sexual identity in positive ways? Where can you get support and information from?

**Evidence** (summarise your evidence below)

**Note:** Text box below limited to 2000 characters. Please use continuation sheets at the end of the workbook, if needed

<b>Supervisor sign off:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
-----------------------------	--------------

## Standard 5: Keep children and young people safe from harm

### 5.1 Legislation, policies and procedures

(TSD Standard 6.1)

#### Skills and knowledge

**5.1a** Have a general **understanding** of the legislation and national guidance relating to protecting and safeguarding children.

**5.1b** **Understand** your local multi-agency safeguarding policies and procedures on identifying and protecting children and young people who have been abused or are at risk of abuse.

#### Evidence requirements

**5.1a** Explain how your fostering agency has helped you understand your role and responsibilities as a family and friends foster carer in protecting and ensuring the welfare of the child or young person in your care

**5.1b** Describe how you understand the role of your supervising social worker and the child or young persons social worker in ensuring that children are safe, have effective care and grow up successfully

**Evidence** (summarise your evidence below)

**Note:** Text box below limited to 2000 characters. Please use continuation sheets at the end of the workbook, if needed

<b>Supervisor sign off:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
-----------------------------	--------------



## 5.2 Keeping children and young people safe

(TSD Standard 6.2)

### Skills and knowledge

- 5.2a **Demonstrate** that you understand what children and young people want and need to feel safe.
- 5.2b **Know** how to help children and young people keep themselves safe from harm or abuse.
- 5.2c **Be aware of** the safeguarding policy of the school, pre school group, club or other activity

### Evidence requirements

#### 5.2a and b

Explain how you support the child /young person in your care to feel safe and keep them from harm or abuse

- 5.2c Can you describe the policy for the school, preschool or other activity related to the child or young person in your care?

**Evidence** (summarise your evidence below)

**Note:** Text box below limited to 2000 characters. Please use continuation sheets at the end of the workbook, if needed

**Supervisor sign off:** **Date:**

### 5.3 Recognising and responding to abuse

(TSD Standard 6.3, 6.4, 6.5)

#### Skills and knowledge

- 5.3a Understand** the different ways in which children and young people can be harmed by adults, other children and young people including the internet.
- 5.3b Understand** signs and indicators of possible abuse and neglect.
- 5.3c Understand** how children and young people might be bullied and know what action to take if you suspect a child or young person is being bullied.
- 5.3d Understand** the procedures you need to follow if you suspect a child or young person is being abused or neglected, and the action you might need to take immediately

#### Evidence requirements

##### 5.3 a, b and c

Explain your understanding of a, b, and c. For example, what actions you might take to support the child /young person in your care? And if they were at risk of abuse, bullying or neglect?

- 5.3d** What are your agency's procedures on reporting concerns if you suspect a child or young person is being abused or neglected? Who would you contact immediately if you were worried that a child or young person was at risk of abuse, bullying or neglect?

**Evidence** (summarise your evidence below)

**Note:** Text box below limited to 2000 characters. Please use continuation sheets at the end of the workbook, if needed

<b>Supervisor sign off:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
-----------------------------	--------------

## Standard 6: Develop yourself

### 6.1 Using support and supervision to support you as a family and friends foster carer (TSD Standard 7.3)

#### Skills and knowledge

- 6.1a **Understand** the purpose of your personal supervision and annual review and how to make the best use of it.
- 6.1b **Know** what support is available to you and the importance of asking for help and advice.

#### Evidence requirements

##### 6.1a and b

Explain how you have used your personal supervision and annual review as support

Give an example of when you have asked for help or advice.

**Evidence** (summarise your evidence below)

**Note:** Text box below limited to 2000 characters. Please use continuation sheets at the end of the workbook, if needed

<b>Supervisor sign off:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
-----------------------------	--------------

## **6.2 Personal development**

(TSD Standard 7.4)

### **Skills and knowledge**

- 6.2a** Be willing to take advantage of training and development opportunities to develop your knowledge and skills further. As appropriate to the child you are caring for

### **Evidence requirements**

- 6.2a** Where appropriate, give an example of how training and development has helped you or could help you.

**Evidence** (summarise your evidence below)

**Note:** Text box below limited to 2000 characters. Please use continuation sheets at the end of the workbook, if needed

<b>Supervisor sign off:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
-----------------------------	--------------



Continuation sheet for Standard no. \_\_\_\_\_ Outcome no. \_\_\_\_\_

Evidence (summarise your evidence below)

Supervisor sign off:

Date:

Continuation sheet for Standard no. \_\_\_\_\_ Outcome no. \_\_\_\_\_

Evidence (summarise your evidence below)

Supervisor sign off:	Date:
----------------------	-------

Continuation sheet for Standard no. \_\_\_\_\_ Outcome no. \_\_\_\_\_

Evidence (summarise your evidence below)

Supervisor sign off:

Date:

Continuation sheet for Standard no. \_\_\_\_\_ Outcome no. \_\_\_\_\_

Evidence (summarise your evidence below)

Supervisor sign off:

Date:

Continuation sheet for Standard no. \_\_\_\_\_ Outcome no. \_\_\_\_\_

Evidence (summarise your evidence below)

Supervisor sign off:

Date



Department  
for Education

© Crown copyright 2012

You may re-use this information (excluding logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/> or e-mail: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at [FosterCare.CIC@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:FosterCare.CIC@education.gsi.gov.uk).

This document is also available from [our website](#).



Department  
for Education

# **Short break carers standards and workbook**

**Training, support and development  
standards**

**July 2012**

# Contents

Introduction	3
The Short Breaks Duty	3
How to use this workbook	6
What to expect from your agency	8
Principles and values statements	10
Standard one: Understand your role as a short break carer	11
Standard two: Provide a safe environment and healthy care	20
Standard three: Communicate effectively	30
Standard four: Understand the development of children and young people	37
Standard five: Keep children and young people safe from harm	42
Standard six: Develop yourself	51
Exemplars: Standards 2.1 & 3.1	56
Useful websites and organisations	61
Training, Support and Development Standards for Short Break Carers	66
Annex A: Outcomes Framework	71



## Introduction

Welcome to this workbook and guide to the Training, Support and Development Standards for Short Break Carers.

The workbook was originally developed by the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) in partnership with the Short Breaks Network (the national organisation for family-based short breaks) and revised by the Department for Education in July 2012. It is for short break carers of disabled children and young people, and those with complex health needs. Completion of the standards is a requirement for short break carers who are approved under the Fostering Services Regulations 2011.

Other new and existing short break carers are also strongly encouraged to complete the standards as part of their induction, training and development.

## The Short Breaks Duty

Since April 2011, local authorities have been under a duty to provide a range of short breaks services for disabled children, young people and their families. The new Short Breaks Duty aims to improve and expand short break services, ensuring a wide range of high quality opportunities and providing positive life experiences for children and young people, as well as a break for their parents and carers.

A key part of the Short Breaks Duty is the requirement for all local authorities to prepare a Short Breaks Duty Statement, providing details of the local range of services; how services are responding to the needs of local carers; and how services can be accessed, including any eligibility criteria. Local authorities are required to place a copy of the statement on their websites; to keep the websites under review; and to review their statements on a regular basis. They must also consider the needs of local parents and carers when preparing and revising their statements.

## The standards for short break carers

These standards have been adapted from CWDC's *Training, Support and Development Standards for Foster Carers*, to reflect the distinct role of the short break carer in providing short periods of care specifically for children and young people who are disabled or have complex health needs.

The standards set out clearly what short break carers should know, understand and be able to do, and are designed to be proportionate to the role and tasks of the short break carer. They will help to ensure that short break carers are safe to take on the appropriate level of responsibility for the disabled children and young people in their care. They will assist supervisors and managers in assessing the skills, knowledge and experience of short break carers, and in identifying their training and development needs.

It is recognised that many children and young people with complex health needs also have significant impairments. Where this is not the case, some of the specific outcomes in these standards may not apply or will need to be adapted to make them relevant.

It is expected that all approved short break foster carers who are subject to the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services<sup>1</sup> should complete these standards. The standards cover their preparation and assessment and must be completed during the twelve months following their approval as foster carers, or within twelve months of their taking up their role.

Other short break carers are also strongly encouraged to complete the standards to support their professional development and training (see *Short Breaks - Advice to Local Authorities, 2011*<sup>2</sup> and *Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations, 2011*<sup>3</sup>.) They are underpinned by the principles and values statement, which applies to anyone who works with children, and by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

## The workbook

This workbook explains what the standards are and how you can show that you have met each one. If you have previous experience of working with children and young people you can use your prior learning and experience as evidence to show that you can meet the standards. You will also be able to provide evidence of learning from your preparation training and assessment for becoming a short break carer.

If you are an experienced approved foster carer and have qualifications in a care-related or similar field (such as care work, nursing or education), or if you have a relevant degree, diploma or relevant NVQ qualification, you must still complete the standards as they are tailored to the short break role. You can use your qualifications and experience, however, as evidence against specific outcomes in the standards.

Your supervisor\* will help you complete the workbook and will sign off each standard when you have provided sufficient evidence to meet it.

*\* We have used the term 'supervisor' throughout the workbook, but you may be more familiar with 'supervising social worker', 'link worker' or 'support worker'.*

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/DFE-00029-2011>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/send/a0075231/short-breaks>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2011/707/made>

## Definitions

The term 'disabled children and young people' is used throughout the standards to refer to children or young people who may have physical, sensory or cognitive impairments that affect the way in which they relate to the world around them. Society creates many barriers which disable this group of children and young people and prevent them from participating in a valued life. Many disabled children and young people will need varying amounts of support to ensure that they can interact with their environment and achieve the same outcomes as all children: to be healthy, to stay safe, to enjoy and achieve, to make a positive contribution and to achieve economic well-being.

An increasing number of disabled children also have complex health needs and require care which is invasive, or they will be dependent on technology in order to maintain their optimum health (for example, children who are tube-fed, use ventilators or require procedures such as intermittent catheterisation). Some children with complex health needs may not have an impairment but will require support in order to access activities and community facilities.

***Definitions provided by Jeanne Carlin, Independent Disability Consultant***

# How to use this workbook

## Summary

Each standard begins with a summary telling you what the standard covers and what you will be expected to know and be able to do in order to complete it.

## Main area

This indicates the main area of knowledge and practice that you will need to cover under each of the standards.

## Outcomes

These are the pieces of knowledge or skills that you have gained. You will need to provide evidence that you meet each of these outcomes.

## Evidence

You should enter a summary of the evidence that you have collected to meet a particular outcome in the evidence box. Try to keep these entries short. It is good practice to keep a portfolio ring binder that contains your evidence, for ease of reference. Evidence can include certificates from training you have undertaken, supervision notes, witness statements, records of observation (either you recording something you have observed or a colleague observing you at work), testimonials or references from current or previous employers or service users, reflective logs (something you have written reflecting on a piece of work you have done), reports or records you have written, videos or photos.

You can draw on your previous life, caring and work experience as evidence of your knowledge and skills. Most importantly, you should also enter your own descriptions of examples from your current work as a short break carer. Exemplars for standards 2.1 and 3.1 at the end of this workbook are completed worksheets which illustrate the breadth and depth of knowledge and skills expected. They are not intended to be prescriptive of how you should present your evidence.

## Sample questions and activities

These are examples of the sort of questions or activities that will help you check your knowledge and what you can do against the outcomes. Your supervisor may ask you questions in order to check your understanding, or you may prefer to write out your own response first to share with them. These questions are designed to help you gather the evidence needed, and you do not have to use the questions if you already have sufficient

evidence to demonstrate that you have met a particular outcome. It is not intended that you should have to write exam-type answers to these questions. If you have a specialist role, your supervisor may identify similar questions or activities that fit better with what you do.

## Induction plan

When you start work on the standards, you should draw up an induction plan with your supervisor, writing down what you are going to do and find out, and what evidence you are going to collect to prove you are able to meet the outcomes. For experienced short break carers, this will be a case of gathering all your evidence together and identifying any gaps. New short break carers will also have lots of evidence from previous experience and learning, and information acquired during their preparation or induction training and assessment. Carers and supervisors should agree a timetable for completion of the standards. Your induction plan should be full of actions (i.e. things you are going to do or learn to prove you meet the standards).

Useful sources of learning materials could include:

- material from the welcome-pack you have been given by your agency
- your handbook or manual
- any other policy and procedure documents you have been given
- any other preparation or induction training materials (e.g. Skills to Foster guides and resource packs).

A list of other resources and useful links is included towards the back of this workbook.

## What to expect from your agency

The agency you work for has a duty to arrange for you to learn about the different areas within the standards, to make sure you know enough to meet the outcomes for each area. Your agency will also provide you with learning opportunities and support through your supervisor, a mentor or training officer.

Before you are approved as a short break carer, your agency should arrange for you to attend preparation training, and you will also learn a lot about what your caring role entails during your assessment.

Within six weeks of your approval, your supervisor should induct you into the short breaks service and talk to you about the standards.

It is helpful at this stage to draw up an induction plan to look at what knowledge and skills you already have and where you may need additional training or learning activities.

Your supervisor will advise you on what training and learning support is available and agree with you how you are going to complete the standards.

## Assessing your knowledge and skills against the standards

There are different ways to learn new things. Sometimes it is better to find information by reading, going online or attending a training course; sometimes better to watch someone else carry out a task; sometimes better to talk about ideas with other people, and so on.

Different people learn best in different ways. Most people prefer a mix of activities which could include:

- one-to-one discussion
- distance learning
- guided reading
- shadowing
- training programmes
- videos and DVDs
- e-learning
- structured use of supervision
- mentoring by a more experienced carer
- use of reflective diaries
- support groups.

Together with your supervisor, you will decide what learning activities suit you best, and how you are to be assessed.

You may be assessed by:

- your supervisor observing how you carry out your work as a carer
- answering the questions or undertaking the tasks in the workbook
- showing examples of work you have done (e.g. your carer's diary or log, recording or reports). If you are using this type of evidence, remember to protect the confidentiality of children, young people and their families
- talking about things you have read or done
- reflecting on the knowledge and skills you have used in your everyday caring role
- having evidence of previous learning (e.g. certificates) and showing that you still have the knowledge and skills gained from the learning.

Assessment is not an exam. If you are not able to show your supervisor that you have fully understood any area of the standards, they may need to set up further training or learning opportunities for you.

## Evidencing knowledge and skills

The following words are used in the workbook:

**Be aware of** – know that something exists. For example, the importance of routines for children and what is involved, at a general level rather than in detail

**Know/know how to** – have a clear and practical understanding of an area of work, with enough detail to be able to carry out any tasks or procedures linked with it

**Recognise** – understand a concept (such as equal opportunities) and how it affects the way work is carried out in practice

**Show/demonstrate/be able to/identify** – be able to provide practical evidence of an area of work (e.g. in communication) at a skill level appropriate to the role

**Understand** – grasp both the meaning of a concept and its broad purpose and principles (such as with child development, policies).

# Principles and values statements

The same principles and values underpin all the induction standards for staff and carers who work with children, young people and their families.

## 1. Principles

The welfare of the child or young person is paramount

Carers contribute to children and young people's care, learning, development, and safeguarding; this is reflected in every aspect of practice and service provision

Carers support parents and families who are partners in the care, learning, development, and safeguarding of their children, recognising that they are the child or young person's first and, in most situations, most enduring carers and educators

Carers are integral to the team supporting children and young people.

## 2. Values

The needs, rights and views of the child or young person are at the centre of all practice and provision

Individuality, difference and diversity are valued and celebrated

Equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice are actively promoted

Children and young people's health and well-being are actively promoted

Children and young people's personal and physical safety is safeguarded, whilst allowing for risk and challenge, as appropriate to the capabilities of the child or young person

Self-esteem and resilience are recognised as essential to every child and young person's development

Confidentiality and agreements about confidential information are respected as appropriate, unless a child or young person's protection and well-being are at stake

Professional knowledge, skills and values are shared appropriately in order to enrich the experience of children and young people more widely

Social inclusion and advancement of children and young people are actively promoted, as specified in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.



## **Standard one**

### **Understand your role as a short break carer**

#### **Summary**

This standard sets out what you are expected to know about the principles and values underpinning your work with children and young people, and how you should put them into practice. You will be expected to show that you understand how to promote these values and put them into practice in a way that supports and respects diversity. You should also show that you have an understanding of the social model of disability.

The child or young person should be at the centre of all our work. This approach is the key to achieving successful outcomes for each child and supporting them to be healthy, to stay safe, to enjoy and achieve, to make a positive contribution and to achieve economic well-being.

To complete this standard, you will need to have a good understanding of your role and responsibilities as a short break carer. You will also be expected to know what constitutes good practice in working with disabled children and young people, and how to put into practice the policies and procedures of your agency. You will be expected to know how to work with families and carers, with colleagues in your short breaks service and other agencies involved in the care, health and education of the children and young people you care for.

#### **Main areas**

- 1.1 Principles and values for working with children and young people
- 1.2 Equality, inclusion and anti-discriminatory practice
- 1.3 The role of the short break carer
- 1.4 Policies, procedures and good practice for the short break role.

## Standard 1: Understand your role as a short break carer

Principles and values for working with children and young people

**1.1a Understand** the principles and values essential for caring for children and young people.

**1.1b Demonstrate** how your care relates to the five Every Child Matters outcomes.

### Sample questions and activities

- What principles do you think are important in caring for children and young people? Check them against the principles and values set out in this workbook.
- Give an example of treating children and young people: a) with respect and b) as an individual. Find some evidence from your work or ask for feedback.
- For each of the five outcomes outlined below, give an example of how your care can help the child or young person achieve this outcome.

Be healthy	
Stay safe	
Enjoy and achieve	
Make a positive contribution	
Achieve economic well-being	

You may find it helpful to look at the Outcomes Framework taken from the *Aiming High for Disabled Children Implementation Guidance* which makes these five outcomes more relevant to disabled children and young people. A copy of the framework is provided at Annex A.

## Evidence (summarise your evidence below)

Name of supervisor:

Signature of supervisor:

Date this standard signed off:

## 1.2 Equality, inclusion and anti-discriminatory practice

- 1.2a Know** about the different types of prejudice and discrimination that can affect children and young people.
- 1.2b Understand** why it is important to provide care which respects and preserves each child or young person's ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic background and sexual orientation.
- 1.2c Understand** the social model of disability and how society creates barriers to inclusion for disabled people. Demonstrate a positive attitude towards impairment and a willingness to challenge discrimination.
- 1.2d Show** how you might respond to discrimination directed at a disabled child or young person.

### Sample questions and activities

- Give three examples of prejudice or discrimination that might affect a disabled child or young person that you look after and say what the effect might be.
- How can you, as a carer, support children and young people so that they can deal with any discrimination that they may face and overcome the barriers to inclusion?
- How would you deal with discrimination shown against a child or young person (e.g. bullying or name calling, or exclusion from activities)?
- Give an example of how you have explained the child or young person's impairment, or the care and support they require, to other children or adults in a way which promotes a positive image of disability.
- Why is maintaining a positive sense of a child's identity important, regardless of their ability to understand?
- Where can you get advice about the care needs of a child who has a different racial, cultural or religious background or sexual orientation from your own?
- Explain what is meant by the social model of disability and how society creates barriers which 'disable' children.
- Describe the individual needs of a child or young person that you look after.
- You can use learning from your disability awareness training as evidence.

**Evidence (summarise your evidence below)**

Name of supervisor:

Signature of supervisor:

Date this standard signed off:

## 1.3 The role of the short break carer

- 1.3a Understand** your role as a short break carer and to whom you are responsible.
- 1.3b Understand** your role as part of the short break service working with the child or young person, and how you contribute to their development.
- 1.3c Be able** to work in partnership with families and **understand** the pressures of caring for a disabled child or young person.
- 1.3d Be able** to work in partnership with staff from the other organisations that support the child or young person and their family.

### Sample questions and activities

- Describe your role and responsibilities as a short break carer. Pick out what you think are the three most important aspects of your job and also what you find most challenging. Be prepared to discuss these with your supervisor.
- Evidence a contribution which you made from your experience or observations at a child or young person's planning or review meeting.
- Draw a diagram of the people supporting a child or young person that you look after and their responsibilities. Put the child or young person at the centre (don't forget to include yourself!). Have you included your supervisor?
- What do you do to ensure that you maintain good working relationships with a child's family? *Ask for feedback.*

## Evidence (summarise your evidence below)

Name of supervisor:

Signature of supervisor:

Date this standard signed off:

## 1.4 Policies, procedures and good practice for the short break role

- 1.4a **Understand** how to apply your agency's policies, procedures and good practice relevant to short break carers.
- 1.4b **Understand** the importance of confidentiality and how it applies in your work.
- 1.4c **Know** how to make a complaint on your own behalf or on behalf of the children and young people you care for.

### Sample questions and activities

- Give an example of good practice from your work as a short break carer.
- Why is it important to follow policies and procedures?
- Read through two policies of your agency and be prepared to explain to your supervisor how they affect your work.
- What does 'confidentiality' mean to you? Think of an example of when you might share information given to you about a child or young person, and one where you have needed to be selective about who the information was shared with.
- How would you go about making a complaint on your own behalf or on behalf of a child or young person you care for?
- How can you reduce the risk of a complaint or allegation being made against you or a member of your family? *Consult your agency's manual or handbook.*

### Definitions

- **Good practice** means using proven and recommended methods of care.
- **Policies** set out the general rules about the way things should be done and the standards that are expected.
- **Procedures** set out the exact steps that should be taken to get something done.



**Evidence (summarise your evidence below)**

Name of supervisor:  
Signature of supervisor:  
Date this standard signed off:

## **Standard two: Provide a safe environment and healthy care**

### **Summary**

This standard is about the things you need to know to do your job as a short break carer safely, and not to put yourself, your family or the children and young people you look after in danger. You will be expected to understand health and safety requirements as they apply to your role.

It is also about providing 'healthy care', promoting healthy lifestyles and meeting the health-care needs of disabled children and young people, and those with complex health needs, including administration of medication or undertaking clinical procedures after training from a health professional.

You will be expected to know what to do in case of accidents or illness, including what action to take in emergency situations. You will be required to undertake basic first aid training. You may also need additional specialist training to equip you to care for a specific child; for example, in how to use equipment and aids safely, and in moving and handling.

You will be expected to provide personal care that respects the privacy, respect and dignity of the child or young person.

You will be expected to assess potential risks and understand how to manage challenging behaviour in line with guidance, training and support provided by your agency.

### **Main areas**

2.1 Health and safety

2.2 Healthy care, medication and clinical procedures

2.3 Personal care

2.4 Personal safety and managing risk

## Standard 2: Provide a safe environment and healthy care

### 2.1 Health and safety

- 2.1a **Know** your responsibilities under your agency's procedures for the health and safety of children and young people in your care.
- 2.1b **Demonstrate** how you keep your home safe, secure and free of avoidable hazards, and that you maintain a good standard of hygiene and cleanliness.
- 2.1c **Know** what to do in case of a fire.

### Sample questions and activities

- What agency procedures must short break carers follow to ensure the health and safety of children and young people they care for? Read the relevant section in your manual or handbook. Find your latest health and safety checklist.
- What precautions should you take in relation to:
  - electrical safety
  - hazardous substances (e.g. bleach, pesticides)
  - play equipment
  - disposal of hazardous waste?
- How do you prevent the spread of infections in your home?
- If you have not already done so, make a 'fire plan' to ensure everyone knows what to do if there is a fire when a child is in placement, and talk about this with all the family.

## Evidence (summarise your evidence below)

Name of supervisor:

Signature of supervisor:

Date this standard signed off:

## 2.2 Healthy care, medication and clinical procedures

**2.2a Understand** what 'healthy care' means for the physical, mental, emotional and sexual health of children and young people.

**2.2b Be aware** of the child or young person's health-care needs and the implications for their care (including hygiene, allergies and infection control procedures).

**2.2c Be aware** of the child or young person's moving and handling plan, and the implications for their care (if applicable).

**2.2d Successfully** undertake specific training in clinical procedures and carry them out in accordance with the training (if required).

**2.2e Know** how to administer medication safely, implement health-care plans, and **understand** the importance of obtaining consent; and **know** in what circumstances to contact those with parental responsibility.

**2.2f Know** how to use equipment and aids safely and be willing to undertake any relevant training.

**2.2g Know** how to carry out basic first aid, and when and how to access emergency medical treatment.

**2.2h Know** what records to keep of a child's health and administration of medication in line with agency procedures and medical advice.

### Sample questions and activities

- Find your first aid certificate and ensure your training is up to date.
- Give three examples of how you provide 'healthy care' for the children and young people you look after.
- How do you find out about the individual needs, allergies and medication of the children and young people in your care? What is your role in meeting these needs?
- How do you encourage children and young people in your care to maintain their physical care and diet, exercise choice and develop independence in their self-care?
- Briefly describe an example where you have successfully dealt with a difficult situation in meeting the care needs of a disabled child or young person.
- Where a child or young person has moving and handling needs, provide evidence that you are familiar with the moving and handling plan, have been trained, and are carrying out what you have learnt when caring for the child or young person.

- Where a child or young person has invasive care needs, provide evidence that you are familiar with the health-care plan, have been trained, and are carrying out what you have learnt when caring for the child or young person.
- Read the relevant guidance covering medication and health-care procedures. Are you clear what you can and cannot do, and when you would ask for help? Ask your supervisor for guidance if you do not have it.
- If you are administering medication or carrying out health-care procedures, what records should you keep?

## Evidence (summarise your evidence below)

Name of supervisor:

Signature of supervisor:

Date this standard signed off:

## 2.3 Personal care

**2.3a** Be able to provide personal and intimate care, in line with agency guidelines, which respects the rights of children and young people to privacy, respect and dignity, and encourages their independence.

**2.3b** Be able to provide care which is responsive to the specific needs and impairments of the children and young people you look after and respects their right to make choices.

### Sample questions and activities

- Describe the skills you use in the personal care you give to one of the children or young people you look after (e.g. help with eating, mobility, toileting, behaviour).
- What do you do to ensure that the child or young person is treated with dignity and respect whilst you are carrying out personal care tasks?
- What consideration do you need to give to the safety of the public if you are out in the local community, and how would you manage this risk?
- If you are administering medication or carrying out health-care procedures, what records should you keep?



## Evidence (summarise your evidence below)

Name of supervisor:

Signature of supervisor:

Date this standard signed off:

## 2.4 Personal safety and managing risk

**2.4a Understand** potential risks to the safety of yourself and your family, and **know** what you can do to reduce and manage the risks.

**2.4b Be aware** of the range of challenging behaviours which may be presented by children and young people, and know how to manage challenging behaviour in a way that is both safe and respectful while in accordance with the child or young person's behaviour management plan, where one exists.

**2.4c Identify** examples of risks to the personal safety of children and young people, and know how to access information and training, and the appropriate action to be taken to reduce the risk.

### Sample questions and activities

- Give an example of a potential risk to yourself or your family arising from your work as a short break carer and say what you could do to minimise the risk.
- List some ways you can encourage positive behaviour – think of examples that have been successful.
- Describe the diversionary or de-escalation strategies that you have used and that have worked with a child or young person with challenging behaviour.
- Describe how you work with other key people to maintain consistency in how a child or young person's behaviour is managed.

**Evidence (summarise your evidence below)**

Name of supervisor:  
Signature of supervisor:  
Date this standard signed off:

## **Standard three: Communicate effectively**

### **Summary**

This standard is about developing your communication skills for working with disabled children, young people and their families, as well as with other professionals. These are fundamental skills for short break carers and are needed to achieve all the other standards.

You will be expected to show that you understand about communication, what helps and what hinders communication, and how to communicate effectively.

You will be expected to know about and use different forms of communication, both verbal and non-verbal, to enable you to communicate with the child or young person using their chosen method of communication.

You will be expected to understand the importance of good record-keeping and how you can make, use and keep records properly. You will be expected to find out and record the child or young person's views and feelings about their short breaks service.

### **Main areas**

3.1 Communicating with children and young people

3.2 Communicating with parents/carers and organisations

3.3 Record-keeping

## Standard 3: communicate effectively

### 3.1 Communicating with children and young people

**3.1a Use** and be willing to undergo training in the child or young person's preferred method of communication, and **demonstrate** that you respond appropriately.

**3.1b Show** how you enable disabled children and young people to make their own decisions and exercise choice.

**3.1c Demonstrate** an ability to advocate on behalf of disabled children and young people.

### Sample questions and activities

- How would you show a child or young person that you were interested in their wishes and feelings?
- Ask someone who regularly sees you with a child or young person to give written feedback about the way you communicate with them, or you could ask the child or young person themselves.
- How would you communicate with a child or young person who found it difficult to express their wishes and feelings, or whose first language was not English? Give an example from your own experience.
- Identify three different ways in which you would encourage and empower disabled children and young people to make their own decisions.
- Identify where you could get relevant and useful information, resources and training to help you communicate with the child or young person.
- Give evidence of any courses you have attended or one-to-one training sessions to learn about the child's preferred method of communication.
- Give examples of non-verbal tools or methods you use to communicate with the child (e.g. symbol boards; Pecs pictures).

## Evidence (summarise your evidence below)

Name of supervisor:

Signature of supervisor:

Date this standard signed off:

## 3.2 Communicating with parents/carers and organisations

- 3.2a Be able** to communicate effectively with parents and carers and raise any concerns in an appropriate way.
- 3.2b Be able** to communicate effectively with other organisations which are involved with disabled children and young people.
- 3.2c Be able** to communicate effectively with your supervisor.

### Sample questions and activities

- What skills do you have for effective communication with other adults? You could ask for feedback from a parent or your supervisor.
- If you had to raise a sensitive subject with a parent or carer, how would you go about it? Provide evidence from your own experience if available.
- Give an example of an agency you work with. What was the purpose of the work and how did it benefit the child or young person?
- What agencies might you have to contact in relation to the children you care for, and how does their involvement benefit the child?
- What sort of things is it important to share with your supervisor?

## Evidence (summarise your evidence below)

Name of supervisor:

Signature of supervisor:

Date this standard signed off:



## 3.3 Record-keeping

**3.3a** **Be able** to keep accurate written records in line with your agency's requirements and to use a variety of materials to record progress and achievements.

**3.3b** **Be able** to gather and record the child or young person's views and feelings about their short breaks placement in line with their chosen method of communication.

### Sample questions and activities

- Make a list of what you need to record and state why your records might be needed in the future.
- Examine a report or a record that you have written. Is it understandable, relevant, factual, clear and concise? Is it dated and signed? Does it distinguish between fact and opinion?
- Ask for feedback from your supervisor – you can use their comments as evidence.
- Use examples of your records or your carer's diary as evidence.

## Evidence (summarise your evidence below)

Name of supervisor:

Signature of supervisor:

Date this standard signed off:

## **Standard four: Understand the development of children and young people**

### **Summary**

This standard sets out what you need to know about the development, behaviour and special needs of the children and young people you look after.

You will be expected to show that you understand the stages of child and adolescent development.

You will be expected to know how a child's disability or health condition can affect their development, and understand how to support a child or young person who is disabled, has a disabling health condition or special educational needs.

You will be expected to understand your role as a short break carer in supporting children and young people in their learning and development.

You will be expected to know how to promote positive sexual health and sexual identity.

### **Main areas**

**4.1** Child and adolescent development

**4.2** Needs of disabled children and young people, and those with complex health needs

## 4.1 Child and adolescent development

**4.1a Demonstrate** a basic understanding of child and adolescent development and the developmental needs of children and young people.

**4.1b Understand** the difference between chronological age and stages of development, and how this may affect a disabled child or young person.

**4.1c Be able** to work with disabled children and young people in developing independence, self-confidence, resilience and self-esteem.

**4.1d Understand** the importance of transitions in the life of disabled children and young people and your contribution to the transition process.

### Sample questions and activities

- What are the main developmental stages a child goes through from birth to adolescence? A developmental chart can be found in the Skills to Foster training pack or at [www.ask-nanny.com/child-development.html](http://www.ask-nanny.com/child-development.html).
- List what you think are the priority needs of all children to help them grow into healthy and fulfilled adults.
- Think of a disabled child or young person you look after. How far do you see their needs as being similar or different from those of others of a similar age?
- Give an example of how you encourage a child to have a positive view of themselves.
- How can you help a young person to develop their independence and learn to exercise choice?
- If you look after older children, what could you do to ensure that a disabled young person's transition\* into adulthood is a positive experience?

\*Transitions are milestones in children's lives – some are general, some are individual – such as starting school, puberty, leaving school, moving out or transferring to adult services.

## Evidence (summarise your evidence below)

Name of supervisor:

Signature of supervisor:

Date this standard signed off:

## 4.2 Needs of disabled children and young people, and those with complex health needs

**4.2a Know** how to promote the child or young person's independence (as far as is possible) in all aspects of their life.

**4.2b Know** how to encourage disabled children and young people's participation and ensure inclusion in play, activities and learning.

**4.2c Show** that you provide age-appropriate activities and experiences both within and outside of the home to take account of the child or young person's disability.

**4.2d Be aware** of the importance of providing safe and predictable routines for disabled children and young people.

**4.2e Understand** how to enable disabled children and young people to develop their sexual identity in a positive way.

### Sample questions and activities

- Give examples of when you have encouraged a child or young person to take part in activities. How did you ensure the experience was fun and positive?
- Give an example of how you have contributed to a child or young person's development.
- How have you adapted activities to enable a child or young person to take part?
- Describe how you might go about enabling a disabled child or young person to take part in a youth or community activity that did not appear to cater for their disability.
- Some children and young people require clear and predictable routines. How would you adapt your household routines to accommodate a child or young person who needs consistency and finds change difficult?
- What help do disabled children and young people need to develop their sexual identity in positive ways?

## Evidence (summarise your evidence below)

Name of supervisor:

Signature of supervisor:

Date this standard signed off:

## **Standard five: Keep children and young people safe from harm**

### **Summary**

This standard sets out what you need to know and to do to keep children and young people safe and to protect them from harm or abuse.

Disabled children and young people are at an increased risk of suffering significant harm, and the presence of multiple disabilities appears to increase the risk of both abuse and neglect.

You will be expected to show that you understand the local safeguarding policies and procedures for protecting children.

You will be expected to show that you are aware of the signs of possible abuse or neglect and know what to do if you suspect that a child or young person is being abused or neglected.

You will be expected to know what to do if you have concerns about a child or young person's welfare, instances of malpractice, negligence or unprofessional behaviour.

You will be expected to know how to promote positive sexual health and sexual identity.

### **Main areas**

**5.1** Safeguarding policies and procedures

**5.2** Keeping children safe

**5.3** Recognising and responding to abuse

**5.4** Whistle-blowing (reporting failures in duty)



## **Standard 5: keep children and young people safe from harm**

**5.1a Be aware** of your local multi-agency safeguarding policies and procedures on identifying and protecting children and young people who have been abused or are at risk of abuse.

**5.1b Know** your responsibilities as a short break carer for protecting and safeguarding children, and how to follow your agency's procedures on reporting concerns about child protection issues.

- Sample questions and activities
- What are the procedures for protecting children in your area?
- Describe your responsibilities as a short break carer for protecting and safeguarding children.
- If you have attended your local multi-agency safeguarding children training, you can use this as evidence.

## Evidence (summarise your evidence below)

Name of supervisor:

Signature of supervisor:

Date this standard signed off:

## 5.2 Keeping children safe

**5.2a** **Be able** to create a safe environment for children and young people.

**5.2b** **Know** how to help children and young people keep themselves safe from harm or abuse.

**5.2c** **Develop, maintain and implement** 'safer caring' guidelines for you and your household, and provide care that minimises the risk of allegations.

### Sample questions and activities

- Make a list of what you need to record and state why your records might be needed in the future.
- Examine a report or a record that you have written. Is it understandable, relevant, factual, clear and concise? Is it dated and signed? Does it distinguish between fact and opinion?
- Ask for feedback from your supervisor – you can use their comments as evidence.
- Use examples of your records or your carer's diary as evidence.

## Evidence (summarise your evidence below)

Name of supervisor:

Signature of supervisor:

Date this standard signed off:

## 5.3 Recognising and responding to abuse

**5.3a Understand** the different ways in which children and young people can be harmed, with particular regard to factors that make disabled children and young people more vulnerable to abuse. Different types of abuse are:

- physical abuse
- emotional abuse
- neglect
- institutional abuse
- bullying
- sexual abuse
- exposure to domestic violence
- altering growth/failure to thrive
- self-harm
- the internet.

**5.3b Know** about the signs and indicators of possible abuse and neglect and how these relate to disabled children and young people.

**5.3c Understand** how disabled children and young people might be bullied and know what action to take if you suspect a child is being bullied.

**5.3d Know** what action to take if you suspect a child or young person is being abused or neglected and when immediate action may be necessary to ensure their safety.

### Sample questions and activities

- Attend your multi-agency safeguarding training or read up on child abuse and neglect. Be prepared to talk about what you have found out with your supervisor.
- In what ways are disabled children and young people more at risk of abuse, and how can you deal with these additional concerns?
- What signs might you notice that would suggest that a child or young person had been harmed? Choose two areas of child abuse or neglect (see above) and write down as many possible signs as you can think of. What additional factors might you need to take into account for a disabled child or young person?
- In what ways might a child or young person be bullied? In what ways are disabled children more vulnerable to bullying? If you suspect a child or young person is being bullied, what action would you take?
- If a child or young person were at risk of harm, what action would you take to protect them? How would this be different in and outside office hours?

## Evidence (summarise your evidence below)

Name of supervisor:

Signature of supervisor:

Date this standard signed off:

## 5.4 Whistle-blowing (reporting failures in duty)

**5.4a** **Know** your agency's policies and procedures on reporting concerns on child protection issues and unsafe practice of others, and what to do when you do not get a satisfactory response from your own or other organisations.

### Sample questions and activities

- Read through the whistle-blowing policy of your agency. Ask your supervisor for a copy if you do not have one available.
- Who would you report your concern to and what would you do if you did not get a satisfactory response?

## Evidence (summarise your evidence below)

Name of supervisor:

Signature of supervisor:

Date this standard signed off:



## **Standard six: Develop yourself**

### **Summary**

This standard is to help you make the most of the support and development opportunities that are available to you. This is important for developing your skills as a short break carer, for your own well-being, and to help you provide the highest standard of care.

You will be expected to show that you know how to access and use the support and supervision provided by your agency.

You will be expected to show that you are committed to improving your practice as a short break carer through training opportunities and continuing professional development.

You will be encouraged to think about how you can develop your role, either by remaining as a carer or through other career opportunities.

### **Main areas**

**6.1** Using supervision and support to develop your role as a short break carer

**6.2** Personal development

## 6.1 Using supervision and support to develop your role as a short break carer

**6.1a Understand** the purpose of your personal supervision and how to make the best use of it.

**6.1b Know** what support is available to you and the importance of asking for help and advice.

- Sample questions and activities
- What is the purpose of supervision and how can it help you?
- Review your supervision arrangements with your supervisor to ensure that your support needs are being met.
- Give an example of when you have sought help – who did you ask and how did they help you?
- What would you do if you needed support out of hours?

## Evidence (summarise your evidence below)

Name of supervisor:

Signature of supervisor:

Date this standard signed off:

## 6.2 Personal development

**6.2a Be willing** to take advantage of training and development opportunities to develop your knowledge and skills further.

### Sample questions and activities

- Give examples of training or other learning activities (e.g. support groups, books, the internet) that you have undertaken or would be helpful to you.
- Ensure that you have a personal development plan.

## Evidence (summarise your evidence below)

Name of supervisor:

Signature of supervisor:

Date this standard signed off:

## Exemplars: Standards 2.1 & 3.1

### Exemplar

#### Standard 2: provide a safe environment and healthy care

- 2.1a **Know** your responsibilities under your agency's procedures for the health and safety of children and young people in your care.
- 2.1b **Demonstrate** how you keep your home safe, secure, free of avoidable hazards and that you maintain a good standard of hygiene and cleanliness.
- 2.1c **Know** what to do in case of a fire.

## **2.1a**

We have read our agency procedures and have completed a safe care plan.

We have both completed a basic first aid course and I have attended a safeguarding course.

Y has a Short Breaks Care Plan and once, when his father, who lives apart but sees him regularly, called to collect him, we phoned his mother to check that this was OK. We also talked to our support worker about this and she spoke to Y's mother and father.

Y's mother wrote to confirm that she wanted the plan changed so his father could collect Y and she agreed to always tell us who was collecting Y in the future. Our support worker told us Y's mother was delighted that we were so diligent and his father also understood our actions. This is recorded in our supervision notes and these also provide evidence for 5.2c.

## **2.1b**

During our assessment, we completed a health and safety checklist and we reviewed this with our support worker before our first review.

After completing this checklist, we moved the storage of bleach and other cleaning materials to our outdoor cupboard that we always keep locked – the key is kept out of the reach of children. We also put a padlock on the back gate and we keep all the garden tools locked away in our shed.

When our first placement was identified, we received information about Y and during the introductions we talked regularly with his family. We also received a risk assessment about Y that said that he will break ornaments, so before he visits we make sure that there is nothing within reach that could present a hazard. We also put plug guards on all our plugs and have bought some plastic cars like he has at home that are safe and durable.

Y is still in pads and, after changing him in the bathroom on his changing mat, we put the pad and wipes in a nappy sack which we then put in the outside bin. We then wash the changing mat down and make sure that Y and the person changing him wash their hands.

## **2.1c**

We check our smoke alarms every month to make sure they work and, before our first carers' review, our support worker watched as we checked the smoke alarms.

As a family, we wrote a fire plan and agreed that if there is a fire at night when we have a child staying, I will take responsibility for the child. My partner will wake our own children and also phone the fire service.



## Exemplar

### Standard 3: communicate effectively

#### 3.1 Communicating with children and young people

**3.1a Use**, and be willing to undergo training in, the child or young person's preferred method of communication, and **demonstrate** that you respond appropriately.

**3.1b Show** how you enable disabled children and young people to make their own decisions and exercise choice.

**3.1c Demonstrate** an ability to advocate on behalf of disabled children and young people.

### 3.1a

1. In 2008, I attended a Makaton course at the school where I work as a learning support assistant.
2. Once a term, I meet with the class teacher and a speech and language therapist where we talk about the progress of each child. I have also contributed to making communication passports for the children in the class.
3. When we were introduced to X, we took pictures of our home and family to add to her communication passport.
4. During introductions, I spent time with X and her family to learn her chosen method of communication. I got to know her individual signs and I took pictures of her family, home and pets. We keep these pictures at our home to use as communication tools.

### 3.1b

1. X always brings her communication passport when she stays with us.
2. In the morning, we use laminated photos of the different activities available with X, who will choose what she wants to do during the day. We then use this plan throughout the day to explain to X what is going to happen next.
3. At breakfast, we put 3 cereal boxes on the table so she can choose her breakfast. We also do the same with juice and we have checked with her family to make sure they are all things that she likes. We have learnt that X finds it hard if she has more than 3 choices and so limit her choices to make sure it is meaningful.
4. On non-school days, we give her a choice in what she wants to wear by putting a selection of clothes on her bed; X will then point to what she wants to wear during the day.

### 3.1c

1. We regularly go swimming with X. On one occasion, a pool attendant complained about the noise X was making. I saw the manager and suggested that he arranged some training for his staff. He was very unhelpful and, after talking with her family and my support worker, I wrote a letter of complaint to the council. I will write again if I do not get a satisfactory response.

# Useful websites and organisations

## Useful websites

### Department for Education

[www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/sen](http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/sen)

### Every Disabled Child Matters

[www.edcm.org.uk](http://www.edcm.org.uk)

## Organisations

### Short Breaks Network

[www.shortbreaksnetwork.org.uk](http://www.shortbreaksnetwork.org.uk)

Represents around 180 services UK-wide providing short breaks to support disabled children and their families.

### Social Care Institute for Excellence

[www.scie.org.uk](http://www.scie.org.uk)

Provides up-to-date knowledge and summarises research and good practice in easy-to-read publications accessible on their website.

### The Fostering Network (tFN)

[www.fostering.net](http://www.fostering.net)

UK-wide charity for anyone with a personal or professional interest in fostering. tFN provides a wide range of publications, training and resources to support foster carers and fostering services. It also produces the Skills to Foster training materials for prospective carers (which now provide 60% of the evidence for the standards on completion of the training), key policy and recruitment materials, the Signpost series, good practice guides, and a wide range of training programmes.

### British Association for Adoption & Fostering (BAAF)

[www.baaf.org.uk](http://www.baaf.org.uk)

UK organisation made up of fostering and adoption agencies and providing a range of books and other resources, including training. It also publishes attractive books for children.

### British Institute of Learning Disabilities (BILD)

[www.bild.org.uk](http://www.bild.org.uk)

Disability organisation that works with government and other organisations to improve the quality of life for people with a learning disability. Areas of work include policy and research, learning services, publications, membership and information, advocacy and user involvement.

## **The National Autistic Society (NAS)**

[www.nas.org.uk](http://www.nas.org.uk)

Champions the rights and interests of all people with autism. Aims to provide help, support and services to individuals with autism and their families that they can access, trust and rely upon, and which can make a positive difference to their lives.

## **Council for Disabled Children (CDC)**

[www.ncb.org.uk/cdc](http://www.ncb.org.uk/cdc)

Umbrella body for the disabled children's sector in England, with links to the other UK nations. Works to influence national policy that impacts upon disabled children and children with special educational needs and their families.

## **The Challenging Behaviour Foundation**

[www.thecbf.org.uk](http://www.thecbf.org.uk)

Organisation providing information and support to parents/carers and professionals caring for individuals with severe learning disabilities and challenging behaviour.

## **Scope**

[www.scope.org.uk](http://www.scope.org.uk)

Disability organisation providing services for people with cerebral palsy, their families and carers, particularly in the areas of early years, education, work and independent living. Provides information and the monthly newspaper, Disability Now.

## **Mencap**

[www.mencap.org.uk](http://www.mencap.org.uk)

Charity for people with learning disability, their families and carers.

## **Carers UK**

[www.carersuk.org](http://www.carersuk.org)

The voice of carers, aiming to improve carers' lives by providing information and advice on carers' rights and by campaigning for changes that make a real difference for carers. Freephone Carers Line 0808 808 7777

## **Contact a Family**

[www.cafamily.org.uk](http://www.cafamily.org.uk)

UK charity providing support, advice and information for families and professionals with disabled children. Useful publications targeted on families, medical information about various conditions, statistical information and research findings.

## **Norah Fry Research Centre**

[www.bris.ac.uk/Depts/NorahFry](http://www.bris.ac.uk/Depts/NorahFry)

Research about children and adults with learning disabilities. Provides information, publications and support through the Working Together with Parents' Network.

## Certificate of Successful Completion Training, Support and Development Standards for Short Break Carers

Name of short break carer:

Name of short break provider:

Address of short break provider:

1. I certify that the above named short break carer has successfully met all of the outcomes in the Training, Support and Development Standards for Short Break Carers (For completion by the supervisor, trainer or person within the service with supervisory or management responsibility)

Signed:

Name:

Job role:  Date:

2. Summary of learning to achieve the Training, Support and Development Standards for Short Break Carers

2a. Type of delivery (Please tick all that apply)

- |                                            |                                                                           |
|--------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Distance Learning | <input type="checkbox"/> e-learning                                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Taught course     | <input type="checkbox"/> Mentoring                                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Private study     | <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input style="width: 150px;" type="text"/> |

2b. Who provided the learning? (Please tick all that apply)

- |                                   |                                                                           |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> In-house | <input type="checkbox"/> Private training provider                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> College  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input style="width: 150px;" type="text"/> |

2c. Did the learning include a formally accredited programme with an awarding body?

Yes (go to question 2d)       No (go to question 2e)

2d. What is the name of the awarding body?

2e. How was the learning assessed? (Please tick all that apply)

Written       Verbal questioning

Role play       Observation

Other

2f. Who assessed the learning?

3. Short breaks carer's learning needs – outline of personal development plan agreed with the short break carer:

4. Further essential learning still required at this stage for role-specific tasks not covered by the Training, Support and Development Standards for Short Break Carers

Areas of learning, Learning outcomes needed (what specific tasks does this short breaks carer need information about and need to learn to do?)

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for handwritten notes or answers to the question above. The box is currently blank.

# Training, Support and Development Standards for Short Break Carers

## Standard 1: Understand your role as a short break carer

### 1.1 Principles and values for working with children and young people

- a. Understand the principles and values essential for caring for children and young people.
- b. Demonstrate how your care relates to the five Every Child Matters outcomes.

### 1.2 Equality, inclusion and anti-discriminatory practice

- a. Know about the different types of prejudice and discrimination which can affect children and young people.
- b. Understand why it is important to provide care which respects and preserves each child or young person's ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic background, and sexual orientation.
- c. Understand the social model of disability and how society creates barriers to inclusion for disabled people. Demonstrate a positive attitude towards impairment and a willingness to challenge discrimination.
- d. Show how you might respond to discrimination directed at a disabled child or young person.

### 1.3 The role of the short break carer

- a. Understand your role as a short break carer and to whom you are responsible.
- b. Understand your role as part of the short break service working with the child or young person, and how you contribute to their development.
- c. Be able to work in partnership with families and understand the pressures of caring for a disabled child or young person.
- d. Be able to work in partnership with staff from the other organisations that support the child or young person and their family.

### 1.4 Policies, procedures and good practice for the short break role

- a. Understand how to apply your agency's policies, procedures and good practice relevant to short break carers.
- b. Understand the importance of confidentiality and how it applies in your work.
- c. Know how to make a complaint on your own behalf or on behalf of the children and young people you care for.



## **Standard 2: Provide a safe environment and healthy care**

### **2.1 Health and safety**

- a. Know your responsibilities under your agency's procedures for the health and safety of children and young people in your care.
- b. Demonstrate how you keep your home safe, secure and free of avoidable hazards, and that you maintain a good standard of hygiene and cleanliness.
- c. Know what to do in case of a fire.

### **2.2 Healthy care, medication and clinical procedures**

- a. Understand what 'healthy care' means for the physical, mental, emotional and sexual health of children and young people.
- b. Be aware of the child or young person's health-care needs and the implications for their care (including hygiene needs, allergies, and infection control procedures).
- c. Be aware of the child or young person's moving and handling plan, and the implications for their care (if applicable).
- d. Successfully undertake specific training in clinical procedures and carry them out in accordance with the training (if required).
- e. Know how to administer medication safely, implement health-care plans, and understand the importance of obtaining consent; and know in what circumstances to contact those with parental responsibility.
- f. Know how to use equipment and aids safely and be willing to undertake any relevant training.
- g. Know how to carry out basic first aid, and when and how to access emergency medical treatment.
- h. Know what records to keep of a child's health and administration of medication in line with agency procedures and medical advice.

### **2.3 Personal care**

- a. Be able to provide personal and intimate care, in line with agency guidelines, which respects the rights of children and young people to privacy, respect and dignity, and encourages their independence.
- b. Be able to provide care which is responsive to the specific needs and impairments of the children and young people you look after and respects their right to make choices.

### **2.4 Personal safety and managing risk**

- a. Understand potential risks to the safety of yourself and your family and know what you can do to reduce and manage the risks.
- b. Be aware of the range of challenging behaviours which may be presented by children and young people, and know how to manage challenging behaviour in a way that is

both safe and respectful, while in accordance with the young person's behaviour management plan, where one exists.

- c. Identify examples of risks to the personal safety of children and young people, and know how to access information and training, and the appropriate action to be taken to reduce the risk.

## **Standard 3: Communicate effectively**

### **3.1 Communicating with children and young people**

- a. Use and be willing to undergo training in the child or young person's preferred method of communication, and demonstrate that you respond appropriately.
- b. Show how you enable disabled children to make their own decisions and exercise choice.
- c. Demonstrate an ability to advocate on behalf of disabled children and young people.

### **3.2 Communicating with parents/carers and organisations**

- a. Be able to communicate effectively with parents and carers and raise any concerns in an appropriate way.
- b. Be able to communicate effectively with other organisations which are involved with disabled children and young people.
- c. Be able to communicate effectively with your supervisor.

### **3.3 Record-keeping**

- a. Be able to keep accurate written records in line with your agency's requirements and to use a variety of materials to record progress and achievements in line with the Every Disabled Child Matters outcomes.
- b. Be able to gather and record the child or young person's views and feelings about their short breaks placement in line with their chosen method of communication.

## **Standard 4: Understand the development of children and young people**

### **4.1 Child and adolescent development**

- a. Demonstrate a basic understanding of child and adolescent development, and the developmental needs of children and young people.
- b. Understand the difference between chronological age and stages of development, and how this may affect a disabled child or young person.
- c. Be able to work with disabled children and young people in developing independence, self-confidence, resilience and self-esteem.

- d. Understand the importance of transitions in the life of disabled children and young people, and your contribution to the transition process.40

## **4.2 Needs of disabled children and young people, and those with complex health needs**

- a. Know how to promote the child or young person's independence (as far as is possible) in all aspects of their life.
- b. Know how to encourage disabled children and young people's participation and inclusion in play, activities and learning.
- c. Show that you provide age-appropriate activities and experiences both within and outside of the home to take account of the child or young person's disability.
- d. Be aware of the importance of providing safe and predictable routines for disabled children and young people.
- e. Understand how to enable disabled children and young people to develop a positive sexual identity regarding their own sexuality.

## **Standard 5: Keep children and young people safe from harm**

### **5.1 Safeguarding policies and procedures**

- a. Be aware of your local multi-agency safeguarding policies and procedures on identifying and protecting children and young people who have been abused or are at risk of abuse.
- b. Know your responsibilities as a short break carer for protecting and safeguarding children, and how to follow your agency's procedures on reporting concerns on child protection issues.

### **5.2 Keeping children safe**

- a. Be able to create a safe environment for children and young people.
- b. Know how to help children and young people keep themselves safe from harm or abuse.
- c. Develop, maintain and implement 'safer caring' guidelines for you and your household, and provide care that minimises the risk of allegations.

### **5.3 Recognising and responding to abuse**

- a. Understand the different ways in which children and young people can be harmed, with particular regard to factors that make disabled children and young people more vulnerable to abuse. Different types of abuse are:
  - physical abuse
  - emotional abuse
  - neglect

- institutional abuse
  - sexual abuse
  - exposure to domestic violence
  - faltering growth/failure to thrive
  - self-harm
  - the internet.
- a. Know about the signs and indicators of possible abuse and neglect and how these relate to disabled children and young people.
  - b. Understand how disabled children and young people might be bullied and know what action to take if you suspect a child is being bullied.
  - c. Know what action to take if you suspect a child or young person is being abused or neglected and when immediate action may be necessary to ensure their safety.

#### **5.4 Whistle-blowing (reporting failures in duty)**

- a. Know your agency's policies and procedures on reporting concerns on safeguarding issues, and unsafe practice of others, and what to do if you do not get a satisfactory response from your own or other organisations.

### **Standard 6: Develop yourself**

#### **6.1 Using support and supervision to develop your role as a short break carer**

- a. Understand the purpose of your personal supervision and how to make the best use of it.
- b. Know what support is available to you and the importance of asking for help and advice.

#### **6.2 Personal development**

- a. Be willing to take advantage of training and development opportunities to develop your knowledge and skills further.

## Annex A: Outcomes Framework

The aim of this framework is to illustrate the judgements that service commissioners need to consider to ensure that short breaks support disabled children and young people to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution and achieve economic well-being.

### Be healthy

Short break services that support disabled children and young people to be physically, mentally, emotionally and sexually healthy means:

- That disabled children have appropriate access to universal and specialist health care whilst receiving the service
- That short break providers empower and support disabled children to take responsibility for their own health and well-being
- That disabled children are supported to achieve maximum mobility and independence through the provision of appropriate equipment and adaptations
- That disabled children have access to appropriate advice and support on their emotional well-being and mental health.

Living a healthy lifestyle whilst receiving the service means:

- That disabled children have the right medicine; that clinical procedures are safely administered and appropriate therapy or behaviour management is carried out by staff and carers who are trained and competent
- That staff and carers are trained and are competent in basic first aid, moving and handling and child resuscitation, with regular opportunities to update and refresh their training in these areas
- That the short break environment is appropriately adapted and the necessary equipment is in place
- That families of disabled children receiving short breaks are supported to work in partnership with the service provider concerning their child's development.

### Stay safe

Being safe from maltreatment, neglect, violence and sexual exploitation within a short break service means:

- That disabled children can recognise and have opportunities to talk about maltreatment and neglect
- That staff and carers are trained specifically in safeguarding disabled children and are given regular opportunities to update and refresh this training

- That services have robust safeguarding procedures to ensure that swift and appropriate action is taken to protect disabled children at the times that short breaks most usually occur (i.e. at weekends)
- That maltreated disabled children are subsequently protected
- That families of disabled children receiving short breaks are supported to work in partnership with the service provider concerning safeguarding and protection.

Being safe from accidental injury/death means:

- That disabled children have the right medicine; that clinical procedures are safely administered and appropriate therapy and behaviour management is carried out by staff and carers who are trained and competent
- That the short break environment is appropriately adapted and the necessary equipment is in place
- That disabled children have accessible and safe transport to and from their short break service and whilst receiving it
- That disabled children have access to specialist health support whilst in their short break service.

Being safe from bullying and discrimination means:

- That disabled children do not feel bullied or discriminated against whilst receiving the service.
- Having security, stability and appropriate care means:
- That disabled children do not have a multiplicity of carers whilst receiving the service
- That disabled children are cared for by the same staff members or carers who develop an understanding of the child's unique way of communicating.

## **Enjoy and Achieve**

Achieving personal, social and recreational development and enjoying recreation within a short break service means:

- That disabled children are happy and have fun in their short break service
- That disabled children have access to activities, organised leisure, sport and outings that are age-appropriate and of their choice whilst in their short break service
- That disabled children develop social networks and friendships through their short break service
- That disabled children have appropriate systems and support to enable them to communicate effectively whilst in their short break service
- That parents of disabled children have a real break from their caring responsibilities.

## **Making a positive contribution**

Engaging in decision-making within a short break service means:

- That disabled children are enabled and supported to communicate their views about their short break service
- That disabled children are supported and enabled to communicate their choices and preferences whilst receiving the service
- That disabled children have the opportunity to participate in planning and decision-making about the short break service they receive and that their views, however expressed, are routinely gathered and recorded.

Developing positive relationships means:

- That disabled children do not feel bullied or discriminated against whilst receiving their short break service
- That disabled children are happy, have fun and develop friendships in their short break service.

Developing self-confidence and successfully dealing with significant life changes and challenges means:

- That a range of methods are used to ensure that disabled children participate in the planning and review of their short break provision
- That disabled children and their families are involved in service design, delivery and development
- That short breaks positively support disabled children and young people through key transitions.

## **Achieve Economic Well-Being**

Living in decent homes and sustainable communities means:

- That the short break environment is appropriately adapted
- That disabled children have access to accessible and safe transport, both to and from the short break service, and whilst receiving it.

Access to transport and material goods means:

- That appropriate and accessible transport arrangements are made which enable disabled children and young people to maximise opportunities within their short break.



Department  
for Education

© Crown copyright 2012

You may re-use this information (excluding logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/2](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/2) or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at [www.education.gov.uk/contactus](http://www.education.gov.uk/contactus).

This document is available for download at [www.gov.uk/government/publications](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications)

Reference: DFE-33002-2012





Department  
for Education

# **Training, Support & Development Standards for Foster Carers**

## **Guidance**

**Refreshed: November 2012**

# Contents

Introduction	3
Training, support and development standards	4
Evidencing the standards	5
The guidance	6
Principles and values statement	7 - 8
What to expect from your foster care provider	8
<b>Standard 1:</b> Understand the principles and values essential for fostering children and young people	<b>10</b>
<b>Standard 2:</b> Understand your role as a foster carer	<b>14</b>
<b>Standard 3:</b> Understand health and safety, and healthy care	<b>22</b>
<b>Standard 4:</b> Know how to communicate effectively	<b>29</b>
<b>Standard 5:</b> Understand the development of children and young people	<b>35</b>
<b>Standard 6:</b> Keep children and young people safe from harm	<b>44</b>
<b>Standard 7:</b> Develop yourself	<b>52</b>
Glossary	58
What next? Further knowledge and skills	66
Further resources	67

## Introduction

Foster carers play an extremely important role, providing much needed support and security for often very vulnerable children, and enabling their successful transition into independent adult life. Fostering is a challenging role and requires skills and dedication

The Training, Support and Development (TSD) standards form part of a foster carer's induction in the role. They provide a national minimum benchmark that sets out what foster carers should know, understand and be able to do within the first 12-18 months after being approved

These standards were developed by the sector and were introduced in 2007 and apply to all approved foster carers in England

The TSD Standards provide a national minimum benchmark to set out what all foster carers should know, understand and be able to do within the first 12 months of approval. They form part of a national strategy, supported by the Department for Education, to raise the profile of foster carers as valued professionals and to improve and standardise service provision for looked after children.

All foster care providers are expected to engage with their foster carers to support them in achieving the TSD Standards. This ensures that the Standards are delivered in a way which allows carers to understand how the standards support them in their caring role, encouraging them to build on any areas for development identified in their assessment.

It is the government's view that all foster carers who are approved under the Fostering Services Regulations should complete the TSD Standards, which are designed to equip all foster carers with the skills and knowledge to provide high quality care to the children they look after. The TSD Standards are also now a requirement of the National Minimum Standards (Fostering)

Completion of the TSD Standards is a requirement for all approved foster carers in England and is referenced within the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services 2011.

Further information about the TSD Standards for Foster Care can be accessed at

<http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/families/fostercare/fostercarestand/b00203661/nationalstandardsforfostercarers>

## Training Support and Development Standards

There are seven TSD standards:

**Standard 1:** Understand the principles and values essential for fostering children and young people

**Standard 2:** Understand your role as a foster carer

**Standard 3:** Understand health and safety, and healthy care

**Standard 4:** Know how to communicate effectively

**Standard 5:** Understand the development of children and young people

**Standard 6:** Keep children and young people safe from harm

**Standard 7:** Develop yourself

Foster carers must evidence that they have met **all** these standards, where these apply to the child(ren) they are caring for.

In each of the seven standards there are a number of topics that you will need to know about.

This guidance should be read in conjunction with the Guidance for Supervising Social Workers, Managers and Training Officers (revised February 2011). The guidance forms part of a resource pack for foster care service providers to help them with implementation of the TSD Standards. The guidance factsheets may be particularly useful in helping you to understand how to complete the standards and provide examples of the type and amount of evidence required. Visit our website at:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/families/fostercare/fostercarestand/b00203661/nationalstandardsforfostercarers> for copies of these resources.

### Additional information for service providers

The National Minimum Standards (NMS, Department for Education, April 2011)) do not link directly to the completion of the TSD standards. They are issued by Ofsted to assess how a service provider develops and maintains services to meet a child's needs. However NMS 1-12 are specifically child focused and are key to the foster carer's role. These national minimum standards can therefore be mapped in a general sense to the TSD standards. In addition NMS 20, 21 and 26 set out training for foster carers, the supervision of foster carers and the importance of keeping records, respectively. The following Fostering Services NMS can therefore be said to map generally to the TSD standards:

Standard 1 - NMS 1, NMS 10

Standard 2 - NMS 9, NMS 10, NMS 11, NMS 12, NMS 21

Standard 3 - NMS 6, NMS 10

Standard 4 - NMS 1 NMS 9, NMS 11, NMS 21, NMS 26  
Standard 5 - NMS 2, NMS 3, NMS 8, NMS 7, NMS10, NMS 12  
Standard 6 - NMS 4, NMS 5, NMS 26  
Standard 7 - NMS 3, NMS 20, NMS 2

It should be noted that it is the service providers' responsibility to demonstrate that they meet National Minimum Standards. Foster carers must complete the Training Support and Development Standards.

## Evidencing the Standards

Although the amount of evidence will vary with each outcome, it should be short and simple, use bullets points where appropriate. Essays are not required! The evidence box in the workbook is meant to be guidance and is not an indication of amount of evidence expected. In some cases this may be reference to another document with a short accompanying paragraph or witness statement. Other outcomes may require a short reflective piece of writing, giving an example of when a particular task was carried out or when an incident occurred.

The exemplars given below indicate the maximum amount.

### **Exemplar: Standard 5.3c Transitions (also meets 5.1c and 4.1d)**

P has been in foster care for over 13 years and been placed with me for the past 4 years. She is now 19 years old and I have been helping her prepare for adulthood and independent living over the past few years. Some of the ways I have helped P include:

- Support with decision making and encouraging P to develop her own opinion.
- Teaching her basic recipes and cooking skills.
- Involving her in household chores and talking to her about safety in the home.
- Supporting and encouraging her to continue with her education.
- Helping her with financial planning and budgeting. These are just some of the ways that we are helping P get ready for independence. As someone who has been brought up in foster care most of her life, she is
- uncomfortable and wary of new situations. This means she needs additional encouragement, support, love and patience until she feels able to deal with new situations.

There should be at least one piece of evidence per outcome. Please note: one piece of evidence can be used as the basis for a number of different outcomes. For example, in the exemplar below the evidence has been cited for Standard 5.5b. This evidence could also be used as the basis for Standard 2.4a, 4.4a and also for Standard 3.4b.

### **Exemplar: Standard 5.5b Supporting Educational Potential**

T has been in foster care with me for 3 years. As he is a complex and challenging young person, I get support from a therapeutic worker who offers advice and support around managing his behaviour. I also work closely with the staff at his school who are experienced with looked after children. I have close links with the named person for Looked after Children and we speak on the phone about once a week. I learnt at T's review that he had not been doing his homework. When I discussed this with the school, they suggested that they take him out of one lesson per week to catch up with homework. This seems to have taken some of the pressure off him and the school has agreed to let him continue with this. Working together with the therapeutic worker, school staff and social worker has really helped T receive consistent messages and support, which helps him feel secure and safe.

## **The guidance**

The guidance explains what the Standards are and how you can show that you have met each Standard. Foster carers who have previous experience of working with children and young people can use their prior learning and experience as evidence to show that they can meet the Standards.

Experienced carers who may also be professionally qualified in health or care or any other similar field (e.g. care work, nursing, schools, youth work) or who have a relevant NVQ or level 3 Diploma units are still required to complete the Standards, as they are tailored to fostering. You can use your qualifications and experience as evidence against specific outcomes in the Standards.

To note: If you are undertaking the social care pathway and optional foster care units in the level 3 diploma working in the children and young people's workforce you should have completed the TSD standards before embarking on the optional foster care units.

Your supervising social worker or support worker will help you complete the Evidence Workbook and will sign off each Standard when you have provided sufficient evidence to meet the Standard.

At the end, a manager or the training officer in your fostering service will check to ensure that the Evidence Workbook has been completed satisfactorily, and will issue you with the Certificate of Successful Completion  
– see evidence workbook.

## **How to use this guidance**

### **Skills and knowledge**

These are the pieces of knowledge or skills that you have gained. You will need to provide evidence that you meet each of these outcomes.

### **Evidence requirements**

This section outlines what you need to do in order to provide evidence of your skills

and knowledge. Your supervising social worker may ask you questions in order to check your understanding or you may prefer to write out your own response first to share with your supervising social worker. Assessment and preparation training should have provided some of the evidence already (particularly if you have completed the Skills to Foster training and the Skills to Foster assessment)

### Providing evidence

You should enter a summary of the evidence that you have collected to meet a particular outcome(s) in the separate Evidence Workbook.

### Fact Sheets

Further guidance factsheets are available on the following topics

- Getting started with the TSD Standards.
- The Workbook.
- Evidencing the TSD Standards.
- Assessing foster carers' workbook.
- Engaging all foster carers.

These factsheets and Training toolkit, including trainer's notes, session plans and group exercises are available here: [Foster Care Training Toolkit](#)

### Principles and values statement

The same principles and values underpin all the induction standards for staff and carers who work with children, young people and their families.

#### Principles

The welfare of the child or young person is paramount.

Carers contribute to children and young people's care, learning and development, and safeguarding. This is reflected in every aspect of practice and service provision.

Carers support parents and families who are partners in the care, learning, development and safeguarding of their children, recognising they are the child or young person's first, and in most situations, their most enduring carers and educators.

Carers are integral to the team supporting children and young people.

## Values

The needs, rights and views of the child or young person are at the centre of all practice and provision.

Individuality, difference and diversity are valued and celebrated.

Equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice are actively promoted.

Children and young people's health and well-being are actively promoted.

Children and young people's personal and physical safety is safeguarded, whilst allowing for risk and challenge, as appropriate to the capabilities of the child or young person.

Self-esteem and resilience are recognised as essential to every child and young person's development.

Confidentiality and agreements about confidential information are respected as appropriate unless a child or young person's protection and well-being are at stake.

Professional knowledge, skills and values are shared appropriately in order to enrich the experience of children and young people more widely.

Social inclusion and advancement of children and young people are actively promoted as specified in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

## What to expect from your foster care provider

Your foster care provider has a duty to arrange for you to learn about the different areas within the standards and to make sure that you know enough to meet the outcomes for each area. They will also provide you with learning opportunities and support through your supervising social worker and training officer.

Before you are approved, your foster care provider should arrange for you to attend preparation training (the Skills to Foster course or similar). Practice varies but will usually take place before or during your fostering assessment. Within six weeks of your approval your supervising social worker should induct you into the fostering service you work for and help you draw up a Personal Development Plan identifying learning activities to help you complete the Training, Support and Development Standards. They will advise you on what 'core' training courses and/or learning support are available.

They will also tell you about opportunities to participate in training with other colleagues working with children (e.g. multi-agency child protection training) and support groups for foster carers. Foster care providers have been asked to provide financial support to enable foster carers to attend training sessions. Your foster care provider is responsible for providing an assessor who will usually be your supervising social worker, but could be a training officer or work based learning assessor.



Your foster care provider is also responsible for:

- The safety and well-being of individuals with whom your fostering service works.
- The safety and well-being of you and your family.
- Fulfilling their obligations as set out in law and in professional standards - for example, health and safety laws, the Care Standards Act, the Children Act 1989 and 2004, and the Fostering Service Regulations and National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services (April 2011).

It will not always be practical for foster care providers to offer face to face training courses if foster carers are spread over a wide geographical area, but training can be provided using distance learning, computer based learning packages, or similar.

Foster care providers are also inspected to ensure that they are preparing and training their foster carers in line with the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services.

If you move and are approved as a foster carer in a new area after you have successfully completed the Training, Support and Development Standards, your new foster care provider will want to see your Certificate of Successful Completion. You may still need to undertake some further induction or training to familiarise you with your new fostering service, but you will not need to repeat the standards. Similarly if you decide to take up a job working with children you will be able to use your Certificate of Successful Completion to indicate that you have met the Training, Support & Development Standards for Foster Care.

## Standard 1: Understand the principles and values essential for fostering children and young people

**Summary:** This Standard sets out what you are expected to know about the principles and values underpinning work with children and young people, and how you should put them into practice. You will be expected to show you understand how to promote the values listed and work in a way which supports and respects diversity. You will be expected to understand the importance of confidentiality, including what you should keep confidential and what you should not. You will also be expected to know how to put into practice the policies and procedures of your fostering service about sharing information with others. The child or young person should be at the centre of all of our work. It is one of the ways you will put the principles of care into practice. You will show you understand how you put children and young people at the centre of your work by meeting the outcomes set out in this standard. This includes understanding the right of children and young people to take risks and your role in relation to that risk-taking.

### 1.1 Principles and values

#### Skills and knowledge

- 1.1a Show** your awareness of the principles and values essential for looking after children, young people and their families.
- 1.1b Demonstrate** how you promote these principles and values in the care you provide for children and young people.

#### Evidence requirements

- 1.1a** With regard to the principles and values statements on page 6 give two examples of how you might express these in regard to the child or young person in your care
- 1.1b** Give an example of how you promote equality and diversity with the young people you care for.

## 1.2 Equality, inclusion and anti-discriminatory practice

### Skills and knowledge

- 1.2a **Understand** the different types of prejudice and discrimination which can affect children and young people.
- 1.2b **Understand** why it is important to provide care which respects and preserves each child's ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic background.
- 1.2c **Demonstrate** how you support and encourage children and young people to develop skills to deal with discrimination, enhance self-worth and make a positive contribution.

### Evidence requirements

- 1.2a What different types of prejudice or discrimination have you come across or are you aware of?
- 1.2b Why is respecting and preserving a child's background important? Where can you get advice about the care needs of a child or young person who has a different racial, cultural or religious background from your own?
- 1.2c What skills might children and young people need to develop to deal with discrimination? How can you challenge prejudice and discrimination or help other people to challenge them? How would you enhance their self-worth and encourage children and young people to make a positive contribution? How can you support them in this?

## 1.3 Person centred approaches

### Skills and knowledge

**1.3a Be able** to explain how your care relates to the outcomes of ensuring that a child is supported to:

- Be healthy.
- Stay safe.
- Enjoy and achieve.
- Make a positive contribution.
- Achieve economic wellbeing.

**1.3b Give** examples of how you take account of the experiences, preferences, wishes and needs of individual children and young people, and their families.

**1.3c Explain** why it is important to listen to children and young people's views about risk and safety, and show how you take these into account in your role as a foster carer the importance of confidentiality and how it applies to your role.

### Evidence requirements

**1.3a** What support is available in your fostering service or local authority to help children achieve the five outcomes listed? Give a practical example of how your work as a foster carer helps children and young people achieve one these outcomes.

**1.3b** Give an example of how you have made changes to accommodate the individual needs and expressed wishes of a child or young person.

**1.3c** What should you do if a child or young person wants to do something you consider as "risky" or "dangerous"? How would you approach the subject with the child or young person? Give an example where a positive challenge for a child or young person might involve an acceptable level of risk. Why is it important to allow children and young people to take measured risks?

## 1.4 Confidentiality and sharing information

### Skills and knowledge

- 1.4a **Understand** the importance of confidentiality.
- 1.4b **Understand** how to apply your fostering service's policies and procedures about confidentiality and information sharing.
- 1.4c **Understand** the limits of confidentiality (for example, when it is necessary to share information to safeguard a child or young person).

### Evidence requirements

- 1.4a What do you understand by the word 'confidentiality'? Why is confidentiality important?
- 1.4b How do you maintain confidentiality in the home? If a GP, teacher, social worker or professional from another organisation asked for information about a child or young person what would you do? If a relative, friend or neighbour asked about a child or young person what would you do?
- 1.4c Give one example of when and to whom you would disclose information you are given; give one example when you would not disclose information.

## Standard 2: Understand your role as a foster carer

**Summary:** This standard sets out what you need to know about your role and responsibilities as a foster carer in relation to the law, Government policies and other professionals working with children and young people. You will be expected to know and understand the legislation, policies, values and procedures relevant to your work as a foster carer. You will be expected to know how to work well with colleagues in your fostering service and local authority and from other organisations involved in the care and education of the children and young people you foster. You will also be expected to understand the value of, and how to work with, families and carers.

### 2.1 Fostering role

#### Skills and knowledge

- 2.1a Know** the overall aims of your fostering service.
- 2.1b Understand** your own role and responsibilities.
- 2.1c Understand** the role of your supervising social worker.

#### Evidence requirements

- 2.1a** Explain the aims of your fostering service. Does it have a specialist role?
- 2.1b** What are your role and your responsibilities as a foster carer? Explain three specific tasks you undertake.
- 2.1c** What is the role of your supervising social worker?

## 2.2 Legislation, policies and procedures

### Skills and knowledge

**2.2a Know** about relevant legislation, policies and procedures relating to foster care, and where you can get further information.

**2.2b Understand** the importance of following your agency's policies and procedures.

### Evidence requirements

**2.2a** Identify two important pieces of childcare law that foster carers need to know about.

For example, give an example of how your local authority explained the law and the assessment process relating to becoming foster carer.

Who would you speak to in order to get clear information about the law or a procedure relating to being a foster carer?

**2.2b** Where can you find out about your fostering service's policies and procedures? Pick two of your fostering service's policies and explain how they affect your work? Why is it important to follow the policies?

## 2.3 Relationships with parents and others

### Skills and knowledge

**2.3a Understand** the importance of families and friends for children and young people.

**2.3b Demonstrate** how you involve families and others in the lives of children and young people and the important role of foster carers in helping a child maintain contact.

### Evidence requirements

**2.3a** What is important about family and friends for children? Why is it important to maintain links with the child's birth family?

**2.3b** Explain your role as a foster carer in helping a child or young person maintain contact with their family and friends in relation to someone you have looked after? What do you do in relation to this? How would you support a child or young person where there was no parental contact or contact had a negative impact on the child?



## 2.4 Team working

### Skills and knowledge

- 2.4a Understand** the concept of ‘the foster care team’ and your contribution to effective teamwork.
- 2.4b Know** who you are accountable to in your work as a foster carer and where to go for support.
- 2.4c Know** how to contribute to planning for children and young people, including contributions to meetings and reviews.

### Evidence requirements

- 2.4a** Draw a diagram or make a list of the people supporting the child or young person in their placement with the child at the centre. Indicate how you work with each member of this ‘team’.
- 2.4b** Who are you accountable to in your work as a foster carer? What different types of support are available to you? What support should you receive from the child or young person’s social worker?
- 2.4c** Get feedback from your supervising social worker on how you contribute to meetings. Identify any specific help you might require in making effective contributions.

## 2.5 Being Organised

### Skills and knowledge

**2.5a Demonstrate** that you are well organised, reliable and dependable.

**2.5b Show** that you provide activities and environments that are well organised and safe

### Evidence requirements

**2.5a** Why do children and young people need carers who are organised, reliable and dependable? Give an example from your own practice and also provide witness testimony to back up your example.

**2.5b** Give an example of an activity that you have organised. How did you organise it and ensure it was safe?

## 2.6 Complaints and compliments

### Skills and knowledge

- 2.6a Understand** how complaints and compliments are dealt with in your agency, and know how you can make a complaint.
- 2.6b Know** how children, young people and their families can access the complaints procedure and how you can support them.
- 2.6c Know** about the allegations policies and procedures of your fostering service and how to access support and legal advice.

### Evidence requirements

- 2.6a** What should happen when someone makes a complaint? How and to whom would you make a complaint or compliment?
- 2.6b** What does the organisation do to make sure children are happy in their placement? How would you support a child or young person who wanted to make a complaint?
- 2.6c** What should happen if an allegation is made against a foster carer? What support and advice is available?

## Standard 3: Understand health and safety, and healthy care

**Summary:** This standard is about all the things you need to know to do your job as a foster carer safely, and not to put yourself, your family or the children and young people you look after in danger. It is also about providing 'healthy care'. You will be expected to understand health and safety laws and regulations as they apply to your role as well as the policies and procedures of your fostering service. You may be expected to undertake specialist training, for example, to help a child with a specific health need. You will be expected to demonstrate that you have an understanding of the health care needs of children and young people, how to promote healthy lifestyles, and what to do in case of accidents or illness. You will be expected to assess potential risks and understand how to manage challenging behaviour in line with the guidance provided by your fostering service.

### 3.1 Legislation, policies and procedures

#### Skills and knowledge

**3.1a Show** an awareness of the relevant health and safety legislation and guidance and your responsibilities.

**3.1b Know** your agency's procedures in relation the health and safety of children and young people

#### Evidence requirements

**3.1a** Give an example of how you use the health and safety legislation to protect the child or young person in your care.

**3.1b** What procedures must foster carers follow in respect of the health and safety of children and young people?

## 3.2 Accommodation

### Skills and knowledge

**3.2a Know** how to keep your home safe and free of avoidable hazards that might be a risk to children and young people.

**3.2b Know** the importance of maintaining a good standard of hygiene and cleanliness.

**3.2c Show** that you and those living in your household know what to do in case of a fire.

### Evidence requirements

**3.2a** How does your responsibility as a foster carer in relation to health and safety apply to:

- Electrical safety
- Hazardous substances
- Play equipment

Give two examples of potential fire hazards and how you can reduce the risk of fire.

**3.2b** How do you prevent the spread of infections in your household? How should you dispose of infected waste (e.g. bodily fluids)?

**3.2c** How have you made sure everyone in the house knows what to do in case of a fire? Do all members of your family know what to do in case of fire?

### 3.3 Healthy care and medication

#### Skills and knowledge

- 3.3a Know** what ‘healthy care’ means for the physical, mental, emotional and sexual health of children and young people.
- 3.3b Have** an understanding of children and young people’s health and hygiene needs, including allergies and infection control procedures.
- 3.3c Explain** your role in promoting the health of children and young people, including giving advice and information in relation to risk taking, substance misuse, relationships and sexual health.
- 3.3d Have** an understanding of first aid and know how to access emergency medical treatment.
- 3.3e Know** what procedures to follow in relation to medication and health-care procedures including what consent is required.

#### Evidence requirements

- 3.3a** What does providing ‘healthy care’ mean in relation to the children and young people you look after in terms of meeting their: physical, mental, emotional and sexual health needs? Give an example for at least 3 of the 4 areas.
- 3.3b** How do you encourage children and young people to maintain personal hygiene? How do you find out about the individual health needs, allergies and medication of the children and young people you look after? What is our role in meeting these needs? How do you maintain a good standard of hygiene in your home?
- 3.3c** What actions should foster carers take in relation to the health of all children? Give an example of how you would deal with a situation where a child or young person was putting their health at risk, related to either risk-taking, substance misuse, relationships and sexual health.
- 3.3d** What would you do if a child or young person:
- Had an accident?
  - Showed symptoms of being seriously ill?
- What record should you keep of accidents or injuries?
- 3.3e** Which of the following do you need consent for and who would be involved in giving consent?
- Taking a child to the GP
  - Administering medicines
  - Vaccinations/ inoculations
  - Routine operation

- Emergency operation
- Contraception
- Dental treatment
- Body piercing

Think of other examples where you might need consent? What records should you keep?

## 3.4 Personal safety and security

### Skills and knowledge

- 3.4a Understand** potential risks to the safety and security of yourself and members of your family and what you can do to reduce or manage the risks.
- 3.4b Know** about the range of challenging behaviours presented by children and young people and how to encourage positive behaviour.
- 3.4c Understand** the need to manage challenging behaviour in a way that is safe without the use of physical or other inappropriate punishment and give examples from your work as a foster carer.

### Evidence requirements

- 3.4a** Give two examples of situations where you or your family might be placed at risk. What could you do to reduce or manage the risks?
- 3.4b** Describe the range of challenging behaviour that could be presented by the children and young people you look after. Give examples of ways in which you can encourage positive behaviour.
- 3.4c** What is the policy of your fostering service or local authority on what sanctions are permissible/not permissible (including use of physical restraint)? What steps would you take to discourage challenging behaviour directed towards:
- Yourself?
  - Another child or young person?
  - Another adult?
  - Self harm?



## 3.5 Risk assessment

### Skills and knowledge

**3.5a Identify** examples of risks to children and young people and appropriate action to reduce or manage the risks.

### Evidence requirements

**3.5a** Give two examples of different types of risks to children and young people (e.g. from their own behaviour, from the environment, from other people). What have you/can you do to reduce each risk? Give an example of a way you have managed one of these risks that you could not remove? Who should be involved in this decision?

## Standard 4: Know how to communicate effectively

**Summary:** This standard is about developing your communication skills for working with children, young people and their families, as well as with other professionals in your fostering service, and other organisations. These are fundamental skills for foster carers and are needed to achieve all the other standards. You will be expected to show that you know about communication, what helps and what hinders communication, and how to use it effectively. You will be expected to know about and use different forms of communication. You will be expected to understand the importance of good record keeping and how you can make, use and keep records properly.

**4.1 Encourage communication** 'Empathy' is the ability to put yourself in someone else's shoes and understand how that person might feel

### Skills and knowledge

**4.1a Demonstrate** how you listen to and understand the wishes and feelings of children and young people.

**4.1b Understand** the need to use appropriate means of communication with children and young people including non-verbal and other means, and give examples from your practice.

**4.1c Demonstrate** that you respond appropriately to children and young people in clear, jargon-free language, without being patronising.

**4.1d Show** how you help children and young people to make their own decisions.

### Evidence requirements

**4.1a** Explain how you listen to children and young people and how you know what they want and how they feel. What have you done in response to this?

**4.1b** Describe different ways of communicating, including non-verbal and other means, with children and young people taking into account their age, understanding, body language, use of words, any disability, cultural background and where their first language is not English. Give examples of this from your practice.

**4.1c** Ask your supervising social worker or someone else you have worked closely with to give you feedback on their observations of your communication with children or young people.

**4.1d** How do you encourage and empower children and young people to make their own decisions? Explain how you have helped children and young people contribute to planning- for example with consultation booklets. Give examples of phrases you could use which would:

- Encourage them to make their own decisions
- Discourage them from making their own decisions

## 4.2 Knowing about communication

### Skills and knowledge

**4.2a Describe** effective ways of communicating with children and young people.

**4.2b Understand** some of the common difficulties in communicating with children and young people and give examples of how you try to overcome these.

**4.2c Know** how to use different communications media.

### Evidence requirements

**4.2a** Make a list of techniques you have found to be helpful in communicating with children and young people.

**4.2b** Describe some of the common difficulties in communicating with children and young people. Give two examples of difficulties you have encountered and how you have tried to overcome them.

**4.2c** Show that you can write a short report or a letter using a computer and send and receive an email message or use a fax machine, and produce written reports using log-books/diary. Show also that you can write a text message and make a phone call also put in text messages or phone calls.

## 4.3 Communication with parents, families and friends

### Skills and knowledge

- 4.3a **Show** that you are aware of the procedures for arranging contact and understand your role as a foster carer.
- 4.3b **Understand** when and how to raise concerns with families and friends in an appropriate way.
- 4.3c **Demonstrate** that you understand children and young People's confidentiality when communicating with parents, families and friends, including your own family and friends.

### Evidence requirements

- 4.3a How would you arrange contact for a child or young person with their family? What different contact arrangements might be made? For example can you agree to extra visits or withhold visits? Where would you get information on this?
- 4.3b If you had to raise a sensitive subject to a parent or carer, how would you go about it? If a parent or carer became aggressive or was threatening, what would you do?
- 4.3c What information should you pass on to parents and carers? What should happen to information that a child or young person might pass to you or your family? Give an example of a decision where it would be appropriate to consult their parents and carers. Give an example of confidential information that it would not be appropriate for you to share.

## 4.4 Communication with organisations

### Skills and knowledge

**4.4a Understand** the importance of effective communication with other organisations who are in contact with children and young people.

**4.4b Demonstrate** effective communication with your supervising social worker.

### Evidence requirements

**4.4a** Give an example of an agency (e.g. school, CAMHS) you have contact with. What was the purpose of your contact and how has it benefited the child or young person?

**4.4b** How can you achieve good communication with your supervising social worker? Give an example or provide feedback from your supervising social worker.

## 4.5 Principles of keeping good records

### Skills and knowledge

- 4.5a Understand** the importance of keeping accurate records.
- 4.5b Know** the record keeping policy of your fostering agency, and how information is shared with others, including children and young people and their families.
- 4.5c Know** how to record understandable, relevant, clear and concise, factual information, which can be checked.
- 4.5d Know** how to enable children and young people to participate in record keeping and keep their own records and memorabilia.

### Evidence requirements

- 4.5a** Make a list of the reasons why your records might be needed now or in the future.
- 4.5b** What is the record keeping policy of your fostering agency? What should you record? How and when do you share information with others?
- 4.5c** Examine an example of a report or a record that you have written (e.g. for a LAC Review or from your foster carer diary). Is it:
- Understandable?
  - Relevant?
  - Factual?
  - Clear and concise?

What does a record need to contain so that it can be checked? What is meant by the following and how they differ from each other:

- An observation?
  - A fact?
  - An opinion?
  - Information from others?
- 4.5d** How can children and young people contribute to records kept about them? How do you ensure that they have recorded memories of their stay?

## Standard 5: Understand the development of children and young people

**Summary:** This standard sets out what you need to know about the development, behaviour and special needs of the children and young people you look after. You will be expected to show that you understand the stages of normal child development and how children develop attachments, and the impact of interrupted development, loss and separation. You will be expected to know how to help children develop 'resilience' and self-esteem and how to support them through changes in their lives. You will be expected to know how to help children achieve their full potential and promote their learning and development at different stages of their childhood. You will be expected to know how to promote positive sexual health and sexual identity. You will be expected to understand how to support children with disabilities and special educational needs.

### 5.1 Attachment and stages of development

#### Skills and knowledge

- 5.1a Understand** the basic principles of how children of all ages form attachments, how these attachments affect their development, and the impact of interrupted development, trauma, separation and loss.
- 5.1b Understand** child development and the developmental needs of children and young people.
- 5.1c Understand** the difference between chronological age and stages of development, and how this may affect a child or young person.

#### Evidence requirements

- 5.1a** How do children form attachments? How might the experiences of looked after children affect their ability to form attachments? How can you help children to build caring relationships following the impact of interrupted development, trauma, separation and loss?
- 5.1b** What are the main stages of a child's development? Give two examples of the developmental needs of children and young people you look after.
- 5.1c** Describe the stages of development and relate these to the child or young person you look after. Give examples of the difference between chronological age and stages of development.



**5.2 Resilience** 'Resilience' is a quality that helps children and young people resist and recover from adversities.

**Skills and knowledge**

**5.2a Understand** how foster carers can help children and young people develop 'resilience' and self-esteem.

**Evidence requirements**

**5.2a** How can you encourage children and young people to have increased ability to overcome difficulties and develop a positive view of themselves?

**5.3 Transitions** ‘Transitions’ are milestones in children’s lives – some are general, some are individual.

#### Skills and knowledge

**5.3a Explain** significant milestones that mark transition in the lives of children and young people, and the range of responses to them.

**5.3b Understand** how to support individual children and young people through significant life changes and challenges.

**5.3c Be able** to work with young people to develop skills, self-confidence and knowledge to prepare them for adulthood and independent living.

#### Evidence requirements

**5.3a** Think about your own life and what significant milestones (transitions) you experienced as a child. What helped you through these? What significant milestones have you seen children and young people experience? Give examples of different responses to these milestones.

**5.3b** Select an example of a child or young person who is going through a significant period of their life (e.g. starting a new school, separation from their birth family). What have you done to support them with these changes?

**5.3c** What helped you prepare for adulthood and to live independently of your family? Give examples of specific help the children and young people you look after might need with skills, self-confidence and knowledge. Give examples of the different areas of support you will need to cover.

## 5.4 Supporting play, activities and learning

### Skills and knowledge

- 5.4a Know** how to encourage children and young people to participate in activities.
- 5.4b Explain** how play, hobbies and interests are important to social and personal development, and enjoyment of recreational activities.
- 5.4c Explain** the importance of adhering to appropriate routines for children and young people.

### Evidence requirements

- 5.4a** How would you encourage children and young people to take part in activities:
- At home?
  - Sporting and outdoor activities?
  - With friends?
  - Out of school activities?
- 5.4b** Why are play, hobbies and interests important for development?
- 5.4c** How do routines benefit children and young people? What routines do you have in your household and why?

## 5.5 Supporting educational potential

### Skills and knowledge

- 5.5a Show** how you can encourage and support children and young people with their education (including early years education) and help them overcome setbacks.
- 5.5b Be able** to actively work with families, social workers and teachers to help children and young people achieve.
- 5.5c Know** how to support young people in their further education and training, and employment.
- 5.5d Be able** to advocate on behalf of children and young people to ensure their educational needs are met.

### Evidence requirements

- 5.5a** Describe active ways in which you can provide support for children and young people and how you can enable them to achieve in their education. Give examples of how you can help pre-school children with their learning and development. What setbacks have the children and young people in your care experienced with their education? How did you help them to overcome these?
- 5.5b** Show how you have worked with others e.g. those listed to support a child or young person's education.
- 5.5c** Make a list of resources and support available for young people who have left school. How would you assist a young person to access further education or find employment?
- 5.5d** What would you do if you felt that a child or young person's educational needs were not being met?

## 5.6 Understanding contexts

### Skills and knowledge

- 5.6a Understand** children and young people in the context of their wider family, caring or social network.
- 5.6b Understand** the contribution family, caring and social networks make to the development of children and young people.
- 5.6c Understand** the impact of abuse, separation and loss on the behaviour of children and young people.

### Evidence requirements

- 5.6a** Why are wider family, caring and social networks important to children's well-being and development? Draw a diagram or make a list of a child or young person's family, friends and wider social networks.
- 5.6b** Give an example of how family, caring or social networks can affect the development of a child or young person positively or negatively.
- 5.6c** What types of behaviour would you expect to see in a child or young person who has experienced abuse, separation or loss? For example, if the child or young person in your care has been/ is affected by separation, loss, trauma or abuse how are you helping them to overcome this?

## 5.7 Promote positive sexual health and sexual identity

### Skills and knowledge

- 5.7a **Understand** how to promote good sexual health with children and young people.
- 5.7b **Understand** how to enable children and young people to develop a positive sexual identity with regard to their own sexuality.

### Evidence requirements

- 5.7a What advice and information should be available to children and young people to promote their sexual health, and when? What is your role as a foster carer?
- 5.7b What help do children and young people need to develop their sexual identity in positive ways? How would you respond to a child or young person telling you that he or she is gay/lesbian or bi-sexual or who was unsure of their sexual identity?

## 5.8 Supporting disabled children and children with special emotional needs

### Skills and knowledge

- 5.8a **Understand** the 'social model of disability' and what it means in relation to your work as a foster carer.
- 5.8b **Have** a broad understanding of the needs of children and young people who are disabled or have learning difficulties.
- 5.8c **Understand** the need to adapt activities and experiences so individual children and young people can take part.
- 5.8d **Understand** how you might support children and young people with special educational needs, and their families.

### Evidence requirements

- 5.8a Explain what is meant by the 'social model' of disability (see glossary). What do you understand about disability? How has your fostering agency explained this to you?
- 5.8b Give two examples of needs that may be specific to children and young people who are disabled or have a learning disability.
- 5.8c Think of a game or activity you might use with a child or young person. How can you adapt it so a disabled child or young person can join in?
- 5.8d Think of an example of a special educational need. How would you support the child or young person and their family with this?

## Standard 6: Keep children and young people safe from harm

**Summary:** This standard sets out what you need to know and do to keep children and young people safe and protect them from harm. You will be expected to show you understand the relevant laws, policies and local safeguarding arrangements to protect a child or young person from harm or abuse. You will be expected to show you understand how to recognise that a child or young person is being abused or neglected and what action you should take working alongside other agencies who have a child protection role. You will be expected to know what to do if you have concerns about a child or young person's welfare, instances of malpractice, negligence or unprofessional behaviour.

### 6.1 Legislation, policies and procedures

#### Skills and knowledge

**6.1a Know** about legislation and national guidance relating to protecting and safeguarding children.

**6.1b Understand** your local multi-agency safeguarding policies and procedures on identifying and protecting children and young people who have been abused or are at risk of abuse.

#### Evidence requirements

**6.1a** Look at and then summarise a piece of legislation or guidance that relates to protecting and safeguarding children.

**6.1b** Give examples of the multi-agency safeguarding policies in your local area related to protecting children from abuse.



## 6.2 Keeping children safe

### Skills and knowledge

- 6.2a **Demonstrate** that you understand what children and young people want and need to feel safe.
- 6.2b **Be aware** of what contributes to a safe environment for children and young people.
- 6.2c **Know** how to help children and young people keep themselves safe from harm or abuse.
- 6.2d **Develop** and maintain 'safer caring' guidelines for you and your household.

### Evidence requirements

- 6.2a What do children and young people say they want and need in order to feel safe from harm? What aspects of staying safe might children and young people not understand or are aware of when coming from an unsafe situation? How can you help meet these needs?
- 6.2b How can children and young people be unsafe in a foster home?
- 6.2c Give a practical example of how a child or young person can protect themselves and stay safe?
- 6.2d How have you applied these guidelines in your household?

## 6.3 Recognising and responding to abuse

### Skills and knowledge

**6.3a Understand** the different ways in which children and young people can be harmed by adults, other children and young people including the internet.

**6.3b Understand** the different ways in which children and young people can be placed at risk, for example:

- physical abuse
- sexual abuse
- emotional abuse
- exposure to domestic abuse
- neglect
- faltering growth
- institutional abuse
- self-harm

**6.3c Understand** signs and indicators of possible abuse and neglect.

**6.3d Understand** how children might be bullied and know what action to take if you suspect a child or young person is being bullied.

**6.3e Understand** the procedures you need to follow if you suspect a child is being abused or neglected, and the action you might need to take immediately.

### Evidence requirements

**6.3a** Give an example of how children and young people could be harmed by **each** of the following:

- Adults
- Other children and young people
- Individuals through the Internet

What are the risks of the Internet and mobile phones and what can you do to reduce the risks?

**6.3b** Find out about two areas of abuse and describe how children and young people may be placed at risk.

**6.3c** Make a list of signs and indicators for the two types of abuse you found out about for 6.3b. How can parental problems (e.g. domestic violence or drug and alcohol misuse) increase the risk to the child or young person?

**6.3d** In what different ways might children and young people be bullied?  
What action should you take if you suspect that a child or young person is being bullied?

## 6.4 Working with other agencies

### Skills and knowledge

- 6.4a **Know** about your local Safeguarding Board and the responsibilities of your fostering service and other agencies in keeping children safe from harm.
- 6.4b **Know** who the designated child protection worker is at the school, pre-school group, club or other activity.
- 6.4c **Be aware** of the safeguarding policy of the school, pre-school group, club or other activity.

### Evidence requirements

- 6.4a What local agencies are involved in safeguarding children and young people? Describe the role of your local Safeguarding Children Board. Outline the responsibilities of one of these agencies for keeping children safe from harm. Explain your fostering agency's policy on safeguarding.
- 6.4b Find out who the designated staff are.
- 6.4c Read a copy of the Safeguarding Policy of a children or young people's organisation you have contact with.

## 6.5 'Whistle-blowing' (reporting failures in duty)

### Skills and knowledge

- 6.5a Know** when and how to refer a concern about child protection, the child's welfare or any other instance of malpractice, negligence or unprofessional behaviour which might not be in the child's best interests or pose a risk to the child.
- 6.5b Know** how and to whom to report your concern about unsafe practice of others.
- 6.5c Know** what to do if you have followed your own fostering service's policies and procedures on reporting concerns, and you are not satisfied with the response.
- 6.5d Identify** what to do when you do not get a satisfactory response from other organisations or agencies.

### Evidence requirements

- 6.5a** Describe the 'whistle blowing' policy of your fostering service/agency. If you had a concern about a child or young person's welfare or any instance of malpractice, negligence or unprofessional behaviour what should you do?
- 6.5b** What would you do if you consider the practice of another person is unsafe or inappropriate?
- 6.5c** What would you do if you had reported abuse or unsafe behaviour but no action was taken by the person you reported it to?
- 6.5d** What would you do if you didn't receive a satisfactory response from another organisation or agency after reporting a child protection or child welfare concern?

## Standard 7: Develop yourself

**Summary:** This standard is to help you make the most of the support and development opportunities that are available to you. This is important for developing your skills as a foster carer, for your own well-being, and to help you provide the highest standard of care. You will be encouraged to think about how fostering has affected you and your family, in particular the impact on your own sons and daughters. You will be expected to show that you know how to access and use information and supervision sessions, and use the support and supervision provided by your fostering service. You will be expected to show that you are committed to improving your practice as a foster carer through training opportunities and continuing professional development. You will be encouraged to think about how you can develop your career, either by remaining as a foster carer or through other career opportunities.

### 7.1 Your role and approval as a foster carer

#### Skills and knowledge

- 7.1a Understand** the implications of your approval as a foster carer for yourself and your family.
- 7.1b Understand** how being a foster carer may affect you personally and where you can get support.
- 7.1c Be aware** of the particular issues for male, black and minority ethnic, gay and lesbian foster carers and the support available.

#### Evidence requirements

- 7.1a** What changes have you and your family had to make since becoming foster carers? What have you found challenging? What fit in easily?
- 7.1b** What are the biggest challenges you have had to face? Where would you go for support if your supervising social worker was unavailable or if a situation arose outside of office hours?
- 7.1c** What are the issues for you in your role as a foster carer? What issues might male, black and minority ethnic, gay and lesbian foster carers face? What support is available in your fostering service or the wider community for these carers?

## 7.2 Being aware of the impact of fostering on your sons and daughters and extended family

### Skills and knowledge

**7.2a Understand** the impact of fostering on your own children and other members of your family, their support and training needs and how to access these.

### Evidence requirements

**7.2a** How has fostering affected your own children or family members? What issues have arisen and what training and support is needed or has been provided? Where would you access this support?

## 7.3 Using support and supervision to develop your role

### Skills and knowledge

- 7.3a **Understand** the purpose of your personal supervision and annual foster carer review and know how to make the best of these opportunities.
- 7.3b **Know** what additional support and training is available to you.
- 7.3c **Be able** to recognise when you need support and the importance of asking for help and advice.
- 7.3d **Develop** knowledge, skills and understanding pertinent to your foster care role (e.g. treatment foster care, fostering teenagers).
- 7.3e **Develop** knowledge, skills and understanding to enable you to "broaden" your foster care role.

### Evidence requirements

- 7.3a Why is supervision necessary? What do you expect to gain from supervision? How have you used supervision and support from your supervising social worker? Why is your annual review necessary?
- 7.3b Describe the training and support that is available to foster carers.
- 7.3c What aspects of your role do you find more difficult? Give an example of when you have asked for help. Give an example of some advice you have been given as a carer.
- 7.3d Identify current changes and developments in fostering and children's services. What specialist roles and key areas of learning are you interested in developing for yourself? What knowledge and skills have you gained that enables you to do your particular type of fostering?
- 7.3e What new skills or knowledge would help you in your current role? Suggest an activity (e.g. reading, a visit, specialised training) that would broaden your role.

## 7.4 Meeting learning needs as part of continuing professional development (CPD)

### Skills and knowledge

- 7.4a **Understand** the need for continuing professional development and the ways in which it can improve your practice.
- 7.4b **Understand** and be able to reflect on how your day-to-day work as a foster carer is influenced by feedback from people you come into contact with and from children, young people and their families.
- 7.4c **Work** with your supervising social worker or other relevant person to agree and follow a personal development plan.
- 7.4d **Be willing** to continually improve your practice and understand how to do this.

### Evidence requirements

- 7.4a Why do you need to develop and improve your skills and knowledge? How does this improve your work?
- 7.4b Give two examples of when you have received compliments or criticisms from the children, young people and families you work with. How did you change the way you work as a result of the feedback you received? If you did not change the way you work, explain the reasons why not.
- 7.4c What is a personal development plan? How has your personal development plan helped you? Are there ways in which it could be improved?
- 7.4d Explain methods you can use to improve your work as a foster carer. Which do you think will be most useful and why?



## 7.5 Meeting learning needs as part of continuing professional development (CPD)

### Skills and knowledge

- 7.5a **Understand** the career opportunities available to foster carers and who can help you identify your needs and make the most of these opportunities.
- 7.5b **Work** with your supervising social worker/provider to access further or higher-level training, development and qualifications.

### Evidence requirements

- 7.5a Describe the career opportunities that are available to you as a foster carer, both within and beyond your current role? Who is able to help you make the most of these career opportunities?
- 7.5b Which people or organisations can help you in higher-level training, development and qualifications? Have you discussed this with your supervising social worker?

## Glossary

### Words used about people and organisations

**CAMHS – Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services:** this service helps children and young people with their mental health and well-being and is usually provided by a multi-disciplinary team of mental health professionals.

**Children’s Services:** organisations that provide services to children, young people, their families and carers. Many Social Service Departments have re-organised into Children’s Services and Adult Services.

**Designated teacher:** all schools assign a senior member of staff as ‘designated teacher’ to act as a champion for looked after children and an advocate for the development of personal education plans for these young people. The role of designated teacher for looked after children sits alongside that of the designated teacher for child protection and the SENCO – the special educational needs coordinator in the school.

**Family Placement or fostering manager:** the person who is directly responsible for managing the fostering service and with responsibility for the staff. Independent fostering providers will often be managed by a Director.

**Safeguarding Board:** each local authority area has a Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) made up of representatives of local authorities, health bodies, the police and other agencies. Their aim is to ensure that all agencies work well together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in their area.

**Wider family, caring or social network:** all those people who are significant people in the lives of children and young people. They are likely to include family members, friends and others in the local community, school and social networks.

**Supervising Social Workers, Link Workers, Family Placement workers:** The term ‘supervising social worker’ has been used throughout the guidance to mean the person who is responsible for supervising and supporting foster carers. They are also referred to as Link Workers or Family Placement Workers, and are key members of the fostering service.

**Children’s Social Worker:** this person is responsible for making plans, supporting the child or young person, contact with the child or young person’s family and coordinating the care plan. They also have legal responsibilities for visiting the child or young person and ensuring that their reviews are carried out.

## Words used about work and work documents

**Active listening:** the process of actively seeking to understand the meaning of another person's communication, whether the communication is spoken or conveyed in a different way. Active listening includes the use of verbal and non-verbal skills (and may also involve use of technological or other aids).

**Assess/Assessment:** there are three types:

(a) The formal assessment of children and young people's needs. A 'core assessment' should have been completed for each looked after child or young person. This core assessment should include information about the child and their family, their care, health, behaviour, education, and their social and emotional well-being. The core assessment is the responsibility of the child's social worker although other professionals will also be involved. Specialist assessments (e.g. from an educational psychologist) may also have been requested.

(b) The assessment by supervising social workers to ensure that foster carers meet the *Training, Support and Development Standards for Foster Care*. Your supervising social worker will assess your understanding of, and your ability to meet, a specific learning outcome as set out in the standards. This will be based on evidence that you provide and from discussion with you.

(c) Your formal assessment for approval as a foster carer can also provide some of the evidence towards some of the learning outcomes in the standards.

**Care Plan:** a document which sets out in detail the plans for the child or young person including type of placement, plans for the future, health, schooling, and how daily care and support should be provided.

**Continuing Professional Development (CPD):** an on-going and planned learning process to help you keep up to date and improve and broaden your knowledge and skills, and further develop the personal and professional qualities needed to be an effective foster carer.

**Empathy:** the ability of yourself in somebody else's shoes and to understand how that person might feel (this definition is from a group of young people).

**Healthy Care:** this broadly refers to what children and young people should expect and what they are entitled to in a healthy care environment. The National Children's Bureau has developed the National Healthy Care Standard, on behalf of the Department for Education and Skills: A child or young person living in a healthy care environment is entitled to:

- Feel safe, protected and valued in a strong, sustained and committed relationship with at least one carer.
- Live in a caring, healthy and learning environment.

- Feel respected and supported in his/her cultural beliefs and personal identity.
- Have access to effective healthcare, assessment, treatment and support and have opportunities to develop personal and social skills, talents and abilities and to spend time in freely chosen play, cultural and leisure activities.
- Be prepared for leaving care by being supported to care and provide for him/herself in the future.

**Outcomes:** outcomes for children and young people.

**Person-centred approaches:** ways of working which involve and empower children and young people and their carers in deciding what they want to happen in their lives.

**Personal development plan:** a document for planning your own development based on where you are now and where you would like to be in the future. It should set out your learning needs as well as agreed training, learning and qualification opportunities to help you develop your knowledge and skills.

It is the responsibility of your supervising social worker to ensure that each foster carer has a personal development plan.

**PEP – Personal Education Plan:** it is now a legal requirement that all children and young people in public care should have a personal education plan. It is the responsibility of the young person's social worker to initiate the personal education plan by contacting the school's 'designated teacher' for children and young people in public care. The personal education plan should be in place within 20 days of the young person becoming a child or young person in public care or moving to a new school.

**Resilience:** a quality that helps children and young people resist and recover from adversity. Children can be helped to recover from adversities in early life through help with learning coping mechanisms, support from family and carers, good educational experiences and opportunities to develop self-confidence.

**Social Model of Disability:** the social model has been developed by disabled people in response to the medical model and the impact it has had on their lives.

Under the social model, disability is caused by the society in which we live and is not the 'fault' of an individual disabled person, or an inevitable consequence of their limitations. Disability is the product of the physical, organisational and attitudinal barriers present within society, which lead to discrimination. The removal of discrimination requires a change of approach and thinking in the way in which society is organised.

The social model has been developed with the aim of removing barriers so that disabled people have the same opportunity as everyone else to determine their own life styles.

A simple example is that of a wheelchair user who has a mobility impairment. They are not actually disabled in an environment where they can use public transport and gain full access to buildings and their facilities in the same way that someone without the impairment would do.

**Transitions:** children and young people naturally pass through a number of stages as they grow and develop. Often they will also be expected to cope with changes such as moving from primary to secondary school and for children and young people with disabilities or chronic ill health, from children's services to adults' services. Such changes are commonly referred to as 'transitions'.

Some children may have to face very particular and personal transitions not necessarily shared or understood by all their peers. These include: family illness or the death of a close relative; divorce and family break-up; issues related to sexuality; adoption; the process of asylum; disability; parental mental health; and the consequences of crime. All looked after children and young people will experience loss, separation and varying degrees of trauma when they come into foster care.

It is important to understand a child or young person in the context of their life, to recognise and understand the impact of any transitions they may be going through. It is also vital to recognise the role of parents and carers in supporting children and young people at points of transition, and to understand the need for reassurance, advice and support that parents and carers may express at these points.

**Whistle blowing:** raising concerns and reporting failures in duty about the way care and support is being provided, such as practices that are dangerous, abusive, discriminatory or exploitative.

## Words used about knowledge and skills

**Be aware of/have an awareness of:** to know that something exists, for example legislation about promoting equal rights, and what it is concerned with at a general level rather than in detail.

**Know/know how to:** to have a clear and practical understanding of an area of work, with enough detail to be able to carry out any tasks or procedures linked with it.

**Recognise:** to understand a concept (e.g. equal opportunities) and how it affects the way work is carried out in practice.

**Show/Respond/Share/Identify:** (examples of 'doing' words). To be able to provide practical evidence in an area of work (e.g. in communication) at a skill level appropriate to what is required in the role.

**Understand:** to grasp the meaning of a concept and to grasp its broad purpose and principles (such as with legislation, policies and procedures).

## Abbreviations and Acronyms

**BAAF** - British Association for Adoption and Fostering  
**CPD** - Continuing Professional Development  
**CYPPC** - Children and Young People in Public Care  
**DfE** - Department for Education  
**HSC** - Health and Social Care  
**NVQ** - National Vocational Qualification  
**Ofsted** - Office for standards in Education, Children's services and Skills  
**PDP** - Personal Development Plan  
**PEP** - Personal Education Plan  
**SSW** - Supervising Social Worker  
**SCIE** - Social Care Institute for Excellence  
**SFC** - Skills for Care  
**tFN** - The Fostering Network  
**UN** - United Nations (as in UN Convention on the Rights of the Child)

# What next?

## Further knowledge and skills

### Essential learning for specific tasks

Training, Support and Development Standards for Foster Care demonstrates that you have the basic information and skills necessary for work as a foster carer.

There will be some tasks, however, that will need you to learn more before they can be performed safely because they are linked to the specific needs of children and young people or to a specialist role (e.g. working with disabled children and young people, handling medication, managing challenging behaviour).

### Continuing professional development

Learning should continue throughout your career, and will enable you to develop new skills and open up career options. This will support your professional development, which will be beneficial both to your fostering service and for your career progression. In consultation with your supervising social worker, you should identify any additional training and development that will be beneficial to your role in the fostering service or your own aspirations.

### Continuing professional competence

You may not wish or be required to develop skills in new areas. However it will still be necessary for you to keep your skills up to date. Additional training can provide an opportunity for you to ensure that you are working in accordance with current best practice.

### Supporting flexible movement

Foster carers who are moving to a different foster care provider or another job with children and young people will have new things to learn so that they can understand how their practice may need to be adapted to the changed circumstances. Additional training can provide the learning necessary for them to make a successful transition into a different part of the workforce.

## Further resources

Along with information that your SSW can provide, the following resources should provide you with any further information you may need:

**The Children Act (1989, updated 2004)**

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/31/contents>

**Children Leaving Care Act (2000)**

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/14/contents>

**National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services and Fostering Services Statutory Guidance and Regulations 2011**

<http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/families/childrenincare/fostercare/a0071234/fostering-regulations-guidance-and-national-minimum-standards>

## Organisations

**The Fostering Network** [www.fostering.net](http://www.fostering.net)

This is the UK's leading charity for anyone with a personal or professional interest in fostering. The Fostering Network provides a wide range of publications, training and resources to support foster carers and fostering services. It also produces The Skills to Foster training materials for prospective carers, key policy and recruitment materials, the Signpost series and essential good practice guides, and a wide range of training programmes.

**British Association for Adoption and fostering** [www.baaf.org.uk](http://www.baaf.org.uk) This is a UK organisation made up of fostering and adoption agencies providing a range of books and other resources including training. It also publishes attractive books for children.

**The Who Cares? Trust** [www.thewhocarestrust.org.uk](http://www.thewhocarestrust.org.uk)

It promotes interests of children and young people in care and produces many useful publications.

**Research in Practice - children and families research implementation project**  
[www.rip.org.uk](http://www.rip.org.uk)

This has useful information and research findings relevant to fostering and looked after children and young people.

**Social Care Institute for Excellence** [www.scie.org.uk](http://www.scie.org.uk)

The institute provides up to date knowledge and summarises research and good practice in easy to read publications accessible on their website. There are some very good Practice Notes on what works in fostering.

**National Youth Agency** [www.nya.org.uk](http://www.nya.org.uk)

This youth work organisation produces useful publications and information on mental and emotional health, sex and relationships, drug and substance misuse, healthy lifestyles.



### **Skills for Care and Development -**

[www.skillsforcareanddevelopment.org.uk/home/home.aspx](http://www.skillsforcareanddevelopment.org.uk/home/home.aspx)

Skills for Care & Development (SfC&D) is the sector skills council for people providing social work, social care and children's services to the people of the UK.

### **Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) <http://www.hpcp-uk.org/>**

The Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) formerly the Health Professions Council is responsible for the regulation of social workers in England, following the abolition of the General Social Care Council (GSCC) on 31 July 2012.

### **Office for standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (known as Ofsted) [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)**

This organisation is responsible for inspecting and regulating the care and education of children and young people.

### **Policy and guidance [www.unicef.org/crc](http://www.unicef.org/crc)**

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, sets out the basic rights that every child should have. These rights underpin children's services in the UK.

National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services and Fostering Regulations 2011 are the main regulations and standards relevant to foster care.

<http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/families/childrenincare/fostercare/a0071234/fostering-regulations-guidance-and-national-minimum-standards>

The Code of Practice on the recruitment, assessment, approval, training, management and support of foster carers (NFCA 1999). [www.fostering.net](http://www.fostering.net)

UK National Standards for Foster Care (NFCA 1999). The NFCA was the forerunner of the Fostering Network. [www.fostering.net](http://www.fostering.net)

Every Disabled Child Matters website gives details of support, resources and leaflets for disabled children. [www.edcm.org.uk](http://www.edcm.org.uk)

## Training and resource guides

The Skills to Foster: The Fostering Network's preparation training programme for pre-approval level carers, focusing on developing practical skills and linked to the Training, Support and Development Standards, the UK National Standards for Foster Care and the Skills to Foster assessment process. [www.fostering.net](http://www.fostering.net)

The Signposts in Fostering: a series of A5 information booklets for foster carers on crucial areas for foster care. The Fostering Network [www.fostering.net](http://www.fostering.net)

Prepared to Care (2006): a resource book for family and friends carers. The Fostering Network [www.fostering.net](http://www.fostering.net)

Living in Foster Care series: (2007) a guide for children and young people coming into care. The Fostering Network [www.fostering.net](http://www.fostering.net)

Preparation for Adult life (2003) a guide for those actively engaged in helping young people prepare to leave care. The Fostering Network [www.fostering.net](http://www.fostering.net)

Six 'Pathways through Fostering' publications which are practical and comprehensive guides written for foster carers on the following topics:

- Attachment (2008)
- Behaviour (2009)
- Contact (2008)
- Education (2008)
- Health (2009)
- Safer Caring (2012 The Fostering Network [www.fostering.net](http://www.fostering.net))

Healthy Care Programme – a practical resource for improving the health and well-being of looked after children developed by the National Children's Bureau. [www.ncb.org.uk](http://www.ncb.org.uk)

Diploma - Level 3 Diploma for the children and young people's workforce. Qualification for staff and foster carers working with children and young people. <http://www.ofqual.gov.uk/>

## Helpful websites

[www.fostering.net](http://www.fostering.net)

The Fostering Network website covers face to face and online training courses, publications, information and advice, and campaigns on issues affecting foster carers in the UK. Members can access a large range of fact sheets, reading lists and other practical resources on all aspects of foster care from the foster care Resource Centre at [www.fostering.net/resources](http://www.fostering.net/resources).

[www.kidscape.org.uk](http://www.kidscape.org.uk)

Advice, helpline and information about bullying and child sexual abuse. Helpline 08451 205204.

[www.carelaw.org.uk](http://www.carelaw.org.uk)

A guide to the law for young people in care. Created by National Children's Homes, this website explains in simple terms each aspect of childcare law and its implications.

[www.chatdanger.com](http://www.chatdanger.com)

An easy to use site on the potential dangers of interactive services online, e.g. chat, Instant Messenger (IM), online games, email and mobiles with useful resources for parents and carers.

[www.kidsmart.org.uk](http://www.kidsmart.org.uk)

A website on Internet safety, run by the charity Childnet and aimed at schools, adults, young people and children. Provides plenty of advice, plus a section where carers can access a number of resources (including a special interactive presentation).

[www.childnet-int.org](http://www.childnet-int.org)

Online resources and leaflets for young people and adults to help make the Internet a great and safe place for children and young people.

[www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk)

Lots of information about staying safe on the Internet, with games for young people to download and replay.

[www.parentsonline.gov.uk/safety](http://www.parentsonline.gov.uk/safety)

Department of Education and Skills online resource that provides information on the latest Internet safety issues, forums and a short safety presentation.

[www.ace-ed.org.uk](http://www.ace-ed.org.uk)

The Advisory Centre for Education (ACE) is an independent registered charity, which offers information about state education in England and Wales for parents of school age children.

## Useful numbers

### **Fosterline 0800 040 7675 (Freephone)**

The confidential advice line, providing independent and impartial advice about fostering issues, funded by the Department for Education and run in association with the fostering Network (Mon-Fri 9am –5pm except Bank Holidays). Email: [Fosterline@fostering.net](mailto:Fosterline@fostering.net)  
Text phone users dial 18001 before 0800 0407675 (for Typetalk service).

### **Childline 0800 1111**

A free 24-hour helpline for children and young people to contact about any problem.

## Useful Topics

In addition, as well as speaking to your SSW you may wish to look in more detail at the following topics.

Further information will be available from your fostercare provider.

Attachment [www.fostering.net/resources/publications/attachment](http://www.fostering.net/resources/publications/attachment)

Advocacy <http://www.voiceyp.org>

Anti-bullying policy and procedures of your fostering service

Anti-bullying training

Assessment and care planning

Benefits training

Carers own Children Training

Caring for children who have been abused

Caring for disabled children

Caring for separated refugee and asylum seeking children

Child Abuse: accusations against foster carer (Fostering Network Signposts) Child and adolescent mental health awareness

Child Development, Growth and Health

Child protection procedures

Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 DfE Children

Act 1989 and 2004 DfE

Children and Young People who engage other children in abusive activities

Children and Young People's Plan of your local authority

Children's Centres, Schools and designated teachers, and local children's information centres

Children's Rights and Participation Team

Choices: supporting active decision making with children and young people

Communicating with Children and Young People Communicating

with Disabled Children Counselling skills Complaints Leaflet for looked after children

Complaints procedure of your fostering service

Computer training

Confidentiality and Information Sharing Policy of your fostering service

Contact: supporting children's relationships with family and friends

Contact: supporting children's relationships with family and friends

Data Protection Act 1998 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/29/contents>

Dealing with Allegations Fostering network or BAAF Delegated

Authority [www.fostering.net/delegated-authority](http://www.fostering.net/delegated-authority)

Disability equality training

Education Welfare Service

Educational Support [www.fostering.net/resources/publications/education](http://www.fostering.net/resources/publications/education)

Emotional abuse and neglect

Every Disabled Child Matters DfE

Examples of feedback given (annual review, consultation with children and young people)

Family and friends briefing days  
 Feedback from SSW Fire  
 escape plan  
 First Aid Training  
 First aid/Emergency Aid  
 Foster Carer Handbook  
 Foster Carers Charter DfE/ The Fostering Network  
 Fostering Network document on the impact of fostering on sons and daughters  
 Fostering Service Policy and Procedure  
 Fostering service's policy on computer and mobile phone use  
 Guidance about care, handling and use of restraint of your fostering service  
 Guidelines for managing children's behaviour Health and Safety Act - see DfE  
 website Health and Safety checklist  
 Health, hygiene and first aid  
<http://www.fostering.net/resources/publications/health>  
 Healthy eating  
 Helping children form good attachments  
[www.fostering.net/resources/publications/attachment](http://www.fostering.net/resources/publications/attachment) HIV  
 and Blood Borne Infections  
 Induction file Foster Carers' Handbook  
 Kidscape  
 Leaflets on the Children Act 1989 and 2004 see DfE website  
 Leaving Care Preparation  
 Life Story Work  
 Literature from community groups or the internet  
 Local foster care association and the fostering Network  
 Local safeguarding board website  
 Managing challenging behaviour/A Proactive Approach to Conflict  
<http://www.fostering.net/resources/publications/behaviour> Managing  
 stress  
 Meeting the needs of Black and Minority Ethnic Children  
 Men in foster care  
 Moving On  
 Multi-agency child protection training  
 Office hours of agency/out of hours arrangements  
 Panel training  
 Peer mentoring <http://www.fostering.net/resources/good-practice-guidance/foster-carer-peer-mentoring-good-practice-guidelines>  
 Personal development plan  
 Personal education plans  
 Personal, Health, Social Education (PHSE)  
 Planning for looked after children  
 Policy and procedures on contact  
 Policy and Procedures relating to allegations against foster carers (Local  
 Safeguarding Board)  
 Policy of your fostering service on keeping records  
 Principles and Values for Training, Support and Development standards for foster care  
 Promoting equality, diversity and rights  
 Promoting health and well-being Promoting

self esteem  
Promoting the positive mental health of looked after children and young people  
Protecting children, supporting foster carers  
Recruitment of foster carers  
Reducing risk for teenagers in care  
Reports for child's LAC review or planning meetings / consultation booklets / witness testimony from SSW or review chairs etc. Risk assessments  
Safer Caring <http://www.fostering.net/resources/publications/safer-caring>  
Safer Caring Family Policy  
Separation and Loss  
Sex and relationships for looked after children  
Sex and sexuality  
Sexual health  
Sexual Offences Acts DfE websites  
Statement of Purpose/leaflets produced by your fostering service  
Substance misuse and the impact on fostering  
Supervision policy of your fostering service Support groups for foster carers  
Supporting gay and lesbian foster carers  
Supporting gay, lesbian and bi-sexual young people in foster care The Common Assessment Framework CWDC and DfE websites Training around working with education  
Underpinning training for Level 3 diploma  
United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child [www.unicef.org/crc](http://www.unicef.org/crc)  
Valuing Diversity  
Websites of national children's charities  
What can I say? Talking about sex and relationships  
What to do if you suspect a child is being abused  
<https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/31815MIG2809.pdf>  
Whistle-blowing' policy of your fostering service  
Working together – the foster care team  
Working Together to Safeguard Children  
Working with Children and Young People to keep themselves safe  
Working with children and young people who self-harm  
Working with children, young people and their families  
Working with families  
Young people, substance use and foster care Your fostering service's use of 'risk assessments'  
Your local Safeguarding Procedures

## Books

**A Child's Journey through Placement:** Vera Fahlberg BAAF/Batsford 1994

**Attachment, Trauma and Resilience – therapeutic caring for children:** Kate Cairns BAAF (reprinted 2004)

**Promoting Resilience:** a resource book on working with children in the care system: Robbie Gilligan (BAAF 2001)

**Adopting or fostering a Sexually Abused Child:** Catherine Macaskill (BAAF/Batsford reprinted 2004)

**Time to Listen: experiences of young people in foster and residential care:** Sally Morris and Helen Wheatley (Childline 1994)





Department  
for Education

© Crown copyright 2012

You may re-use this information (excluding logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/> or e-mail: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at [FosterCare.CIC@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:FosterCare.CIC@education.gsi.gov.uk).

This document is also available from our website at:  
[www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/families/fostercare/fostercarestand](http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/families/fostercare/fostercarestand)



Department  
for Education

# **Training, Support and Development Standards for Foster Care: Evidencing Factsheet**

**This factsheet provides guidance on evidence, levels, the amount of evidence, what counts as evidence and cross referencing.**

**Refreshed: November 2012**

It is important to remember that the TSD Standards for Foster Care are at a foundation or induction level and set out what foster carers should know and be able to do within 12 months of approval. Assessors should be wary of assessing the outcomes at too high a level or demanding too much in-depth knowledge.

The workbook contains sample questions and activities and examples of evidence. These are for guidance only and assessors may substitute other questions. It is not necessary to answer all questions in order to evidence the standard. The level and sufficiency of evidence is not the same as is required for a Level 3 qualification (e.g. NVQ or Diploma), but will provide foundation evidence towards one.

### **Amount of evidence**

Encourage foster carers to keep it short and simple and use bullet points where appropriate. The evidence box in the workbook is meant to be guidance and is not an indication of amount of evidence expected. Essays are not required. The exemplars given in this factsheet indicate the maximum amount.

The amount of evidence will vary for each outcome. Some will only require a reference to another document, such as a witness statement. Others may require a reflective piece of writing, giving an example of when a particular task was carried out or when an incident occurred, as in the example overleaf.

### **Exemplar: Standard 5.3c Transitions (also meets 5.1c and 4.1d)**

P has been in foster care for over 13 years and been placed with me for the past 4 years. She is now 19 years old and I have been helping her prepare for adulthood and independent living over the past few years. Some of the ways I have helped P include:

- Support with decision making and encouraging P to develop her own opinion.
- Teaching her basic recipes and cooking skills.
- Involving her in household chores and talking to her about safety in the home.
- Supporting and encouraging her to continue with her education.
- Helping her with financial planning and budgeting.

These are just some of the ways that we are helping P get ready for independence. As someone who has been brought up in foster care most of her life, she is uncomfortable and wary of new situations. This means she needs additional encouragement, support, love and patience until she feels able to deal with new situations.

There should be at least one piece of evidence per outcome (see overleaf for 'What counts as evidence').

Please note: one piece of evidence can be used as the basis for a number of different outcomes. For example, in the exemplar below the evidence has been cited for Standard 5.5b. This evidence could also be used as the basis for Standard 2.4a, 4.4a and also for Standard 3.4b.

## **Exemplar: Standard 5. 5b Supporting Educational Potential**

T has been in foster care with me for 3 years. As he is a complex and challenging young person, I get support from a therapeutic worker who offers advice and support around managing his behaviour. I also work closely with the staff at his school who are experienced with looked after children. I have close links with the named person for Looked after Children and we speak on the phone about once a week.

I learnt at T's review that he had not been doing his homework. When I discussed this with the school, they suggested that they take him out of one lesson per week to catch up with homework. This seems to have taken some of the pressure off him and the school has agreed to let him continue with this.

Working together with the therapeutic worker, school staff and social worker has really helped T receive consistent messages and support, which helps him feel secure and safe.

### **What counts as evidence?**

Pre-approval training and assessment can be used as evidence for meeting the TSD Standards. Foster carers completing the Fostering Network's revised (2nd edition) Skills to Foster preparation training will have gained the core skills and knowledge to start their first foster care placement. The skills and knowledge gained through these processes may provide up to 60% of the evidence towards the TSD Standards.

Encourage carers to use a variety of evidence, using a combination of any from the list below. Foster carers can be as creative as they like in collecting evidence – audio, video, photographic records can contribute. Evidence can include a description of their work and how it meets the standard. Evidence can include:

- Cross referencing to other training completed e.g. Skills to Foster, training courses and NVQs. Training certificates should give details of the learning outcomes.
- Witness testimony i.e. by other professionals and service users.
- Professional discussion.
- Reflective accounts.
- Supervision notes.
- Direct observation.
- Fostering records.
- Reviews – minutes of meetings.
- Foster carers' annual reviews.
- Written questioning and oral questioning (must be recorded).
- DVDs – e.g. bullying and education.
- Training undertaken externally.
- Work or leisure activities where foster carer works direct with children and young people.

- E Learning.
- Case studies.
- Photographs of displays, but never of children and young people.
- Support group discussions which also include invited speakers or trainers.
- Research – articles, books, websites etc.
- Foster carers who have undertaken support training roles, or who have done presentations.

Where the evidence is a training certificate or a policy/procedure, the supervising social worker needs to check that it is relevant to the standards and should be satisfied that the carers learning has been assessed, either during the course or after the course through discussion with the carer. If there isn't evidence of the carers learning, the certificate should be accompanied by a few sentences outlining how the training has been put into practice against the standards, as in the exemplar overleaf.

### **Exemplar: Standard 5.1a Attachment and stages of development**

In January 2009 I attended the Fostering Network's course on Attachment (certificate attached). This course helped me understand how secure attachments are made and what the impact of trauma and abuse on children's abilities to develop secure attachments.

As a new foster carer this has really helped me when two sisters (J and K) came to live with us 6 months ago. Even though J is 10 and K is 16, they are inseparable. My husband felt that they should do activities separately as they have different interests. However, through my training I could understand that through their experiences the only constant thing had been each other and it was quite frightening for them to be separated, as they found it hard to trust others. We respect their need for each other, but as they have begun to trust us more, we have started to slowly introduce activities for each of them separately.

### **Cross referencing evidence from previous relevant training**

Foster carers with previous related training, fostering experience or work with children will be able to fast-track through the TSD Standards by providing evidence of competence, based on prior learning and experience. Evidence of their previous relevant experience should be assessed for relevance by the supervising social worker and can be recorded by discussion in supervision and review sessions.

If carers have completed an NVQ3 in Health and Social Care or hold a related professional qualification such as social work, they will already have much of the evidence to meet the TSD Standards. Two documents mapping the NVQ units against the TSD Standards can be accessed [here](#).

The Fostering Network has produced a guide called 'Meeting the Training, Support and Development Standards' which shows how each standard can be evidenced using either

the Skills to Foster training or assessment, the Pathways through Fostering publications or other training and information guides. The guide is available free to members to download from <http://www.fostering.net/all-about-fostering/resources/good-practice-guidance/meeting-training-support-and-development-standards>

### **Do all carers have to evidence all outcomes?**

It is important to note that not all of the standards will be relevant to all foster carers for example standard 5.3 Support Children and Young People to achieve their educational potential, would be marginal to a foster carer who was approved only to look after babies. If this is the case, it is acceptable for the carer to write a comment in the evidence box 'I only foster babies, so this outcome is not relevant to my work'.

It is up to foster service providers to determine agency policy in relation to TSD Standards or outcomes that may not be relevant to particular carers. Some agencies choose to ask all their carers to evidence all the outcomes and where the outcomes aren't relevant, carers are asked what they might do in theory.

**Joint carers** – Where two adults in a household are approved as foster carers, both carers must evidence that they meet the TSD Standards (as stated in the revised NMS, standard 20.1). Some of this evidence may be joint. Where carers cannot provide joint evidence, each carer must provide their own individual evidence. In some cases, where the majority of the caring is done by one of the carers, some of the outcomes will not be relevant to the secondary carer. If this is the case, it is acceptable for the carer to write a comment in the evidence box which reflects this.

**Family and friends (kinship) foster carers** are required to complete the TSD Standards for Foster Carer. However, you may need to be flexible in implementing the TSD Standards with these carers, prioritising which standards they need to complete first. CWDC guidance to help providers implement the TSD Standards with family and friends carers will be available in spring 2011.

**Foster carers who are approved for a named child** are required to complete the TSD Standards for Foster Care. However, not all standards will be relevant to these carers and providers will need to make a judgement about which are relevant on a case by case basis.

**Short break carers for children and young people with disabilities.** We have developed Training Support and Development Standards for Short Break Carers, that are relevant to the task of carers offering short breaks for children and young people who have a disability or complex health needs. For further information, see <http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/send/ahdc/a0070553/short-breaks>

**Support carers and foster carers who provide short breaks** (formerly known as respite carers). Fostering providers should determine their agency policy in relation to whether to use the TSD Standards for Foster Care or for Short Break Care with support carers and respite carers. We have produced some additional guidance to assist fostering service providers, '[Using the Standards with Support Carers](#)', which provides a framework for making the decision and shows which outcomes must be evidenced.



Department  
for Education

© Crown copyright 2012

You may re-use this information (excluding logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/> or e-mail: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at [FosterCare.CIC@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:FosterCare.CIC@education.gsi.gov.uk).

This document is also available from our website at: [www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/families/fostercare/fostercarestand](http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/families/fostercare/fostercarestand)

# Recording

## 1. Introduction

---

It is important for any child that you care for to have recorded for them, their time living with you and your family. Each child who is cared for outside of their parent's care needs to have clear records to support them in understanding why decisions were made, and how they were cared for. As Foster Carers your input is invaluable in this, as your recording provides them with a picture of their time spent with you and your family. This is achieved via your daily recording and your contribution to life story work.

Your daily recording will also help you to reflect upon a child's care needs, interests, what is working well and any worries you may have. This will support the care team in their care planning for children.

Daily recording also can be a useful tool if allegations are made against you, for example by giving contexts to situations so they are better understood. You may also find that your daily recordings could be required as part of Court proceedings, it is therefore important that they are maintained in a timely manner in line with the Fostering Service Policy. It is of note that if your recordings are not maintained, then as a Foster Carer the Court may require you to give face to face evidence instead.

When completing your daily recording it is important that this is completed clearly and concisely, containing only factual information and not assumptions and views. Try to write down things in a timely fashion, including the date time, who was present and what exactly was said.

You should also try and record things in a manner that you could let the person concerned see. If you think that something is so private that the young person should not see what you are going to write, you should contact your Supervising Social Worker to talk about this and whether and how the information should be kept private.

The Fostering Service will provide you with recording sheets, which you will complete for each child/young person in your care. Your Supervising Social Worker will look at these during supervision meetings and sign the records.

At the Placement Planning meeting held before the child is placed with you, it should be made clear to parents and the child/ young person, (depending on their age) what you will be recording, how this information will be used and how long the records will be kept. This helps to develop an open and honest relationship; you will only be recording exactly what happens.



## 2. What to Record

- Health – record all injuries (no matter how minor), illnesses, medical appointments (including those cancelled) and any medication given. Please note that in the case of accidents there is also a second form to complete, where you should also record the date and name of the worker you have advised.
- School/nursery/educational setting - any important conversations you have with school, open evenings, exclusions, concerns and achievements.
- Family time – record dates, times and duration, with whom and significant observations (both before, during and after). Also include the date and name of the worker you have contacted in relation to any issues noted.
- The child's contact with their Social Worker and any other professionals or adults, record date, times and duration of visit. Also note any cancelled visits
- Finance-for example: pocket money/clothing, money given to young person
- Meetings-attendance at and any issues/concerns, contact from the Fostering Service to be included here
- Any periods of short breaks or day care or absences from Foster Carers Home (all child's significant absences, including overnight stays, overnight school trips, absconding etc. Record leaving /returning times. For missing record when reported and to whom and also complete missing form.
- Episodes where child/young person has put themselves or others at risk and action taken. This would include threats of allegations, actual allegations and use of restraint
- Record any other significant incidents not detailed above, or areas of concern or progress or to be noted.

## 3. Records - the Child/Young Person

---

When a child/young person is placed with you, the child's Social Worker will give you:

- Care Plan
- Chronology
- Referral for placement
- Minutes from any reviews or care team meetings

If there are any further reviews about the child/young person's progress you should always seek their views, wishes and feelings before the meeting so that you can advocate on their behalf. You should attend the review and receive copies of the minutes. Copies of all these documents should be kept as part of the child's records.

## 4. Personal Information

All records, irrespective of whether they are paper or electronic, should be securely kept; electronic messaging (e.g. emails) should also be sent in a secure and safe way so as to preserve their confidential and professional nature. If using emails, please only use the child's initials so as they are not identifiable should someone else read the message.

You may need to share limited information with close family members and your own children, depending on their age and understanding. If you are unsure about how much to share, ask the child's Social Worker.

You can share basic information with Doctors; Health Visitors etc, but if they need further information that you are unsure whether you can share, give them the Social Worker's contact details. If professionals visit the child/young person at home, you should ask to see their identification card.

## 5. Foster Carer Records

---

The Fostering Service will keep a record of any meetings that take place with you, key discussions, any allegations and training and development records.

All supervisory visits will be recorded, and you will receive a copy to keep for your records.

These will be kept for at least 10 years after the date that your approval was terminated.

**North Tyneside Council  
Fostering Service  
Foster Carers Recording**

Name of Child \_\_\_\_\_ Foster Carer \_\_\_\_\_

Date	Recording

Signature of Foster Carer: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Supervising Social Worker \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**North Tyneside Council  
Fostering Service  
Foster Carers Recording**

Name of Child \_\_\_\_\_ Foster Carer \_\_\_\_\_

Date	Recording

Signature of Foster Carer: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Supervising Social Worker \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

# Working with Families and other Professionals

## 1. Introduction

---

As a Foster Carer you have an important role to play in the lives of children you care for and their family.

Where possible the child's parents or other relatives may visit them in your home. However, where this is not possible the child's Social Worker will make alternative arrangements and all family time arrangements will be set out in the child's care plan.

It is important that you develop an open and honest relationship with parents, so that they can be reassured that their child is the most important person, and their well-being is being looked after by you.

This will be a difficult time for parents and other family members, so you need to ensure you work sensitively with them. Equally, this will also be difficult for the children and young people who are living apart from their families. It is important that you never speak about any member of their family in a negative way.

During your time as a Foster Carer, you will also work alongside many other professionals, such as education, health, etc as part of a team around the child/young person that makes sure their needs are met and they are safe from harm.

## 2. The Child/Young Person's Social Worker

---

Each child or young person who comes to live with you will have an allocated Social Worker. It is important to note that Social Workers always work with the whole family, not just the child/ren, and they must always be mindful of the parents' wishes and feelings as they continue to hold parental responsibility for their child/ren. Given this, parents will always be consulted about their child's care plan and included in day to day arrangements for their child.

The child's Social Worker should keep you informed about the progress of the plan for the child/ren and any changes of plan or direction.

Their role is to:

- Assess the needs of a child.
- Develop a relationship with the child.
- Agree a plan for the child and regularly review that plan.
- Work with you, the child and the child's family.

- Share information with you and the child's parents.
- Identify and obtain resources so that the child's needs are met.
- Visit the child at your home every week from when the child/ren came to live with you until their first review. After this they will visit the child every four weeks (or in line with the Care Plan if this is different).

On occasion it may be problematic to contact a professional who is working with you or the child/ren. Should this happen it is important that we try and resolve this as quickly as possible, therefore please contact your Supervising Social Worker so that they can work with you to try and resolve this.

### 3. Education

Each school will have a Designated Teacher for Children in Care, who is responsible for co-ordinating the policies and procedures for the school and their role in relation to children living outside of their parent's care. A representative from the school will attend meetings in respect of the child.

While the child/ren are living with you it is your responsibility to work with their school or educational setting to ensure that they are working to the best of their ability, supporting them to reach their potential. To support with this the school will help to co-ordinate a Personal Education Plan for each child along with yourself and the child's Social Worker to ensure that they have the correct support in place.

### 4. The Independent Reviewing Officer

---

Each child or young person placed in Foster Care will have an Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO). The IRO will meet the child before the first review.

The IRO has two roles: chairing a child's review and monitoring a child's case on an on-going basis.

### 5. Guardian Ad Litem

---

A Guardian is appointed by the court from CAFCASS (Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service) when they want an independent view of what has been happening and what should happen in the child's life. They may also be involved in adoption proceedings.

You should support children to share their views particularly regarding their future although it is important that you share your views with your supervising social worker. The child should be supported to spend time with the Guardian appointed by the court so that the Guardian can tell the child's story in court where the child is not able to do this themselves.

## 6. Independent Visitor

---

The Local Authority looking after a child has a duty to appoint a person to be the child's Independent Visitor where it appears to them that it would be in the child's best interests to do so. The Independent Visitor will have a duty to make regular visits to the child and maintain other contact, by telephone and letter as appropriate.

Independent Visitors are particularly important where children have no contact with any member of their family.

The main purpose of the visits and contacts will be to befriend the child and give advice and assistance as appropriate.

For more information on the North Tyneside Council's Independent Visitors Scheme please [click here](#).

## 7. Advocate

---

This is a person appointed to speak on behalf of another person and/or to support them. All children who are in Local Authority Care should be given information about how to access an Advocate and the child's Independent Reviewing Officers should also make sure that this information is available to the child and assist the child to identify and appoint a suitable Advocate if appropriate.

In North Tyneside, the Advocacy Service can be contacted, details outlined [here](#).

## 8. Child Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)

---

The Child and Adolescent Health Service takes referrals for children in care. Some of these children due to their experiences may have higher levels of behavioural, emotional and mental health problems. Your role will be to highlight any issues of concern about a child/young person that may result in the need to refer to this service. The referral will be made by the child's Social Worker. If the service is needed, you should make sure appointments are kept and work with professionals from the service.

## 9. Designated Nurse for children in care.

You will work alongside the Designated Nurse and other health professionals to make sure the health needs of children in your care are met.

## 10. Emergency Duty Team (EDT)

---

The EDT service is open at night and at weekends. They operate a call service and will respond to you as soon as possible. If no one is available when you ring, leave a message. You must contact the police first if you feel you, your family or child in care are in any danger and don't wait for EDT. Outside of office hours, on weekends and public holidays contact the EDT on 03303337475.

## 11. 24-hour Foster Carer Helpline

---

A 24-hour Foster Carer helpline is available to contact this ring the EDT number 03303337475 and ask to speak to the Fostering Social Worker on call.

## 12. Adoption Team

---

The Adoption Team is responsible for finding adoptive families for children who cannot remain with their birth families. They will look at the child's background, health and any special needs and find the right adoptive family. When the adoptive family is linked with a child, they have a period of introductions before the child goes to live with them. You will play an important role in supporting the child through this time and introductions. It is important that the child sees you working alongside the adoptive parents. You can also give valuable advice and support to the adoptive parents who will be feeling anxious about getting it right. Your Supervising Social Worker will guide you through this and should be contacted if you have any concerns.



# Support Groups for Foster Carers

Attending groups and meeting with other Foster Carers can be a good way of sharing experiences and provides an opportunity to talk about what's working well, what is working not so well and what needs to change.

**Local support groups for Foster Carers** exist across the region, please contact us for further information about any of the support groups listed below;

- **Social work led support groups.** These groups are led by a social worker and meet monthly in various locations across North Tyneside.
- **Foster carer led support group.** Some foster carers organize these groups independently of the team, groups meet monthly in various locations across North Tyneside.
- **Children who foster group.** This group meets every six weeks and it is aimed at children aged 6-18 who are family members of foster carers, this could be your own children, nieces, nephews, and or grandchildren.
- **Teenage support group.** The group meets monthly and is to support foster carers who care for teenagers.
- **Fostering committee events.** These events are held throughout the year and are offered by members of the fostering committee and are open to all carers.
- **Quarterly event.** This event is offered quarterly throughout the year and is attended by Fostering Team Managers. Guest speakers are also often arranged to attend, and the team at Employment Training Skills North also provide an opportunity for our carers to have free treatments and a pamper.

# 'On Hold' and Suspension

## POLICY AND PROCEDURE

### Contents

1. Definition of being on hold
2. On hold for personal circumstances
3. Suspended due to concerns

### Definition of being on hold

North Tyneside Fostering Service acknowledges that there may be reasons and/or circumstances which suggest that a Foster Carer should, for a time limited period, request to be put on hold and not be considered to care for future children. This means that the Foster Carer is removed from the vacancy list and put 'on hold'.

There can be several reasons why a Foster Carer may request to be placed 'on hold' which is different to a Foster Carer being under investigation and/ or suspended. This policy aims to elaborate on the two most common scenarios which are:

- 1) A Foster Carer asks to be put 'on hold' due to personal circumstances including:
  - Serious illness or a bereavement within the family
  - A change in family circumstances such as a relationship breakdown
  - An extended break from the fostering role following a transition for the child in their care
- 2) A Foster Carer is under investigation following an allegation and is suspended by the Fostering Service.

### On hold for personal circumstances

Foster Carers may request to be placed "on hold" due to personal circumstances. This policy identifies how this should be addressed within North Tyneside's Fostering Service.

When a Foster Carer identifies that they wish to go on hold, they should inform their Supervising Social Worker or the relevant Fostering Team Manager. Their Supervising Social Worker will then gather the details of the reason why they wish to be placed on hold and the likely length of time they anticipate needing to be on hold for. The Supervising Social Worker will then fill in the Foster Carers on hold proforma which will be held on the carers file and sent to the Foster Carers Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) for information purposes.

The Supervising Social Worker must also inform the Placement Duty Worker (PDW) that a Foster Carer is going on hold and the expected return date.

A Foster Carer will not receive their fostering fee for the duration of time they have placed themselves on hold as are not available to care for future children.

During the time a Foster Carer remains on hold, it is expected that:

- All training is kept up to date
- Unannounced visits will continue
- Supervisory visits will continue no less than every 12 weeks
- Foster Care Reviews will be held within their usual timescales.

Should the Fostering Service be concerned about a Foster Carer's lack of engagement during this time then it may be that an early Foster Care Review is held to consider the Foster Carers continued registration.

Should a Foster Carer have put themselves on hold due to health concerns then a health assessment will need to be undertaken. Depending on the outcome of the medical assessment, the Fostering Team Manager may decide that an early Foster Care Review is necessary to consider how any health implications will impact on a Foster Carers ability to care for future children.

Should a Foster Carer be on hold due to a change in family circumstances then a re-assessment will need to be undertaken to explore how this change in circumstances will impact on the family fostering future children. The outcome of this assessment will then be presented to a Foster Care Review.

In any circumstances of a Foster Care Review needing to take place, following a Foster Carer being on hold, the outcome of the Foster Care Review alongside all reports will then be presented to the next available Fostering Panel. The Fostering Panel will then give a recommendation as to the families continued suitability to foster to the Agency Decision Maker (ADM).

Until the outcome of the ADM has been returned a Foster Carer will remain on hold.

## Suspended by the Fostering Service

When an allegation or serious complaint is made against a Foster Carer or a member of the fostering household, if it is felt that the allegation is significant and there are safeguarding concerns, it may be decided that a child cannot be placed in your care during the course of the subsequent investigation. On such occasions a Foster Carer may be suspended from their role and should this happen Foster Carers will be informed both verbally and in writing. During the time of the Foster Carers suspension a Foster Carer will continue to receive their fostering fee only.

North Tyneside Fostering Service takes any allegation or complaint seriously and will investigate thoroughly any allegation made. Please see the [allegations policy and flow chart](#) for further information on allegations.

Once an allegation made against the Foster Carer has been fully investigated and a recommendation has been reached by the Fostering Service in respect of the continued approval for the Foster Carers, a Foster Care Review will be held. The outcome of the Foster Care Review alongside all reports will then be presented to the next available Fostering Panel for a recommendation to the ADM as to the continued approval as Foster Carers. Should the Agency Decision Maker make the final decision (following any appeals) that a Foster Carer should be de-registered then the fee will stop at this point. Please see [terms of approval and appeals](#) for further information of this process.

Should the ADM decision be that the allegation is not upheld and recommends continued registration as Foster Carers, then Foster Carers will be placed back on the vacancy list, taking into account any changes of terms of approval (following any appeals).

Should a Foster Carer decide to resign during the time they are suspended from fostering then their fee will end 28 days from the date of their resignation. Please note however, that it may be that a Foster Care Review still goes ahead during the 28 days resignation period. The decision about a Foster Care Review is made by the IRO and Fostering Team Manager.