

# Induction for Foster Carers Guidance

It is important that foster carers receive the support and supervision they need in order to provide good care for the children and young people who are placed with them. The giving of information starts at the pre-approval stage when carers are provided training. As part of the assessment they also undertake tasks that help them to prepare for the job they are about to embark upon e.g. safer caring policy. It is crucial that this support, guidance and information giving continues after approval and throughout their career. The guidance in this document is for the induction of new carers who have been approved or who are temporarily approved as foster carers.

The National Minimum Standards for Fostering state:

- All new foster carers receive an induction
- All foster carers, including all members of a household who are approved foster carers, are supported to achieve the Training, Support and Development Standards for Foster Care. Short break carers who are approved foster carers are supported to achieve the Training Support & Development Standards for Short Break Carers. Family and friends foster carers are supported to achieve the Training, Support and Development Standards for Family and Friends Foster Carers.
- On approval, foster carers are given information, either a handbook or electronic resources, which cover policies, procedures (including with regard to allegations), guidance, financial information, legal information and insurance details. This information is updated regularly.

## **The first six weeks after approval (or temporary approval)**

Within the first six weeks of being approved foster carers should meet with their supervising social worker and be provided with the following. Ideally this meeting should take place prior to any children or young people being placed. This induction includes the areas outlined below:

- All foster carers should be provided with or know how to access the foster carer handbook and relevant policies and procedures (Available via <http://telfordchildcare.proceduresonline.com/contents.html> )
- Ensure the welcome email has been received by the foster carers
- Ensure that foster carers have the secure and lockable place where they can store confidential information

- SSW to discuss with the foster carer the expectation regarding recordings for children placed with the family, recording medication and completion of incident forms.
- SSW to go through the Foster Carer Agreement with the carers and ensure that this is understood and signed
- Provide carers with copies of the expense claims forms and talk to them about how and when these should be completed
- Complete the supervision agreement, discuss with the carers the purpose of supervision, how this will be recorded and agree future supervision dates
- Ensure that carers are aware of the Statement of Purpose and how they can access this
- Discuss with carers what to expect regarding information about a child and check that they know what information they should be asking for when considering a placement
- Ensure that the foster carer understands the purpose of the statutory reviews for children looked after and their role within this
- Provide carers with a copy of the Children's Guide for all ages of children
- Ensure that the carers have access to the current foster carer training programme
- Complete the Personal Development Plan for each carer
- Ensure the carers profile on OLLIE has changed from pre-approved status (unless temporary approval) and the Supervising Social Worker is allocated as the manager on OLLIE.
- Ensure that the foster carers have the appropriate TSDS (Training, Support and Development Standards) induction workbook. This should have been provided during the assessment stage (unless temporary approval). SSW to discuss with the foster carer a strategy as to how the foster carer(s) will be able to gain the knowledge and experience to enable them to evidence the workbook. For carers who are not temporarily approved it is also advisable to check that they have received the cross referencing grid linking the assessment process with the Training, Support and Development Standards (TSDS) so this can contribute to their workbook. Those who are temporary approved should receive this when their assessment has been completed. The Training Support and Development Standards which should be completed within 12 months ( or 18 months if Family and Friends Carers) of approval.

- Inform the carers that they will be given membership with The Fostering Network and ensure that the process for them to become members is completed and they have the relevant contact details.
- Ensure that the carers are aware of the Telford & Wrekin's Foster Carer Association and contact numbers and email addresses are provided.
- Ensure that the carers have the relevant telephone numbers of the Supervising Social Worker and a copy of the Out of Hours Support guidance.
- Provide the carer with the Who's Who in the fostering team document.
- Ensure that the foster carers are aware of the complaints procedure for themselves as well as the 'have your say' procedures for any comments, compliments or complaints for children and young people.
- Identify an appropriate experienced carer to be the carers buddy or mentor.
- Provide carers with the information about support groups and how they might access these.
- Arrange for ID cards for the carers to be completed.
- A discussion should be held with the carers in regards to the Guide to Payments and ensure their understanding.
- A discussion should be held on the expectations around requesting respite.
- A visit should be arranged for the Placements Officer to meet the foster carers and hold a discussion around placements (mainstream only).
- A discussion should be held with the foster carer around different roles of professionals with support of the Who's Who document

The completion of the induction should be recorded on Protocol and the checklist attached to the case note, including the dates of the visits completed and the carers' signature.

Any outstanding actions from the above list should be clearly recorded in the supervision record and monitored to ensure that they are all completed.

