

# Learning / Training and Development of Foster Carers

## RELATED PROCEDURES.

### Foster Care Training Manual

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#### 1. Introduction

Telford and Wrekin Council Fostering Team require all Foster Carers to undertake personal development training to ensure that they are able to meet the needs of the children and young people placed in their care.

##### 1.1 What is Foster Carers' engagement and participation in training linked to?

There are a number of Fostering Standards and Regulations requirements that are linked to a Foster Carer's attendance and participation in their Personal Development Plan. These are.

- The national minimum standards for fostering.
- The training support and development standards,
- Telford and Wrekin fostering fees (post approval)
- Foster Care Agreements
- Individual children's care plan
- Foster Home Reviews
- A Foster Carer's contribution and compliance with the care plan for the Children and Young People placed in their care
- A Foster Carer's individual Personal Development Plan
- A Foster Carer's attendance and participation in supervision with their Supervising Social Worker – which will address a Foster Carer's training and learning development needs

##### 1.2 Foster Carers professional development / training

Foster Carers' engagement and participation in training and development is integral to enabling carers to meet the specific needs of children and young people placed within the foster family.

Training also provides guidance and reassurance to Foster Carers in relation to Telford and Wrekin's own policies, procedures and practices and this reduces the risk of Foster Carers pursuing an action which may be at odds with our specific requirements of Foster Carers in relation to the care plan for the specific child/young person placed with them.

## **Training requirements**

### **2.1 Pre-Approval**

All new prospective Foster Carer applicants are required to attend our Skills to Foster Training and the identified pre approval training as in the Foster Carer Training Manual. A Foster Carer's participation and engagement in the Skills to Foster sessions will be referred to in their Form F/Form C Assessment which will be considered by the Telford and Wrekin Fostering Panel. The Skills to Foster Training sessions are mandatory.

Prospective Foster Carers will need to ensure they make arrangements to attend the Skills to Foster training. Failure to attend and participate in Skills to Foster Training will be commented upon within their Form C and Form F Assessment Report which is presented to the Telford and Wrekin Fostering Panel who will discuss and make a recommendation whether they should be approved as a Foster Carer.

### **2.2 Post-approval Training**

All approved Foster Carers are required to attend post approval training.

The national requirement for newly approved Foster Carers requires carers to complete the Training Support and Development Standards (TSD's) within 12 months for Mainstream approved carers, and 18 months for Connected Persons Approved Foster Carers.

The Training Support and Development Standards are mandatory and can be started following the Skills to Foster training. Approved Foster Carers will be provided with specific time scales in which to complete their Training Support and Development Standards. In addition to the Training Support and Development Standards there are mandatory training courses that should be completed within the first twelve months of approval. Please see the Foster Carer Training Manual for details.

The Foster Carer engagement and participation within their initial 12 months of approval will be reported to the Telford and Wrekin Fostering Panel as per regulations in regards to a Foster Carer's first review. Subsequent reviews will be completed by the Foster Reviewing Officer.

Following a Foster Carer's first foster home review and completion of the Training Support and Development Standards, we will consult with their Supervising Social Worker and the fostering manager, to recommend progression to level 2 fees.

### **2.3 Ongoing Training**

When a Foster Carer has completed their Personal Development Plan during their first year a further Personal Development Plan will be developed for the next 12 months.

If a Foster Carer has not completed their Personal Development Plan, dependent upon their specific circumstances, discussion/meetings will take place concerning meeting their training and development needs for the next 12 months. If a Foster Carer has failed to comply with the training and development required, a non-compliance process will be implemented (see section 2.4).

The requirements for all approved Foster Carers after their first year of fostering with Telford and Wrekin Council is that they complete six Training and Development Activities as a minimum requirement. The Training and Development required will arise from review of previous Personal Development Plan, Fostering Standard, the child/young person's care plan, Supervisions, Foster Home Reviews, Cause for Concern meetings and recommendations made by the Telford and Wrekin Fostering Panel and Agency Decision Maker.

Foster Carers will be required to evidence how they have met the six (if a two carer household) or four (if a single carer) specific training and development tasks identified for the children they care for. Two of the Training and Development Activities must involve group training. For a two carer household each carer should complete a minimum of two pieces of training.

Training available can be found on the Foster Carers Training Manual.

If the training requirements have been met during the reviewing year by the fostering household, then a training bonus of £100 will be paid.

## **2.4 Training requirements not met**

Failure to attend pre-approval or post approval training will be discussed with Foster Carers by their Assessing Social Worker/ Supervising Social Worker/ Senior Social Worker/ Team Manager and will be commented upon and recorded in any of the following documents: Supervision Records, Foster Home Review reports and assessment reports (Form C/ Form F assessment reports).

[The Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards 2011](#) (standard 20) requires Foster Carers to complete the Training, Support and Development Standards within 12 months (mainstream Foster Carers) or 18 months (connected Person Carers) of their approval. The fee will only progress to the next level if these are completed along with the minimum training requirements.

Following a Foster Carer's first year of fostering a training bonus will only be applied if they meet the training requirements as outlined in 2.3 of this policy, if the training requirements are not met then a recommendation may be made at the Foster Carers' foster home review to amend the fostering fee to a lower level. Support will be accessible to Foster Carers to assist them to achieve these minimum standards.

### **The process to address any concerns**

- In the first instance a discussion will take place in supervision between the assessing/Supervising Social Worker and the Foster Carer.
- Agreed timescales will be implemented and recorded in their supervision along with any support needs they may have that could be impacting upon them completing the training.
- Where this is a prospective Foster Carer who is being assessed, a meeting will take place to discuss the consequences of not attending preapproval training and the impact this will have on their assessment to become an approved Foster Carer.
- Where continued failure to attend/undertake training and development activity persists a Standards of Care meeting (formerly called a Cause for Concern meeting) will be

convened by the Team Manager and the Supervising Social Worker with the Approved Foster Carer/s. Foster Carers may choose to request the presence of the Fostering Network Advocate to attend this meeting.

- The Standards of Care meeting will address (if applicable) any noncompliance with their specific Personal Development Plan and set timescales to complete outstanding training and development requirements.
- This meeting will be minuted and a report detailing agreements and recommendation/actions will be submitted to the Telford and Wrekin Fostering Panel for information and consideration when considering their approval to become or continue to be an approved Foster Carer. Foster Carers will be invited to attend the Fostering Panel Meeting to discuss the reports submitted to the panel concerning their compliance with the Personal Development Plans.
- Should Foster Carer's failure to engage in training and development activity continue, an early Foster Home Review will be called which may result in specific targets and/or an action plan being developed with timescales, or a recommendation to the Telford and Wrekin Fostering Panel for the Foster Carer/s to be de-registered as an approved Foster Carer due to failure to comply with their Personal Development Plan and Fostering Minimum Standards.

### **3 Induction**

- Each Foster Carer will be allocated a Fostering Supervising Social Worker when approved by the Agency Decision Maker
- The Foster Carer's Skills to Foster training and development needs profile will be transferred to their allocated Fostering Supervising Social Worker.
- The Fostering Supervising Social Worker will meet with the Foster Carer/s within a maximum two weeks of their approval as a Foster Carer.
- The Foster Carer's Supervising Social Worker will discuss with them and provide specific items to them at their first meeting.
- Foster Carers will be provided with the following:
  - A lockable box to store confidential documents for the child/ren and or young people placed in their care and any other significant documents which require safe storage.
  - Information concerning confidentiality and data protection to ensure compliance in maintaining personal information.
  - Foster Care Agreement which sets out the expectations of Foster Carers and of the Fostering Service.
  - Arrangements for supervision and agree dates for supervision.
  - Key policies and procedures (and when to seek guidance from the supervising Fostering Social Worker).
  - Guidance on the use of recording, accident/incident and contact sheets.
  - Supervision Agreement
  - Personal Development Plan, identifying courses and dates for completion and ensure that the Foster Carer/s have access to Ollie (online learning), including the Training Support and Development Standards.
  - Information about the role of the Training Facilitator.

- Guidance on how to access Policies and Procedures on the Foster Carers' Website, the Foster Carer Handbook, the Statement of Purpose, the Guide to Payments for Foster Carers and the use of the Children's Guide.
- Information about the roles of the child's Social Worker, the Independent Reviewing Officer, the Foster Home Reviewing Officer, the Virtual School, the Children's Rights and Representations Officer and how to raise any concerns a Foster Carer may have
- Information about the complaints procedure for Telford and Wrekin
- Information about the role of the placement officer and the process of how placements are made

Once a Foster Carer's Induction is complete the Fostering Supervising Social Worker will record on the social care records the date they completed the induction and a brief summary of what was achieved as well as any ongoing training and development needs which will need to pursue in the next 12 months.

Foster Carers will receive a copy of their Personal Development Plan.

#### **4 National Minimum Standards Related to Foster Carers Continued Training and Development Activities**

\* For information and guidance please visit the [Department for Education site - National Standards for Foster Carers](#).

#### **STANDARD 20 - Learning and development of Foster Carers**

Outcome

- Foster Carers receive the training and development they need to carry out their role effectively.
- A clear framework of training and development is in place and this is used as the basis for assessing Foster Carers' performance and identifying their training and development needs.

Foster Carers will be required to maintain an ongoing Personal Development Plan portfolio which demonstrates how they are acquiring the skills required of them by the fostering service to meet the needs of children and young people placed in their care.

The Fostering Service has a dedicated officer who is able to provide support to Foster Carers. If Foster Carers would like their assistance they should discuss with their allocated Supervising Social Worker.

If a Foster Carer moves to a new fostering service, details of the development and training which he or she has undertaken, and of the extent to which the agreed training and development standards have been met, will be made available to the new fostering agency by a formal written request. This information will be included in their assessment concerning suitability of the Foster Carer.