

SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL
Children, Young People and
Families
Fostering Service

Skill Levels progression

**Foster
Sheffield's
Future**



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Foster carer payment for skills model

Introduction to the skills level model

Welcome to Sheffield City Fostering Service. This guide has been developed to help you through your journey in fostering.

The model is based upon the belief that foster carers should be paid as a result of their skills rather than the perceived needs of children placed with them. As you journey through your fostering career, you will develop your skills and experiences not only through the children you care for, but through your engagement with the services and attendance at training opportunities. What this means for you is that as a foster carer you can move up and down the scale dependant on applying the level of skill you have acquired and your ability to maintain or exceed this level.

Sheffield City Council Fostering Service has a **three level progression model**. You will generally start your journey as a new foster carer at skills level 1 following your pre-approval training, assessment and approval at fostering panel, congratulations.

In your first year of approval, you are required to complete the 'Training, Support and Development Standards' work manual, (TSDS). This forms the foundations of the knowledge and skills required by you in your fostering development. This is generally completed in your first year of registration as a foster carer but can be completed over 18 months following approval if necessary. This standard has been set up by the Government and it is the starting point in the skills level progression to level 2 and beyond.

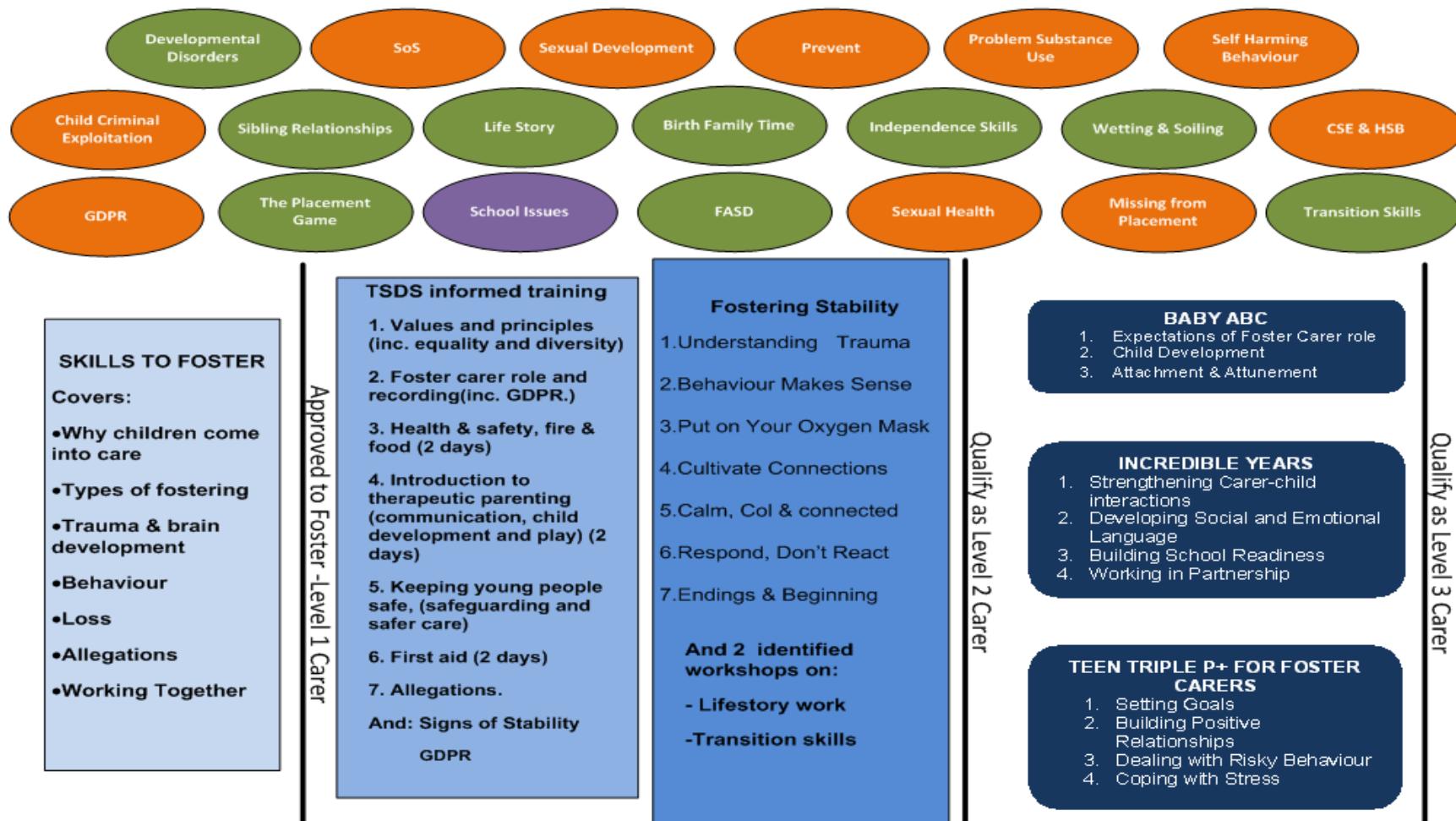
How you can progress through the skills level is set out in the following sections but includes training requirements, attendance at training, support groups and wider fostering community.

As part of your development, you should keep a log of evidence of training and with your social worker fostering (SWF), complete an annual learning and development plan. This will be reviewed as part of the foster carers annual review process.

In order to further evidence your learning and development, the fostering service has developed a Progression Report and with your social worker fostering, you will be expected to complete this so that your progression can be considered by the fostering service.

If you are a Kinship carer you will also be able to progress in the skills level progression scheme by demonstrating the evidence of training and development outlined in this document.

Sheffield City Council Foster Carer Training Model Dec 2019



Every 3 years all carers must update their 1st Aid training and provide evidence of recent training in the areas of **SAFEGUARDING**, **SCHOOL/EDUCATION ISSUES**, **GDPR (Data Protection)** and **THERAPEUTIC PARENTING**.

Safeguarding	Therapeutic Parenting	Schools & Education
GDPR	Introduction to Therapeutic Parenting	Your Role in Education
Keeping Children and Young People Safe	Fostering Stability	Reading Volunteers
Health & Safety, Fire & Food	Lifestory Work	
Foster Carer Roles & Recording	Transition Skills	
Paediatric First Aid	Developmental Disorders	
Allegations	Sibling Relationships	
Values & Principles (inc. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion)	The Placement Game	
Signs of Stability	Birth Family Time	
Child Criminal Exploitation	Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder	
GDPR	Autisms Awareness	
Sexual Development	Independence Skills	
Prevent	Wetting & Soiling	
Problem Substance Use	StartWell	
Self Harming Behaviour	Eating Difficulties	
Child Sexual Exploitation & Harmful Sexual Behaviour	Loss & Bereavement	
Sexual Health Needs of Children in Care	Baby ABC	
Missing from Placement	Incredible Years for Foster Carers	
	Teen Triple P for Foster Carers	

For Sheffield City Council foster carers, the training package is one which builds from pre-approval through to providing specialised, complex care.

Their first taste of training will be the Skills to Foster training which will familiarise them with the circumstances that bring children and young people into care and some of the behaviours and issues that they may see in caring for them.

For those that are approved and join the foster carer team as **Level 1** carers, the focus of training in their first 12 months will be the TSDS informed workshops. These relate directly to the National Minimum Standards and will help them to build evidence to complete their TSDS portfolio. In addition, all carers will complete Signs of Stability, a framework which underpins all Children, Young People and Family work in Sheffield City Council.

Carers wishing to progress to **Level 2** will then be required to complete the Fostering Stability Course, which goes into therapeutic parenting, emotional regulation and self-care in more depth. In addition the carers will need to complete two additional workshops. The first looks at Life Story Work. This will explore how, as a carer you preserve the child's past and present experiences in a way that enables them to process and develop a narrative. The second, is a Transition Skills workshop. This has been co-written and is co-delivered by a foster carer who is experienced in transitioning children from task to permanent care. The workshop looks at strategies to keep the child and their needs central whilst caring for yourself and your family.

Those **Level 2** carers then wishing to progress to **Level 3** will be required to complete an age specific training course appropriate to the children they care for. Each of these courses look at the emotional, physical and neurological changes that are taking place in the children and how trauma may affect their development and understanding of the world.

In addition to the mandatory training detailed above there will be ongoing workshops on a range of topics which all carers can attend. Carers may choose a workshop which feels appropriate to a child they have in placement or they may be directed by their fostering social worker towards a specific piece of training.

All carers at whatever level must renew their **Core Training** every 3 years. The Core are Paediatric 1st Aid, Safeguarding, School/Education Issues, GDPR (Data Protection) and Therapeutic Parenting. Whilst 1st Aid will be a direct repeat (updated) of the course they have previously done, it is necessary to maintain a current first aid

certificate. The other training however, can take the form of the optional workshops (in orange, green and purple on the attached chart).

Please note that training forms only a part of foster carer skills progression. Their FSW will be monitoring and discussing with them, how they are putting their learning into practice. The FSW will also be guiding them through the other elements of skills progression, so carers wishing to progress must discuss this with their FSW.

Entry requirement - Skills Level 1

Congratulations you are now an approved Sheffield City foster carer and are working towards completing the TSDS within the first year of your approval. Speak with your social worker fostering if you need any guidance or support in doing this.

You will have a learning and development plan which will be developed by the social worker fostering and yourself, to highlight your learning and training needs for the first year. You are expected to complete a log of the training and development as you achieve this.

You are expected to attend the induction support groups and/or other group sessions on a regular basis, for example, one of the many city wide support groups, open forum and service events.

You are also expected to keep accurate records in respect of children in your care

As a Skill Level One foster carer, you are expected to have completed the following minimum training and are able to demonstrate how this training has enhanced your fostering experience:

The TSDS informed training is:

- Values & Principles (including equality, diversity & inclusion).
- The Foster Carer Role & Recording
- Health & Safety, Fire and Food
- Introduction to Therapeutic Parenting
- Allegations against foster carers
- Keeping Children, Young People and Yourselves Safe
- Paediatric First Aid

We recognise that not all foster carers wish to progress to level 2 and as long as you can evidence your ongoing approval at this stage through engagement at support groups, and ongoing level 1 training you will not be expected to do so. If you remain at this level Core Training needs to be completed every 3 years. This includes renewing your First Aid qualification, and evidencing training on Safeguarding, School Issues, Therapeutic Parenting and GDPR. Your SWF will be able to help direct you towards appropriate additional training.

Skill Level 2

Skill Level 2 foster carers must comply with the level 1 expectation and tasks in addition to the following criteria.

Foster carers wishing to progress to skills level two will be expected to have completed an 'evidence of progression' report which should be shared with your social worker - fostering, approved by the Team Manager, and authorised by Fostering Service Manager. What is really important is that within the progression report you can demonstrate that you:

- Maintain an up to date log of the training and learning that you have undertaken. This will be provided to your social worker fostering as and when required (a minimum requirement is annually).
- Complete the 'Fostering Stability' therapeutic fostering course and 3 additional workshops:
 - School Issues
 - Life story Work
 - Transition Skills
- You will need to be able to evidence how the training and development has helped in meeting the needs of the children in your care. You can write about this in the progression report.
- You will also be expected to evidence that you are a proactive member of the fostering community. For example you should be able to show how you have been involved in **some** of the following:
 - Attended support groups, forums, fostering and children's service events
 - Worked with and supported other foster carers and built up your fostering networks.

- Assisted with or actively been involved in events to recruit other foster carers
- Promoted fostering within Sheffield City, e.g. supporting staff recruitment and training

You will be expected to maintain learning and development at skills level two and this will be reviewed as part of your annual review process and recorded in your individual learning and development plan in subsequent years. If you are struggling to maintain this standard, don't worry, your social worker fostering will work with you to devise a learning and development plan. This will address any development needs and how you can work towards meeting these over the following 6 months in order to maintain your skill level status. If for any reason you cannot maintain the current skill level after the 6 month period, your worker may recommend that you move down a skill level. This will not disqualify you from re-applying to progression when you are ready to do so.

We recognise that not all foster carers wish to progress and as long as you can evidence your ongoing approval at this stage through engagement at support groups, and ongoing level 2 training and meeting the therapeutic needs of children in your care, you will not be expected to do so. If you remain at this level Core Training needs to be completed every 3 years. This includes renewing your First Aid qualification, and evidencing training on Safeguarding, GDPR, School Issues and Therapeutic Parenting. Your SWF will be able to help direct you towards appropriate additional training.

Foster carers that wish to progress to skill level 3 will discuss this with their social worker fostering , and this will be recorded in their personal development plan along with the training and development requirement that must be completed to evidence this skill level. Information about how to progress to skill level 3 is set out in the next section.

Skill Level 3

Skill Level 3 foster carers must have the time and availability to meet the following additional requirements.

Foster carers wishing to progress to skills level three will have been fostering for a minimum of 3 years and have consistently maintained the skills level required at both level 1 & 2.

You will be expected to complete an 'evidence of progression' report which should be shared with your social worker fostering, approved by the Team Manager, and authorised by Fostering Service Manager. What is really important is that within the progression report you can demonstrate that you have:

- Evidenced positive multi-agency working e.g. attendance at LAC reviews, meetings, communication with other professionals.
- An up to date individual learning and development plan. This will have been completed and agreed with the social worker fostering.
- Maintained an up to date log of the training and learning that you have undertaken. This will be provided to your social worker fostering as and when required (a minimum requirement is annually).
- Completed an enhanced age related course, e.g. Baby ABC, Incredible Years or Teen Triple P+ for Foster Carers (as is relevant to the age of the children in your care and are able to evidence how this has enabled you to care in a therapeutic way).
- Completed one additional current safeguarding training such as radicalisation, child criminal exploitation, child sexual exploitation, signs of stability, foetal alcohol Spectrum Disorder, etc)
- Been able to evidence positive multi-agency working, such as Aspire, working with MAPS, CAMHS, fostering psychologist, team around the child meetings, school etc.
- Attend and helped run support and training groups, **or**:
- Provided mentoring support to newly approve foster carers or other foster carers who require additional support and guidance. This can be formally, informally or through a 'buddying' relationship. This also involves attending bi-monthly mentor meetings, **or**:
- Assisted and been actively involved in events, for example the speed interviewing (SHU social worker recruitment process), or plan, organise and help facilitate children's events and parties, for example 'the Star' Awards, Christmas Party and Care Leavers events, etc.
- Promoted contact, and where it is safe to do so supervise contact in your own home.

Please note: To maintain skill level 3, you must continue to work towards the above standard each year.

To maintain your skill level you must:

- Ensure that they have an up to date DBS that is renewed every three years
- Have an up to date medical that is renewed every two years
- Ensure that the following 'Core Training' requirements are renewed at a minimum of every three years:
 - Education training/PEP
 - Paediatric First Aid
 - Safeguarding
 - Therapeutic Parenting
 - GDPR

Level 2 Skills Progression Report Foster Carer's Contribution

Name (main carer):	
Second carer	
Address:	
Date of Approval:	
Current Approval:	
Matching Preference:	

Information	Date Completed	Name of carer
Date TSD Standards workbook completed?		
Date Fostering Stability course completed?		
Date Paediatric First Aid completed?		
Date Education training element completed?		
Date Life Story Work completed?		
Date Safeguarding completed?		
Any other training completed:		

***if you are approved as a couple, please state if you did this training together or if not which carer attended training.**

Support group/ Fostering forum attendance		
Date:	Venue:	Support group/ fostering forum
How this has supported you as a carer?		

	Please outline what has been your greatest achievement/ reward in your role of foster carer looking after Sheffield Children in Care.
	How has your training and development helped you achieve this
	Please give 3 examples to demonstrate how you have put your learning and development opportunities into practice in caring for the child/ren you are/ have looked after?
	Please give 3 examples of how you have met the needs of the children you have care for?
	Please give 3 examples that demonstrate good multi-agency working with other professionals, parents or agencies or other relevant professionals that evidences how you can work to the child's care plan.
	Please give an example of how you have been actively involved with recruitment activity or other events, supported another carer helped the service to promote fostering.

Date:	
Social Worker Fostering comments:	
Signature:	
Date:	
Team Managers comments	
Signature:	
Date:	
Service Managers Comments:	
Signature:	
Date:	

Level 3 Skills Progression Report Foster Carers' Contribution

Name (main carer):	
Second carer	
Address:	
Date of Approval:	
Current Approval:	
Matching Preference:	

Information	Date Completed	Name of carer
Date TSD Standards workbook completed?		
Date Fostering Stability course completed?		
Date enhanced age related course completed, (e.g. either Baby ABC, Incredible Years, or Teen Triple P+)		
Date Paediatric First Aid completed?		
Date Education training element completed?		
Date Life Story Work completed?		
Date Safeguarding completed?		
Date of one further current safeguarding training such as radicalisation, child criminal exploitation, child sexual exploitation, signs of stability, foetal alcohol abuse etc)		
Name of training:		
Any other training completed:		

Training and development outlined in your current development plan		
Name of training	Date scheduled	Name of carer

***if you are approved as a couple, please state if you did this training together or if not which carer attended training.**

Support group/ Fostering forum attendance		
Date:	Venue:	Support group/ fostering forum
How this has supported you as a carer?		
<p>Please outline how you have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helped to run a support or training group, or • Active member of Voices, or • Provided mentoring to a newly approved foster carer or a carer who requires support or guidance either formally, informally or through a 'buddying' relationship, or • Been actively involved with recruitment activity to promote fostering, or • Assisted at and been actively involved in setting up or facilitating events, such as speed interviewing, children's events and parties, etc. 		
	Please outline what has been your greatest achievement/ reward in your role of foster carer looking after Sheffield Children in Care in the last year.	
	How has your training and development helped you achieve this	

	Give 3 examples to demonstrate how you have developed and maintained positive relationships with the children or young people in your care, particularly those whose development has been compromised due to their early life experiences.
	Please give an example for each of the following areas to demonstrate how you promote good outcomes for children in care: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children's health • Children's education • Emotional wellbeing • Helping children achieve • Developing or maintaining relationships
	Give 3 examples that demonstrate good multi-agency working with other professionals, parents or agencies or other relevant professionals that evidences how you can work to the child's care plan.
	Outline your understanding about why contact is important for children in care, and what ways you have helped to promote contact. Please outline if you promote contact in your home, where it is safe to do so.
	Why is it important to keep accurate records how do you achieve this as a foster carer?
	Describe how you positively represent and model the foster carer role within the foster carer community, across the city and with other professionals and agencies?

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Date:	
Social Worker Fostering comments:	
Signature:	
Date:	
Team Managers comments	
Signature:	
Date:	
Service Managers Comments:	
Signature:	
Date:	

Review of skill level - learning and development plan

This learning and development plan will be completed by the social worker – fostering with you in order to outline the training and development you need to evidence your current skills level. **This will be reviewed within 6 months of being completed**, and it is an expectation that all areas outlined are met in this timescale.

Name (main carer):	
Second carer	
Address:	
Date of Approval:	
Current Approval:	
Matching Preference:	

Information	Date Completed	Name of carer
Skill level 1 requirement		
TSD Standards workbook completed?		
Education/PEP (mandatory 3 yearly refresh)		
Paediatric First Aid (mandatory 3 yearly refresh)		
Safeguarding / safer care (mandatory 3 yearly refresh)		
Therapeutic parenting (mandatory 3 yearly refresh)		
Skill level 2 requirement		
Fostering Stability course completed?		
Life Story Work completed?		
Skill level 3 requirement		
Enhanced age related course completed, (e.g. either Baby ABC, Incredible Years, or Teen Triple P+)		
Date of one further current safeguarding training such as radicalisation, child criminal exploitation, child sexual exploitation, signs of stability, foetal alcohol abuse etc)		
Name of training:		
Additional recommended training requirement:		

***if you are approved as a couple, please state if you did this training together or if not which carer attended training.**

	Areas of practice not meeting the skill level- describe fully the gaps		
	Areas of practice not meeting the skills level – please describe the action plan required to meet this area of development.		
	Please outline the training required to maintain this skill level		
Training requirement	How will this be met?	Scheduled date of training	Date completed
Please describe how this training and action plan has supported you in maintaining your current skill level.			
SSW evaluation and recommendation			
Signature:			
Date:			
Signature:			

Date:	
Team Managers Comments:	
Signature:	
Date:	
Service Managers Comments:	
Signature:	
Date:	

Job Description of all Sheffield City Council Foster Carers

- 1.** To provide safe and consistent care to children and young people in the foster placement.
- 2.** To be able to work as part of a team within the Children, Young People & Families Service and other agencies and to work within the department's policies and procedures.
- 3.** To provide a safe, secure, stable and stimulating environment and provide a flexible response to the needs of the individual child or young person.
- 4.** To either help children and young people return to the care of their family, move to a permanent home or offer a long-term home into independence.
- 5.** For Short Breaks Carers, to work with the child or young person's carers to provide a short break which meets the needs of the child or young person receiving the provision.
- 6.** To be able to understand the impact of past events on the child's life and behaviour.
- 7.** To be able to contribute to any assessment being conducted and prepare the child for any subsequent move.
- 8.** To promote the health and wellbeing of children and young people and ensure health and safety standards are adhered to.
- 9.** To understand the importance of good attendance at school, encourage children to fulfil their potential and support their educational development.
- 10.** To provide an environment which encourages confidence, promotes a positive identity and respects diversity.
- 11.** To provide opportunities for children and young people to develop positive relationships with adults and other children and young people.

12. To provide an opportunity for children and young people to develop and learn new skills.
13. To work with children and young people with a disability to meet their specific needs, and to support them to overcome any barriers to maximise their potential.
14. To keep the child's social worker fully informed of events and developments in the child's life.
15. To understand the importance of the child's birth family and, where appropriate and in line with the Care Plan, participate in contact arrangements.
16. To work with their identified social worker fostering from the department in the planning and caring of the child or young person.
17. To attend court if required and give evidence in respect of the child or young person based on their experience of caring for them.
18. To participate in training as identified for all foster carers and from individual training needs.
19. To maintain a log (in the notebook) of key events in the child's life, collect photos and other personal possessions and objects, such as awards for achievements, to include in the child's life story or memory book.
20. To complete all required monitoring information, for example, information about illnesses and accidents, young people that go missing.
21. To provide written reports, both for their own Foster Carer Annual Review and the Statutory Review of the child.
22. To provide transport to schools if possible.
23. To provide transport for contact, if possible, or assist in arrangements.

24. To work in partnership with birth parents and families with an inclusive approach, for example, joint attendance at health appointments.
25. In line with the child's care plan, to facilitate some contact either in the foster home or elsewhere which on occasions may require the foster carer to supervise.
26. To have the ability to meet the needs of the children for which they are approved and can demonstrate that are able to meet the needs of children who exhibit challenging or distressed behaviour.
27. To participate and contribute positively to supervision with the allocated social worker fostering, acknowledging strengths and areas of development.
28. Be prepared to complete the Training, Support and Development Standards (TSDS).
29. A willingness and commitment to use and access the Foster Forum website.