

If any information in this document needs explaining or clarifying then contact the Family Placement Service on 01325 406120

Other contacts include:

The Family Rights Group

0808 8010366

[www.frg.org.uk/](http://www.frg.org.uk/)



Fostering Network

0800 04076675

[www.fosteringnet/](http://www.fosteringnet/)



Grandparents Plus

0300 1237015

[www.grandparentsplus.org.uk](http://www.grandparentsplus.org.uk)

The Relative Experience

**Relative Experience Project Office - Tel: 0191 2572504**

**Email: [relative.experience@gmail.com](mailto:relative.experience@gmail.com)**



## Darlington Children's Placement Service

### Information for parents and prospective Connected Persons Foster Carers

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## What is the fostering allowance? Continued...

Other benefits such as Job Seekers Allowance may be affected, but you must seek advice from the DWP (Department of Work and Pensions) or the Citizens Advice Bureau.

On occasions the Local Authority may have to share information with benefits agencies.

The fostering allowance will start from the date the child is placed with you. Payment will normally commence two weeks after the child is placed. You must provide your bank details so that a transfer can be made to you.

## What is the fostering allowance?



You will be paid a weekly fostering allowance for child you care for. This allowance will enable you to meet all of the child's needs including food, clothing, school dinners, and leisure activities.

If a child leaves your care the fostering allowance will cease and you will be liable for any overpayments. It is your duty to notify the Social Worker of any changes in the child's circumstances. You may wish to consider a separate bank account for the fostering allowance.

The amount of the allowance given depends on the age of the child.

Family and Friends (Connected Person) carers who receive the fostering allowance are not entitled to claim income support or child benefit for the child/young person in their care.

If you claim Income Support for yourself and your family, this will not be affected by being a Family and Friends (Connected Persons) Carer.

## What is a Connected Persons Foster Carer?

This is when a child/young person who is "looked after" by the Local Authority is placed outside of their parents care and is placed with a family member(s), a family friend or someone who knows the child well.

A child/young person is described as "looked after" if they are accommodated by the Local Authority under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989 or subject to a Care Order, issued by the Court.

## Who are Connected Persons Foster Carers?

Family and Friends (connected persons) carers can be:

Grandparents

Aunts and uncles

Adult brothers and sisters

Other family members

Friends of the family

Someone who has an important relationship with the child/young persons.



A person in the last category may be someone who knows the child in a professional capacity e.g. teacher, child minder or youth worker, although these are not exclusive categories

### Some questions to be considered by anyone thinking about becoming a Connected Persons Foster Carer:

- ◆ Does the child have an established relationship with you?
- ◆ Is there sufficient/appropriate space in the house for this particular child and their belongings?
- ◆ Smoking is not acceptable if the child is under 5 years.
- ◆ Your ability and overall capacity to care for the child will be considered and this will include an assessment of your health.
- ◆ Do you have sufficient practical support?
- ◆ Are there any financial constraints/debts?
- ◆ Does the prospective carer have good knowledge of the child?
- ◆ How many outside commitments do you have e.g. work, other caring commitments etc?



### What happens once I have been approved as a Family and Friends Foster carer?

Once it has been agreed by the Agency Decision Maker (ADM) that you are approved; you will be sent a letter telling you that you are approved as a Connected Persons Foster Carer. This letter will name the child/children you are approved to care for. The following will also take place:

You will be allocated a Social Worker who will provide you with support with guidance and regular supervision.

You will have monthly supervision and an annual Fostering Review which will be presented back to the Family Placement Panel for consideration.

#### Training requirements post approval

You will receive relevant training and development opportunities. which includes First Aid Training and TSD Standards (Training Support and Development Standards) which you must complete within 18 months of your approval

Additional training needs will be discussed in supervision and relevant courses will be identified.

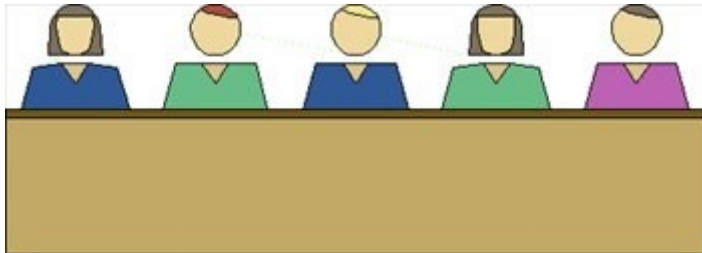


## What is the Assessment Process? Continued...

### Panel

The Darlington Family Placement Panel is made up of a range of independent people and advisors who make a recommendation about the approval of carers. This will be presented to the Agency Decision Maker (ADM) who will make a final decision in relation to your approval.

If you have not been recommended for approval by the ADM then a discussion will take place with your Supervising Social Worker as to what will happen next.



## How do I become a Foster Carer?



## Connected Persons Foster Carer?

If a child becomes 'Looked After' by Darlington Borough Council, the child/ young person's Social Worker will explore whether the child could be placed with his/her family or with someone well known to the child.

If a family member or friend wanted to care for the child a social worker would need to assess whether this was safe and suitable and in the best interests of the child.

In some situations a placement is needed immediately – and there will not be time to undertake a full assessment.

In these situations a parent may suggest you can care for a child and a social worker would undertake a brief assessment involving basic checks, including a Police National Computer check on all household members over 18 years. The social worker your home to assess your suitability and whether you have the space to accommodate the child.

This assessment is then presented to the Head of Service who may grant your temporary approval as a Connected Persons Foster Carer.

A full assessment will then take place.

## What is the Assessment Process?

The assessment process for Connected Persons Foster Carer includes the following:

You will be required to complete a Connected Persons Foster Carer application form.

After this you will be asked to have a full medical check with your GP. (This will be paid for by Darlington Borough Council.)

You will be asked to provide a referee from your family and two personal referees who are not related to you and who could comment on your suitability as a prospective carer.

Referees will also be interviewed by the social worker involved.

You and your members of your household of 18 years of age will be asked to provide relevant ID and agree to a full police check, referred to as a DBS being undertaken. Some offences will not necessarily stop your application but will have to be considered in the process.

The assessment will be undertaken with you by a qualified Family Placement Social Worker. This worker will support



## What is the Assessment Process? Continued...

### Timescale

The assessment must be completed within 16 weeks from the date the child has been placed with you and you will be provided with a date to attend the Family Placement Panel. Similarly for those prospective connected carers where a child has not been placed we would aim to complete the assessment in the same timescale. It is usual in both cases that a court process will also be taking place to decide upon plans for the child.

The Family Placement Social Worker will then prepare a report about you which will look at your family background, how you would care for the child and keep them safe.

During the assessment process you will be asked to attend a three day foster training course along with other Connected Persons Foster Carers and prospective Local Authority Foster Carers.

This usually takes place over three consecutive Saturdays. This offers training about your role as a foster care and expectations of you. It also provides the opportunity to meet others in similar situations to yourself and obtain information on what is going to happen and what may be expected of you in the future.

