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**Guidance for Placement Viability Assessment/Temporary Approval or immediate placement of a child under regulation 24 (Family and Friends Care/Connected Person)**

**Introduction**

Regulation 24 (The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010 states that a Local Authority can temporarily approve a connected person if they are satisfied that it is the most appropriate placement for the child and they are not already approved as a local authority foster carer. If it is necessary for a child to be placed with a connected person before they can be fully assessed in accordance with the Fostering Service Regulations, they may be temporarily approved for a period of 16 weeks, in order for a full assessment to be carried out, providing that the Local Authority:

* Assess the suitability of the connected person to care for the child
* Assess the suitability of the accommodation
* Assess the suitability of all other persons within the household who are aged 18 years or over
* Visit the home and collect as much information set out in Schedule 4 to the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010 (this is the assessment as laid out in Section 3 of the assessment tool), particular attention should be made to the quality of the relationship between the child and the connected person
* Discuss any criminal records of the proposed connected person
* Carry out any other checks felt appropriate to grant temporary approval.

**Who can be a connected person?**

A connected person can mean a relative, a friend of or another person connected to the child, e.g. a teacher, child-minder, etc. A relative means a grandparent, sibling, uncle or aunt or a step-parent.

**When can a Regulation 24 assessment be completed?**

Regulation 24 is intended to be used in *exceptional circumstances.*

The local authority must be satisfied that the placement is the most appropriate way to safeguard and promote the child’s welfare and that the placement can not wait until a full foster carer assessment can be completed.

*Statutory guidance clearly states that if there is no intention to undertake a full foster carer assessment, then it is not appropriate for temporary approval to be granted.*

**Viability assessment (Part 1 of the assessment tool)**

Where practical, a viability assessment should be completed for any potential connected persons to help assess the most appropriate plan for the child(ren). The information gathered can be used to inform the Regulation 24 temporary approval or as evidence in the Court arena to show that due care and consideration was made when considering family members that put themselves forward.

The viability assessment should be completed jointly with a representative from the Fostering Team to allow discussions to take place about the expectations of the connected person to work as part of the fostering service.

**Regulation 24 (Part 1 and 2 of the assessment tool)**

Temporary approval of a connected person can only be for a period of 16 weeks, this is to give the fostering service time to complete a full foster carer assessment for the placement to be on-going.

Temporary approval must be granted prior to the child(ren) being placed.

A connected person must understand the role of a foster carer, as they will be treated as a foster carer in every respect, other than the temporary nature of their approval. A foster carer’s agreement must be signed at the start of the placement, as they will be expected to work as part of the fostering service. They will be entitled to the same support package as all other foster carers.

When placed, the child(ren) will be given a Looked After status and the requirements of care planning and placement planning will remain, this includes the requirements for Child Looked After reviews and the child(ren)’s IRO needs to be informed.

**Flow chart of procedure for a child to be placed with Family and Friends Care/Connected Person**

Child needing a placement

Children’s team identify potential connected persons in relation to the child.

Viability Assessment **(Part 1 of assessment tool)** carried out jointly with Fostering Social Worker:  Sections 1 & 2 to be completed by child’s social worker. Section 3 to be completed by FSW Section 4 to be completed by both Section 5 to make recommendation to management

Not recommended

Carer to be informed

Placement recommended

**NFA**

Child’s social worker to complete Part 2 – the regulation 24 assessment, with recommendation and signed to pass on to the manager

If temporary approval not recommended - **NFA**

If recommended – Child’s social worker to complete Part 3 checklist, sign and get manager signature

Fostering Team to be notified of potential assessment required

Head of Service to authorise temporary approval of connected persons for 16 weeks

The carers will be approved for a period of 16 weeks as connected person for the named children.

A refer on to the Fostering Team for allocation to a social worker to undertake a full foster carer assessment must be completed before the end of the 16th week and presented to an appropriate Fostering Panel for full approval.