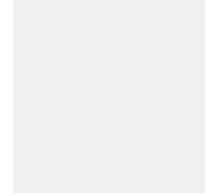


## Back Up Foster Carers



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### 1. Definition of Back-up Carer

This is a person or persons identified by a foster carer (either during the assessment process or when acting as an approved foster carer), who will care for the children placed with these carers, for periods ranging from a weekend (two overnight stays) or longer periods of one up to four week. The respite can take place either within the main carers home or the back-up carers home.

### 2. Format of the Assessment

If the back-up carer is a member of the main carers household, then the information should be included in the main carer's Form F assessment. If they are being assessed at the same time as the foster carers the information in relation to their potential to act as back-up carers should be included in the main carers Form F. If the assessment occurs at a later point in time, the a separate report should be included and submitted as an addendum to their form F.

If the back up carer is not a member of the main carers household, then a separate assessment report is to be completed, comprising part 1 of an F1 and a descriptive report, covering the areas identified in Appendix 1 of that form

### 3. Process

- i. All back-up carers should complete an application form which will give their agreement to all the necessary checks being undertaken.
- ii. The assessment will be undertaken by either the assessing social worker (during main carer's assessment) or by the link workers once the carers are approved.

- iii. The assessment is completed according to the guidelines outline in Appendix 1 of that form.
- iv. Once the assessment report is completed, the carers should read it (except for confidential references) and sign it.
- v. The assessment report should be presented to the Fostering Panel for consideration and recommendation the **Designated Manager (Foster Carer Approval)**
- vi. They will be approved as foster carers, acting in a back-up capacity for named foster carers.
- vii. They will be reviewed at the same time as the main carers and a report presented to the Fostering Panel or the Review & Skill Level Board (see **Annual Review and Termination of Approval of Foster Carer Procedure**) at the same time as the main carer's review, for their re-approval as back-up carers to be considered.
- viii. Once approved the carers will sign the foster care agreement
- ix. Whilst undertaking the respite they will be supported by the main carers link worker.
- x. The placement will be a placement with carers under the departmental policies and procedures and as such a pre or post placement meeting will be held, LAC paperwork completed and the foster placement agreement drawn up and signed.
- xi. Back-up carers should be offered the opportunity to attend training support groups etc.

#### **4. Guidance Notes**

1. Applicants to complete application form in order to give consent for statutory checks.  
WSS302
2. Statutory checks
  - i. Disclosure and Barring Service
  - i. Medical
  - i. Children's Services
  - i. NSPCC
  - i. 2 x personal references non family – by telephone – if necessary preferably interviewed
3. Assessment report
  - i. Complete part 1 of the form F1
  - ii. For part 11 of the assessment, the following areas need to be covered

- a. Reasons for considering these applicants as back-up respite carers for these carers  
i.e. Relationship with carers and their relationship with children placed with these carer's expectations
- b. Where is the respite to take place – at the carer's home. A health/safety risk assessment must be completed if it is in the back-up carer's home.
- c. Individual profile – very brief details on family structure, employment, personality etc.
- d. Support Networks - draw ecomap, what additional support will they need from the agency.
- e. Children in the Household – brief detail, how they have related in the past to children placed with the foster carers, how will they adjust/cope. Safe caring issues.
- f. Any other adult members of the household
- g. Description of family lifestyle – how appropriate is this in relation to the needs of the children to be placed.
- h. Parenting capacity
  - Understanding of children's history/background
  - Understanding of children's behaviours
  - Behaviour management – how will they implement appropriate boundaries/discipline for children placed (aware of non-uses of corporal punishment)
  - Education Needs
  - Health
  - Contact
- i. Child Protection issues
  - Aware of child protection issues generally
  - Safe caring – understood and practiced
  - (ensure they have a copy of Fostering Network booklet, "Safer Caring").
- j. Conclusion and recommendations

These carers will have to be considered for numbers, ages etc. of carers for whom they are to be back-up carers, with same matching considerations.