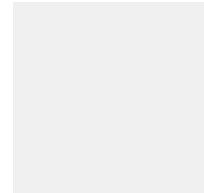


Foster Carer Reviews



RELATED CHAPTER

To be read in conjunction with procedures in **Annual Review and Termination of Approval of Foster Carers Procedure**

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1. Context

The suitability of foster carers should be reviewed within one year of approval and at intervals of not more than one year thereafter.

In Walsall a dedicated post has been created for the purpose of chairing all of the foster carer reviews. The Coordinator (Foster Carer Reviews) is based at the Review and Child Protection Unit, The Hollies.

2. Aims of the Review

- To determine whether or not the carer(s) remain suitable to continue to carry out the responsibilities of fostering children/ young people;
- To establish if the fostering household continues to be a suitable environment in which the welfare of children and young people placed will be safeguarded and promoted; with particular regard to anti-oppressive practice and corporate parenting expectations in respect of health, education and placement stability;
- To update statutory checks and enquiries;
- To seek on-going improvements to the service through consultation with foster carers, children, birth parents and those people who have been involved with the children and young people placed with the foster carer(s) over the review period;
- To develop an action plan for future training, development and support needs;
- To make recommendations for skill level progression, and the terms and conditions under which approval is sought.

3. Statutory and Precautionary Enquiries

Police Checks are now obtained via the Disclosure and Barring Service and include Police DHSC and DfE checks; these must be renewed every 3 years for all approved foster carers, all members of the fostering household aged 16 years and above and for regular visitors to the household (unless they have subscribed to the [Disclosure and Barring Service Update Service](#)). Enhanced Disclosures are required in all circumstances.

Local Authority, Probation/CAFCASS and NSPCC checks in relation to foster carers will be renewed every 3 years.

A foster home must be inspected annually to make sure that it meets the needs of the foster children. The Coordinator (Foster Care Reviews) will inspect the accommodation at the time of the review.

The review will also confirm the date of, or the requirement for, unannounced visits (at least one each year).

Walsall M.B.C Health and Safety Assessment report must be renewed annually, and copy attached to the review documentation.

Issues emerging from the updating or completion of statutory checks / enquiries should be fully covered within the formal review process.

CoramBAAF Form AH (2000), or the predecessor document BAFF Adult 1 Form, will have been completed for all foster carers. CoramBAAF Form Adult AH2 (Adult 2) (2001) provides an update to information available within the CoramBAAF Form AH/CoramBAAF Adult 1. The Form AH2 should be completed by an approved foster carer's GP every 2 years.

The emergence of significant health issues for foster carers may, at any time, warrant a request for a full medical and a dedicated foster carer review to be undertaken in order to establish any implications in respect of the fostering role.

All completed update medical reports in relation to existing foster carers must be made available to the agency medical adviser for her/his comments.

Issues arising from update medical reports need to be discussed within the foster carer review.

4. The Role of the Agency Fostering Panel and the Review and Skills Level Board

See the following Chapters:

[The Fostering Panel Procedure](#)

[Fostering Allowance Guidance](#)

The role and function of the Fostering Panel and the Review and Skills Level Board in relation to foster carer reviews can be found in the [Annual Review and Termination of Approval of Foster Carers Procedure](#).

In summary, foster carer reviews are completed not more than a year after initial approval, and:

- When there has been a very serious or significant incident or event in the life of a foster family which raises questions about suitability to foster and/or their capacity to provide appropriate care for fostered children/ young people;
- Following a serious complaint and/or allegation of abuse in relation to a foster family;
- Requests for a significant change in the terms of approval that appears inconsistent with the carers' development;
- In any circumstance where a variation, or exemption to the normal fostering limit has been granted and continues beyond a six week period.

The first foster carer review will normally take place not later than 6 months following the initial approval of the agency foster panel; this review must be presented to the agency foster panel, as will all of those reviews that are carried out consequent of one or more of the reasons listed above.

Any review which concludes with a recommendation for de-registration must also be presented to the foster panel.

Routine non contentious reviews, and those where there have been no significant changes will be considered by the Review and Skill Level Board.

5. The Foster Carer Review Process: First and Subsequent Annual Reviews

All foster carer reviews are conducted from a basis of transparency and openness. All of the reports compiled for the review will be shared with foster carers as a matter of course.

There may be rare instances (usually following serious allegations/ complaints) where 'third party' information has to be withheld and this will be indicated in the report.

All foster carer reviews will be chaired by the designated officer for this role, namely the Coordinator (Foster Carer Reviews). The Coordinator post is independent of the Family Placement Service in terms of team/ office location, team management and foster carer assessment and supervisory responsibilities.

Written reports for foster carer reviews are obtained from:

- The foster carer(s);
- The sons and daughters of foster carers who share their home with fostered children and young people;
- Any child or young person who is or has been placed with the foster family during the period under review;
- The birth parents of any child/young person who is or has been placed with the foster carer(s) during the period under review;
- The placing Social Worker(s) (and Outreach Worker, where relevant), for the children/young people;
- The link supervising Social Worker for the foster carer;
- The Review and Child Protection Coordinator responsible for chairing the independent reviews for any children or young people who are/ have been placed with the foster carer(s).

The Coordinator (Foster Carer Reviews) will provide the summary report and recommendations for the panel / board.

6. Competences

In completing foster carer reviews there will be an emphasis on the competences identified within the CoramBAAF Form F1 (CoramBAAF 2000) assessment framework for prospective foster carers. Many existing Walsall approved carers have been approved and assessed with these competences in

mind; on – going supervision, pre / post approval training and skills level assessments are linked to these competence elements. When conducting the review's the competences at the time of approval should be referred to and an on-going evaluation and appraisal of the foster carer against those competences should be completed.

For the purpose of obtaining written relevant contributions to foster carer reviews, the competences have been integrated into some key documents and detailed information about the competences is appended to these.

7. Database

- The Coordinator (FCR) is responsible for maintaining an up-to-date data base of information relevant to the foster carer review process. The current data base includes the following details;
- Review due date;
- Statutory checks by due date for all carers and the relevant extended family and friends;
- Health update reports by due date;
- Health and Safety risk assessments by due date;
- The date of the last unannounced visit;
- The availability of a Personal Computer for use by fostered children.

8. Notification of Review and Statutory Checks Due

- It is the responsibility of the Coordinator (FCR) to advise the relevant Team Manager and the Link Social Worker FPS of a review being due 8 weeks prior to the due date;
- At the time of this notification the due date of any statutory/ precautionary checks will also be advised;
- It is the responsibility of the relevant Team Manager in consultation with the responsible link social worker to ensure that all checks are kept up-to-date, and duly processed.

9. Process and Responsibilities for Arranging the Review

- The Link Social Worker is responsible for advising the Coordinator (FCR) of the actual date of receipt and the outcome of all checks;
- Upon notification of a review due the Link Social Worker will contact the Coordinator and the foster carer(s) to arrange a mutually convenient date for the review meeting, and advise the Coordinator (FCR) of the need to involve any support workers i.e. Outreach services in the review consultation process;

- The Link Social Worker will ensure that a current Health and Safety Risk Assessment, Section 1 'Factual Details', Section 2 'Carers Comments', Section 2a 'Carer's Family Member's Comment's' and Section 4 'Link Social Workers comments' are completed and available for the Coordinator at least one week prior to the review meeting;
- The Link Social Worker should also include a complete list of all complaints / allegations and the Pets report with the review documentation;
- The Coordinator (FCR) will, eight weeks prior to the agreed date of a foster carer review send out Section 2b 'Young Person's Comments', Section 2c 'Birth Family's Comments' to the allocated Social Worker, along with. Section 3 'Child's Social Worker's / Outreach Worker's' Comments;
- The Coordinator (FCR) will send to the appropriate Child Protection Reviewing Officer, Section 5, 'Reviewing Officer's comments';
- The Coordinator (FCR) will progress chase receipt of these reports, and will forward all the available reports to the Link Social Worker FPS two weeks in advance of the agreed review date;
- The Link Social Worker is responsible for sharing all of the review documentation with the foster carers in advance of the actual review meeting taking place;
- In those circumstances where there are two approved carers, the review should be arranged to include both carers;
- As an on-going process throughout the annual review cycle, Administrative support for the Coordinator (Foster Carer Reviews) will, as a matter of routine, send out Section 3 'Child's Social Worker's Comments', Section 2c 'Birth Family's comments' and Section 2a 'Young Persons Comments' to all of those Social Workers responsible for a child/young person where the placement has ended and has been notified consequent of the WSS19 process. All completed feed-back forms should be returned to the Coordinator (FCR) for inclusion in the annual review documentation.

10. The Foster Carer Review Process: Ad hoc Review and Those That Follow From the Complaints and Allegations Process

These reviews will be no less thorough than the routine annual review process. Reviews following a serious complaint / allegation will include consultation with all of the parties referred to above, however the emphasis of the report that will be considered by the foster panel will be substantially more analytic in nature.

In these circumstances it will not always be necessary to reproduce for panel all of the strategy meeting minutes; usually only the concluding strategy meeting minutes should be included in the review documentation. These minutes should include clear recommendations as to the foster carers' suitability to continue as a carer for the authority.

Essentially, in these circumstances it is the role of the Link Social Worker to present a factual analysis of the prevailing events/ circumstances and a concluding assessment of the foster carer(s) abilities to continue to provide a suitable environment where the welfare of children and young people placed will be safeguarded and promoted.

Of necessity the assessment will be evidence based, taking into account the historical context of the foster carers performance, strengths and learning needs.

In all circumstance there must be a clear and unambiguous recommendation to the foster panel.

The role of the Coordinator (FCR) in chairing those reviews following a serious complaint/allegation will be to independently review the historical information about the carer(s) performance, the available evidence, associated reports and the Link Social Workers' assessment.

The Coordinator (FCR) in making a recommendation will confirm for panel the integrity, depth and compliance of the investigation in accordance with prevailing policy, procedure and sound practice; review the significant evidence; and either confirm or seek to make alternative or additional recommendations to that of the fostering service provider.

11. Disclosure and Barring Service and Regulatory Authority

There are occasions where the approval of a foster carer has been terminated for serious misconduct. In this circumstance consideration will need to be given as to whether the foster carer's name should be referred to Disclosure and Barring Service for inclusion in the Barred List.

The [Regulatory Authority](#) should be notified of serious complaints made against Foster Carers. The co-ordinator of foster carer reviews and the team manager should decide whether a Foster Carer Review is necessary.

12. Reviews That Follow Significant Changes

For those reviews that follow consequent of significant changes, the Coordinator (FCR) in discussion with FPS staff will decide on the depth of consultation required; and the extent of the review process. The decision will be based on an assessment of the potential impact of the change in circumstances on the carer(s) continued ability to provide a suitable environment in which the welfare of children and young people placed will be safeguarded and promoted.

13. Disagreements and Disputes

As the review process is based upon wide consultation, it is inevitable that disagreements will occur. In all circumstances where there is a disagreement over what is recorded in the consultation documents the Coordinator (FPS) will bring this to the attention of the relevant Team Manager FPS and the Team Manager/ Social Worker for the child(ren).

The responsible Team Managers FPS and child care team will decide who needs to be involved in seeking a potential resolution of the dispute, and arrange a meeting of the relevant people in order to try and resolve the issue.

The possibility of invoking the complaints procedure and/ or disciplinary action will need to be considered if the matter cannot be resolved or is of a potentially serious nature.

In terms of the Coordinator (FCR) report, all reports of a contentious nature will be shared with the Team Manager/Social Worker for the child prior to consideration by the foster panel.

As a matter of process the Coordinator's report is shared with the Social Worker FPS prior to the consideration of the fostering panel/skills board. Disagreements about what is recorded by the Coordinator should in the first instance be attempted to be resolved informally by way of a meeting of the relevant staff. Failures to agree should be acknowledged and reported to the foster panel that will consider the report, and may make recommendations as to any further or outstanding actions.

14. Organisational Learning and Change

As the review process is based upon consultation there are valuable opportunities for the consultation feed-back to positively impact upon service delivery and the configuration of services.

It is the responsibility of the Coordinator (FCR) to ensure that the quality of service delivery is monitored through the review process, and that the learning from reviews is disseminated throughout the organisation. The process for this will be through the various managers' forums within the organisation, and through the regular dedicated meetings, for this purpose, with Team Managers FPS, the Coordinator for foster carer training, Peer development officer and the foster carer committee.

Exit Interviews will be conducted by the Coordinator (FPS) on all occasions where foster carers leave the authority. There is an established format for these interviews that is designed to elicit information that can inform the style and quality of service delivery within the organisation.

It is a function of the Coordinator's role to produce regular management information for the agency foster panel in respect of monitoring service trends and complaints.