FAQ- Foster to Adopt

**Can this type of placement be used as an emergency?**

No, all information should be gained about the child to ensure adopters can make this probable ‘lifelong decision’. There must be enough information to enable the adopters to know the health, emotional, behavioural and educational needs of the child. The child’s social worker will need to visit the adopters and discuss the child and to ascertain whether the adopters can meet the needs of the child. The adopters will need time to consider if they can meet these needs. The social worker will also need to read the PAR.

**How quickly can this type of placement happen?**

If the social worker is able to read the PAR and meet the adopters it can happen within 4 working days . This will depend on the information presented and the individual circumstances of the child and adopters

**Will introductions have to take place?**

Yes, but there is unlikely to be the same sort of introductions which happens in adoption placements. In practice due to the circumstances they tend to be shorter but are still based on the needs of the child. However, if possible best practise principles for transitions should be maintained.

**Do I have to have a “ adoption is the plan” decision from the adoption decision maker before requesting this placement?**

No but you must book an urgent appointment with the panel administrator to ensure that the ADM agrees with the plan.

**Should it be used for all small children?**

This should only be used where all prospective family or persons known to the child who may be able to offer a permanent home to the child have been identified and ruled out. There should also be limited probability that the child will be reunified with their birth family. Consideration could be given where it is very unlikely a challenge from a family member will be successful but they have put themselves forward.

**Will carers be paid?**

Yes they will receive the basic fostering allowance and the payment for the child. Adopters will not be able to claim adoption leave although some employers will give adopters unpaid leave. The child is still a child in care so adopters will not be able to claim child benefit.

Carers can claim adoption leave once the child and the adopters match has gone to panel and the decision of the panel ratified by the Adoption Decision Maker. The fostering allowance will cease at this point and any assessed adoption support allowances will be payable. Adopters can also claim child benefit from this date.

**When can carers make an application for an adoption order?**

Adopters cannot apply for an Adoption Order until the Court or parent has given permission. Parental permission can only be gained through CAFCAS. The match will then go to the Adoption Panel and once the ADM has ratified the decision the adopters can apply immediately if the child has been in placement for 10 weeks. This is different to ‘usual’ adoption cases. However, if the child has been in placement for over 12 months then the adopters can apply directly to the Court for an adoption order.

**What are the expectations on carers when they are in the role of foster carers?**

Until final plans are made for the child, contact with birth family members may continue, and carers will be expected to co-operate with contact arrangements, possibly including providing transport for the child to the contact sessions. This will be agreed on a case by case basis.

**What support is available for foster to adopt carers?**

Adopters should ask their social worker to link them in to the local fostering team, so that they can access any available support groups and training – this is in addition to direct support from the adoption service.