

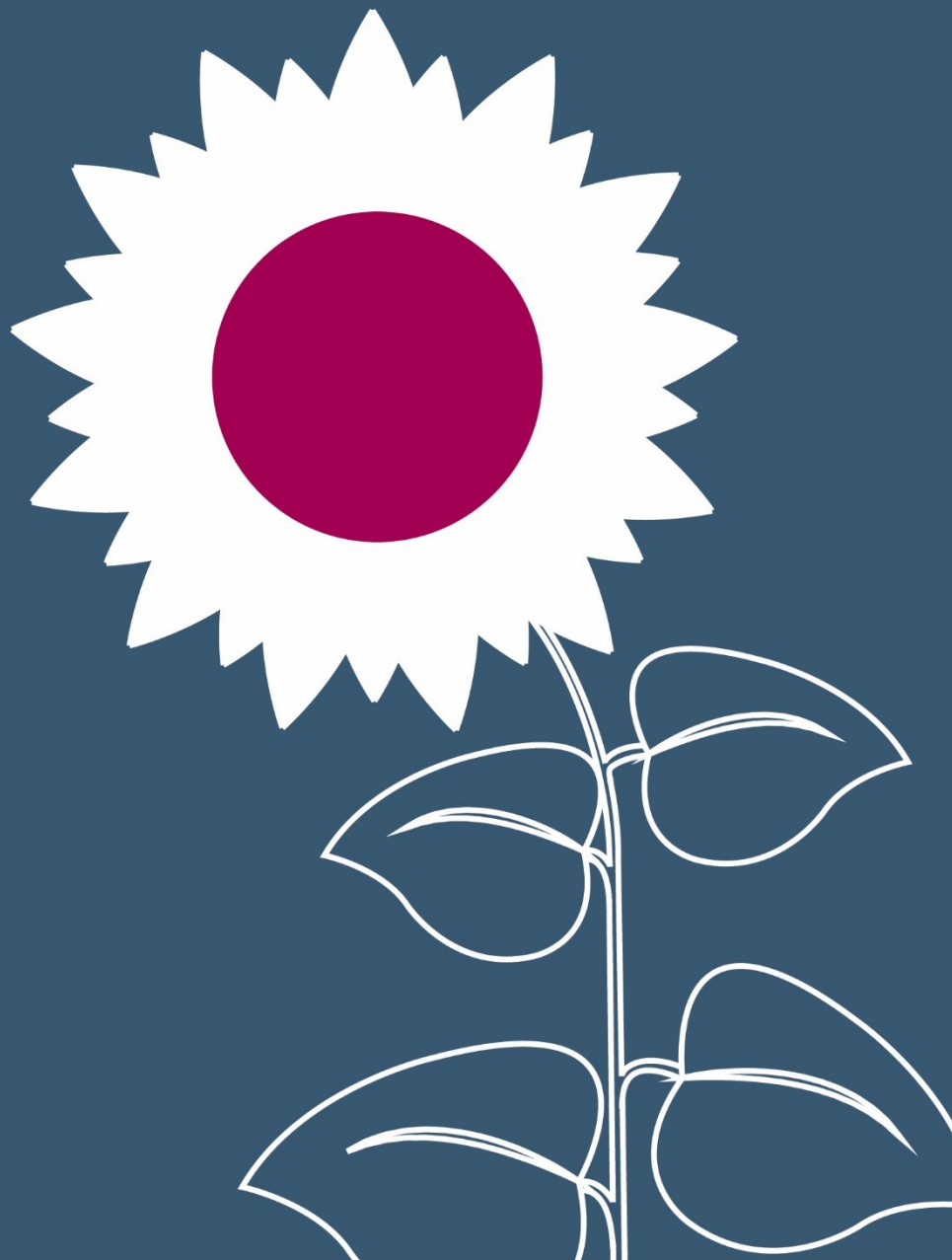


City of
Stoke-on-Trent

Foster Carer Files, Records and Recording

Tri X 5_1_10 July 2022

Review July 2023



The fostering service's administrative records contain all significant information relevant to the running of the foster care service and as required by regulations.

Standard 25. National Minimum Standards.

1 General

1.1 Fostering Services are required under **Regulation 26 Fostering Services Regulations 2011** to keep a record of each child placed with foster parents detailing:

1. The date of placement
2. The child's address prior to placement
3. The legal status of the child
4. The name and address of the foster parent
5. The date when the placement ended
6. The child's address on leaving the placement

Regulation 22 also requires that a record is kept of all accidents occurring to children whilst placed with foster parents. This is done by foster carers completing an Accident, Injuries and Illness Form which is sent to the supervising social worker and collated by the Fostering Service.

1.2 **Regulation 26** of the **Fostering Service Regulations** requires that a case record is established for each foster carer containing all the documents and information specified in the Regulations.

1.3 The Directorate's **Recording Policy** applies to all Fostering Service staff.

2 Confidentiality

2.1 Files should be maintained in the prescribed format, marked 'Strictly Confidential' and should be stored securely in a lockable filing cabinet/room.

2.2 Only staff employed by the Authority are authorised to access electronic data stored on the Authority's databases. Any confidential information stored on computer should be password protected.

2.3 All staff should observe the confidentiality guidance outlined in the Caldicott Guidelines and Stoke-on-Trent's confidentiality guidance.

- 2.4 Foster carers must confirm in writing as part of the Foster Care Agreement that:
- They will keep all information confidential
 - They will store all confidential information in a secure location
 - They will return all the information to the agency if requested to do so
- 2.5 Before appointing Panel members, the agency will inform them in writing of the confidentiality agreements applying to fostering work. Prospective Panel members will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement before being appointed.
- 2.6 Whenever it is necessary to send any part of a Fostering Case File by post, either within or outside the Council, the information should be delivered personally wherever possible or placed in a sealed plain envelope and marked '**PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL**'. When the external post is necessary, then arrangements must be made for copies of relevant documents to be sent by recorded delivery.

3 Foster Carers File

- 3.1 When applicants commence the assessment process a case file should be established.
- 3.2 The Case File should contain:

Section 1 Front Sheet and Basic Information

- Referral
- Initial Enquiry Form
- Request to Attend an Information Meeting
- Expression of Interest
- Initial Visit Form
- Application
- Carers Consent Form
- Record of financial matters
- General admin/Movement/Closure

Section 2 Case Records

- Case Records
- Supervision of Foster Carers Forms
- Social Work Assistant case records
- Case Consultations/Supervision Notes
- Management decisions
- File Audit documents

Section 3 Reviews

- Annual Review of Foster Carers
- Disruption Meetings
- Associated correspondence, notifications and reports

Section 4 Training

- Formal Training Evaluation Report
- Course Attendance Record

Section 5 Checks and References

- Record of CRB checks
- Statutory Checks
- LA Information
- Health and Safety Checklist
- Pet Questionnaire
- References

Section 6 Medical

- Medical Consents
- Medical Advisors Report
- Psychological and Specialist Reports

Section 7 Approval Documents

- Form F
- Matching Meeting Minutes
- Panel Minutes
- Agency decision-makers decisions
- Letters/notifications linked to approval/matching process
- Exemptions/Extensions
- Foster Carer Agreements including Confidentiality Agreement
- Safer Caring Policy
- Letters/notifications linked to resignation/termination

Section 8 Child's Information (1 section per child - current placement only)

- EIR 1 and 2
- PP 1 and 2
- Care Plan
- Statutory Review Minutes
- Form E
- Foster Carer's Placement Record

Section 9 Legal

- Statements of Evidence
- Notifications/Legal correspondence
- Interagency Forms
- Representations
- Court Orders

Section 10 Correspondence

- General Letters
- Printed E-mails
- Proposed/Actual Placement Letters

Section 11 Restricted Access

- 3rd Party Information
- Written legal advice
- Information without permission to disclose
- Allegations/Complaints
- Strategy Meetings

3.3 The team clerk is responsible for establishing the file and the Fostering Service social worker will be responsible for maintaining the file.

3.4 The location of any information which cannot be stored on the foster carer case file because of its format e.g. story book or audio-visual, should be noted on the case file.

4 Storage

4.1 All foster carer files and records are kept electronically on a secure system.

4.2 Foster carer files will be kept for 35 years from the date of closure and for at least 10 years after their death or the refusal/ withdrawal of their application to be a foster parent.

4.3 All closed files are kept on the electronic system.

4.4 Directorate personnel records pertaining to fostering staff are stored securely in Human Resources.

4.5 Personnel records pertaining to Panel members are kept by the Panel administrator on a secure electronic system.

5 Access to Files

PRACTICE GUIDANCE

Service users and members of the public are allowed to see any records the Directorate holds about them under the Data Protection Act 1998. Requests must be in writing and responded to within 40 days.

5.1 Foster Carers

A foster carer may have access to all parts of their file except those deemed to be confidential under the Council's Access to Records Policy Procedure.

5.2 Staff and Local Authorities

From time to time access to the Council's foster carer case records may be requested by:

- Directorate Management
- Directorate staff
- Local Authorities making enquiries about prospective foster carers
- Those holding an inquiry under section 81 of the 1989 Act (inquiries) or section 17 of the Act (inquiries) for the purposes of such an inquiry
- The Secretary of State;
- The registration authority
- The Commission for Local Administration in England, for the purposes of any investigation conducted in accordance with Part 3 of the Local Government Act 1974;
- A court having power to make an order under the Children Act 1989 or a guardian acting for the child in proceeding
- Any person appointed by the agency for the consideration of any representations (including complaints)

In most circumstances information from case records should only be provided if the subject of the enquiry has provided written consent to the enquiring agency for the information to be disclosed.

Information provided in response to statutory enquiries from other agencies must be approved by the Principal Manager. If the name of any person other than the subject of the enquiry is to be disclosed within this information, consultation must first take place with a Senior Manager/Legal Services. This applies whether a third party is a child or an adult.

A written record shall be kept of any access provided to a foster carer file or any information disclosed. The record should be made on the case file and in the Fostering Services Access to Records Log.

Any person, other than the foster carer, accessing foster carer case records or the information contained within them, should first give agreement in writing to keep the records safe and the contents confidential.

The Fostering Service should know the location of foster carer files at all times. If a file is removed the name of the person and the location of the file should be recorded.

6 Auditing

It is the Team/service manager's responsibility to audit case files in line with Children and Young People's Services case recording policy.

7 Records held by Foster Carers

The following records are held/maintained by foster carers:

- Foster Carer's Daily Log
- Child's Personal Health Record. When a child under 5 years is placed, they will already have a 'Child Personal Health Record'. If the foster child moves to another care placement, or to adoptive carers, the record must be passed to the new carers or returned to the birth parents if the child returns home.
- Carers Contact Record. Record information related to the child's contact with birth family and others.
- Incident Forms. Record any significant events concerning the foster child e.g. accidents and use of sanctions
- CIC Documentation – EIR 1 and 2, PP1 and 2, Care Plan, Reviews

8 Record storage in the foster home

- 8.1 Documentation Files are issued by the Fostering Service to foster carers. These are lockable metal boxes and contain a checklist of documents the foster carer should hold in respect of the child.
- 8.2 Foster carers paperwork regarding children they foster must be kept confidential and be stored in the secure, locked container provided.
- 8.3 If the child moves to another placement or returns home, all the documents must be returned to the child's social worker and/or supervising social worker.