

Training and Development of Foster Carers

SCOPE OF THIS CHAPTER

This chapter outlines the training and development offered to support Foster Carers.

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1. Benefits of Training and Development

The training and development of Foster Carers is an important factor in improving outcomes for Looked After Children and young people. It can support Foster Carers to:

- Develop knowledge and skills in areas which interest them.
- Increase their confidence
- Get together to share ideas and experiences and learn from each other.
- Support them through the unique challenges they face.

2. Types of Training and Development

There are lots of ways Foster Carers can access training and development activities:

Taught courses – short courses delivered by a facilitator to small groups in venues are located across the county.

E-learning – courses accessed online which can be completed at home, or wherever and whenever you have access to the internet.

Workbooks – courses accessed through printed paper or electronically which you complete in your own time.

3.Mandatory Training

Mandatory training must be completed by newly approved Foster Carers within 18 months. These courses should then be repeated every 5 years as a refresher. Mandatory courses are:

- Basic food hygiene (worksheet)
- Care planning and the role of professional foster carers (taught course)
- Child development (e-learning)
- Equality and diversity (available as an NCFE Level 2 course or e-learning)
- First aid, infant and child (taught course)
- Life story (taught course)
- Neglect (taught course)
- Recording with care (taught course)
- Safe care practice (taught course)
- Safeguarding children (e-learning)
- Safeguarding children from sexual exploitation (e-learning) or sexual exploitation of children and young people (taught course)

4.Core Training

Core training should be completed within 3 years of approval and should be refreshed every 5 years. Course courses are:

- Attachment (taught course)
- Appropriate behaviour management (taught course)

- Child abuse and the internet (taught course)
- Education courses (taught courses)

5.Optional training

A wide range of optional courses are available to Foster Carers and are advertised annually in the training programme (insert link). Foster Carers can choose any of these courses to suit their circumstances or interests.

Most of the courses that are offered are appropriate for all Foster Carers. Some courses are more specialist, but Supervising Social Workers will help to guide Foster Carers to choose the right courses for them.

6.Ground Rules Used on Training Courses

To support Foster Carers to get the most from training courses the following ground rules are used:

- Everyone should take responsibility for starting and finishing on time
- One person should speak at a time
- Allow expression of different points of view
- Agree to disagree respectfully
- Everyone has responsibility to challenge offensive language or prejudice
- Personal information is confidential to the group
- Mobile phones should be turned off or silent
- Challenge the idea, not the person
- All questions are valid – there are no stupid questions

7.Booking a course place

A Foster Carer can book a place on a course in any of the following ways:

- Ask their Supervising Social Worker to request a place on the course
- E-mail fostercarertraining@durham.gov.uk to request a place
- Telephone the Development and Learning Team on 03000 267 359 to request a place

The Development and Learning team will confirm places by e-mail.

Foster Carers attending a course without booking a place may be turned away if the course is full.

8. Cancelling a Course Place

It is important that Foster Carers cancel course places when they are unable to attend. It may be possible for the Development and Learning Team to re-allocate the place.

A Foster Carer can cancel a place on a course in either of the following ways:

- E-mail fostercarertraining@durham.gov.uk to cancel the place
- Telephone the Development and Learning Team on 03000 267 359 to cancel the place

9. Reflecting on Learning

On completion of training, Foster Carers are asked to reflect on their learning, and discuss with their Supervising Social Worker how they will incorporate what they have learned into their work with children and young people. Over time this evidence will build into a portfolio.

10. Training, Support and Development (TSD) Standards

Foster Carers

The Training, Support and Development (TSD) Standards form part of a Foster Carer's induction into the role. They provide a national minimum benchmark that sets out what Foster Carers should know, understand and be able to do within the first 12 months of being approved.

The TSD Standards were introduced in 2007 and apply to all approved Foster Carers in England. They form part of a strategy, supported by the Department for Education, to raise the profile of Foster Carers as valued professionals and to improve and standardise the support for Looked After Children and young people.

There are 7 standards to complete:

Standard 1: Understand the principles and values essential for fostering children and young people

Standard 2: Understand your role as a Foster Carer

- Standard 3:** Understand health and safety, and healthy caring
- Standard 4:** Know how to communicate effectively
- Standard 5:** Understand the development of children and young people
- Standard 6:** Safeguard children and young people (keep them safe from harm)
- Standard 7:** Develop yourself

Kinship Carers

Kinship Carers must complete the 6 Family and Friends Standards within 18 months following approval. The 6 Standards are:

- Standard 1:** Understand your role as a family and friends carer
- Standard 2:** Know how to provide a safe environment and healthy care
- Standard 3:** Know how to communicate effectively
- Standard 4:** Understand the development of children and young people
- Standard 5:** Keep children and young people safe from harm
- Standard 6:** Develop yourself

Support to Complete the Standards

Supervising Social workers will assist Foster Carers to collate evidence during supervision sessions. To support Foster Carers in this task the Learning and Development Officer provides advice, support and guidance where needed.

When the standards have all been covered the Fostering Social Worker, or Learning and Development Officer, will assess the portfolio.

If there are any elements missing the Fostering Social Worker, or Learning and Development Officer will support Foster Carers to fill the gaps.

If the evidence covers the standards the portfolio will be signed as competent and passed to an internal verification panel for verification.