**Children, Young People**

**& Families Services**

# 

**A Foster Carer’s Guide to**

**Training**

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## Section 1: An Introduction to Training

## Who Is This Guide For?

The guide is created by the BCP’s Fostering Team. The guide is created specifically for Foster Carers, although it may be informative to other professionals.

## Therapeutic Training

BCP Fostering & Supported Lodgings Team are proud to provide a Therapeutic Fostering Service to their Children, Young People and Carers. We aim to ensure that Carers have the skills needed to support young people, emphasising a parenting style that addresses a child's needs by understanding their behaviours and working with them to move towards healthier and more positive relationships with those around them.

## Training Support

Carers can access support with their training from a number of places.

Your Supervising Social Worker (SSW) collates your Personal Development Programme (PDP) every year as part of your assessment and annual review. This document holds all the details of your training and which training plan you are on.

The Training and Development Officer, Josh Blanchard, oversees all aspects of Carer training, including online and face to face training, as well as carer forums. He is available to help with any technical issues you are having as well as questions about different training courses and what may or may not be suitable for you.

Family Support Practitioners (FSP’s) are available to deliver bespoke one on one training, to access this support please speak to your SSW who can investigate this possibility for you.

## Types of Training

There a 3 main types of training available to BCP Carers.

**Online Training:** This training is delivered via The Training Hub. With over 2,000 courses on offer, they have a wide variety of training for almost any issue. All online courses are allocated at the request of your SSW, if you have spotted a course on there you would like to complete, please let them or the Training Officer know.

Online Training is broken down across 4 easy units:

* Unit 1: Interactive
* Unit 2: Short assessment/quiz
* Unit 3: Download Handbooks for later reading
* Unit 4: Learning Outcomes

**Face to Face Training:** delivered by both members of the Fostering Service, as well as specialist external trainers. We pride ourselves on getting our carers input on what training they would us to put on, so we can ensure we are accurately meeting our carers needs.

**Forum Training:** once a month we hold a coffee morning for our carers to attend to meet each other and build support networks. During these forums we also arrange for a guest speaker to attend to speak to our carers about their area of expertise.

## Schedule of Events

The schedule of events is your guide to everything being run by the Fostering Service, sent out in a monthly email by the Training Officer.

This calendar lists every training course, forum, event, support group and school holiday throughout the year allowing you to plan your attendance well in advance.

## Section 2: Mandatory Training

All Foster carers are expected to complete 5 training courses, as well as their TSD Handbook as part of their approval.

All 5 mandatory training courses need to be completed every 3 years, with the exception of the TSD Workbook which only needs to be completed once.

More advanced versions of these courses are available upon request.

## Safeguarding Children

Being able to effectively safeguard children is the most important duty that a foster carer has. This course aims to teach carers how to protect the children in the care, as well as the law and best practice.

The course also goes into detail on:

* Knowing the different types of abuse
* Knowing the symptoms associated with abuse
* Knowing what to do if a child discloses that they are being, or have been, abused
* Understanding the process of recording, reporting, and recordkeeping
* Recognising the signs of abuse
* Understanding the duty of care for carers
* Understanding the whistle-blowing process
* Knowing the groups and agencies involved in the protection of the child

## Secure Attachment and Bonding

Understanding attachment and the difficulties there can be for traumatised children in building healthy relationships is key.

This course provides an introduction to attachment theory, as well as information on:

* Understanding the key principles of attachment and bonding critical for healthy development
* Knowing how healthy attachment is facilitated
* Awareness of the various ways that neglect, and abuse negatively influence attachment, exploring the consequent challenging behaviours
* Understanding how carers can help children with attachment difficulties

## Risk Management and Safer Caring

Caring for a traumatised child will always carry an element of risk. This course enables carers to understand the nature of risk and to develop knowledge and confidence to assess and manage the risks that are an inevitable part of their work.

At the end of this course, you will understand:

* The meaning of safer caring
* How to explore safer caring scenarios
* How to be aware of delegated authority
* How to know how to minimise the risk of allegations

## Equality, Diversity and Cultural Competency

The children that BCP cares for come have a wide variety of genders, races, sexualities, religions, and nationalities. Every child that comes into our care deserves to have equality in their care and education.

This course will help you understand:

* What cultural competence is and its importance in a diverse society
* The need to work with children in a culturally competent manner
* What equality and diversity are
* How to work with individual young people in a culturally competent fashion
* Diversity and how an individual understands their identity

## Paediatric First Aid

Knowing how to appropriately act and the steps you can take if the child in your care is injured is an important skill for a foster carer to develop.

This course is split across 2 days.

Day 1 is an online course sent out ahead of day 2 that you can complete in your own time at your own pace.

Day 2 is the practical face to face session where you will get the opportunity to practice the skills you learnt in day 1 in a safe environment with a qualified trainer.

## Training, Support and Development Workbook

The TSD Workbook is a government mandated piece of work that all foster carers have to complete after their approval. For mainstream carers this must completed within 1 year of their approval and for connected carers it must be completed within 18 months of their approval.

In this workbook you will go over the 7 standards that all foster carers are expected to know as part of their role, these are:

1. Understand the principles and values essential for fostering children and young people
2. Understand your role as a foster carer
3. Understand health and safety, and health care
4. Know how to communicate effectively
5. Understanding the development of children and young people
6. Keep children and young people safe from harm
7. Develop yourself

Foster carers are only required to complete this course once during their career as a foster carer.

## Section 3: Therapeutic Training

The BCP Fostering Service promote a therapeutic parenting style with all our carers. This means our focus is on helping our carers understanding the root causes of our children’s behaviours to help them develop healthier and more positive relationships with the people around them.

To help you with this BCP run several therapeutic parenting courses each year.

## Attachment and PACE

This 2-day course builds on what you have already learned as a part of your mandatory training.

On day 1 we will go in-depth on the different attachment styles, and challenges associated with them as well as how the brains physical make up can influence attachment.

On day 2 we will introduce you to the PACE therapeutic parenting technique. This technique aims to help carers de-escalate children and young people’s behaviours when they are feeling heightened by engaging them in playful activities and asking the right questions.

## 8-Week Intensive Attachment Course

Hosted by members of BCP’s Clinical Psychologist Team, this 8-week course goes deep into the detail of attachment theory and also allows you to build connections with highly experienced psychologists with a background in working with traumatised children, as well as with carers who are in a similar position to you.

During these weekly sessions you will have the opportunity to work in small groups and ask any questions that you might have in a course that is focused on you and the other participants.

## Life Story Work

Life Story Work is about helping a child or young person to understand the journey that they have been on so far, before and during their time in foster care.

This course helps carers to understand how this can support a child's emotional and social development as well as helping them come to terms with their trauma so that they can move forward and build a healthy future. The course encourages carers to think about their role in the child's life story and what support they can give and to understand the role of the team around the child in facilitating formal Life Story Work Interventions.

## Non-Violent Resistance

Non-Violent Resistance (NVR) is a 4-day course, that teaches carers about how the NVR model can be used to challenge children and young people's unhealthy behaviours in a less punitive way. It is an intervention based on raising a carers presence in their child’s life and developing a more positive relationship between them.

NVR can be used with a wide variety of behaviours including violence, substance misuse, anxiety-related problems, school non-attendance and many more.

## The Great Behaviour Breakdown

The Great Behaviour Breakdown looks at some of the most serious and challenging behaviours you can face as foster carers and over the span of 3 days breaks them down and provides guidance over how you can manage these and help the children in your care work through them.

## Section 4: Specialist Training

In addition to the training mentioned above, we also offer a variety of specialist training to our carers.

These courses cover a wide variety of areas and challenges and may not always be available.

## Autism Spectrum Disorder

Children and Young People with Autism often present unique challenges to carer. This course aims to help you understand these challenges, as well as effectively understand the perspective of someone who lives with ASD.

## AQA Training

Learn how to access and use the AQA folders to help your children develop the skills necessary to become independent, manage their budgets, learn to cook and receive a recognised certificate in their life skills.

## Bereavement, Loss and Separation

Children in Care can suffer from bereavement, loss and separation in a variety of ways, this course is designed to help carers understand what death and bereavement means to a child in care and how to explore grief in a healthy, child focused way.

## Blocked Care and Compassion Fatigue

Blocked Care and Compassion Fatigue are natural responses to the difficulties that can be experienced during your role as a carer. This is a course that aims to help you understand how and why this happens and what you can do to manage this.

## Caring for Sexually Abused Children

Caring for children who have been sexually abused is demanding and challenging, and foster carers cannot be left to manage this alone.

This course will enable carers to have a better understanding of caring for sexually abused children, providing them with information they can understand and use and arranging for practical parenting support that directly relates to the needs of these children.

## Caring for Children and Young People Who Display Sexualised Behaviour

This training is designed to provide Carers with a wider understanding of a range of sexualised behaviours that children and young people can display, due to experiencing poor care or abuse. The training then focuses on providing information and advice for carers on how to address this behaviour and provide therapeutic care and therapeutic input to enable children and young people to attain relief from trauma and poor mental health.

## Caring for Asylum Seeking Refugee Children

Young refugees and asylum seekers are amongst the most vulnerable groups of children and young people in care. This is largely due to their experience of war and conflict, as well as adapting to a new environment, usually unable to speak English. This course will enable participants to make a distinction between refugees and asylum seekers and address the misconceptions that are prevalent.

## Child Sexual Exploitation

We have a duty to protect the young people in our care from all types of abuse and to help them overcome previous abuse. This course enables carers and professionals to gain knowledge and awareness of the issues that surround child sexual exploitation (CSE) and the impact of this type of abuse, as well as what can be done to help and support victims of sexual exploitation.

## Child Trafficking

This course is designed for those who work with vulnerable children and aims to provides advice and guidance on human trafficking, as well as an understanding of best practice in supporting children and young people who may have been trafficked.

## Communicating with Children and Young People

This course enables carers to understand how general principles of effective communication can be applied specifically to work with children and young people. It covers the core principles of effective communication and the different conditions and skills which can help you communicate more effectively with the children and young people in your home.

## Dealing with Disclosures and Building Resilience

When the young person placed with you discloses trauma or abuse it can be one of the most difficult things that a carer can experience, this course aims to help you understand the appropriate way to comfort the young person and find out more information, whilst also taking time to look after your own mental health and understanding how this is impacting you as well.

## Developmental Trauma and Adverse Childhood Experiences

Adverse childhood experiences may result in changes in the deepest parts of the brain, resulting in effects which are behavioural, cognitive, biological, social, and emotional. This course allows you to recognise the damage, understand the various causes, and making sense of bad experiences.

## Knife Crime and Serious Youth Violence

This course aims to help increase your knowledge of knife crime and serious youth violence so that you feel confident in recognising the dangers, reporting your concerns, and promoting good personal safety to the children in your home.

It goes in depth into the facts and myths around knife crime and why young people carry knives. It also covers the specialist services available and what the referral process for these is.

## LGBTQIA+

The aim of this course is to help carers understand the meaning of LGBTQIA+, and how sexual identity, expression and assignment can develop over time. The course also provides information on the specific challenges faced by LGBTQIA+ children in care and how can provide care and support for them during this time.

## Managing Allegations and Standards of Care

This training is aimed at all Carers, not just those who are undergoing an allegation. The course will be of considerable benefit for both new and experienced Foster Carers. The course aims to ensure that Foster Carers remain aware of the potential for an allegation to be made against them and what measures they can take to try to minimise these and what they can expect in the event of an allegation.

## Mental Health First Aid

This is a new 1-day course for BCP focusing on 2 aspects of mental health:

1. Providing Carers with the skills they need to help support and manage young people with trauma and mental health difficulties
2. Helping Carers develop strategies to build your resilience and engage in effective self-care to help manage

## Oppositional Defiant Disorder

This course allows carers to be able to describe the nature of defiant, oppositional, or non-compliant behaviour in children and able to describe the nature of defiant, oppositional, or non-compliant behaviour in children, as well as how ODD can relate to other disorders.

## Positive Behavioural Support

Positive Behavioural Support is a child-centred approach based on an assessment of the social and physical environment in which the behaviour takes place and includes the views of the child, and everyone involved - and then uses this understanding to develop support that improves the quality of life for the child and any others who are involved with them.

## Reflective Practice

This course establishes the importance of reflective practice and professional development for foster carers. It aims to enable learners to understand how adults learn, to consider their own learning style, and to recognise the importance of reflective and guided learning.

## Secondary Trauma

Carers can be impacted by secondary trauma through exposure to the emotional pain experienced by those they look after. This course takes a therapeutic approach to secondary trauma and aims to increase your capacity to identify and respond to it if you feel it’s affecting you or if you witness it in your partners.