**NORTH LONDON CARE PROCEEDINGS PROJECT (NLCPP)**

|  |
| --- |
| **FULL ASSESSMENT**  **OF A PROSPECTIVE CARER CONNECTED TO A CHILD** |

|  |
| --- |
| **To be completed within 10 weeks** |

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| --- |
| This form is to be used following a positive initial screening/assessment.  The assessment can lead to the recommendation that a connected person:   * is approved by the fostering panel as a foster carer, or * is approved by the court to care for a child in care proceedings (eg. via a Special Guardianship Order). |

# NLCPP Connected Persons’ Full Assessment - Oct 2013 - Review date March 2014

**ASSESSMENT OF FAMILY, FRIENDS AND OTHER PEOPLE**

**CONNECTED TO THE CHILD**

# **NAME OF EACH CHILD:**

**NAME OF PROSPECTIVE CARER/S:**

**RELATIONSHIP OF PROSPECTIVE CARER/S TO EACH CHILD:**

**COURT CASE NUMBER:**

|  |
| --- |
| **Assessment for Special Guardianship**  **Assessment for Fostering Panel**  *(delete as appropriate)* |

|  |
| --- |
| **Recommendation of Assessment:** |

**NAMES OF REPORT WRITERS**

*Parts 2, 3, 4 – information about the child and birth family*

*Completed by the child’s social worker*

**NAME AND JOB TITLE:**

*Parts 1, 5, 6 – information about the prospective carer*

*Completed by the assessing social worker*

**NAME AND JOB TITLE:**

**DATE OF REPORT:**

**PART 1 - INTRODUCTION**

* 1. **Name and address of the local authority:**

**1.2 In preparing this report the authors have**

1. **read the following documents:**
2. **interviewed the following people:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Relationship to prospective carer** | **Date of interview/s** |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

###### PART 2 - INFORMATION ABOUT EACH CHILD

*If there is more than one child to be placed, record under the following headings your comments about each individual child, unless what you would be writing is the same for all the children. You want to bring out the differences between children, but avoid unnecessary repetition.*

* 1. **Child’s basic information (name, gender, date of birth, nationality, and immigration status if applicable):**

* 1. **Physical description:**
  2. **Identity (include ethnicity, language, religion, culture, sexuality and any additional needs):** ([[1]](#endnote-1))
  3. **Description of the child’s personality:** ([[2]](#endnote-2))
  4. **Health and physical development:** ([[3]](#endnote-3))
  5. **Education:** ([[4]](#endnote-4))
  6. **Legal status (any court order about the child):**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name of child** | **Name of court** | **Order granted** | **Date of order** |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

* 1. **Reason why child is looked after and cannot live with a birth parent:**
  2. **Current placement of child**

1. **who the child is living with (name and status of carer):**
2. **date first placed with this person:**
3. **date first looked after in this period by the local authority:**

**2.10 Contact arrangements (current and proposed arrangements with birth parents, siblings and significant others):**

**2.11 Summary of child’s needs in the proposed placement:** ([[5]](#endnote-5))

PART 3 - THE CHILD’S WISHES AND FEELINGS

* 1. **Assessment of the child’s wishes and feelings** ([[6]](#endnote-6)) **(in light of their age and understanding) about the proposed placement with the prospective carer (include religious and cultural upbringing and contact with relatives and/or any other significant person):**
  2. **Date on which the child’s wishes and feelings were ascertained for this assessment:**

PART 4 - THE CHILD’S BIRTH FAMILY

* 1. **Birth family composition:** ([[7]](#endnote-7))

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Date of birth (and place)** | **Relationship to child** | **Address (and date last confirmed)** | **Legal status (in relation to each child, including PR)** |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |

**The following information is requested for each parent. Where either parent is not known, explain the steps taken to ascertain information and state what is known:** ([[8]](#endnote-8))

* 1. **Physical description:**
  2. **Nationality, and immigration status if applicable:**
  3. **Identity (include ethnicity, language, religion, culture, sexuality and additional needs):**
  4. **Past and present legal relationship between the parents:** ([[9]](#endnote-9))
  5. **Where applicable and available, describe**

1. **health history, including serious physical or mental illness, hereditary disease or disorder, or additional needs:**
2. **education history:**
3. **employment history:**
4. **personality and interests:**

**4.7 The birth family’s wishes and feelings regarding**

1. **the proposed placement and proposed legal order:**
2. **the child’s religious and cultural upbringing:**
3. **contact arrangements for the child:**

**The date on which these wishes and feelings were last ascertained:**

**The wishes and feelings of any significant others:** ([[10]](#endnote-10))

* 1. **Give the following details about any sibling of the child (for siblings under 18 and not part of this assessment):** ([[11]](#endnote-11))

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Date of birth** | **Child in care status** | **Care provider** | **Legal status (court name and date of order)** |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |

PART 5 - INFORMATION ABOUT EACH PROSPECTIVE CARER

**5.1 Name:**

**Date of birth:**

**Place of birth:**

**Address:**

**Current local authority area:**

**5.2 Physical description:**

**5.3 Personality:** ([[12]](#endnote-12))

**5.4 Identity (include ethnicity, language, religion, culture, sexuality and any additional needs):**

**5.5 Nationality, and immigration status if applicable:** ([[13]](#endnote-13))

* 1. **Relationship to the child:** ([[14]](#endnote-14))

**5.7 Family members and composition**

1. **For each person, including any child living elsewhere, record:**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Date of birth** | **Relationship to carer** | **Where do they live?** | **Part of the household?** |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |

1. **State their views in relation to the proposed placement:** ([[15]](#endnote-15))

**5.8 Support network of prospective carer:** *(if for fostering panel, attach an eco-map)*

**5.9 Current partnership/marital status:** ([[16]](#endnote-16))

**5.10 Details of any previous marriage, civil partnership, or relationship:** ([[17]](#endnote-17))

**5.11 If the prospective carer is a member of a couple and is applying alone to care for the child, the reasons for this:** ([[18]](#endnote-18))

**5.12 Health:** ([[19]](#endnote-19))

**5.13 Statutory checks:** *(if for fostering panel, attach relevant reports)* ([[20]](#endnote-20))

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Check** | **Date completed** | **Outcome** |
| **DBS of 1st prospective carer** |  |  |
| **DBS of 2nd prospective carer** |  |  |
| **Other DBS completed (add name/s)** ([[21]](#endnote-21)) |  |  |
| **Medical of 1st prospective carer** |  |  |
| **Medical of 2nd prospective carer** |  |  |
| **Referee 1** |  |  |
| **Referee 2** |  |  |
| **Referee 3 (family referee)** |  |  |
| **Ex-partner reference (if there is a child from the relationship)\*** |  |  |
| **Employer reference\*** |  |  |
| **Other references\*** |  |  |
| **Health and safety** |  |  |
| **Local authority checks of prospective carer** |  |  |
| **Ofsted\*** |  |  |
| **School\*** |  |  |
| **Nursery\*** |  |  |
| **Health visitor\*** |  |  |
| **Housing checks** |  |  |
| **Other checks\*** |  |  |

\* if applicable

**5.14 Has the prospective carer (or anyone in their household) applied to foster/adopt/be a childminder before? Give the outcome:** ([[22]](#endnote-22))

**5.15 Finances and verification:** ([[23]](#endnote-23))

**5.16 Accommodation, including pets:** ([[24]](#endnote-24))

**5.17 Background and family history:** ([[25]](#endnote-25)) *(if for fostering panel, attach life chronology)*([[26]](#endnote-26))

1. **education:** ([[27]](#endnote-27))
2. **employment:** ([[28]](#endnote-28))
3. **lifestyle, leisure activities and interests:** ([[29]](#endnote-29))

**5.18 Parenting capacity (include past parenting experiences, and comment for specific children):** ([[30]](#endnote-30))

1. safeguarding: ([[31]](#endnote-31))
2. ability to promote contact: ([[32]](#endnote-32))
3. valuing diversity and the child’s identity (including religious identity): ([[33]](#endnote-33))

**5.19 Comments of prospective carer on the report, and any other representations they wish to make:** ([[34]](#endnote-34))

**PART 6 - ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

**6.1 Analysis of parenting capacity and ability to meet the child’s specific needs, as identified in Part 2 (k):** ([[35]](#endnote-35))

* 1. Contact arrangements: ([[36]](#endnote-36))
  2. If any Children Act 1989 order is made, the implications for ([[37]](#endnote-37))

1. the child:
2. the child’s birth parents:
3. the prospective carer/s and family:
4. significant others:

6.4 Recommendation: ([[38]](#endnote-38)) *(ensure that the relevant Support Plan is attached as an appendix to this assessment form)*

**Signed ………………………………………..**

**Assessing social worker/allocated worker**

**Date:**

**Signed ………………………………………..**

**Manager of the Assessing Team**

**Date:**

**Signed ………………………………………..**

**Child’s social worker**

**Date:**

**Signed ………………………………………..**

**Manager of the Child’s Social Worker Team**

**Date:**

**GUIDANCE FOR UNDERTAKING AN ASSESSMENT OF FAMILY, FRIENDS AND OTHER PEOPLE CONNECTED TO THE CHILD**

**The process**

This full assessment of family, friends and other people connected to a child is to be used following a positive viability assessment of a prospective carer who is connected to a child, or for the recommendation of a carer to be a Special Guardian or a foster carer for this child, and/or for the recommendation of another appropriate court order.

The format has been designed to cover all the areas that need to be considered by the child’s agency during either type of assessment. It can be adapted easily for different uses: for presentation to a fostering panel for kinship foster care approval; for filing with the court in care or special guardianship proceedings; and, in some cases, for use in adoption.

**If used for court proceedings**, the assessment must be presented to court in the timeframe directed.

**If used for the local authority fostering panel**, the assessment must be presented to the panel within 12 weeks of the child being placed (if placed under Regulation 24). In exceptional circumstances, an extension of up to eight weeks may be requested from the fostering panel, and the panel’s recommendation for an extension must be agreed and signed off by the LA Agency Decision Maker.

*Please refer to your local authority’s guidance for any additional documents to be attached to the report to enable your panel to make a recommendation.* (This will include, but not be limited to, the Safer Caring Policy, Health and Safety Assessment, referee interviews, references from other agencies, and pet assessments.)

**The work involved**

A full assessment is an in-depth piece of work.

The assessing social worker should allow for six to 10 family visits, to explore fully the situation, the information required to make a considered recommendation, and the support needs the family will have if they are to care for the child. The social worker will also need to interview referees and ensure that statutory checks have been completed.

The fact that a child is already known to the prospective carer does not mean that the assessment should be less rigorous than when assessing stranger carers, although the focus will be different. At each stage in the process the social worker should consider how the child's assessed needs will be addressed, both now and as they grow older. Appropriate decisions and recommendations can be made only if there is full information and clear assessment of the capacity of potential carers to meet those needs.

**Completing the form**

**Parts 2 to 4**of the form are for recording factual information about the child and birth family. This is to set the assessment of the connected person in context and enable the form to be read as a stand-alone document if necessary.

These parts should be completed by the child’s social worker and forwarded as soon as possible to the social worker who is assessing the prospective carer.

In Part 2 (Information about each child), record comments for each individual child unless what you would be writing under the heading is the same for all the children. You want to bring out the differences between children, but avoid unnecessary repetition.

**Part 5** of the form is for recording the assessing social worker’s concise narrative about the prospective carer. It should include an analysis of the impact of the prospective carer’s past and present experience on their capacity to meet the child’s needs. It is not a detailed description of every aspect of their life history that is needed here but, rather, an analysis of the particular factors impinging on the parenting of the particular child.

Note that both research and practice knowledge suggest that an adult’s own experience of being parented, and the sense that they have been able to make of this experience later in life, have a major impact on their capacity to offer good care to children.

**Signatures**

Each social worker and appropriate manager should sign the last section of the document.

In addition, for an SGO assessment, the Head of Service should sign the Special Guardianship Support Plan attached to the assessment form.

**The appendices** will be the additional and supporting evidence referred to in Part 4 – eco map, family tree, attachment-style assessment (if used), the prospective carer’s self assessment (if used), children’s health and school reports, and all confidential interviews and references. This information will usually be presented to the fostering panel only, not submitted to court. An exception is if this form is being used as a Special Guardianship assessment. If so, the Special Guardianship Support Plan must be attached for the court.

The list of appendices below can be used as a reminder about what to attach to the report.

**APPENDICES** (for the fostering panel)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | **Tick if included** |
| 1 | Health and safety assessment of the home |  |
| 2 | References – Two personal, one family, ex-partners, employment (including all positions with vulnerable people), children in the home (if not written into report), adult children (if not written into the report). Include both written feedback and interview reports, as appropriate. |  |
| 3 | Family tree of each carer |  |
| 4 | Pet assessment |  |
| 5 | Life events chronology |  |
| 6 | School reports of any children |  |
| 7 | Deputy Director’s Authorisation forms from any DBS issue |  |
| 8 | Eco map |  |
| 9 | Competencies/standards, as appropriate to the agency |  |
| 10 | Support plan for fostering |  |
| 11 | Adult medical forms or feedback |  |
| 12 | Any previous panel minutes |  |

**END NOTES** (relating to the numbers in brackets in Parts 1-6 of the assessment form)

1. () Include the child’s cultural, ethnic, linguistic, religious background and any other identity points that the child has that will need to be recognised and promoted to help them understand who they are. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. () Include likes and dislikes, social development, emotional and behavioural development, and any related needs. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. () Give a health history and describe the state of the child’s health, including any current treatment. Summarise the latest LAC medical, include physical and mental health, and think about long-term needs, prognosis or issues. Consider additional needs and the effect of any disability on the child’s daily needs for support. Think about puberty and sexual health and the challenges that might arise. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. () Give name, address and type of any nursery or school attended, with dates. Is the child subject to a statement and, if so, what support do they get with it? If for the fostering panel, attach the most recent PEP or school report. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. () This summary is only about the named child or children. It could include matters relating to health, education, immigration, contact, additional needs, identity, emotional health and past life experiences. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. () If a child is too young to comment, consider their behaviour, their responses to the prospective carer if placed with them or having contact, and any other source of information. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. () Include adult half siblings, where possible. Record full addresses only where appropriate - for example, if there is a history of violence it might be better to record only the name of the local authority. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. () If relevant, include the steps taken to establish paternity. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. () This is about their legal relationship. If relevant, include how Parental Responsibility (PR) was acquired. Give the date of any previous marriage or civil partnership, and include PR details. [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. () Include the child’s relatives or any other person the local authority considers relevant. Add the last date when wishes and feelings were ascertained. [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. () Include half-siblings, where possible. [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. () Describe how the prospective carers see themselves and also give the views of the assessor, in terms of them being welcoming, open, defensive, how they relate to people and, if possible, how they relate to children. [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. () Include proof of status that you have seen, and any future issues if the prospective carer is not resident/able to work in the UK. [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. () This needs to be considered in detail, as part of your assessment of the role they have played in the child’s life to this point. Include their motivation to be assessed to care for the child and the likelihood that their motivation will endure long term. [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. () This is about the attitude of others in the household and family to the proposed placement and how they think it will affect them. Use open questions when talking to wider family members, to allow them to identify anything they feel appropriate. Do the carers have a back-up plan if anything should happen to them whilst the children are still young, and does the wider family know this, and are people committed to it? Do they see any other issues that have not been raised by you or others? Give the key points of each interview. [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
16. () Consider strengths and vulnerabilities of the present relationship. Include how they make decisions, and how they support each other and manage disputes. How will caring for the child affect their relationship? Do they plan to have more children? If one of them is not being assessed as a prospective carer, what are their feelings about the placement? [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
17. () What did the prospective carer learn from these? If there are children from the relationship, what contact do they have with the prospective carer and how will this affect the child to be placed? Give key points of any interview with an ex-partner, including their view of the proposed placement. (Full interview reports will usually only go to the fostering panel). [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
18. () The assessment will have to consider both adults in the relationship, in the same way that it would cover any adults living in the home. But, if only one adult in a couple is applying for a Special Guardianship Order, the reasons for this will need to be explored. Consider the impact of something happening to the prospective carer: the other adult will not have PR for the child. What is motivating the prospective carer to take this on alone? Is the other adult not committed to the child? What difficulties might this lead to? [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
19. () For this health history, include any serious physical or mental illness, any hereditary disease or disorder, and any additional needs. Quote the medical advisor’s comment and add any other issues that the prospective carer has discussed. [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
20. () If for the fostering panel, attach reports of all reference interviews, school and nursery reports, work references, and any other reports of checks required by your local authority. Referee information can be alluded to or used as evidence in the body of the report, but the written record of the interview is confidential and so can be given only to the fostering panel. Referee names and addresses must be included in the record of the interview. [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
21. () Each local authority has slightly different policies about doing DBS checks on people outside the household. List everyone who has been checked. [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
22. () Include any requests or applications made by them or any other household member to foster or adopt a child, or for registration as either an early years or later years provider under Part 3 of the Childcare Act 2006. In order to be sure of covering all previous applications, you might need to make further enquiries and read files from other agencies. [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
23. () You don’t have to include a household budget but you do need to have explored that in the assessment so that you can comment here on any issue. Consider the possible impact of financial issues, including on the motivation to care for the child. Consider whether long-term stability might be affected if the prospective carer is in significant debt or cannot afford the ongoing costs of the child. Some current debt might be manageable if the prospective carer can afford to pay it and is doing so. Talk the prospective carer through the benefits they are or not entitled to, and consider what impact the different legal orders will have on what the prospective carer can or cannot claim. Record whether you have seen evidence of their rent or mortgage payments and whether they are in arrears. [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
24. () Describe the prospective carer’s home and neighbourhood and their access to resources. Consider the potential for them accessing a larger or safer home if necessary (ie is the council likely to provide a bigger home? Can the prospective carer afford a larger home?). If for the fostering panel, attach the Health and Safety Assessment and the Pet Assessment. [↑](#endnote-ref-24)
25. () In describing family history, emphasise the type of parenting they each received and their thoughts about this, the major events that have impacted on their development, and what they feel they have learnt from their past experiences. [↑](#endnote-ref-25)
26. () The fostering panel needs to receive a life events chronology, including addresses, schools, job positions, and family and other significant events. It could be completed by you or the prospective carer. [↑](#endnote-ref-26)
27. () Include the prospective carer’s aspirations for any child in their care and their approach to supporting children with their education. [↑](#endnote-ref-27)
28. () Include the values that the prospective carer would want to pass on to any child in their care and their attitude to paid and voluntary work. Give details of their working hours and all child care arrangements. [↑](#endnote-ref-28)
29. () As you discuss the current routine, hobbies and interests of the prospective carer and others in the household, consider the likely impact that caring for the child will have on these routines. What support might the prospective carer need? What changes will they have to make? How will they manage these? [↑](#endnote-ref-29)
30. () Consider the experience of the prospective carer in caring for any children, with particular reference to any child of their own. Include employed and voluntary child care. Consider and describe their skills, competence and potential against the child’s current known needs and their likely future needs (consider adolescence, or any other period that is likely to be particularly challenging). How will the prospective carer be able to meet all the child’s needs? What is their understanding of attachment and the difficulty of caring for a child with disrupted attachments? What is their approach to boundary setting and discipline? Consider the family’s lifestyle, including interests, how they celebrate special occasions, and their attitude to personal space and to food. [↑](#endnote-ref-30)
31. () How will they ensure that the child will remain safe in their household? Consider the issues that the child will bring with them. Are there implications for other children in the home? For example, if the child has been sexually abused or comes from a violent background, how does the prospective carer think this might impact on the child’s behaviour and on risks for other children in the household? What are the family’s normal safeguarding practices and how might these have to change? Are there any contact issues that might impact on the child’s safety? [↑](#endnote-ref-31)
32. () Consider the prospective carer’s ability to manage contact in line with the LA’s care plan and any concerns or support needs. What is their understanding of the continuing importance of the child's birth parents and others to whom the child is attached, such as foster carers? What are their expectations of the future relationship and contact between the child and their birth family? [↑](#endnote-ref-32)
33. () Consider the prospective carer’s understanding and experience of racism and discrimination and how they would support a child to deal with this. Look for practical examples of their ability to promote a positive self image and identity for the child. How they would promote the child’s cultural, religious and ethnic background, including any language the child speaks, especially if different from their own? Consider, too, sexual identity and additional needs. [↑](#endnote-ref-33)
34. () This is for any prospective carer who wishes to add their own comments – about the assessment, or the report, or their feelings about caring for the child, or any disagreements with the assessor, or anything else. Insert their words in full, as a quote. In some cases this might lead to the prospective carer’s self assessment being appended for the fostering panel. [↑](#endnote-ref-34)
35. () Section (a) is for your overall analysis of the prospective carer’s ability to care for the child, based on your judgment about the significance of the evidence in the earlier sections of the report.

    The analysis should give a clear indication of your opinion about:

    * the prospective carer’s ability and suitability to bring up the child
    * how they will meet the specific assessed needs of the child, including any child protection issues
    * their hopes and expectations for the child’s future
    * their ability to work in partnership with the local authority and other professionals, and
    * any points of disagreement with the prospective carer.

    State, too, whether the prospective carer intends to apply for a permanence order.

    You might want to present some of your analysis in the form of a risk assessment or in a balance of positive attributes and concerns. If for the fostering panel, consider adding the fostering competencies as an appendix.

    If relevant, give details of any support needs of the prospective carer, who will meet these needs, and any time frame involved. If this information is completed separately, as a support package for a Special Guardianship Plan, the reader should be directed to that. [↑](#endnote-ref-35)
36. () Make any recommendation about contact, such as frequency or limits. But any comments here will need to be considered in light of the plans of the child’s social worker. You will need to reach agreement about how detailed or general your recommendations are. [↑](#endnote-ref-36)
37. () Consider the different implications for each appropriate legal order – care order, special guardianship order and, in some cases, a residence order or adoption order. [↑](#endnote-ref-37)
38. () Three recommendations are needed from the assessor: (1) whether the prospective carer is suitable to care for the child, (2) what order or arrangement will best meet the child’s needs, and (3) whether any special arrangements/orders should be made along with this order. The assessing social worker and the child’s social workers will need to work together at this point, to ensure they are making plans and recommendations in line with each other, and resolving any disagreements that arise. **Ensure that the SGO Support Plan is attached, where relevant.** [↑](#endnote-ref-38)