

Practice Guidance for Overseas Checks for Fostering Assessments

This practice guide provides clarity around the expectations for undertaking overseas checks on applicants during both mainstream and kinship fostering assessments.

These checks are not statutory but are considered good practice in circumstances where applicants have spent extended periods of time living abroad.

This guidance should be read in conjunction with the Practice Guidance for Checks and References required for Fostering Assessments, and particularly the section relating to overseas checks.

Consideration to be Given

Where a prospective foster carer has lived overseas for an extended period (usually six months or over), when aged 18 or over, overseas checks should be considered and sought, where deemed appropriate to do so.

The Assessor should consult with their Team Manager and with Legal in the case of kinship assessments if not already triggered by the locality teams, to assess the appropriateness of undertaking a check. This discussion should take place on a case-by-case basis. There is no 'blanket position', and an assessment should be undertaken.

The assessment should consider:

- The country, and the process involved in undertaking the check.
- An estimate of the time needed for the check to be processed and returned – would this be a reasonable timeframe.
- Age of the applicant when they lived in the named country.
- Duration of the residence – requirement to be 6-months or over.
- Duration since the residence took place.

Where a check is deemed not necessary, the assessment and reasons for not undertaking the check must be clearly outlined within the assessment report (checks information section) by the Assessor.

Undertaking a Check

Overseas checks can be difficult to obtain from certain countries and if unavailable the assessor should try to triangulate evidence about the person's time abroad. For example, with employer references or through personal references. The application process for criminal records checks or 'Certificates of Good Character' for someone from overseas varies from country to country.

For further information, see [GOV.UK - Criminal records checks for overseas applicants](#).

Timescale for a Check to take place

The consideration of whether a check is required must be made at the start of the assessment period to optimise the time for the check to be processed and returned. The timescale must be proportionate and not cause undue delay in the approval process.

If the assessment report is ready to take to fostering panel, and the overseas check has not been returned, careful consideration must be given as to whether the assessment report can be presented to fostering panel without the overseas check being finalised.

A further assessment by the Assessor and Team Manager must take place which should consider the following:

- When was the overseas check was undertaken and the time it has taken not to be returned - has this timeframe been reasonable?
- Has other pertinent information and evidence been accumulated during the assessment which demonstrates 'good' character such as a DBS check, employment references, strong referee information including a 'character' reference, where possible, from a friend or family member who knew the applicant at the time, ideally in the country they lived BUT not a requirement. If the person still lives in the 'other' country, the service will accept an email character reference.
- Have safeguarding concerns been raised during the assessment which makes it vital the overseas check is returned before it is presented to panel.
- Has the receipt of the overseas check been chased and to offer dates for when this has happened.

Prior to the assessment report being presented to panel, this written risk assessment (see below) should be signed off by the Team Manager, and permission given by a Service Manager to present to the fostering panel.

The written risk assessment along with Service Manager sign off should be included within the panel paperwork.

Appendix – Risk Assessment for Overseas Checks

This risk assessment should be completed when an overseas check has been undertaken, but due to an unreasonable delay in receiving the check back, the assessment report is prevented from being presented to fostering panel.

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|---------------------------------------|--|
| Name of Applicant | |
| Date of Birth | |
| Address | |
| Date of Assessment | |
| Date of booked Fostering Panel | |

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| 1. Details of the Overseas Check undertaken (include information about the country, when the period of residence took place, and duration of residence) |
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| 2. Rationale for the Overseas Check to have been undertaken |
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| 3. Date when the Overseas Check was undertaken, has there been an unreasonable delay and what attempts have been made to encourage receipt? |
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| 4. What other pertinent information has been accumulated during the assessment which demonstrates 'good' character? (include DBS information, employment checks, referee information, 'character' reference, where possible) |
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| 5. Are there any safeguarding concerns assessed within the assessment report which raise concerns about the applicant(s) character? |
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| 6. Analysis of why the assessment report should be presented to panel without the receipt of the overseas check |
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| SSW Name: | | Signed: | | Date: | |
| Team Manager Name: | | Signed: | | Date: | |



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|-----------------------------|--|---------|--|-------|--|
| Service Manager Name: | | Signed: | | Date: | |
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