



Timescales and documentation for presenting matters to Fostering Panel – Practice Guidance

Fostering Service providers are legally required to have a Fostering Panel

25.1)

To recommend whether a person is suitable to be a foster carer and the terms of the approval.
To consider the first annual review for approved foster carers, as well as any other review, if requested to do so by the Fostering Service and to recommend whether a person remains suitable to be a foster carer, and whether the terms of their approval remain appropriate.
To give advice or make recommendations, on other matters or cases referred to it by the Fostering Service, including terminations of approval.

The Fostering Panel must advise, where appropriate, on the procedures under which reviews in accordance with Reg. 28 are carried out by the Fostering Service provider and periodically monitor their effectiveness.

(Fostering Services Regulations (2011))

In addition

14.2) Panel/s provide quality assurance feedback to the fostering service provider on the quality of reports being presented to panel.

14.3) All necessary information is provided to panel members at least five working days in advance of the panel meeting to enable full and proper consideration.

14.5) Foster carers and prospective foster carers are given the opportunity to attend and be heard at all panel meetings at which their approval is being discussed and to bring a supporter to the panel if they wish.

14.9) The fostering service provider's decision-maker makes a considered decision that takes account of all the information available to them, including the recommendation of the fostering panel and, where applicable, the independent review panel, within seven working days of receipt of the recommendation and final set of panel minutes.

14.10) The foster carer or prospective foster carer is informed orally of the decision maker's decision within two working days and written confirmation is sent to them within five working days.



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(National Minimum Standards (2011))

Assessments presented to Panel must compile with Fostering Regulations

26 (1B) (2):

(c) prepare a written report on X which includes the following matters—

(i) the information required by Schedule 3 and any other information the fostering service provider consider relevant,

(ii) the fostering service provider's assessment of X's suitability to be a foster parent, and

(iii) the fostering service provider's proposals about any terms of approval, and

(d) notify X that the case is to be referred to the fostering panel and give X a copy of the report prepared under subparagraph (c) inviting X to send any observations in writing to the fostering service provider within 10 working days beginning with the date on which the notification is sent.

(Fostering Services Regulations (2011))

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The full document bundle must be ready for review by the Fostering Panel Advisor a full TEN working days following the TEN working days required for the carers/ applicants to have sight of the final draft of the annual review or assessment, i.e. TEN full working days before the date of the scheduled fostering panel meeting itself. This allows FIVE working days for a full quality assurance review before the panel documents are shared with the panel members at FIVE working days prior to the date of fostering panel.

When presenting assessments, either Form F or Form K, to fostering panel the following documents must be included within the document bundle:

Form F & Form K report checklist
Form K or Form F assessment (triangulated statutory checks and references) that has been seen and signed by the applicants and been through the quality assurance process and review by both the responsible Team Manager and the fostering panel advisor.
Stage 1 Decision letter
Compliance check list
Personal Development Plan (PDP): Each foster carer must have completed a PDP with the support of their assessing SSW. This is an individual requirement so each carer must have a PDP to support the assessment when a two-carer household.
Household safe care plan.

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Any specific risk assessments in place (e.g. DBS, Health & Safety, caravans, etc.,)
To satisfy Standard 10 (NMS), the assessing SSW must record that they have seen a copy of either the applicant's most recent rent or mortgage statement, whichever applies. This document does not need to be included within the Form F or Form K report itself, but the assessing SW must include a statement within the report to confirm the date that they have seen this and that there are no arrears.
An updated reference from the child's school or nursery. (Where children are already living in the household: this applies to both CWCF and birth children)

When presenting foster carers for annual review to Fostering Panel, the following documents must be included within the annual review document bundle:

Annual Review report checklist
Annual Review Report that has been seen and signed by the foster carer and been through the quality assurance process and review by both the responsible Team Manager and the fostering panel advisor.
Personal Development Plan (PDP): Each foster carer must have completed a PDP with the support of their allocated SSW. This is an individual requirement so each carer must have an updated PDP to support the annual review when a two-carer household.
Household safe care plan must be updated at the time of the annual review.
Any specific risk assessments in place (e.g. DBS, Health & Safety, caravans, etc.,) must be reviewed at the time of the annual review.
To satisfy Standard 10 (NMS), the SSW must record that they have seen a copy of either the foster carer's most recent rent or mortgage statement, whichever applies. This document does not need to be included within the annual review report itself, but the SSW must include a statement within the annual review to confirm the date that they have seen this and that there are no arrears.
Foster Carer's feedback form: Each foster carer must complete this when a two-carer household.
Foster Carer's children's feedback form: To be completed for all birth children living in the fostering household, regardless of age.
Feedback from the child's social worker must be included. If this is not being provided, SSW is to escalate through their own team manager.
IRO feedback form: SSW to evidence the efforts that have been made to secure this. It is permissible to include feedback shared at the child's latest 'Child in Care' review on the condition that the source of the feedback is included.

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Birth parent's feedback form: Every effort should be made to secure feedback from the child's birth parents, again utilising feedback from the 'Child in Care' review where appropriate and detailing the source of this feedback.
CWCF feedback form: To be completed by the child/children in placement and with support from the SSW (Not the foster carer) when age appropriate. If this is a very young baby or toddler, the SSW would complete this from their own observations of how the child is settled in placement and responds to their foster carer/s.
An updated reference from the child's school or nursery.
If a child is receiving specialist support such as CAHMs or external universal services, please make reference to this within the annual review report and where possible seek a reference to evidence the impact that the foster carers have had upon this.
Confirmation of date of the last unannounced home visit.
Remember to fully consider within the annual review report any conditions that may have been attached to the last annual review ADM as now being satisfied such as training stipulations or Health and Safety requirements.

Please ensure that you triangulate all evidence to support your recommendation for approval to include consideration of the BAAF competencies to foster being evidenced as met, noting if this is fully, partially or not met.

N.B: If all of the required information is not included within the panel document bundle, the fostering panel advisor will need to vacate the planned panel date which may impact upon the ADM for assessment, court timescales and annual review timescales being met. Any such circumstances will be considered a performance issue.

All documentation for fostering panel is managed centrally through the fostering panel inbox **ONLY** as detailed below, and must not be sent to panel advisor's work email address or business support officers' work email addresses:

Fostering_Panel@sandwellchildrenstrust.org

The following people must be present for all matters to be heard by the Fostering Panel:

- Foster carer or applicant (Where a two-carer household, both foster carers or applicants **MUST** be present in person)
- Allocated Assessing/SSW (Should the SSW be unwell on the day and not able to attend, the responsible team manager must intend instead)



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Once the matter has been heard, the fostering panel chair will explain verbally the recommendation to the applicants/ foster carers. Once the fostering panel minutes have been agreed by the fostering panel chair, they will be sent to the fostering panel ADM to make their decision within seven working days. The Assessing/SSW must inform the carer/s by telephone or in person within two working days of the outcome of the ADM. A copy of the ADM Decision letter will be shared on email and in hard copy via post by the business support officer within five working days.

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References:

Fostering Services Regulations (2011)

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2011/581/regulation/28> National

Minimum Standards (2011)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fostering-services-national-minimumstandards>

Appendices:

Coram BAAF - Competency Matrix

1. Caring for children
1.1 Ability to provide a good standard of care to children which promotes healthy emotional, physical, sexual and intellectual development
1.2 An ability to accept the individual child
1.3 An ability to provide care appropriate to the individual child as he/she is
1.4 An ability to work closely with children's families and others who are important to the child
1.5 An ability to set appropriate boundaries, and manage children's behaviour within these, without the use of physical or other inappropriate behaviour
1.6 A knowledge of normal child development and an ability to listen to and communicate with children appropriate to their emotional age and understanding
1.7 An ability to promote a young person's development towards adult status
2. Providing a safe and caring environment
2.1 An ability to ensure that children are cared for in a home where they are safe from harm or abuse
2.2 An ability to help children keep themselves safe from harm or abuse, and to know how to seek help if their safety is threatened

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2.3	An ability to recognise the particular vulnerability to abuse and to discrimination of disabled children
3.	Working as part of a team
3.1	An ability to collaborate with other professional workers and to contribute to the department's planning for the child/young person
3.2	An ability to communicate effectively
3.3	An ability to keep information confidential
3.4	An ability to promote equality, diversity and rights of individuals and groups within society
4.	Own development
4.1	An ability to appreciate how personal experiences have affected themselves and their families, and the impact that fostering is likely to have on them all
4.2	An ability to use people and links within the community to provide support
4.3	An ability to use training opportunities and improve skills
4.4	An ability to sustain positive relationships and maintain effective functioning through periods of stress