

<b>Manual:</b>	Fostering Service Procedures, Foster Carers Handbook
<b>Title:</b>	Support and Supervision of Foster Carers (CPS/015)
<b>Last Reviewed:</b>	14/01/2016
<b>Next Review Due:</b>	14/01/2019

## INTRODUCTION

Robust supervision and support of Foster Carers is crucial in ensuring safe and effective care of children and the success of any placement. It ensures that foster carers carry out their duties in accordance with the:

- Fostering Service Regulations, Guidance and National Minimum Standards
- Children’s Services standards, policies, procedures and guidance
- The terms and conditions of the “Payment for Skills”, including banding criteria.

Regulation 17 of the Fostering Service (England) Regulations 2011 and Standards 20/21 of the Fostering Service National Minimum Standards 2011 address the Supervision and Support of foster carers.

Regulation 17 of the Fostering Service (England) Regulations 2011 requires the Fostering Service to provide Foster Carers with such training, advice, information and support as appears necessary in the interests of children placed with them.

Standard 21 – Supervision and Support of foster carers is set out below:

The outcome to be achieved is “Foster carers receive the support and supervision they need in order to care properly for children placed with them”.

- The Fostering Service supports their foster carers to ensure they provide foster children with care that reasonably meets those children’s needs, takes the children’s wishes and feelings into account, actively promotes individual care and supports the children’s safety, health, enjoyment, education and preparation for the future.
- The Fostering Service ensures foster carers understand the nature and level of support which will be provided to them by the Fostering Service.
- There is an effective out of hours advice and support service for foster carers.
- Peer support, foster care associations and/or self-help groups for foster carers are encouraged and supported.
- Foster carers are provided with breaks from caring as appropriate. These are planned to take account of the needs of any children placed.
- All foster carers have access to adequate social work and other professional support, information and advice, to enable them to provide consistent, high quality care to the child. This includes assistance with dealing with relevant services, such as health and education. Consideration is given to any help or support needed by the sons and daughters of foster carers.
- The role of the supervising social worker is clear both to the worker and the foster carer.

Standard 20 - Learning and Development of foster carers is set out below:

The outcome to be achieved is:

- Foster carers receive the training and development they need to carry out their role effectively.
- A clear framework of training and development is in place and this is used as the basis for assessing foster carers' performance and identifying their training and development needs.
- All foster carers receive an induction.
- All foster carers, including all members of a household who are approved foster carers, are supported to achieve the Children's Workforce Development Council's Training, Support and Development Standards for Foster Care<sup>6</sup>. Short break carers who are approved foster carers are supported to achieve the Training Support & Development Standards for Short Break Carers. Family and friends foster carers are supported to achieve the Training, Support and Development Standards for Family and Friends Foster Carers.
- Foster carers are able to evidence that the Training, Support and Development Standards have been attained within 12 months of approval (or within 18 months for family and friends foster carers).
- Foster carers maintain an ongoing training and development portfolio which demonstrates how they are meeting the skills required of them by the fostering service.
- Foster carers' personal development plans set out how they will be supported to undertake ongoing training and development that is appropriate to their development needs and experience.
- The reviews of each carer's approval include an appraisal of performance against clear and consistent standards set by the agency, and consideration of training and development needs, which are documented in the review report. The foster carer's personal development plan is reviewed and the effectiveness of training and development received is evaluated. Reviews take into account the views of each child currently placed with the foster carer.
- The fostering service is clear and transparent with their foster carers about the level of support available to them and how to access such support.
- Support and training is made available to foster carers, including hard to reach carers<sup>8</sup>, to assist them in meeting the specific needs of the children they are caring for or are expected to care for.
- Appropriate training on safer caring is provided for all members of the foster household, including young people of sufficient age and understanding, and ensures that foster carers understand how safer caring principles should be applied in a way which meets the needs of individual children.
- All training fits within a framework of equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practice and is organised to encourage and facilitate attendance by foster carers.
- In cases where a foster carer moves to a new fostering service, details of the development and training which he or she has undertaken, and of the extent to which the agreed training and development standards have been met, are made available on request to the new provider, and the foster carer is able to take their training and development portfolio with them.

## **PURPOSE OF SUPERVISION**

The Fostering Social Worker (FSW) will aim to ensure through supervision that:

- Foster children are receiving care which is safe and enhances outcomes for them
- Foster carers are receiving the support they need
- Foster carers are aware of, understand, accept and operate within Children's Services standards, policies, procedures and guidance as well as the Fostering Regulations, Guidance and National Minimum Standards

## **OBJECTIVES OF SUPERVISION**

- To ensure that foster carers are aware of, understand, accept and operate within the Fostering Service Regulations, Guidance and National Minimum Standards.
- To ensure that foster carers are aware of, understand, accept and operate within the Children's Services standards, policies, procedures and guidance
- To ensure procedures have been followed in relation to the placement of children and young people.
- To ensure that foster carers understand their roles and responsibilities and are accountable for their actions.
- To be a primary source of support for foster carers and recognising the demands of their job.
- To provide regular and constructive feedback to foster carers.
- To advise foster carers of developments in policies and procedures which affect their work and to ensure foster carers have information which will enable them to do their job
- To ensure that any issues in relation to care planning/communication with the child's social worker is identified and followed up
- To enable the FSW to monitor and check Schedule 6/7 notification requirements, and to ensure that Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks and Medicals and any other statutory requirements are up to date.
- To enable the FSW to update the Foster Carer in relation to service and procedural developments and good practice updates.
- To promote professional and personal development of foster carers.
- To recognise achievements and good practice in relation to evidence for the Foster Carers Portfolio
- To ensure completion of The Evidence of Foster Carers Skills and Competencies, Appendix 1, which are based on the 5 key outcomes for children and young people
- To ensure that foster carers have the opportunity to raise issues of concern and importance to themselves and to have these addressed.
- To ensure that the Foster Carer is aware of how to make a complaint about any aspect of the service which affects themselves or the child in placement.
- To enable the content of the supervisory discussions to be used in the preparation of the foster carers' Annual Review. (See [Foster Carers Annual Review](#))

## **FREQUENCY OF SUPPORT AND SUPERVISION**

The frequency of support and supervision will be discussed in supervision between the Fostering Team Manager and FSW.

The FSW will:

- Ensure that the SS144 Support and Supervision Agreement Form is signed and completed
- Meet with newly approved foster carers on a fortnightly basis for a minimum of 2 months after approval has been given.
- Subsequently provide supervision on a monthly basis.
- Ensure that where visiting is varied from this usual expectation there is agreement with the FSW's line manager and the carers (for example where the carers provide permanent care or occasional respite). In these circumstances the agreed visiting pattern and the reasons must be recorded on the carers' record. In some circumstances for example, where the carers provide permanent care or only occasional respite.
- Inform the Fostering Team Manager if they are unable to meet the visiting requirements. In the event of the FSW being away from work long term, then alternative supervision arrangements must be put in place.
- Ensure that if a foster carer is taking an agreed break from fostering, telephone contact is maintained at an agreed level. Depending upon the circumstances a visit should be made to the foster carer before further placements are made and consideration given to any need for re-assessment.
- Ensure that where there are two approved carers in the family that both carers are seen. In situations where one carer works, consideration should be given to how a supervisory visit that includes both carers can be achieved.
- Record the supervision on the full SS149 Supervision Agreement Form. This will be completed 3 times a year and the fourth quarter will be the Foster Carer Review
- Record other supervision visits the SS144 Support and Supervision Agreement Form Part One
- Make a minimum of one unannounced visit every 12 months
- Ensure that Supervision Record Form is signed by all parties present, and that the carers receive a copy and a copy is placed on the Foster Carers file.
- See the birth children alone to gain their views when they visit the placement. This will take place at a minimum of 6 monthly and before the carer's annual review

## **WHEN A FSW IS ALLOCATED A FOSTER CARER, THEY MUST ENSURE THAT:**

- All necessary documentation is on the carers file
- All regulatory requirements are up to date
- Contact the Foster Carer within 5 working days of allocation to arrange to meet with them.

During the first visit the FSW will:

- Agree a visiting pattern with the Foster Carer including dates for supervision sessions during the year, which will be recorded on SS144 Support and Supervision Agreement Form
- Inform the carer that they will be making at least one unannounced visit within each review period preferably when the children are present.
- Check that the carer has a signed copy of the Foster Carer Agreement (See Assessment of Foster Carers, Appendix 4) and that they fully understand the terms of this
- Check that all regulatory checks are up to date for example DBS, medicals
- Check that the carers have a safe care policy
- Check that the carer has access to a copy of the Foster Carer Handbook
- Look around the home, including the bedrooms of the foster child to ensure that there are no obvious areas of concern or issues with reference to the Health and Safety Checklist
- Ensure that the Foster Carer has the telephone number of the Emergency Duty Team
- Ensure that the Foster Carer has the details of the support groups
- Ensure that the Foster Carer understands the payment system
- Ensure that joint visits with the child's Social Worker are made.

When a foster carer is transferred to a new FSW:

- The previous FSW must provide a transfer summary
- A joint visit must be arranged between the current FSW and the new FSW

## **THE SUPERVISION AGENDA**

Supervision is a positive, enabling and supportive opportunity for foster carers. It should help them to have:

- Their strengths and weaknesses recognised and developed;
- Their skills and potential enhanced;
- Their relationship with the local authority enhanced;
- Their performance positively challenged and managed.

Each support and supervision meeting will have a clear purpose and agenda and will be clearly recorded as is detailed above

The supervision agenda will include:

- An assessment regarding the levels of care provided to the children in placement. An overview of the child/ren's progress in placement. This will include a discussion regarding: health and physical needs; education and educational support; family contact; the child's cultural, religious identity and leisure needs;
- Ensuring that the Foster Carer has the relevant documentation in relation to any children placed

- An assessment regarding whether the levels of support for foster carers is sufficient and whether they need any additional support e.g. to attend particular meetings
- Observations of the child and behaviour management techniques and strategies including an exploration of the foster carer's understanding of the meaning of the child's behaviour. In relation to a child placed who has a disability; any special issues that relate to these needs and the carer's capability to meet them. This might include a discussion about additional support and respite services;
- Ensuring that fostering household issues are up to date for example safe care, DBS, Medicals.
- Ensuring that concerns of any kind are addressed immediately with foster carer's. Documented opportunities including training, with clear objectives should be put in place for foster carer's to improve and outcomes recorded. If, however, the quality of care remains unchanged, the foster carer's suitability to foster may be questioned. In this circumstance, the FSW should discuss with their manager proceeding with a review of approval;
- Any personal issues such as how a placement is affecting the household or foster carer's family;
- Establishing who is involved in caring for the child? If there has been a change to the caring arrangements the FSW should ensure that the necessary checks have been carried out and consideration given to the extent of the caring role and whether any assessment is required;
- Checking the records that are kept in relation to the child including the child's records and whether or not they need to be updated. There will also be a discussion about the foster carer's recording and log book, incidents accidents etc.;
- An assessment of the training and development needs of the foster carer and the identification of suitable ways of meeting those needs including the foster carer's responsibility for their own development.
- Completion of personal development plans, which are linked to their training and their annual review. To ensure that the foster carer's personal development plan is in place within the Evidence of Skills and Competence Form (Appendix 1).
- Any health and safety issues and financial and practical arrangements;
- The date for the next supervision.

## **RELATED DOCUMENTS**

Foster Carers Annual Review

Foster Carer Agreement (See Assessment of Foster Carers, Appendix 4)

SS144 Support and Supervision Agreement Form

SS149 Supervision Agreement Form

Evidence of Foster Carers Skills and Competencies

Appendix 1

**SUPPORT and SUPERVISION AGREEMENT FORM****Purpose of Supervision**

The FSW will aim to ensure through support and supervision that:

- foster children are receiving care which is safe and enhances outcomes for them and that foster carers are receiving the support they need
- foster carers are aware of, understand, accept and operate within Children's Services standards, policies, procedures and guidance as well as the Fostering National Minimum Standards 2011

**Frequency of support and supervision**

The FSW will provide support and supervision as below:

- Newly approved foster carers - fortnightly support visits for a minimum of 2 months after approval has been given.
- Subsequently monthly supervision.
- Permanent foster carers or those providing only occasional respite –supervision visits may be varied from the usual expectation in agreement with the FSW's line manager and the carers. In these circumstances the agreed visiting pattern and the reasons will be recorded on the carers' record.

We agree the following:

1. To work in an open and honest way.
2. If supervision dates/times are cancelled this is done in good time (whenever possible) and an alternative agreed.
3. To work in partnership with one another,
4. To deal with any issues/differences through discussion.
5. To explore anti-racist and anti-discriminatory values as well as levels of competence.
6. To bring to supervision individual agendas and agree priorities.
7. To record the main points of the session/agree the content and one copy kept on file another given to the carer(s).
8. To review this agreement again following a successful annual review.

This agreement is between:

..... FSW and .....

Foster Carer on .....

---

Period Start Date:

Supervision/Support

Date Scheduled

Date Carried Out

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

Date of foster carers next review .....

Signed .....  
(FSW)

Signed ..... (Fostering Carer)

Signed ..... (Fostering Carer)

**SUPERVISION RECORD**

**PART ONE**

**1. Foster Carer:**

**Date of Supervision:**

**FSW:**

**2. Items for Discussion**

Raised by Foster Carer:

Raised by FSW:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

**3 Placements since last supervision (inc. current placements)**

<u>Name</u>	<u>DOB</u>	<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>	<u>Outcome</u>	<u>Social Worker</u>	<u>Date of last visit</u>

**4 Placement Beginnings and Endings, Progress and Outcomes for Children**

Include details of the provision of information/placement date(s), Placement Request/P.I.R./Risk Assessment/Matching report received. Placement Planning Meeting (within 72 hrs), reports/significant social worker and children's comments. End of placement reports received (to be shared with carers).

**5. General Discussion including any issues/areas of concern, including practical issues**

## 6. Practice Issues

### NOTIFICATIONS:

Have any of the following forms required completing since last Supervision/Review

Accident/Incident/Illness	Yes	No
Missing from Home	Yes	No
Notify Ofsted of Serious Childcare incident	Yes	No
Have there been any allegations/concerns about the foster carer(s) (To be recorded on carers file)	Yes	No
Has the child come to the attention of the police for any reason	Yes	No
Has the child been excluded from school	Yes	No
Concerns re: sexual exploitation	Yes	No

## 7. Action Plan with Timescales

Issue/Area of concern	Action to be taken	By whom	Timescale

**Signature:**

**Foster Carer:** .....

**Signature:**

**Fostering Social Worker:** .....

**Date:** .....

**Date and time of next supervision:** .....

**PART TWO****8. Practical Issues****CHECKLIST:**

Date/Type of last medical	
Date of last DBS checks / foster carers	
Dates//Names of DBS: others	
Date of Last Unannounced Visit	
Date last time bedrooms were seen/sleeping arrangements review	
Date of last Safe Care Policy reviewed	
Date of last Health & Safety Checklist reviewed/updated	

Confirm carers can access: Fostering website for Policies and Procedures, including Foster Carers Handbook	Yes	No
Confirm carers can access: LSCB website	Yes	No
Have these procedures been explained to carer(s)	Yes	No
Does/Do the carer(s) have a signed and dated copy of their foster carer agreement and Terms of Approval	Yes	No
Does/Do the carer(s) understand the content of their current foster carer agreement/terms and conditions	Yes	No
Do the carers actively involve themselves in Life Story Work for children/YP in placement	Yes	No

Does/Do the carer(s) have safe storage for confidential information	Yes	No
Date of last foster carer recordings seen by Fostering S/W :	Yes	No
Does/Do the foster carer(s) have a copy of their last Supervision Record Y/N	Yes	No

## 9. Evidence for Foster Carer Review (FCR) Portfolio

What evidence has been collected since last FCR (including end of placement reports/observations etc), also what can be added? Carers to collate evidence in portfolio. (See guidance document).

1. **Be Healthy**
2. **Stay Safe**
3. **Enjoy and Achieve**
4. **Make a positive contribution**
5. **Achieve economic well being**
6. **Working as part of a Care Team/Relationships with Professionals and families**
7. **Foster Carer Development Plan (inc training and support groups attended)**  
*(What the carers have learnt through their attendance of these groups. How this attendance and learning has improved outcomes for the children in their care. Work done for Specialist Knowledge Area for Level 4 carers)*

**Signature:**

**Foster Carer:** .....

**Signature:**

**Fostering Social Worker:** .....

**Date:** .....

**Date and time of next supervision:** .....

Evidence of Foster Carers Skills and Competencies

Name of Carer ..... Date .....

**EVIDENCE OF SKILLS AND COMPETENCE**

**OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN**

**1. BE HEALTHY**

- 1.1 Promote the health/education and emotional needs of children
- 1.2 Promote the individual identity of children
- 1.3 Promote the individual care of the child

Evidence:	Outcomes	Areas for development:	Action Plan:
1.1			
1.2			
1.3			

**2. STAY SAFE**

- 2.1 Promote a safe and caring environment
- 2.2 Promote safety in relation to the individual
- 2.3 Promote anti-discriminatory care in relation to children with disabilities
- 2.4 Promote confidentiality of information

<b>Evidence:</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Areas for development:</b>	<b>Action Plan:</b>
2.1			
2.2			
2.3			
2.4			

### 3. ENJOY & ACHIEVE

- 3.1 Promote positive behaviour and development
- 3.2 Promote communication with children including listening to children
- 3.3 Promote effective communication with families and professionals

<b>Evidence:</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Areas for development:</b>	<b>Action Plan:</b>
3.1			
3.2			
3.3			

**4. MAKE A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION**

4.1 Promote equality, diversity and rights of individuals and groups

4.2 Promote family and social relationships

<b>Evidence:</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Areas for development:</b>	<b>Action Plan:</b>
4.1			
4.2			

**5. ACHIEVE ECONOMIC WELL-BEING**

5.1 Promote self-help/independence skills

5.2 Promote the planning process in relation to the child

<b>Evidence:</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Areas for development:</b>	<b>Action Plan:</b>
5.1			
5.2			

**6. FOSTER CARER DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

- 6.1 Promote an understanding of how fostering impacts on family members
- 6.2 Promote opportunities to learn within the community to help provide support. LIST OF ANY SUPPORT GROUPS ATTENDED (INCLUDING DATES) MUST BE PROVIDED
- 6.3 Promote opportunities to learn through training and skills development LIST OF TRAINING ATTENDED SINCE LAST REVIEW (INCLUDING DATES) MUST BE INCLUDED. ALSO LIST OF IDENTIFIED TRAINING NEEDS FOR THE NEXT 12 MONTHS
- 6.4 Promote effective functioning and relationships through periods of stress

<b>Evidence:</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Areas for development:</b>	<b>Action Plan:</b>
6.1			
6.2			
6.3			
6.4			