

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICE

CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE

Title:

**Approval of Family and Friends as Foster
Carers for Specific Children**

1. SUMMARY

This procedure describes the criteria for making the decision to approve family members or friends as foster carers for specific children and the action to be taken to obtain that approval.

2. LINKED PROCEDURES AND DOCUMENTS

[Recruitment, Approval and Review of Foster Carers – Section 5.15](#)

[Emergency Approval of Family and Friends as Foster Carers for Specific Children
- Section 5.17](#)

[Specialist Foster Carer Recruitment, Approval and Review – Section 5.18](#)

[Medicals for Foster Carers – Section 5.19](#)

[Fostering Panels – Section 5.20](#)

[Register of Foster Carers – Section 5.21](#)

**3. LEGISLATION AND
STANDARDS**

Children Act 1989.
Care Standards Act 2000.
Fostering Services - National Minimum Standards 2002
Fostering Services Regulations 2002.
NFCA UK National Standards for Foster Care 1999.

4. RESPONSIBILITY

General Manager (Child Placement)
Fostering Service Managers

Fostering Workers
Service Managers
Social Workers

5. ACTION

Criteria for Placement

- *When a child needs to be looked after by the local authority, first consideration should be given to a family member or friend undertaking that care providing this is practicable and consistent with the child's welfare.*
- *Any decision that a child needs to be looked after by the authority must be made on child care grounds, and must not be made on the grounds of income maintenance alone.*
- *When a child is to be placed with family or friend foster carers, a decision must be made about whether the placement will be permanent or time limited.*

Application

- *The Fostering Service Manager will allocate a fostering worker to undertake an assessment of the family member or friend as a foster carer.*
- *The prospective carers will complete an application form as in Recruitment, Approval and Review of Foster Carers procedure.*
- *The fostering worker will obtain a full set of references and a full medical report, and will interview two personal referees as in Recruitment, Approval and Review of Foster Carers procedure.*

Assessment

- *The fostering worker will complete an assessment using the standard BAAF Form F2, and giving particular consideration to the pre-existing relationship between the child and the carers*

Preparation and Training

- *Foster carers being assessed for a specific child will be expected to undergo some preparation linked to the needs of the specific child and the carers themselves. The fostering worker will help the carers to identify these needs and will offer relevant preparation and training.*

Approval

- *The Fostering Service Manager will sign the completed assessment and present it to the relevant Foster Panel with a recommendation for approval for a specific named child.*
- *The application will then be treated in accordance with Recruitment, Approval and*

Review of Foster Carers procedure.

After Approval

- *Supervision, support, training and review of family and friend foster carers will be in accordance with procedures that apply to foster carers in general.*
- *The Foster Care Agreement (Appendix 1) should be completed by the Family and Friends Foster Carers and the Service Manager (Placement) 28 Days of Approval.*
- *A record of this will be kept by the Foster Carer and on the Case File.*

6. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Family and Friends Foster Care Agreement.

7. COMPLIANCE TO EQUALITIES

“North Yorkshire County Council is committed to equality and to making fair and equitable treatment an integral part of all we do. We will take action to identify and eliminate any directly or indirectly discriminatory practices, which act as barriers to achieving this objective. We oppose all forms of unlawful or unfair discrimination whether on the grounds of race, colour, ethnic or national origin, sex or gender reassignment, marital status, sexual orientation, religion or belief, disability, or any condition or requirement which places a person at a disadvantage and cannot be objectively justified”.

The full text of the Equalities Policy statement can be found on the Intranet or be obtained from the Corporate Personnel Policy Unit at County Hall, Northallerton.

8. DISTRIBUTION

North Yorkshire County Council’s intranet.

North Yorkshire County Council
Children & Young People's Service

Fostering Services Regulations 2002
Foster Care Agreement

The Fostering Services Regulations 2002 require all fostering agencies to enter into a written agreement with foster carers at the time of their approval and registration.

The purpose of this agreement is to provide written information about the terms and conditions of the partnership between the carer and North Yorkshire Children's Social Care.

The Ofsted is the regulatory body which oversees all fostering services and carries out regular inspections.

1. **Terms of approval**

(Insert name) was approved on *(insert date)* to foster *(insert number, gender, age etc.*

Your first review will be no later than *(insert date)*. *(12 months from approval date)*

2. **Support**

Children's Social Care has a responsibility to provide support to you as a foster carer. Support will entail contact through phone calls and visits by your fostering link worker on a mutually agreed basis. In any event, this should be at a minimum of once a month. You are seen as working as part of a team and, as such, Children's Social Care will engage with you in reciprocal feedback in relation to the care of the children in your home. Contact with you and the fostered child will also be maintained by the child's social worker at a frequency agreed at the time of placement. An out of hours social work service is available via the Emergency Duty Team.

3. **The Foster Carer's Annual Review**

This meeting forms the basis of carers' ongoing fostering registration. One year after approval your 1st review will take place. The review report will be presented to fostering panel for consideration. Reviews represent an important way to monitor the development of the carer and re-emphasises that they are part of a wider team. You will be able to discuss your views on the department as a fostering provider and its service to you as a carer. Post placement reports (written by carers and social workers when a child's placement ends) will be used at the review to discuss the progress of each placement and your contribution to it. It will be necessary to inspect your home taking into particular account its condition, its suitability in relation to the number and age of children fostered and health and safety matters. In addition to yourself, your link worker and a chairperson will be present at the review. Occasionally a social worker for one of the children you have fostered since the previous review will also be invited. You can ask for a review to be held earlier than 12 months if you wish. Likewise, the department may arrange to hold a review earlier under certain circumstances, for example, if there has been a significant change in

your family composition or if an allegation has been made against you. (See Para. 13). You will receive written confirmation of your approval status after each review.

4. The Foster Placement Agreement

Each time a child is placed the social worker and the foster carer enter into a specific agreement.

Information will be given on the following: the arrangements for the child and the objectives of the placement; the child's personal history, health, education, religious persuasion, culture and religious background and racial origin; any particular safety considerations; disability issues.

Additionally you will be told of the following: financial support; giving consent for medical treatment, for school trips and for the child to stay overnight elsewhere; Children's Social Care visits to the child; contact with family; any court proceedings.

You will be asked to comply with the *Foster Care Agreement* and to cooperate with the department over the arrangements for the child.

5. Legal Liability

North Yorkshire has made comprehensive insurance arrangements to cover situations arising out of placements. Cover includes personal accident, public liability, legal expenses and property insurance. You must, however, notify your own home and motor insurers upon approval as foster carers, advising them that you will be caring for children on behalf of Children's Social Care. A valid MOT certificate must be held.

6. Complaints and Representations

The majority of placements work successfully to the satisfaction of all. However, occasionally this is not the case. Therefore foster carers may wish to make complaints/representations about various aspects of the Foster Care service, or decisions made about them or about children placed with them. If the matter cannot be resolved by discussion with your link worker, the child's social worker or the service manager, then the issues should be put in writing to the Children's Social Care Complaints Officer. A pamphlet is available on request.

7. Notification of changes in circumstances

You are required to give written notification of the following: intended change of address or change in household composition; change in personal circumstances or events which may affect your capacity to foster or affect the suitability of your home; any application you make to adopt or to act as a childminder.

8. Foster carers' responsibilities to each child placed

The Fostering Regulations require carers:

- Not to administer corporal punishment; this includes any rough handling, withholding of food and actions taken in the heat of the moment

Section 5y3

- Not to disclose information relating to the child or his circumstances to anyone without the consent of the department and to return all documentation relating to the child when the placement ends;
- To comply with any placement agreement;
- To care for the child as though a member of the family and to promote his/her welfare having regard to the long and short term plans for the child;
- To comply with the Authority's policy and procedure in protecting children in its care from abuse and neglect and adhere to the policy on control, restraint and discipline;
- To co-operate with Ofsted and to allow authorised officers to interview carers and visit their home at any reasonable time;
- To keep the department informed of the child's progress and to notify it immediately of any significant events; this would include such things as accidents and unreasonable absences from the foster home;
- To allow any child to be removed from the foster home if the department assesses that to continue the placement would be detrimental to his/her welfare;
- To attend a child's Looked After reviews;
- To keep a log of progress and important events during placements

9. **Contact with the child's family**

Fostering regulations impose a duty to promote contact between a child being looked after and his/her family and significant others where it is consistent with the child's welfare. Children's Social Care is also required to work in partnership with parents in reaching agreements and in planning with them the aims and time scales of the placement and how these will be achieved. Apart from exceptional circumstances, where a child's welfare may be prejudiced, the foster carer's name and address will normally be divulged to parents and others. Contact between the child and family may include visits to the foster carer's home but arrangements should take account of the foster carer's other commitments.

10. **Visitors to foster carers' homes**

The regulations oblige carers to permit people authorised by Children's Social Care and Ofsted to visit the foster home. Any arrangements of this nature would respect foster carers routines and other commitments. However, there is a duty to see the child alone on occasions and to make impromptu visits in addition to planned ones. The child's sleeping accommodation will also need to be seen.

Where a placement ceases to meet the child's needs Children's Social Care has the power to remove the child from the foster home. Such a step would be taken only in extreme circumstances. The foster carer is entitled to as full a discussion and explanation as possible regarding this course of action and to sensitive handling of the situation and its impact on their household.

11. **Discipline**

Foster carers are expressly forbidden from using corporal punishment. Physical restraint should only be used as a last resort where it is necessary to prevent likely injury to a child or other people or likely serious damage to property. All such incidents must be reported to Children's Social Care as soon as possible.

12. Allegations against a Foster Carer

In the course of caring for other peoples' children, you may become the subject of an allegation made by a child or parent or any other person. Children's Social Care has a responsibility to investigate any such allegations. The child's welfare has to be protected, but account will be taken of the sensitivities and rights of all parties. Your need for additional support and advice will be recognised. This can be sought from the link worker or alternatively via the Fostering Network or your local Foster Care Association. In some circumstances it may be appropriate to seek legal advice.

13. Disruptions

Sometimes things go wrong! Placements do not always end in a planned way. If this is the case, then this is referred to as a *disruption*. In the case of disruptions of *permanent* foster placements, an independently chaired meeting of all parties will be held and a report compiled and presented to the fostering Panel. Disruptions, whilst unwelcome and unfortunate, serve to help us all learn valuable lessons and where necessary, alter our practices and arrangements for caring for children.

14. Termination of Approval

The ending of approval may come about for a whole number of reasons and may be instigated by either the foster carer or by Children's Social Care. Where a proposal is made by Children's Social Care to terminate approval, this will be presented at the Fostering Panel. The resulting decision and the reasons will be discussed with the foster carer and a written notice issued.

Signed:Foster Carer

.....Foster Carer

.....Service Manager Child Placement

..... Date