

Swindon Borough Council

Fostering Service

Induction of Foster Carers Policy

Introduction and Legal Framework

It is important that Foster Carers receive the support and supervision they need in order to provide good care for the children and young people who are placed with them. The giving of information starts at the pre-approval stage when carers are provided training. As part of the assessment they also undertake tasks that help them to prepare for the job they are about to embark on e.g. safer caring. It is crucial that this support, guidance and information giving continues after approval and throughout their career. The guidance in this document is for the induction of new carers who have been approved or who are temporarily approved as Foster Carers.

The National Minimum Standards for Fostering states:

NMS 20

All new 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. Family and friends Foster Carers are supported to achieve the Training, Support and Development Standards for Family and Friends Foster Carers.

NMS 21

On approval, Foster Carers are given information, either a handbook or electronic resources, which cover policies, procedures (including with regard to allegations), guidance, financial information, legal information and insurance details. This information is updated regularly.

Following Approval

Allocation of a Supervising Social Worker

Foster Carers will be allocated a Supervising Social Worker. A joint meeting with your Assessing Social Worker and your Supervising Social Worker will be arranged.

Induction Meeting

Foster Carers will be invited to an induction meeting and will be provided with the following information;

- A checklist which includes the following areas should be completed and put on the Foster Carers file by the Supervising Social Worker
- All Foster Carers should be given the Foster Carer Handbook.
- Supervising Social Worker to discuss with the Foster Carer the expectation regarding keeping diary sheets, recording medication and completion of accident and incident forms.
- Provide Foster Carers with copies of the expense claims forms and talk to them about how and when these should be completed.
- Complete the Support and Supervision Contract, discuss with the Foster Carers the purpose of supervision, how this will be recorded and agree future supervision dates.

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- Ensure that the Foster Carers are aware of the Statement of Purpose and how they can access this.
- Provide Foster Carers with a copy of the Children's Guide.
- Ensure that the Foster Carers have access to the current Foster Carer Training Plan. .
- Inform the Foster Carers that they will be given membership with Fostering Network and ensure that the process for them to become members is completed.
- Ensure that the Foster Carers are aware of the Swindon Foster Carer Association and contact numbers and email addresses are provided.
- Ensure that the Foster Carers have the relevant telephone numbers of their Supervising Social Worker, Business Support, Out of Hours Support and EDS.
- Provide the Foster Carer with the name and telephone number of the Fostering Team Manager.
- Ensure that the Foster Carers are aware of the complaints procedure for themselves as well as the comments, compliments or complaints for children and young people.
- Discuss the possibility of putting the Foster Carers in touch with a more experienced Foster Carer as an additional support – Buddy Scheme.
- Provide Foster Carers with the information about local support groups and how they might access these.
- Arrange for ID cards for the carers to be completed.
- Any outstanding actions from the above list should be clearly recorded in the supervision record and monitored to ensure that they are all completed.

Within the first six weeks

During the first six weeks your Supervising Social Worker will discuss the following;

- Supervising Social worker will visits a minimum of every 4 weeks for the first six months when this will be reviewed.
- Supervising Social Worker to go through the Foster Carer Agreement with the carers and ensure that this is understood and signed.
- Ensure that the Foster Carers have the appropriate TSD (Training, Support and development) Standards Evidence workbook.
- Supervising Social Worker to discuss with the Foster Carer a strategy as to how the Foster Carer(s) will be able to gain the knowledge and experience in order to evidence the workbook. For carers who are not temporarily approved it is also advisable to check that they have received the cross referencing grid linking the assessment process with the Training, Support and Development (TSD) Standards so this can contribute to their workbook. Those who are temporary approved should receive this when their assessment has been completed.
- Ensure that the Safe Care Agreement and Fire Plan are completed. Also check that the Foster Carer does have a copy of the 'Safer Caring' book from Fostering Network.
- Complete the Personal Development Plan for each carer which should include the core induction modules which should be completed within 12 months of approval.
- Ensure that the Foster Carer understands the purpose of the statutory reviews for children looked after and their role within this.

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- Discuss with the Foster Carers what to expect regarding information about a child and check that they know what information they should be asking for when considering a placement.
- Ensure that Foster Carers have the secure and lockable place where they can store confidential information.
- Any outstanding actions should be recorded on the Foster Carers file

The first twelve months after approval (or temporary approval)

Supervising Social Workers to monitor completion of all the tasks noted above and continue to note in supervision if there are areas that have not been completed, the reasons for this and the plan to ensure they are completed.

Supervising Social Workers to monitor and give feedback on the Foster Carer's record keeping, this includes diary sheets and medication records.

The TSD (Training, Support and Development Standards) workbooks should be worked through to ensure that the Foster Carers have all the information and evidence they require to complete the appropriate workbook. Workbooks should be completed within the appropriate timescales (12 months from approval for foster carers and 18 months for family and friends carers).

Supervising Social Worker's to discuss the Foster Carer's on-going development and help them to identify further training and development needs and how these may be met. Foster Carers to maintain their own personal learning and development record and Supervising Social Workers to ensure that this information is also recorded on the Foster Carer file.

Ensure that Foster Carers have access to and an understanding of all the relevant policies. Foster Carers have an understanding of the purpose of the annual household review and are clear about who is consulted for feedback and the feedback that foster carers and their families are expected to provide.