

Immediate Placement of a Child with Relatives or Friends

Upon receipt of this notification, the Family Placement Team Manager will:

- f) Arrange for the carer to receive weekly payments of fostering allowance.
- g) Allocate a family placement social worker to undertake the following:
 - Provide linkwork support to the placement
 - Drafting of Schedule³ 3 report (See Appendix A)
 - Completion of agency checks
 - Medical references
 - Interview referees

4.4 Action required if the child's placement is expected to continue beyond six weeks

- (a) Child's social worker completes Form E⁴ Part 1 in respect of the child
- (b) Family placement social worker completes Form F⁵ Part 1 in respect of the carer(s)
- (c) Child's social worker and family placement social worker submit the following documents to the fostering panel **within** the six-week period of placement allowed under Regulation 38.
 - Completed application form
 - Schedule 1 report- completed by family placement social worker
 - Form F2, Part 1, completed by family placement social worker
 - Form E, Part 1 completed by the child's social worker
 - Copies of any available medical reports
 - Details of enhanced Criminal Records Bureau criminal conviction checks
 - Details of agency checks
 - Record of interviews with referees
- (d) Fostering panel recommends (or otherwise) interim approval of the applicant(s) under Regulation 28 for a period of 3 months to allow time for a fuller assessment
- (e) Family placement social worker notifies carer(s) of the interim approval under Regulation 26 and arranges for the carer to sign a copy of the full foster carer agreement form.

³ Report addressing issues identified in Schedule 1 Family Placement Regulations.

⁴ BAAF form used for identifying child's placement needs

⁵ BAAF form used for assessing prospective foster carers

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Action required if the placement is to extend beyond the period of interim approval (4.5 months)

- (a) Family placement social worker completes full Form F assessment and continues to offer linkwork support to the carers.
- (b) Child's social worker completes Form E assessment and visits the child in accordance with the Fostering Regulations 2002, i.e., six weekly or when required.
- (c) Family placement social worker drafts a linking report, in conjunction with the child's social worker: This linking report should address the following issues
 - Reason for the child's proposed placement
 - Carer's ability to meet the child's priority needs in the short/medium and long term.
 - Alternatives to placement with applicants, including details of searches/enquiries
 - Parents views on the proposed placement
 - Child/Young person's views on the proposed placement
 - Anticipated need for post placement support
 - Conclusion and Recommendations
- (d) Child's social worker and family placement worker present the above reports to the fostering panel for approval, together with relevant medical information, references, police, DOH and agency checks etc.
- (e) Family placement social worker formally notifies carer(s) of approval under Regulation 3 and arranges for Fostering Network membership.

5 Accountability

Accountability for the decision to look after a child rests with the Head of Service for the relevant fieldwork team.

Accountability for the decision to place a child with a relative or friend for a period of up to six weeks under Regulation 38 rests with the Team Manager of the relevant fieldwork team.

Accountability for the ensuring that reports are submitted to the fostering panel within six weeks of placements is held jointly between the fieldwork team and family placement team managers. Fieldwork team managers should ensure that their staff complete reports on the child within this timescale. The family placement team manager is responsible for ensuring that the assessment of the carer(s) is completed in advance of this 6-week limit to placements under Regulation 38.

Accountability for ensuring that the correct reports and paperwork are submitted to the Joint Foster Panel lies with the Family Placement Team Manager. The Panel application must be quality checked and signed by the Head of Service (Looked After Children).

The decision to approve the foster carers ultimately rests with the department rather than the fostering panel. On receipt of panel minutes, the Agency Decision Maker will make a decision about whether or not the carer's are approved taking into account panel recommendations.

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Accountability for the ongoing supervision of the child's placement rests with fieldwork team staff and management. Accountability for support, review and ongoing approval of the foster carers resides with family placement service managers in the usual way.

6 Support to Carers

All kinship foster carers will be provided with the same level of support as other departmental foster carers. The family placement service will provide a Supervising Social Worker as soon as it becomes apparent that the placement may need to extend beyond the 6 weeks allowed under Regulation 38. The Supervising Social Worker will work to provide the same level of support as is extended to other foster carers. The kinship carer will also have access to any out of hours support services that are available to other foster carers.

Arrangements should be made for kinship foster carers to have access to the full range of training opportunities afforded to other approved foster carers.

Kinship foster carers will receive a level of allowance in line with the Fostering Network minimum recommended rates for foster carers.

Kinship foster carers will be assessed for financial assistance in respect of start up costs from the family placement budget as appropriate.

Kinship foster carers should be provided with NFCA membership and a BFBC leisure card following full approval

7 Payment of Fostering Allowances to Regulation 38 foster carers

The child's social worker should notify the Family Placement Team Manager at the earliest opportunity that a suitable placement has been made which meets the initial requirements under Regulation 38 of the Foster Care regulations.

The Family Placement Team Manager will initially authorise payment of fostering allowances (as detailed above) for a maximum period of 6 weeks (from the date of commencement of the placement) on receipt of the application to foster form. The level of fostering allowance payable is the Fostering Network minimum rate for foster carers.

The Family Placement Team Manager may authorise funding for a further 3-month period following the interim approval of the placement by the fostering panel.

The Family Placement Team Manager may authorise continued payment of fostering allowances in the normal way on receipt of confirmation that the carer's application has been considered by the fostering panel and agreed by the agency decision maker.

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Payments of fostering allowance may be suspended or terminated by the Family Placement Team Manager in the event that:

- The foster carer does not cooperate fully with the assessment process,
- On receipt of information that indicates that the carer could not lawfully be approved as a foster carer.
- Following a formal departmental decision not to approve the applicants as foster carers.
- Following termination of the child's placement with the carer

Foster carers should be advised of their right to appeal against any decision to suspend or terminate their allowance. This appeal should be made to the Head of Service (Looked After Children) in the first instance.

8 Overlap with legal proceedings

On some occasions, children may be placed with kinship carers during the course of legal proceedings. In these circumstances, it may be necessary to speed up assessment and approval processes to bring them into line with court time-scales and deadlines. This may be particularly the case if the court is required to consider the possibility of the child living with the carer on a permanent basis. However, in all circumstances a full assessment must still be completed.

In these circumstances, consideration should also be given to whether the child's needs may be better met by their placement under a residence or special guardianship order rather than continued placement under fostering regulations.

See departmental policy on permanency planning, special guardian and residence orders at:

<http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/permanency-planning-for-looked-after-children.pdf>

<http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/special-guardianship-policy-and-procedure.pdf>

<http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/residence-order-policy-and-procedure.pdf>

9 Notifications to carers

Staff involved should ensure that the applicants are kept fully informed of the progress of their applications. After panel has considered their application in accordance with general fostering procedures all applicants will be formally notified in writing of their recommendations within three days. When the Agency Decision Maker has confirmed (or otherwise) the panel recommendation, that too will be confirmed in writing.

10 Review of placements

Placements made under these regulations should be reviewed at intervals set out in the department's policy and procedures for the statutory review of looked after children. See:

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<http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/statutory-review-of-children-looked-after-policy-and-procedure.pdf>

<http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/policy-and-protocol-for-the-consultation-of-lac-and-their-families.pdf>

The carer's terms of approval will be subject to annual review by the family placement team, or more frequently in the event of difficulty, complaint or allegations.

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Appendix A: Format for reports:

This format outlines the issues to be addressed when considering a person as a possible foster carer for a child. It is based on Schedule 3 of the Fostering Regulations 2002. This format is issued to set out the minimum requirements and is for guidance only.

When making a placement, detailed consideration should also be given to the applicant's ability to care for the specific child and their general competency as a prospective foster carer. (See BFBC Fostering Policy and Procedure, Section 3.2.7, at <http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/fostering-service-policy-and-procedure.pdf> for further details.

Minimum reporting requirements:

- 1) Full name, address and date of birth of proposed carer.
- 2) Details of his health (supported by a medical report), personality, marital status and details of his current and any previous marriage or similar relationship.
- 3) Particulars of any other adult members of his household.
- 4) Particulars of the children in his family, whether or not members of his household, and any other children in his household.
- 5) Particulars of his accommodation.
- 6) His religious persuasion, and his capacity to care for a child from any particular religious persuasion.
- 7) His racial origin, his cultural and linguistic background and his capacity to care for a child from any particular origin or cultural or linguistic background.
- 8) His past and present employment or occupation, his standard of living and leisure activities and interests.
- 9) His previous experience (if any) of caring for his own and other children.
- 10) His skills, competence and potential relevant to his capacity to care effectively for a child placed with him.
- 11) The outcome of any request or application made by him or any other member of his household to foster or adopt children, or for registration for child minding or day care, including particulars of any previous approval or refusal of approval relating to him or to any other member of his household.