



Statement of Purpose

Family Works Fostering
Essex

August 2016



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Introduction

Family Works Fostering (FWF) is an innovative independent fostering agency (Limited Company) that is established to meet the needs of children and young people, who require quality foster placements, between the ages of 0 – 18 years of either gender. Family Works Fostering strives to provide safe, stable and first class foster care where children and young people are valued, supported and encouraged to grow and develop as individuals.

Family Works Fostering (FWF) aims to comply with the principles outlined in:

- National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services (England and Wales)
- Fostering Services Regulations 2011
- National Care Standards Act 2000
- The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations 2010
- The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review and Fostering Services (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2013 which amend the Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 with respect to the assessment and approval of foster carers for looked after children
- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- The Children and Families Act 2014
- Training, Support and Development Induction Standards for Foster Care.

Family Works Fostering also follows best practice outlined in the UK National Standards for Foster Care and code of practice.

This Statement of Purpose details our aims and objectives; the way we recruit, approve, train and support foster carers; the range of facilities and services we provide and the staffing and management structure – all of which underpin the provision of an efficient service.

This Statement of Purpose is intended to provide information to a wide audience including:

- Family Works Fostering staff
- Foster carers and prospective foster carers (including foster carers' own children)
- Children and young people placed with Family Works Fostering foster carers
- Local Authorities which are considering placing with Family Works Fostering foster carers
- General public

Our Vision

Our vision is to provide a safe, stable and caring environment which exceeds required standards in meeting the needs of all children and young people placed with our foster carers, enabling them to realise their potential and to enhance their life opportunities.

Family Works Fostering believe that every child / young person has the right to have the same opportunities as other child / young person in an environment that is nurturing, supportive and safe in enabling every child to reach their full potential, through empowering them to take control of their lives in a positive manner.

FWF provides a culturally sensitive fostering service catering for a wide selection of children including White British, Asian, African, Caribbean Communities and Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers/Refugees who can be from the European Communities.

FWF was established in the hope of redressing the imbalance that some children face in the care system due to discrimination such as; sexism, racism, and other prejudices. FWF focuses on working with young people in a way that enable them to express themselves in a supportive/controlled environment, where extensive work can be carried out, both formally and informally. This in turn empowers the young person to come to terms with their emotional, educational, social and cultural needs within a family setting.


FWF works with young people, who have challenging behaviour and/or offending behaviour. The foster placement offers each young person an individualistic approach to his or her identified needs. Part of the foster parent's role is to focus on the young person's presenting problem(s). The Placement plan is used to highlight these areas with a positive plan of action for the young person, foster parent, family, placing authority and other organisations to work towards, offering support and advice. In addition, foster parents will provide positive aspects in young people's lives to ensure that this will enable them to respect differences, value diversity and empower them to take control of their lives.

Children cannot be valued unless foster parents are recognised as the important resource that they are. It is they who administer to a child's needs on a 24-hour basis and who have the capacity through the skill, commitment and care they demonstrate to transform a child's life and experiences. FWF foster parents will be the single most important resource to children and young people looked after by the agency on behalf of local authorities. They need to be supported in their demanding role by the supervising social workers, social workers and the placing authority. Training, social events, workshops, support groups, fees and allowances and regular visits all combine to assist carers in their daily care of children. FWF carers in turn must never underestimate the complexity of the fostering task, the neediness of many of the children for whom they will care and the memories children will carry away of the foster home in which they have lived.

Our Aims and Objectives

It is the aim and objective of FWF to provide needs based fostering services to children and young people who will be placed with us. In our statutory roles and responsibilities FWF aims to:

- Provide a safe and positive environment which represents young people and allows them to address the realities in their lives in a cultural environment that they can identify with.
- To work within the boundaries and dictates of Children's Act 1989 and 2004, National Minimum Standards and The Fostering Services Regulations 2011 which form the basis of the regulatory framework under the Care Standards Act 2000 and also to work closely with Ofsted to ensure that standards are maintained.
- To provide placing authorities with weekly and monthly progress reports, when requested, on the young people placed within FWF. To ensure that each foster child has a current Placement Plan. To supervise all foster placements, carry out regular health and safety checks and risk assessments on all foster placements and to participate in all statutory reviews.
- To promote and develop the child/young person's emotional, social, educational and cultural needs.
- To break the culture of institutionalisation, whilst recognising that semi-independent training encompasses a multitude of issues in relation to living independently.
- To empower the young person to come to terms with their presenting problem; to enable them to express themselves in a positive, safe and controlled environment.
- To maintain a varied and attractive program of recruitment and marketing appropriate to the needs of a diverse society so as to attract the maximum number of foster care applicants.
- To assess foster carers within the timescales outlined in the Department of Health Fostering Services, National Minimum Standards (2011) and through an assessment process that is rigorous and informative.
- To support foster parents through a range of social events, training opportunities, support groups and visits, ensuring the meeting of standards and the promotion of good child care practice.
- To positively promote and develop a fostering service that is sensitive to issues of religion, ethnicity and culture, promoting fostering from across the communities represented by the children and ensuring that placement choice is appropriate to the racial and religious origins of the child.

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- To consult with children, young people, foster parents and staff on their experiences of the service and on required improvements.
 - To work in partnership with other children, families, staff, other council departments and agencies to promote corporate parenting and secure effective outcomes for children and for foster parents.
 - To ensure that all foster parents and staff undertake Disclosure Barring Services (DBS) checks and are reviewed every 3 years in line with Fostering Regulations 2011
 - Any changes to the statement of purpose & Children's guide FWF will notify Ofsted and a copy sent within 28 days. FWF will review the Statement of Purpose annually; however, this may be reviewed earlier dependent to circumstances in relation to service provision and internal audits.
 - FWF to ensure at all times that the service is conducted in a manner which is consistent with its statement of purpose including any conditions for the time being in force in relation to the registration of the agency.

Structure

MANAGEMENT AND STAFFING

The structure will be flat until the business starts to pick up and then staff will be employed.

The Registered Manager has qualifications that include a Diploma in Social Work, Bachelor's Degree in Social Work, Certificate in Bereavement Counselling and various social work post qualifications. The Registered Manager will receive external supervision.

Also, there is a Panel team responsible for the assessment and approval of foster parents across the Agency. A dedicated referrals team is responsible for the processing and matching of placements in accordance with legislation and internal standards. Also the team is responsible for the recruitment, development, health and safety and payments to foster parents.

In addition to permanent staff, there are others who work for the Family Works Fostering on an independent, self-employed basis across a variety of roles including Panel members, Form F assessors and support workers.

All casual or self-employed workers are required to hold appropriate qualifications and will have previous experience related to the work they are undertaking. Family Work Fostering carries out a range of pre-employment checks on all staff including references and telephone follow-up calls, enhanced DBS checks to ensure the welfare and safety of children.

Family Works Fostering may commission qualified, experienced consultants from time to time who will give advice and guidance regarding best practices regarding the service

The staffing team caters for the diverse needs of the foster parents and young people. All staff & Foster parents are trained via our in-house and external Training Courses which cover all aspects of Good Child Care Practice in relation to Looked After Children.

All staff receives monthly supervision with their line manager or other designated senior person and group reflective meetings. Records of these meetings will be kept detailing agreed action and timescales. This is in accordance with Family Works Fostering's supervision policy.

All staff are appraised within the first six months of their employment and annually thereafter. This is to assess with the member of staff their development during their probationary period and then each year thereafter. 360-degree feedback is sought for all staff appraisals. This will also identify how best Family Works Fostering can support staff members to reach their full potential. A coaching and mentoring model is also adopted in supervision.

Services & Facilities

TYPES OF PLACEMENTS

Family Works Fostering offers a range of placements, which includes planned, emergency and respite care. Family Works Fostering recognises that placing authorities are looking for different types of placements to meet the needs of young people in care in respect to time scale and type of placement.

Emergency placements are defined as being same day placements (within 24 hours) the agency should receive a brief synopsis of the young person's behaviour and placement history, this should be accompanied by a recent report/assessment either from the Social Worker or the last placement. This is important in ensuring that the right care and support will be provided to the child/young person from the beginning of the placement.

Short and medium-term placements where a child is expected to return home or move onto a permanent adoptive or foster home.

- Short-term placement will be between 1 week to 3 months.
- Medium – term placement will be 3 months to six months.

Long-term placements where the child/young person is expected to remain until independence


Respite placements where the family is supported by a regular break or due to crises within the family. This is usually for 2 days up to 6 weeks.

Remand and challenging behaviour placements – These carers will have gained experience of working with young people with challenging behaviour and have received training. A number of these foster parents will have experience of residential work and experience of working with challenging behaviour.

Parent and child placements – This type of placement is for young people who have become parents at a young age and who need support and guidance in caring for their own child. Often the placements are used to assess parenting skills and the ability of the parents to keep their child safe and properly cared for in both short and long term.

Sibling placements – Sibling placements are for brothers and sisters who are placed together in a foster care household. FWF advocates keeping siblings together within a family environment, unless it is deemed inappropriate by the placing authority.

Same-race placements – In general the FWF promotes and encourages placements reflective of a child's ethnic and religious inheritance. On occasions carers are recruited to offer care to newly



arriving and unaccompanied young people to ensure their linguistic and cultural needs are met, and for children who have been trans-racially placed, and have a poor self-image or negative attitude towards people from their own ethnic group.

Disabled children & young people placements – FWF will also recruit experienced foster parents with skills in caring for children and young people who are disabled and / or require specialist medical care.


The Social Worker making the referral must also provide the agency with the child/young person's historical information, completed assessments, Looked After Child (LAC) forms 'referral forms'/placement information records. These forms should be received on the day of the placement or within twenty-four (24) hours of the placement being made.

FWF will not advocate any shared accommodation unless this has been recommended and/or agreed with the child's Social Worker(s) in writing.

SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Family Works Fostering offers the following services to children and young people of either gender:

- [a] Outreach work (courts, Immigration, Schools/colleges, shopping, & families)
- [b] One to one discussions and support
- [c] Education (support with homework and other set educational tasks, where necessary liaison with schools / colleges / education centers)
- [d] Culture / identity awareness
- [e] Drug / alcohol / substance awareness
- [f] Providing recreational / leisure activities
- [g] Reports, (assessment, progress, incident & Management investigations)
- [h] Working with offending behaviour
- [i] Family contact work
- [j] Health care awareness (Doctor, Dentist, Optician, Hospitals)



[k] Gender awareness

[l] Maintaining the Boundaries of the placement / respecting the local community

[m] Equal Opportunities / Diversity

[n] Resettlement for new arrivals to the UK (immigration support)

[o] Support during applications for asylum/refugee status as well as liaising closely with the Immigration Authorities and other relevant agencies.

[p] Semi-independence Training

Safeguarding Children

Family Works Fostering works hard to ensure that children in foster care Stay Safe and are aware of their rights. The right to be safe, secure and protected and the right for adults to listen and for young people to be treated equally and fairly are fundamental principles. Procedures are in place to ensure that foster carers have sufficient information about every child in their care, to enable them to keep children safe and meet all their needs.

Family Works Fostering has a robust system for checking prospective carers' backgrounds and their suitability to care for vulnerable children. Elements of child protection and how to provide a safe caring environment are reinforced throughout assessment, approval and training for foster carers. All carers have a Safer Caring Agreement in relation to the household and each individual child in placement as appropriate and this will be reviewed and signed subject to changes within the foster carers' household. Family Works Fostering has a policy against corporal punishment including no smacking, slapping, shaking and all other humiliating forms of treatment or punishment. FWF also has guidelines for the acceptable use of sanctions within the home. Every complaint against a carer is treated seriously and is subject to Family Works Fostering's Complaints and Representations Procedure.

COMPLAINTS AND REPRESENTATION


Family Works Fostering believes that children' young people and their families, and foster carers, have the right to express their views for example compliments, complaints, suggestions or representations about the services that are arranged and delivered, and that by doing so we can improve quality and effectiveness.

Suggestions and complaints are viewed as a positive means of ensuring the quality of service is reviewed, both at a local level and through the formal complaints procedure.

A complaint is a verbal or written expression of dissatisfaction or disquiet. It may be about the organisation, about the implementation of decisions, about the quality or appropriateness of services, or their delivery or non-delivery.

Representations include enquiries, suggestions and statements about such matters as the availability, delivery and nature of services and will not necessarily be critical.

The complaints procedure is provided to all staff and foster carers. On admission at the placement, each young person is given a copy of the "Young Person's/ Children's Handbook" which has details



of the “Young Person’s/ Children’s Complaints Procedure”, the foster home rules as well as useful information relating to FWF. The Handbook will be discussed fully with the young person to ensure that they have a full understanding of the foster home rules and their rights to complain. The Independent Reviewing Officer’s details will also be given to the child.

Complaints can be brought to the attention of Family Works Fostering registered manager by email: complaints@fw-fostering.co.uk or the foster parent, or placing authority social worker or FWF Supervising Social Worker. Alternatively complaints can be directed to below organizations:

Ofsted

By post: Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD

By Telephone: 0300 123 1231

By email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

The Voice of the Child in Care’ (VCC) /Independent Advocate:

Tel: 0808 800 5792

Children’s Right’s Director:

Write to:

Office of the Children’s Rights Director

Ofsted

Aviation House

125 Kingsway

London

WC2B 6SE

FREEPHONE 0800 528 0731

Email: theteam.rights4me@ofsted.gov.uk

Website: www.rights4me.org

ChildLine:

Freephone: 0800 1111

Web: www.childline.org.uk

SERVICES WHICH SUPPORT FOSTERING

Listening to Foster Carers

Family Works Fostering has a range of mechanisms designed to elicit feedback from foster carers. The Foster Care Support Group gives foster carers the opportunity to contribute to service development and meet with representatives from across the service.

Foster carers are regularly invited to join working groups on topics such as fostering allowances and contact procedures. We also obtain feedback through Foster Panels – first reviews, and 12 week post approval meetings. We also have a Welcome Day for new carers to feedback to the service.

Feedback questionnaires are sent to foster carers periodically. All feedback is collated and common issues and themes are discussed at the FWF Management Group Meetings.

Useful contacts

Further information about services that support fostering can be found at the following websites:

British Association for Adoption and Fostering

www.baaf.org.uk

Fostering Information Line

www.fostering.org.uk

www.thewhocarestrust.org.uk

FWF Support Line

To ensure that foster carers have access to knowledgeable out of hours support, there is telephone support line, which operates 24/7.

Tel: Mobile 07554011516 or 07549300035

Fosterline

Tel: 0800 040 7675

Email: enquiries@fosterline.info

Fostering Network Support Line

Tel: 0207 620 2100

(Mon-Fri 1200hrs – 1600hrs)

www.fostering.net

General Info and Benefits Helpline

Tel: 0207 261 1884

Finance Helpline

Tel: 0800 801 1531

Policies

Child protection and safeguarding policy

A comprehensive Child Protection Policy is in operation at FWF. FWF fully recognises that children and young people who are looked after are vulnerable and our responsibility as a caring organisation is to provide a safe and caring environment from which young people grow and develop. Our policy states that the child should always be believed in cases where an allegation of abuse is made. Our first priority in cases like this is to protect the child or young person from the alleged perpetrator. It is of paramount importance that the child or young person making the allegation is reassured by the foster parent / staff team at FWF and supported at all times.

Child protection investigations will be conducted within the remit of working together, within a multi-disciplinary approach and subject to the placing local authorities' child protection procedures.

Equality and Diversity policy

Equality and Diversity is a core value and key policy within FWF. We are aware that the children and young people whom we will foster come from a wide range of cultural backgrounds and we have a broad mix of foster carers to reflect this diversity and this continues to be the target of our foster carer recruitment policy.

FWF believes that equality and diversity is about recognising and appreciating differences in children and young people and ensuring fair and equitable treatment for all in the way in which fostering services are provided to children and young people. In our foster placements children and young people will receive a service that is appropriate taking into account their needs related to their background and individual circumstances.

Children and young people's identity and culture will be valued and respected. Every effort will be made to help them reach their full potential. FWF acknowledges and supports the celebration of all cultures and religious observations within foster placements. All children and young people placed with us are encouraged to celebrate cultural events both at the foster placement and within the wider community. This we believe allows the young people placed with our foster carers to remain 'in touch' with their cultural values whilst they are living away from their families.

FWF focuses on working with children and young people in our foster placements to enable them to express themselves in a supportive/controlled environment, where extensive work can be carried out, both formally and informally. This in turn empowers the child/young person to come to terms with their emotional, educational, social and cultural needs within a family setting.



Foster carers training policy

FWF strives to promote and continue to develop an effective and efficient service to young people coming into its care. Therefore, there is a recognition and commitment to ensuring that this service is offered via a strong, competent, adaptable and motivated staffing group and adequately trained Foster Carers.

Thus, importance is placed on the training needs of all of the Foster Carers at FWF. All new foster carers undergo preparatory training prior to their assessment and on-going training on a monthly basis.

Foster carers are reviewed on an annual basis where their training and development needs are addressed. The outcome of these systems will be monitored and addressed in future training.

FWF intends to offer a continuous and comprehensive training package to all of its Foster Carers from the outset of their approval. This is because a multi-skilled fully trained and competent Foster Carers are the platform and bedrock upon which effective work with children/young people is based.


All Foster Carers will receive pre-approval and induction training. This will include the benefit of gaining experienced knowledge of existing Foster Carers. It is important that all new Foster Carers will receive full induction training. This is set out in four stages.

All training to Foster Carers fits within the framework of equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practice. FWF will try to arrange the training at convenient times for the group of foster carers so as to obtain a large group where part of the training is learning from each other. FWF will provide travelling costs to Foster Carers if needed.

All Foster Carers will be kept informed of any legislation that will have an impact on their practice. Foster Carers will be trained on FWF policies and procedures as this will govern their practice at FWF.

Foster carers' supervision policy

FWF Foster Carers receive individual regular supervision one (1) in the first week of placement then



every four (4) weeks. Supervision is held in a private room, (with no interruptions). The length of the supervision is between (minimum) one to two hours depending on the topics and/or the areas of concerns that need to be covered.

Practical guidance is offered to Foster Carers as well as identifying individual carers developmental needs as stated in the training policy. On approval FWF foster carers are given a handbook which covers policies and procedures, guidance, legal information, statement of purpose and insurance details of the agency. When the documents are updated they are given to the foster carers.

Foster carers also receive information regarding the procedure for complaints (see Complaints procedure) and investigations into allegations (See Child Protection procedure). All information is kept and recorded confidentially and securely for use in future evaluations (policies and procedures documents are available).

FWF's dynamic philosophy will continue to be based upon the changing needs of children or young people within a culturally sensitive environment based upon positive role models and non-oppressive care practices whilst incorporating Social Work models to increase the possibility of positive outcomes. It can be said that through empowerment that it is possible to achieve change, which in turn is beneficial to the children and young people we will be given the responsibility to look after. FWF's Principles of Good Child Care are based upon the key principles of individualism, privacy, dignity, self-fulfilment, independence, choice and rights. This is an integral part of our working practices and our commitment to fostering.

Recruitment

Family Works Fostering has a comprehensive recruitment policy in regards to foster parents. This is to ensure that all carers are treated in an equal manner and that there is a clear process that will enable all prospective foster parents to follow and understand to make an informed decision if they wish to be foster parents.


There is a rigorous recruitment process to ensure that all prospective foster parents have all the checks required to protect children and that the assessment undertaken is a comprehensive one. Family Works Fostering provides a dedicated recruitment line and email address. FWF also ensures it operates rolling advertising and marketing campaigns, recruitment events and Skills to Foster training.

ASSESSMENT AND APPROVAL PROCESS

On receiving an enquiry form from a potential foster carer/s, FWF requests basic information and forwards appropriate literature providing details about Family Works Fostering and information on how to proceed with an application. The enquiry is followed up by a telephone call by FWF Duty Worker and if the potential foster carer/s wishes to proceed then a home visit is arranged by FWF social worker. At this point, the potential carer/s will complete an application form to foster if they wish. Consent will be taken to complete checks and enquiries to assess their initial suitability to become foster carer/s. The process for assessing a person's suitability to foster consists of two parts. These can be carried out concurrently but the information required within stage 1 must be sought as soon as possible and the decision about whether an applicant has successfully completed stage 1 must be made within 10 days once all of the information in that stage has been received.

Once prospective carer/s indicates a wish to proceed they will be invited to attend Skills to Foster training. FWF will then process the following safeguard checks whilst applicants attend training:

- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks on all members of the household aged 18 or over and regular visitors to the household. This will involve disclosure of information about any criminal convictions or cautions and other information which may be held by the police or government agencies relevant to the protection of children. The applicant/s will also be required to have a medical examination by their GP and the report will be made available to Family Works Fostering Medical Adviser for his/her comments about the health of the applicant/s and any impact on their potential to foster.



The applicants will be assigned FWF assessing social worker. The applicants will begin their assessment by giving detailed information about themselves and their family composition. Further safeguard checks will be undertaken at this stage which includes:


- Verification of identity and personal history
- Local authority checks – Social Care Departments and Child Protection Register
- Enquiries to other agencies including NSPCC and Probation where appropriate

The applicant/s will be required to identify at least three personal referees who will provide written references and be interviewed as part of the assessment process. References from external agencies and personal references, which are provided in confidence, cannot be accessed without permission of both the subject and the relevant referee. The FWF assessing social worker will carry out a full assessment. This will consist of the social worker visiting the home of the applicant/s generally on six to eight occasions to meet and collect information about all members of the household and the skills and experience of the applicants in relation to fostering. The information obtained will form the basis of an assessment report.

Family Works Fostering uses the BAAF (British Association for Adoption and Fostering) Form F assessment report which takes into account the assessment of confidential references is shared with the applicant/s and then presented to the Fostering Panel. Applicant/s are to attend the Fostering Panel when their application is being considered. The Fostering Panel makes recommendations about the suitability of the applicant/s to be approved as foster carers. The Agency Decision Maker receives the recommendation of the Fostering Panel and makes the final decision about approval. Applicant/s will then be informed verbally and in writing of the decision. The assessment process can take on average 22 weeks and every effort is made to ensure no avoidable delays occur.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR FOSTER CARERS

It is recognised that fostering has become increasingly demanding and complex. Family Works Fostering is committed to providing good quality training that is accessible and relevant to all our foster carers. Training and learning are viewed as an important element of Family Works Fostering's support to foster carers and comprehensive pre approval and post approval training and learning are provided.



As part of the professional development of foster carers, Family Works Fostering provides training to:

- Help foster carers develop and refine the skills they need for their job
- Improve knowledge
- Establish an explicit, positive framework of values, which promotes equality of opportunity
- Encourage foster carers to reflect and look at the effects of discrimination in all parts of the community, recognizing that they care for children in the context of wider society, and that for many children, discrimination is a fact of life
- Ensure that all foster carers are competent and confident in safe caring and in protecting children from harm
- Encourage foster carers to take responsibility for their own professional development through the creation of individual training profiles
- Enable foster carers to fulfil the expectations agreed in their Personal Development Plan (PDP)

PRE-APPROVAL SKILLS TO FOSTER

The Skills to Foster training covers the following aspects of fostering:

- What foster carers do
- Who are the children and young people?
- Working together
- Safer caring
- Understanding Behaviour
- Moving On
- Sons and Daughters: What's fostering going to mean to me
- Children with disabilities
- Permanency

Post Approval Training

Family Works Fostering is committed to a post approval training programme for our foster carers. The training programme includes e learning, distance learning as well as face to face courses. This includes modules that should be included as part of the initial induction of foster carers as well as more advanced courses supporting foster carers to receive formal recognition of their skills, knowledge and experience. There are nine core modules that primary carers are expected to undertake within the first 12 months of approval and secondary carers are expected to complete five of these:


- First Aid
- Attachment, Separation and Loss
- Record Keeping
- Practical Techniques for Promoting Positive Behaviour
- Achieving Health and Wellbeing of Children in Care
- Health and Safety
- Child Protection and Safeguarding
- Child Development
- Guide to Education

In addition to this, Family Works Fostering has on-going training that covers training identified by the carers and supervising social worker. This is to strengthen any weaknesses identified and to promote foster carers' self – development skills to enable them to provide quality care to children and young

people in placement. There is an expectation that all carers will attend training on a regular basis. There are other opportunities for foster carers to develop and gain skills through involvement at training events, information evenings, and support groups.

TSD INDUCTION STANDARDS

The Training, Support and Development Standards provide guidance for foster carers on the requirements for their training and development and continuous professional development. FWF



ensures that all foster carers use TSD induction workbooks. All new foster carers have 12 months to complete these from when they are approved as foster carers. Workshops are available for foster carers who wish to have some additional input into the completion of these books. Foster carer development programmes are also linked with the TSD standards although there is an expectation that carers need to evidence their learning in addition to attending a course.

Close referencing grids are completed by assessing social workers for all new carers to show which outcomes have been met through the assessment process. There is a grid for each book and the appropriate one should be signed off to show that the carers have fully evidenced the applicable outcomes through that process. Family Works Fostering provides advice and support to foster carers and staff regarding the completion of the books. The Registered Manager has the quality assurance role and is also responsible person for signing off the TSD workbooks.

Support For Carers

Each foster carer is supported and supervised by an allocated Supervising Social Worker whose role includes support, supervision and liaison within placing authorities. FWF Supervising Social Workers visit foster carers regularly and visits are more frequent if required. During these visits Supervising Social Workers read daily logs completed by the foster carers concerning the children in placement and discuss any matters arising. During such visits, the Supervising Social Workers will also be aware of any health and safety, child protection and standards of care issues which need to be addressed. Supervising Social Workers offer support when foster carers have difficulties within their own lives

which impinge on the fostering task. Supervising Social Workers will also liaise with placing authorities on behalf of foster carers. Foster carers are invited to give written feedback prior to their annual household review on the quality of support they have received. This feedback is monitored by the registered manager, the Fostering Panel. Part of the role of the Supervising Social Worker is also undertakes at least one unannounced visit to foster carers each year. Family Works Fostering also provides other support for foster carers as follows:

- Support Line for foster carers
- Carers' support groups
- Foster Carer's own children support groups
- Buddy support
- Fostering Network

REVIEW OF FOSTER CARERS

Household Reviews are undertaken annually on each fostering household or more frequently where there is a change of circumstances requiring this. For each household review, the following are consulted:

- The foster carer/s
- The child in placement
- The child's parents
- The child's placing authority social worker
- The foster carer's own children
- The Independent Reviewing Officer

The Annual Household Review considers:

- Current household members
- Changes of Circumstances since previous review
- Placements during the last year
- Status of statutory checks
- Visits including unannounced visit
- Significant incidents including Child Protection and/or Standards of Care concerns
- Health and Safety
- Comments on foster carer's log
- Support needs of foster carer household
- Supervising social worker's overall report
- Training and Development
- Consideration of approval and future use

If the terms of a foster carer's approval need to change, the report is often considered by the Fostering Panel and the carer is invited to attend.

REFUSAL OR TERMINATION OF APPROVAL

When the Agency Decision Maker proposes not to approve prospective foster carers following recommendations by the fostering panel, prospective foster carers have the right to challenge this. When termination or a change of approval is proposed by the Agency Decision Maker this can be done through representations to Family Works Fostering or through requesting an independent review of their case. Family Works Fostering has a leaflet for carers and prospective carers attending fostering panel that explains the processes available. Applicants can ask the fostering panel to reconsider their case or alternatively can ask for an independent review from the national Independent Review Mechanism (IRM).