

Foster Care Case Recording

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1. Statutory Framework

Standard 26.1 of the Fostering National Minimum Standards 2011 (FNMS 2011) requires the fostering service to implement a written policy that clarifies the purpose, format and content of information to be kept on the fostering service's files and what is kept on child's case records.

Standard 26.2 requires staff, volunteers, panel members and fostering households understand the nature of records maintained and follow the service's policy for the keeping and retention of files, managing confidential information and access to files (Including files removed from the premises).

Standard 26.3 requires Children and their parents understand the nature of records maintained and know how to access them

Standard 26.4 requires information about individual children is kept confidential and only shared with those who have a legitimate and current need to know the information, and to those parts of a child's record or other information that they need to know.

Standard 26.5 requires entries in records, decisions and reasons, are legible, clearly expressed, non-stigmatising and distinguish between fact, opinion and third party information, and are signed and dated.

Standard 26.6 requires information about the child is recorded clearly and in a way which will be helpful to the child when they access their files now or in the future.

Children are actively encouraged to read their files, other than necessarily confidential or third party information, and to correct errors and add personal statements.

Underpinning Legislation:

22 – Records with respect to fostering services

26 – Assessment of prospective foster parents

30 – Case records relating to foster carers and others

31 – Register of foster carers

32 Retention and confidentiality of records

Outcome:

- Records are clear, up to date, stored securely and contribute to an understanding of the child's life.

The principle legislation governing Social Care Records is the Data Protection Act 1998 and its accompanying guidance.

2. Foster Carer Files

The fostering service must maintain a case record for each approved foster carer. All foster carers have an electronic case record on Total View with direct links to the Child or children in placement with that carer. Daily recording for both Child and Foster Carer are maintained and recorded on the Carefirst System.

All files in respect of approved carers must contain as a minimum:

- The foster carers information obtained about him or her in relation to the application for approval, the carers form F;
- The original report on the assessment of the carer/s and any other report submitted to the fostering panel or to the Registered Manager;
- Any recommendations made by the fostering panel;
- The information obtained in relation to the assessment, approval, review or termination of approval of the carer/s;
- Notice of approval;
- The foster carer agreement;
- Annual reviews of approval & recommendations;
- Panel reports & recommendations;
- Notices of the outcomes of reviews of approval, including revised terms of approval or notices of termination of approval;
- Carers supervision agreement;
- Health and Safety Check;
- Safe Care Policy;
- Record of Disclosure and Barring Service checks;

- Record of Medicals for foster carers in date;
- Pet Questionnaire if appropriate;
- Record of Mandatory Training and Updates;
- Record of Supervision visits;
- Record of Un-announced visits;
- Recording of Schedule 6 & 7;
- Record of Support Carer if appropriate;
- Record of any complaints or allegations made in respect of a carer/s
- A record of each placement made with the carer, including the name, age, ethnicity, religion and sex of each child placed, the dates on which each placement began and terminated and the circumstances of the termination;
- Evidence of Management Oversight and Audit;
- Exemptions in place.

All files pertaining to family and friends/connected person foster carers who have a child placed under Regulation 24 of the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulation 2010 must contain:

- The application and assessment process in accordance with Regulation 24;
- A record pertaining to the placement, including the name/s, age and sex of each child placed, the dates on which the placement began and terminated, and the circumstances of the termination;
- The information obtained in relation to the enquiries carried out under regulation 24(2) of the Care Planning Regulations.

All files pertaining to applicants who are not approved as carers or who withdrew their application prior to approval must contain as a minimum:

- All information obtained in connection with the assessment;
- Any reports submitted to Newcastle fostering panel and record of outcome;
- Any notices that Newcastle is mindful to not approve or has not approved the application.

3. Records in Respect of Children Placed

The electronic recording system is set up within Newcastle for the purposes of clear recording and enables access links to the child's file by way of relationships. It also allows access to the documentation pertaining to the child and the placement record with the foster carer.

Within the recording processes for fostering it is clearly identifiable that some information pertaining to the child will of course be within the foster carer's case record. For example, if the child was missing from placement and the detail provided within a supervision visit pertaining to the care of the children placed. It would be

impractical to record this in such a way that kept the child and the carer entirely separate. It must therefore be acknowledged that such information in respect of the children will remain on the carer's file even after the placement has ended.

There is an expectation that foster carers will maintain and keep a record of each child placed. They should record all significant events and pass these on to the supervising social worker so that they can be added to the child's electronic file record. Carers are expected also to contribute and support life story work as outlined within the placement plan.

4. Carers Contributing to Records

Carers are actively encouraged to contribute to their case records.

Applicants to foster, family and friends/connected persons are expected to fully cooperate with the assessment process and to contribute to the findings. This is done through eco-maps and family trees as well as commenting on the report and the assessment process itself.

Approved foster carers inclusive of family and friends/connected persons will have formal opportunities to contribute to their case recording including:

- Six monthly and Annual reviews;
- Reports for long term matches and changes of approvals;
- Allegations and Complaints;
- Feedback on placements;
- Safe care policies;
- Supervision agreements;
- Delegated Authority documents;
- Minutes taken at all meetings pertaining to the children placed;
- Views of foster carers are pro-actively attained within the fostering panel upon an applicant or carers attendance.

Carers views and opinions are taken into account through a variety of participation events and meetings as well as formal governance processes such as Multi-Agency Looked After Partnership and the Corporate Advisory Committee through their representative from Fostering under Newcastle.

5. Register of Foster Carers

Newcastle will maintain an electronic register of approved foster carer, which will include the following particulars:

- Name, address, date of birth, ethnic origin and sex of each foster carer
- The date of approval and each review of approval and
- The current terms of approval

6. Storage of Records

Historical foster carer paper files are stored securely within secure records all other records are stored electronically on CSC ICS recording systems.

7. Retention of Records

The records referred to above under Foster Carer Files (See **Section 2, Foster Carers Files**) and Register of Foster Carers (See **Section 5, Register of Foster Carers**) must be retained for at least 10 years from the date on which their approval is terminated. Closed files are archived.

8. Disclosure of Information and Confidentiality

Newcastle has a policy of working together with foster carers and should a request to see their files be submitted this will be agreed however third party information will be removed.

When a foster carer seeks to move to a new provider, the new provider seeks information from the previous provider about the prospective foster carer, and the previous provider complies with such a request within one month of receipt of the written request (NMS 26.9).

Also see 2.1 Recording Policy and Guidelines ref Children and Families
http://newcastlechildcare.proceduresonline.com/chapter/p_rec_policy.html