

Regional Training Pathway for Foster Carers

Information for Foster Carers, including Kinship Foster Carers

March 2015

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The vast majority of children/young people looked after reside in foster care. For many of these children/young people life prior to entering care was complicated and for some traumatic. The impact of these experiences does not dissolve on entry to foster care. Consequently many foster carers are caring for some of the most vulnerable and potentially challenging children/young people in our community.

The Regional Training Pathway for Foster Carers seeks to provide all foster carers with knowledge and skills to enable them to provide safe and effective care to children/young people placed in their care and to feel confident in their role as foster carer.

The Pathway distinguishes between 3 key fostering groups.

- **Stranger/non-kinship foster carers** (all non-fee paid foster carers)
- **Professional foster carers** (all those in receipt of a fee)
- **Kinship foster carers** (all kinship foster carers)

1. Preapproval Training

Skills to Foster covers key topics of relevance to prospective foster carers, forming the basis of each foster carers *Training and Development Plan*, enabling foster carers to build the knowledge and skills they require and provide some insight into the 'foster role'.

Preapproval training will be undertaken prior to making a formal application to foster and within 3 months of making contact with the Trust.

To enable discussion and reflection it is envisaged that each training event will run over a 4 – 6 week.

My Family Fosters Session

Foster carers own children are often critical in the success of foster placements and therefore should form part of the decision making process.

This workshop provides an opportunity for young people living within the prospective fostering family to discuss their views and feelings about fostering prior to attendance at panel.

2. Post Approval Training – all Foster Carers

There are **three key parts** to post approval training:

- I. ***Core Issues in Fostering*** within 12 months
- II. Training for foster carers within 3 years of approval and relevant refresher training
- III. Individually assessed training needs

Core Issues in Fostering builds on ***Skills to Foster*** covering/developing the issues of:-

- Impact of fostering on the family and contact issues
- Legal issues and participation in Looked After Children Reviews
- Safer care for children, health and safety, allegations and the importance of recording
- Moving on and understanding permanence

Each session allows for discussion and reflection (recommended 10 – 20 participants). The course should be facilitated by Trust training coordinator or fostering social worker and a foster carer trainer.

Additional Training for Foster Carers within 3 years of Approval and Refreshed as Required

Foster carers will encounter a range of challenges during their fostering journey. Some of these will be new, whilst others will be common themes that may involve new approaches or thinking. It is hoped that by 'refreshing' key topics carers have a chance to review and consolidate their practice over time.

The following courses should to be completed and refreshed:

- First Aid
- Safeguarding including sexual abuse awareness raising and child sexual exploitation
- Respecting and Valuing the Individual (cultural, disability and sexual orientation awareness)
- Behaviour Management
- Attachment and Loss
- Internet Safety
- Recognising Men's Role in Fostering
- Personal Development including Sexual health

3. Training –Professional foster carers only

Professional foster carers are those foster carers who receive a fee in acknowledgment of the particular skills, expertise and knowledge they bring to caring for children with particularly complex needs.

Pre-Approval - Challenges in Professional Foster Care

In recognition of the exceptional challenges and demands involved in professional fostering it is important to have a robust selection system in place that takes account of the skills and abilities required for this task.

All prospective professional foster carers are required to attend this training session even if they have fostered previously in a non-professional capacity. This training will focus on the commitment required to becoming a professional foster carer; the demands made of professional carers such as team work, advocacy and challenging behaviour and will contribute to the assessment report forwarded to the Trust's Fostering Panel.

Post Approval Training - Professional carers only

Post approval training for Professional foster carers will follow the same Pathway as for other foster cares i.e. ***Core Issues in Fostering and 3 year post approval training*** with the following additionality

- Attachment training
- Therapeutic Crisis Intervention i.e. Therapeutic Crisis Intervention Fostering (TCIF) plus refresher or Teen Coaching
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Commitment to Accreditation (e.g. QCF Level 3)

4. Kinship Foster Carers

Where a placement is Planned

Prospective kinship foster carers will follow the same pathway outlined above with the following proviso:

Preapproval Training- Skills to Foster for Kinship Foster Carers

This initial training is similar in content to that of non-kinship foster carers and is adapted version of the ***Skills to Foster*** training. This will provide prospective kinship foster carers with the opportunity to meet other prospective kinship foster carers to discuss common themes and support each other.

To facilitate discussion and reflection *planned* preapproval training will run over a 4 – 6 week period.

Placements made in an Emergency

There are potentially significant pressures for prospective kinship foster carers when accepting the care of a child/ren in an emergency and undergoing an assessment during the first 12 weeks of placement. Therefore to provide information and help new kinship foster carers understand more fully the task they are undertaking, a *preapproval information session* will be available prior to the assessment being completed and presented to the Trusts Fostering Panel. This will be structured around the information leaflet given to all Emergency Kinship Carers when a child is placed.

Post Approval Training - *Core Issues in Kinship Care*

Approved kinship foster carers should follow the same pathway outlined in stranger foster care for ***Core Issues in (Kinship) Fostering and 3 year post approval.***

5. Individually Assessed Training Needs

Each year foster carers wider training and development needs will be discussed and an agreement reached in respect of how these are to be met.

6. Where Concerns Arise During Training

Should any concern arise during training in relation to practice etc. then this will be discussed with the prospective foster carer.