



Phoenix Community Care Ltd Policy & Procedure

Parent and Child Fostering Placements

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Phoenix Community Care Ltd
Policy & Procedure

Parent and Child Fostering Placements

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Introduction

The Parent and Child Foster Placements Policy has been designed and written to ensure that action taken by PCC Foster Care is in line with legislation, national policy and guidance. It aims to ensure that all foster carers, supervising social workers, parents and children's social workers have the same understanding about the placement tasks they are required to undertake, and the legal basis for doing so.

This policy should be implemented following:

- A pre-birth assessment; or
- Children's Safeguarding Conference which recommends a parent and child placement; or
- At the direction of the Court during care proceedings.

All of which would be carried out by the Local Authority prior to a placement taking place with PCC Foster Care.

The specific circumstances and placement requirements must be made known to PCC Foster Care and in turn to the foster carers.

Legal Context

There are three scenarios that apply to parent and child fostering, with different implications depending on the regulations that apply.

1. Parent Looked After, Child Looked After

Where the parent is under 18 and is looked after by the Local Authority and the child is also looked after by the Local Authority, each will be subject to all the requirements of the:

- Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010;
- The Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011.

2. Parent Looked After, Child not Looked After

During Care Proceedings it could be that the Child Looked After of a parent under the age of 18 is placed with them, in a foster placement, under the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010 (Placement of child in care with parent). The requirement of the 2010 Care Planning Regulations will apply to both parent and child, but the 2011 Fostering Regulations will apply only to the parent.

3. Parent not Looked After, Child Looked After

In this situation the parent could be either under or over the age of 18, and only the child will be subject to all the requirements of the 2010 Care Planning and 2011 Fostering Regulations. The regulations in relation to placement with parents will not apply, and the parent will be considered as part to the fostering household. In this situation the parent, if under 18, will have been assessed but not identified as a child in need in her own right.

Placement planning guidance

The Fostering Service recognises the duty to foster carers and parents to ensure that the best help and support is provided from the outset. Establishing a clear contract clarifies roles and responsibilities to the placement for all parties involved.

All placements will have an assessment component. The prime aim of any placement should be to assess the safe parenting capability of the parent. Where the parent is also a Child Looked After, realistic timescales for independent living should form part of the assessment and planning.

However, parent and child foster placements should not be treated as the only means of assessment or training in parenting skills. The foster carer will be *informing* the assessment, which is the responsibility of the child's social worker. The parenting assessment will support and work alongside the foster placement.

For a Parent and Child placement to successfully meet its objectives there must be multi-agency working and assessment. The child's social workers will need to take the lead in negotiating with other agencies to ensure that every placement is fully supported (e.g. adult social care, mental health, learning disability, health visiting, family centre, CAT under 10's and midwife).

Where the child is in placement and subject to either an ICO or a Care Order, Parental Responsibility is shared, and the Local Authority will need to negotiate with the parent (s) the most appropriate arrangements for exercising their respective parental responsibilities. These arrangements must be discussed, agreed and recorded at the pre placement meeting.

At the Pre-Placement Meeting a clear statement as to the objectives of the placement and the timescale for assessment must be provided by the social worker. Those involved in the meeting must agree how progress towards meeting the objectives will be tracked, and how success will be measured. This must be made clear to the parent.

Where the parent is also Looked After various scenarios could apply. If the parenting assessment concludes that the parent is able to safely parent the child then the aims and timescales of the placement must be re-negotiated to include clear criteria for moving on into independent living, or to another form of supported arrangement not involving fostering. Should, however, the parent be assessed as unable to safely parent, then by the direction of the Court, or with the agreement of the parent, the child should be moved to a different placement. This may also involve a change of placement for the parent if the placement is designated only as a parent and child placement.



Role of the foster carer

The foster carer(s) will be expected to offer guidance and assistance to the parent in managing the care tasks for the child. This may include direct instruction or modelling, it may include responding to questions, or it may include practical support such as accompanying the parent to parent/child groups, health visiting clinic, shopping etc. The placement should provide a safe and friendly environment to provide supervision and support to the parent, to improve and consolidate parenting skills.

The foster carer will be expected to show the parent how any technical appliances work so that they are able to use cooking and cleaning facilities appropriately. If the placement progresses positively it must be expected that the parent demonstrate less reliance on the carers support.

The foster carer should promote and support the key attachment between child and parent.

The foster carer will be expected to keep one daily record noting observations of the parent's ability to respond to their child's needs, manage the routine, and manage the practical tasks of washing, ironing, shopping, budgeting etc. These observations will inform any parenting programme or assessment that has been agreed. The foster carer will be expected to be open and honest about the parent's strengths and difficulties when recording their observations and the parent must be given the opportunity to read and comment on these observations.

Foster carers will agree to provide 24 hour support when required, transport parent and child when appropriate, and as agreed.

Foster carer will child-sit for one evening a week (subject to contract discussion) provided that 24 hour's notice is given.

Foster carer will provide a fully furnished bedroom complete with bed, cot, and cot linen and ensure the parent has use of a sitting room with home entertainment.

Foster carer will complete and provide an updated safer care policy in relation to the individual parent and child placement. Foster carer will inform parent of any household rules and routines and of the safer caring policy.

Foster carer will be expected to periodically check on the care and safety of the child in placement, and therefore must have access to the child at all times whilst in the home environment.

Foster carers should intervene if the level of risk to the child from a parent would be detrimental to their welfare.

Foster carer will always seek medical advice or treatment for any fall or injury that a child has sustained. A report of any injury should be made to the child's social worker and supervising social worker as soon as possible.

Foster carer will respect and give recognition to the importance of a parent and child's ethnic origin, cultural background, religion, language, gender, sexuality and disability.

Foster carer will attend Pre-Placement Meeting, Family Centre Service Agreement Meetings, Reviews, Core Group Meetings, Planning Meetings, Child Protection Conferences and any other meetings required.

Foster carers will receive full information prior to placement from the child's social worker in relation to both the parent and the child. If the information has not been received the carer must inform the supervising social worker 2 days before the placement commences. If a placement is made on an emergency basis the foster carer should expect to receive relevant information within 5 days.

Foster carer will liaise with supervising social worker, child's social worker, health visitor and any other professionals involved.

Although the progress of the placement will be reviewed according to the schedule set out in the contract, the child will also be subject to the Children Looked After Review mechanism according to the statutory schedule, as will the parent if also looked after. The foster carer will remain subject to the foster care review mechanism.

Foster carers offering parent and child placements may do so alongside existing long-term placements. When carers are holding a vacancy a new placement can be considered in consultation with all those involved in the existing placement but careful matching is paramount.

It is not appropriate for a foster carer to take fostering leave during a parent and child placement, and no respite will be granted until after the first 10 weeks, unless this is as a result of an emergency or has been pre-arranged.

Responsibility of the parent

Parent(s) will be expected to care for their child at all times (getting up, bathing, feeding, changing under supervision from carer until it is agreed it is no longer necessary).

Parent(s) will be expected to manage the day and bedtime routine, which fits in with the foster carer's household. When the parent is settling a child for bed it is their responsibility to check on the child throughout the evening and during the night as required.

Parent(s) will be expected to demonstrate their competence in attending to all their child's physical needs as well as interacting positively with their child.

Parent(s) will be expected to shop, budget and cook for self and child and attend to all clothes washing and ironing. One of the placement aims will be for the parent to achieve greater independence and skill in these areas.

Parent will keep their room tidy and leave the kitchen, bathroom and any other communal areas in a tidy, clean condition after use.

Personal clothing and belongings must be kept in parent's own room. The foster carer cannot be responsible for property or articles that are lost or damaged.



Parents will contribute to the wellbeing of everyone in the foster carers' home and in public by demonstrating non-aggressive, non-threatening behaviours.

If agreed in the contract the foster carer will offer child sitting one evening per week; parent will provide 24 hours notice for request.

Foster carer may make random room checks to ensure safety of parent and child and therefore all bedroom doors must be kept unlocked.

The foster carer will write accurate daily record sheets, which will be shared daily with parent(s) and signed by both parent(s) and carer.

If there are any differences of opinion on childcare these should be discussed and recorded. However, the parent will need to accept the final decision from the foster carer who will endeavour to contact the health visitor at the first opportunity.

The foster carer will complete and share the safe caring plan with the parent.

Smoking is not permitted inside the foster carer's home. If a parent smokes it must be in the designated outside area. On returning to the home, the parent must wash their hands before contact with their child.

If there are other children in the household the parent in placement must not provide any practical or supervisory care.

No alcohol should be kept by the parent in the carer's home.

No involvement with any illegal substances is permitted in the foster carer's home. However, it is recognised some parents may be supported in a parent and child placement whilst the parent is supervised by a treatment programme for drug or alcohol misuse.

Parent should inform the foster carer and child's social worker of any appointments, and check if childcare cover is required.

Parent's circumstances and history is strictly confidential to the named foster carers and not their families or friends. Parents can feel reassured that no discussions will take place between family members and friends.

Parents over the age of 18 in some circumstances will be subject to **Disclosure and Barring Service** Checks and the results will be fed into the pre placement risk assessment. This will be done by the local authority for the parent.

Role of supervising social worker

All Parent and Child foster carers must be fully supported by a designated and experienced supervising social worker who will offer 4 weekly support and supervision.



Any known or potential risks to foster carer and family from members of the child's family or others must be assessed. No foster carer or member of the fostering household should knowingly be placed at risk as a consequence of providing a placement.

SSW to ensure full parent and child information is passed on by child's social worker to foster carer prior to placement commencing. If this is not the case then SSW should inform parent and child lead who will, in discussion with manager, make a decision if the placement goes ahead or is delayed.

SSW will be responsible for monitoring/supporting/supervising/ inspecting the management of the placement.

SSW will visit in the first week of placement and four weekly thereafter to provide supervision and support as well as weekly phone contacts. SSW will also undertake unannounced visits in line with PCC's policies and procedures. The SSW will sign off all daily record sheets and report any issues that are appropriate.

SSW will discuss with the carer the recorded observation to ensure objectivity remains.

SSW to liaise with lead professional to update on placements.

SSW will inform foster carers of any annual leave of one week plus.

SSW will check with foster carers that they have researched/accessed groups or courses available (if appropriate) for the parent and child in the local area.

Expectations of the role of the child's social worker

Child' social worker must visit the placement every 2 weeks and make weekly phone/email contact in addition to the SSW contact with the carer. During these visits social workers should discuss individually and together with parent and carer how the placement is going in relation to the contract, and provide opportunity to share concerns/worries.

Child's social worker should undertake a room check.

Child's social worker must arrange and chair regular placement reviews following the placement planning meeting. Placement reviews should be structured around the original placement plan, and the reviewing process should highlight placement progress.

Placement reviews should be arranged at 2 weeks, 4 weeks combined with first Child Looked After Review, 7 weeks and 10 weeks. Every review should consider placement exit and future plans for family.

Child's social worker should check out any arranged appointments and childcare cover that needs to be approved by the carers.

Child's social worker needs to consider the second parent, and attention and scrutiny must be given to the parent's relationships, both of their involvement in the assessment process and future planning.



Should a dispute arise within the placement, SSW and child's social worker will initially undertake joint visits. If necessary the child's social worker will then arrange a follow up meeting to include parent, SSW and carer and locality team manager.

Child's social worker must ensure that the carer has all relevant information at the latest by the date of the pre-Placement Planning Meeting. If the placement is made in an emergency basis, placement information must be supplied within 5 days.

Looked after parents

The child's social worker must visit the placement every four weeks to meet with the parent and the foster carer. The parent's social worker / support worker (either from Locality or Pathway Team) will provide an opportunity for the parent to discuss any issues or worries, and will assist the parent to address them.

Child's social worker, parent's and SSW must work closely together in monitoring and reviewing the placement.

The Placement Planning Meeting is an essential meeting in preparing for a change of placement for the looked after young person. The parent's responsibilities in this document will be referred to, and adjusted within the Placement Agreement Meeting.

Foster carers will support the parent in relation to education, home tuition and legal appointments and provide transport and childcare if necessary.

Regard must be given to the parent's contact with their family members, time out (with and without child), child sitting, household tasks and level of practical support.

A list of daily tasks for parent to complete, in relation to the child, and their own routine, will be used by the carer to support expectations of parent. (See **Appendix 8: Looked After Parent Daily Task Sheet**).

All Parent and Child foster carers offering this specialist service must be fully supported by a designated and experienced supervising social worker who will offer 4 weekly support and supervision.

Any known or potential risks to foster carer and family from members of the child's family or others must be assessed. No foster carer or member of the fostering household should knowingly be placed in a position of risk as a consequence of providing a parent and child placement.

Daily written evidence based reports will be shared by the foster carer with the parent to highlight and encourage further discussion. These reports will be signed by both parties and may be used in Court Proceedings. The reports will be shared with the child's social worker every week.



Appendix 2: End of parent and child placement evaluation form for foster carer

Name of parent(s):

Name of child:

Name of Child's Social Worker:

Date placement from:

To:

Working relationship with parent:

Was contract used and reviewed?

Were placement expectations/timescales realistic?

Were there any aspects of this placement that were particularly difficult?

Were there any aspects of this placement that were particularly difficult?

Signed: _____ Date: _____



Appendix 3 End of parent and child placement Parent's report

Name of Foster Carers:

Name of Parent:

Name of Child(ren):

Date placement from:

To:

1) How was your relationship with the foster carer and their family?

2) Did you feel supported by your foster carer?

3) Were you given advice and guidance on childcare – what did you find most helpful?

4) What was not helpful?

5) Are there any other comments you would like to make?

Signed _____

Date _____



Appendix 4

Placement Risk Assessment Form

Parent's Name:

Age:

Please give details and assess level of risk using risk assessment form ???

Risk to others
(Aggression, Bullying, Violence, Light fires, Offending)
Please give details:

Risk of Exploitation
(Victim of Abuse, Risky sexual Behaviour, No Self Protective Behaviours)
Please give details:

Medical/Health Risks
(epilepsy, Diabetes, Asthma etc.)
Please give details:

Community,/Environment
(Anti Social Behaviour, Offending, Please include any outstanding court dates or offences)
Please give details:

Child Protection Issues, Abuse of Younger/Smaller Children, Violence Towards Other Children,
(Taking Children Away From Home)
Please give details:

Risk to Self (Self Harming, Suicide, Alcohol/Substance Misuse, Risky Behaviour, Absconding)
Please give details:



Safe Guarding Strategies/Precautions to Address Identified Risk

Signatures:

Name and role of person carrying out assessment: _____

Date: _____

Supervising Social Worker signature: _____

Date: _____

Foster Carer: _____

Date: _____



Appendix 5

Daily Task Checklist

Household Chores

One load of washing - Specify days

Change cot linen - Specify days

Change bed linen - Specify days

Dirty nappies- bagged and put in outside bin

Hoover bedroom - Sun, Tues & Thurs

Clean surfaces in bedroom

Clear bedroom floor of any clutter

Wash bottles in hot soapy water (after use)

Sterilise all bottles (evening)



Child's Care

Daytime starts when child wakes

Play in the morning (no TV- at home)

Check supply day bag (bottle, food, nappies, rattle etc.)

Bath time - (morning or evening)

Play in the afternoon (no TV- at home)

Nappy change after each feed and when else needed

No television during feeding times

Bedtime routine

Check supplies of nappies/creams etc.

Personal Care

Shower/Bath/hair/teeth etc.

Read and sign daily task sheet