



Family and friends assessments: your guide to how we share your information

Introduction

If you are about to be assessed as a family and friends carer or special guardian for a child who is looked after by Camden this leaflet will tell you:

- what kind of information we will ask you to provide
- what we do with the information
- who else will see the information.

Before the assessment starts, your social worker will explain how the assessment will be carried out, and answer any questions you may have.

Information we need

When someone comes forward to be a family and friends carer or special guardian for a child who is looked after by Camden, the council needs to be certain that they are a suitable person to look after children and that they can offer a good standard of care to the child for as long as they need it.

To do this, we will need to carry out a very detailed assessment of your personal circumstances, your life experiences, your parenting skills, and what you can offer the child in terms of a safe and secure home. This will involve gathering information about you such as:

- your personal and family history and background
- past and current relationships
- your state of health
- your religion, culture and ethnicity
- your education and employment history
- your accommodation and local area
- information about your finances
- any cautions or convictions.

How we use this information

The information we gather during the assessment is needed to help us to decide whether you would be the right person to be a long-term carer for the child. Once all the information needed for your assessment has been gathered, your assessing social worker will write it up in a report that will recommend whether or not you should become the child's long-term carer. Your social worker will share the report with you before it is seen by anyone else and you will have an opportunity to take legal advice about what is written in the report.

Some of the information you will be asked to provide will be very personal in nature; you may find it upsetting and distressing to see this written down in the report and may have second thoughts about sharing this with other people. Although we can redact (that means block out) some information such as names of third parties and addresses, information that has a bearing on your suitability to care for the child must remain in the report.

Who will see the report

The assessing social worker's report needs to be shared with anyone who is involved in making decisions about whether you will be a suitable carer for the child.

- If you are being considered as a foster carer for the child, the report will be presented to Camden's Fostering and Permanence Panel; this is a group of independent professionals who make decisions about suitability to foster for Camden.
- If you are being considered as a special guardian or the child is subject to care proceedings, and the matter needs to be decided by the Courts, the report will need to be filed with the Court as part of the proceedings. This means anyone who is party to the proceedings, including birth parents, their solicitors and legal representatives, and the child's guardian will all have access to the report.

However, in all cases we will ensure that only people who need to will have access to the report and that it will be treated with due care to ensure your information remains confidential.