



Children's Safeguarding and Family Help

Family, Friends and Fostering Service Approval and registration of foster carers procedures

Camden's Children and Learning Directorate uses relational practice as the foundation for all our work. Our integrative relational practice framework is based on our values, and is designed to help achieve the Directorate's purpose: to work with children, families and communities to make a positive, lasting difference to their futures, so they have the best start in life.

We recognise the impact of structural inequalities on the lives of the children and families we work with and as a service we will embrace inclusive, anti-discriminatory and anti-racist practice based on our values and our mission to champion social justice.

Our practice framework centres on honest and compassionate relationships with those we serve and with each other. It is an expectation that all Directorate policies and procedures are implemented in line with our practice framework, and that any actions within policies and procedures reflect its ethics, values and practice expectations.

Approval and registration of foster carers procedures

1 Introduction

This document sets out the procedures for approval and registration of Camden foster carers and should be read together with the *Assessment and approval of foster carers* policy.

[Assessment and Approvals of Foster Carers](#)

Social workers should refer to the *Exemptions and extensions/variations of approval* policy for information on exemptions to terms of approval.

[Exemptions and Extensions/Variations to Foster Carer...](#)

2 Procedures for foster carer approval

Applications to the Fostering and Permanence Panel

- It is the responsibility of the team manager authorising the Form F assessment report to ensure:
 - the assessment process has been completed and responses have been received for all checks
 - that notification is given to the Panel administrator that formal approval will be sought for a particular applicant at the next available Panel meeting.
 - the Form F report meets a high standard and contains all required information.

- If the manager is in any doubt as to whether to refer the applicant to the Panel they should seek advice from the agency advisor.

- It is Camden's aim that applications are considered by the Panel within 8 months of the formal application being received.

- The following documents should be forwarded to the Panel administrator for consideration at the next Panel meeting at least 1 month before the Panel meets:
 - application form
 - references
 - details of responses to statutory checks
 - medical report
 - initial home visit report

Approval and registration of foster carers procedures

- written assessment following preparation group
- Form F report
- any other relevant documents.

Attendance at Panel

- Once the team manager has notified the Panel administrator of the intention to apply for approval, the Panel administrator should send out a letter of invitation to the applicant enclosing a leaflet about the Panel at least 10 days before the panel meets.
- Invitation letters to applicants should make it clear that they may attend the Panel to make any representations and clarify facts, but they are under no obligation to do so and non-attendance will not affect their application. All applicants are encouraged to attend panel along with the assessing social worker.
- The Panel administrator should also notify the assessing social worker and team manager, and the child's allocated social worker where approval of a family and friends foster carer is being considered.
- The assessing social worker and responsible team manager must attend the Panel meeting to support the applicant, provide any further information and to advocate for the applicant where required.
- If the Panel are being asked to approve an applicant as a family and friends foster carer for a specific child, the child's allocated social worker should also attend the Panel to provide information on the child's needs and how the applicant can meet these.

After the Panel meeting

- After the Panel meeting, the Panel administrator should write up the minutes of the Panel's discussion, complete a decision sheet for each application and prepare standard letters from the Agency Decision Maker to the applicants.
- When the paperwork has been signed by the Panel chair, the Panel administrator should upload all documents onto the Fostering Panel episode on MOSAIC so that they are available for the Agency Decision Maker to refer to and pass on standard letters for signature.

Approval and registration of foster carers procedures

- The responsible team manager should record details of the Panel meeting for each applicant in the Fostering Panel episode on MOSAIC and send a task to the Agency Decision Maker for a final decision.

Role of the Agency Decision Maker

- On receiving the paperwork and standard letters, the Agency Decision Maker should read through all documentation before deciding whether or not to accept the Panel's recommendations.
- Decisions should be recorded on MOSAIC, together with reasons for the decision, and should cover the following points:
 - documents referred to when making the decision
 - key arguments raised
 - whether it is thought the panel process has been carried out fairly and thoroughly
 - whether any new information not available to panel has affected decision-making
 - reasons for adopting or not adopting the recommendation of the panel.
- The paperwork should then be returned to the team manager. The Agency Decision Maker should also sign the standard letters and return them to the Panel administrator.
- Where an applicant is approved as a foster carer, their assessing social worker should notify them verbally within 2 days of the decision being made by the Agency Decision Maker, who should confirm the decision in writing. This letter should contain the terms of the approval regarding the age, gender and number of children that the approved carer may foster.

3 Post-approval

Once a foster carer has been approved by the Agency Decision Maker, the Family, Friends and Fostering manager should ensure the newly-approved carer is registered and is visited by a social worker and receives the relevant documents.

Approval and registration of foster carers procedures

Registration

- Once the Agency Decision Maker has accepted a Panel recommendation for approval, the BSS Officer responsible for maintaining the Foster Carer Register will receive a task via MOSAIC to add the approved foster carer's name to the register.
- When a child has been placed with a **Regulation 24 carer**, the register should be updated to include the following information:
 - the name and address of the person the child has been placed with
 - the date the placement took effect
 - details of any agreement regarding the placement (this will be contained in the Regulation 24 placement agreement).

Foster care agreement

- All approved foster carers must have a written foster care agreement covering their terms of approval and setting out the role and responsibilities of the foster carer and the expectations that Camden has of approved foster carers. Equally, the agreement also details the Fostering Service's role and responsibilities and what foster carers can expect of the service.
- It is important that foster carers have a full understanding of the terms contained in the agreement, and that they have an opportunity to discuss the agreement with a social worker. The document must be signed by the foster carer and the social worker and uploaded onto MOSAIC in the Panel episode.
- The agreement must be changed to reflect any changes in legislation that affect the role and relationship and expectations of foster carers and the Family, Friends and Fostering Service, and any new agreement signed by the foster carer.

Foster carer's handbook and other documents

- The social worker should ensure that the foster carer is provided with the following:
 - a copy of the foster carer's handbook and copies of any other relevant Camden policies that are binding on foster carers

Approval and registration of foster carers procedures

- details of support groups that foster carers may wish to join
- information on financial payments that will be made to the carer
- some form of identification that verifies their role as a Camden foster carer
- files and equipment for keeping records on CLA.