



## **Children's Safeguarding and Social Work**

Corporate Parenting Service

Long term fostering policy

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## Long term fostering

### 1 Introduction and purpose

This policy sets out the framework for the assessment, approval, planning and review of long term fostering arrangements. It describes how the CLACL service, the Fostering team, the Permanence team, the Resource team and the CYPDS (for CLA children) will work together to deliver careful assessment and matching of children and their carers in order to ensure stable care arrangements that meet the child's present and future needs and will endure for the time that they are looked after.

### 2 Statutory framework

**The definition** of long term fostering is an arrangement made between the local authority and a foster carer to look after the child until they cease to be looked after. Care planning regulations set out the requirements for a long term foster placements which are:

- Foster care is the child's permanence plan and is recorded as such on their care plan.
- The foster carer has agreed to foster the child until they cease to be looked after and beyond if they agree to staying put.
- The local authority has confirmed the arrangement with the foster carer, birth parents and the child.

**Visits** to children in an Agency Decision Maker endorsed long term fostering placement should be at the following frequency:

- within one week of the start of the long term placement
- then at least every six weeks for the first year of the placement
- then at intervals of not more than six months where the child, being of sufficient age and understanding, agrees to this.

However, the circumstances of each case should be taken into account when deciding on the frequency of visits and visits may take place more frequently where this is considered appropriate.

**Statutory CLA reviews** should be held at the normal frequency for the first year of the placement, but consideration can be given to holding only one formal review meeting annually and conducting a less formal six-monthly review where consultations are carried out but no formal review meeting is held.

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The social worker and IRO should consult with the child, if they are of appropriate age and understanding, in order to decide whether this less formal approach would continue to ensure proper scrutiny of the care plan, and all decisions should be recorded on the care plan.

### 3 Framework for decision making

Regulations with regard to visiting and reviewing long term foster placements involve a reduced level of social work oversight, reflecting the foster carer's long term commitment to the child's care and their increasing autonomy for taking decisions on the child's day to day care.

For this reason, it is important that when making decisions on the suitability of a long term fostering placement, CSSW can strike a balance between carers increased authority whilst remaining involved enough to monitor the placement in order to ensure the child's safety and welfare in the long term.

Decisions on long term fostering need to involve the following tasks:

- assessing the suitability of carers to be long term foster carers
- deciding on the suitability of proposed matches
- deciding on what level of delegated authority should be given to permanent carers and the frequency of visits and CLA reviews.

The framework for decision-making and responsibility for carrying out these tasks will depend on the age of the children involved:

- Decisions on whether or not long-term fostering is the best permanence option for a child will be taken at their statutory CLA review.
- Decisions should be based on assessment of the carer's ability to be a long term foster carer to the child, meeting their current and future needs and what support needs to be put in place to support the placement. Assessment should consider the proposed carer's previous experience of foster care, existing relationship with the child and skills and knowledge in relation to meeting the child's assessed needs in a long-term capacity.
- Where a child has been living with a short term foster carer for some time and rehabilitation home is looking unlikely, CLA reviews should look at the possibility of the placement being converted to a long term fostering placement and should plan any work to forward this.

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- Decisions regarding matching a child or young person with a particular foster carer (including decisions where the child will remain with their current carer as a long term fostering placement) will either be presented to the Fostering and Permanence Panel for a recommendation or agreed at a Pathway Review. The final decision will be made by the Director of CSSW as Agency Decision Maker.
- Matching and family finding will be carried out either by the CLA service or by the Permanence team in partnership with the Fostering and Resource teams.

## 4 Procedures for children aged under 16

- Once a statutory CLA review proposes long term fostering as the permanence plan the allocated CLA social worker should liaise with the Permanence team to begin family finding.
- The Permanence team will allocate a family finder who will be responsible for all tasks relating to family finding and matching the child with a long term foster carer. The family finder will convene a family finding meeting to be attended by:
  - the child's social worker and their line/team manager
  - the family finder and the service manager for Care Provisions
  - a social work member of the Fostering team
  - a social work member of the Resource team
  - the supervising social worker of the current foster carer (or agency supervising social worker)
  - The IRO or IRO service manager.
- The CLA social worker will assess the child's long-term care needs by completing Coram/ BAAF Form E (Part 1&2).
- The Fostering team and Resource team will be responsible for carrying out a search for a suitable long –term foster placement and the child's current placement will be the first placement to be considered where this is appropriate.
- The Fostering/Resource team worker will provide copies of the carer's Form F to the family finder who will consider them against the child's Form E and prepare the matching report for the Fostering and Permanence Panel.

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- If the chosen long term foster placement is with a Private and Voluntary foster carer, the Resource team will negotiate with the carer's agency to agree the terms of the long-term placement, for example financial support.
- If the carer is a Camden foster carer, the family finder and the foster carer's supervising social worker will carry out any required work to present the carer to the Permanence Panel for approval as a long-term foster carer.
- It is essential that foster carers understand the nature of the commitment and agree to becoming the child's long-term carer and that they have been given sufficient information about the child and their needs in advance. A note of any discussions with the carer should be made on the MOSAIC case record.
- The Family Finder should complete the matching and linking report (see appendix 1) in order to assess the carer's suitability to care for the child long-term and the possibility of the child/young person remaining with them under a staying put arrangement: [Staying put policy.docx](#)
- The CLA social worker and the Family Finder are responsible for presenting the case to the Fostering and Permanence Panel for a recommendation on matching and should ensure that all the relevant paperwork is available for the Panel meeting.
- The Panel will make a recommendation to the Agency Decision Maker who will make the final decision on the proposed match. The Agency Decision Maker letter will then be sent to the foster carer and the child/young person (if appropriate) confirming the match approval (appendix 4 & 5).
- Where a decision is taken not to pursue a long-term fostering arrangement with the child's current short term foster carer the reasons for this should be given in writing to the foster carer by the service manager.

## 5 Procedures for young people entering the care system aged 16 and 17

- Prior to the 2<sup>nd</sup> pathway review, the CLACL social worker, fostering supervising social worker and the IRO should discuss with the foster carer and young person their views about the placement becoming a long-term/permanent placement.
- The CLACL social worker should complete the matching and linking report for 16/17 year olds (see appendix 3) prior to the 2<sup>nd</sup> pathway review in order to assess the carers suitability to care for the young person until they are 18.

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This report should also consider a staying put arrangement. [Staying put policy.docx](#)

- At the pathway review, this should be agreed as the plan with the young person and foster carer. Following the review the IRO should within 1 week provide the following documents to the agency advisor who will present the case to the Agency Decision Maker the following week:
  - The pathway review paperwork
  - The matching and link report
  - The Agency Decision Maker letter for the young person (appendix 4)
  - The Agency Decision Maker letter for the foster carer (appendix 5).

## 6 Assessing foster carers

A long term fostering placement may only take place with foster carers who have been assessed as suitable to be a long term foster carer and supervising social workers are responsible for ensuring that foster carers are approved as long term foster carers.

If the foster carer has not already been approved their terms of approval will need to be changed.

- For Private and voluntary foster carers, their agency will be responsible for changing their terms of approval via their own Panel.
- Camden foster carers should be referred to the Fostering and Permanence Panel for their terms of approval to be changed.
- The foster carer's allocated supervising social worker is responsible for assessing their suitability in the following ways:
  - If the foster carer is an experienced carer who has looked after a number of children of differing ages and has shown they have the experience to manage long-term placements for children aged 0-18, their approval criteria can be changed via their annual foster carer review, with their supervising social worker presenting the case to the Fostering and Permanence Panel.
  - If the carer is inexperienced in caring for children of different ages or is new etc they should be assessed as long term foster carers for the specific child using the long term foster carer assessment template shown at appendix 2. The Family Finder from the Permanence team

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will complete the assessment where the child is under 16. Once the report is completed the case should be presented to the Fostering and Permanence Panel.

- For young people over the age of 16, the supervising social worker should change their approval at the annual review as long-term foster carers for a specific child. The annual review should be brought forward, if required, to prevent any delay in matching a young person.



## **MATCHING CRITERIA AND LINKING REPORT**

The following framework is to be used when assessing the match between a child and proposed placement, and writing the report to Panel. The object is to ensure that needs and strengths will be specified, and not just in general terms, and that there will be a careful analysis of what a particular placement can and cannot offer.

### **Part 1.**

1.1 Child's name, date of birth, legal status, current placement  
Type of placement required.

1.2 Using the following headings (adding if necessary) list the child's needs in terms of placement. Use your own order of priority for this particular child.

a) Race / Culture

Give details of racial/cultural background include language spoken, in birth family; in foster placement (if appropriate). State requirement for new family. Is it important that more distant racial/cultural links be matched? (E.g. – if child had one set of Polish grandparents, would this need to be reflected in placement?) Are there any particular issues in terms of the child's racial identity, which would need to be addressed in placement? E.g. – possibly in relation to child's feelings of self-worth.

b) Religion

Is the child a member of a religious group? Practising or non-practising? Is it essential that new family is of the same religion? Has a preference been specified by birth parents? What is the child's view? If no religion has been specified for the child would she/he placed in a family where religion is important?

c) Geographical Location of placement

Does the placement need to be near any significant people or places? In-Borough? Out of Borough and distant to prevent unplanned contact with birth family? Or out of Borough and near to enable planned, but not unplanned contact?

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d) Two parent or Single parent family

State preference. If single, is it important whether male or female?  
Does family need to reflect birth family, or family of current placement?  
One parent not working?

e) Other child in family?

Should this child be placed on her/his own or with other children?  
Does the sex of the children in the new family matter? Should the child be oldest/youngest/otherwise in family?

f) Health

Does the child have special health needs? Do these require a specialised placement (e.g. training for prospective carers?) Does placement need to be near hospital or specialised centre for treatment? Would home need adapting – e.g. for wheelchair access? Does the child have any allergies (e.g. to pets?) Do the family need to be able to cope with health emergencies i.e. more than would be usually expected.

Are immunisations & checks up to date?

Looking at child's medical history, are there any inherited risks, e.g. schizophrenia, genetic disorders, which might have implications for child's health in the future? Is this child thought to be particularly at risk of being HIV positive?

g) Education

Does the child have any special educational needs? If stated, how have these been identified? Is child to remain in present school? Does this child require special education in connection with his/her religion?

h) Contact with birth family (Cross ref. Contact)

Specify plans for contact, if any. With whom? Frequency? Face to face? Letter/photos? Where: on neutral territory? In new home? Is it planned that birth parents meet adopters once, before placement? How will contact be mediated? Use of Post Box.

1.3 Using the following headings (adding if necessary), list the child's personal resources and needs. Use your own order of priority for this particular child.

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### a) Temperament

Is this child, for example: confident; withdrawn; volatile; easygoing; irritable; cheerful; gregarious; a loner etc.

Are there any talents/skills it is thought the child might inherit? In terms of time spent on interests: how often? With whom? What qualities would be required in the placement to encourage this child's talents and/or interests?

### b) Identity

Concerns the child growing sense of self as a separate and valued being. Includes how a child views himself and his abilities, feelings of belonging and acceptance by the family and wider society and strength of a positive sense of individuality.

### c) Family and Social Relationships

Development of empathy and the capacity to place self in someone else's shoes. Includes quality of relationships with parents or care givers, increasing importance of age appropriate friendships within peers and other significant persons in the child's life and response of family to these relationships.

How does this child relate to i) men ii) women and iii) children and siblings? NB if the child has a history of sexual abuse this may be significant. Are any of these problematic? Does this have bearing on the composition of the new family?

### d) Social Presentation

Concerns child's growing understanding of the way in which appearance and behaviour are perceived by the outside world and the impression of being created. Includes appropriateness of dress for age, gender, culture and religion, cleanliness and personal hygiene and availability of advice from parents or caregivers about presentation in different settings.

### e) Emotional and Behavioural Development

Concerns the appropriateness of response in feelings and actions by a child, initially to parents and caregivers and increasingly to others beyond the family. Includes nature and quality of early attachments, characteristics of temperament, adaptation to change, response to stress and degree of appropriate self control. Predictions about child's ability to form future attachments.

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Information on past attachments and their level of significance.

f) Expressed Feelings

Is this child able to express feelings? How are the expressed (e.g. freely, destructively?) Does this child need a family who can help them to express feelings safely?

g) Physical Contact

Is this child who enjoys physical contact, hugs, kisses etc, or are they reluctant to be touched? Does she/he need more physical affection than most children, perhaps due to, e.g. deprivation? Difficulties in expressing feelings in other ways? Does she/he find it difficult to accept affection? Would family need to be able to cope with periods of rejection?

h) Self care Skills

Concerns the acquisition by a child of competencies required for increasing independence from early skills of dressing and feeding to opportunities to learn safe care beyond the family and independent living skills as older children. Includes encouragement to acquire skills and impact of disability and other special needs on how skills are gained.

i) Birth parents/relatives wishes and feelings

j) Child's wishes and feelings.

1.4 List, in order of priority, the strongest or important relationships she or he had with family, friends, or the community. Is it planned that these relationships will be sustained after placement?

Include extended family and foster carers here.

1.5 Family finding plan to be completed.



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### Appendix 2

<b>Camden Permanence Team</b> <b>Approval as Long Term Foster Carers</b>
This assessment is the property of Camden Permanence Team and may not be used without the permission of this service. This report is strictly confidential.

<b>Name of Assessor</b>	
<b>Name of Team Manager</b>	
<b>Name of Applicant/s</b>	
<b>Known As</b>	
<b>Date of birth</b>	
<b>Present address</b>	
<b>At this address since</b>	
<b>Telephone number</b>	
<b>Ethnic origin</b>	
<b>Marital status</b>	
<b>Approval sought for</b>	
<b>Current Placements</b>	

### Information about the child/ren

<b>Name of the Child/ren</b>	
<b>Known As</b>	
<b>Date of birth</b>	
<b>Present address</b>	
<b>At this address since</b>	

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<b>Ethnic origin</b>	
<b>Religion</b>	
<b>Legal status</b>	
<b>Childs wishes and feelings</b>	
<b>Family Finding History</b>	

## Background

<b>Reason for considering permanence for the child/ren named above?</b>
<b>Background of factual information about applicants (highlight and explore any changes since previous assessment report, employment changes, parenting, major life events).</b>
<b>Date of Form F and strength of analysis and evidence relevance in regards to permanency.</b>
<b>Current support network composition, including previous support care provided</b>

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<b>Details of Placements to date including age, gender, ethnic origin and diversity and length of placement. Types of issues and behaviours cared for e.g. health issues, soiling, absconding</b>
<b>Any special roles/skills eg mentors new carers, co-facilitates training</b>
<b>Training attended in the last year</b>
<b>Use of any support groups and other services ie fostering support groups</b>
<b>File review including general information from Foster Carer Reviews including working with the fostering agency and professional networks. Overview of information from case notes for any supporting evidence.</b>



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<b>Comments from social workers and other professionals regarding the care provided For example IRO's and CLA social workers.</b>
<b>Any allegations, complaints or standards of care issues and the outcomes of these</b>
<b>Any other significant information from the file and/or annual reviews</b>

**Summary of previous care experience**

<b>How have the carers managed the needs of children in the household including their own children (i.e how have they managed / combined the needs and demands placed on them. What does living in this household feel like for CLA and their own children?).</b>

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**How do the carers promote safe and caring experiences for CLA placed in their care? Include how carers may resolve disputes between themselves and how they model good family relationships that build resilience.**

**How do the foster carers work as part of a team? Explore how applicants have worked with other professionals, worked with birth families and managed any areas of conflict or differences of opinion, include participation in reviews, meetings and care plans. Include details of how the carers make and share placement records; and engage in supervisory visits and this assessment.**

## Placement and Matching

**How are the carers meeting the children's needs now? How will they manage long term? Please include any issues relating to identity; race; culture; religion; geographical; health; education; contact; family and social relationships; emotional and behavioural development; moving on to independence and staying put.**

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<b>Summary of the selection meeting (strengths and vulnerabilities)</b>

**Checks & References**

<b>DBS on applicant/s</b>	
<b>DBS on support carer and/or adult household members</b>	
<b>Medical Assessment</b>	
<b>Medical Advisor's comments</b>	
<b>LA &amp; Previous LA check</b>	
<b>Personal References, dates if re-visited. If not re-visited why?</b>	
<b>Health &amp; Safety Check</b>	
<b>Support Carer interview date, if applicable</b>	

<b>Key Strengths of Applicant/s</b>

<b>Areas For Development</b>
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<b>Foster carer feedback to this report</b>
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<b>Recommendation</b>	
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<b>Assessing social worker: Signature &amp; Date:</b>	
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<b>Team Manager: Signature and Date:</b>	
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Appendix 3

## **MATCHING CRITERIA AND LINKING REPORT FOR 16 & 17 YEAR OLDS**

The following framework is to be used when assessing the match between a young person (16 & 17 years of age **only**) and proposed long-term foster placement or residential placement and writing the report to the Agency Decision Maker. The object is to ensure that needs and strengths will be specified, and that there will be a good analysis of what the recommended permanence placement can and cannot offer.

### **PART ONE**

#### 1.6 Young Person's Details and placement

Name:

DOB:

Legal Status:

Current placement:

Type of Permanence placement Required: (ie. foster care, residential etc.)

#### 1.7 Young Person's Needs

*Please list the child's needs including what they require from a permanence placement until the age of 18 years. Please include race/culture, religion, health, education, location of placement, contact, identity, relationships, emotional and behavioural development, social presentation, independent skills/self-care etc).*

#### 1.8 Expressed Wishes and Feelings

*Please confirm the wishes and feelings of the young person, birth parent/relative (where appropriate) and the carer/placement in respect of permanence in this placement until at least the age of 18 years.*

Young Person's expressed wishes and feelings:

Date views obtained:

Birth Parents/Relative's expressed wishes and feeling:

Date views obtained:

Carer/Placement's expressed wishes and feelings:

Date views obtained:

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## **PART 2**

### 2.1 Proposed placement

Name of Carer/placement:

Address:

Length of placement Offered to date: (how long has the young person been there)

Composition of family (if foster placement):

Type of placement offered: (ie. foster care, residential etc.)

2.5 How the Proposed placement meets/will meet the Young Person's needs  
*Please refer to your list at 1.2 to state how the proposed carer/placement is meeting the young person's needs now and will continue to meet their needs until 18 years of age. If it is a foster placement please comment on whether staying put is being considered.*

2.6 Deficits in the Proposed Permanence placement  
*Please consider any areas of the young person's needs that is not met by the placement and comment on how this will be addressed to ensure the child is safe and their needs met.*

## **PART 3**

3.1 Conclusion and Recommendation  
*Please provide a brief analysis of why you are recommending that this placement is secured as the young person's permanence placement until they reach their majority.*

### **SIGNATURES:**

Signature:

Date:

Name:

Social Worker

CLA and Care Leavers Team

Children's Safeguarding & Social Work

London Borough of Camden

Signature:

Date:

Name:

Social Worker

CLA and Care Leavers Team

Children's Safeguarding & Social Work

London Borough of Camden

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Appendix 4

## **Letter to CLA confirming their long-term foster placement**

### **To be written by social worker**

Dear (name of child)

At your CLA review meeting held on (date of meeting) we agreed that you needed to live with a foster carer who is best able look after you until you are 18. We said that we would look for the best carer for you and get permission for you to go and live with them.

*\*(delete as required)*

\*I am writing to let you know that we have now decided that we think it is best for you to stay living with your current foster carer (name of carer) until you are 18 as we think this is the best option for you.

\*I am writing to let you know that we have found a foster carer (name of carer) who we believe is the best person to look after you until you are 18. I will be in touch with you to talk about the arrangements for you to move to your new home.

Yours sincerely

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Appendix 5

Your Ref:

Our Ref:

Enquiries to:

**Supporting People Directorate**

**Children's Safeguarding & Social Work**

**Children's Provision**

**Adoption & Permanence Team**

London Borough of Camden

1<sup>st</sup> Floor

Crowndale Centre

218 Eversholt Street

London NW1 1BD

Direct dial: 0207 974

Fax 020 7974

Dear .....

RE: The Care Planning and Fostering (Miscellaneous Amendments) (England) Regulations 2015

As you are aware at a recent Looked After Review for .....it was agreed that he/she should remain with you under a long term fostering arrangement.

I am pleased to confirm that I agree with this decision and have noted that it is .....wish to be placed with you on a long term basis. I have also taken into account your wish to provide a long term placement for .....

This is a positive outcome for ..... and the Independent Reviewing Officer has noted that he/she has benefitted from being placed with you in the following ways, (add specific outcomes for YP)

**As ..... is remaining with you on a long term basis this may be a good time for you to review the delegated authority and the monitoring arrangements for ..... with the CLA service.**

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for continued commitment to ..... and wish you as a family the best for the future.

If you have any queries please contact your supervising social worker or the social worker for .....

Yours sincerely

**Rashida Baig, Agency Decision Maker**  
**Director , Children's Safeguarding and Social Work**  
**Supporting People Directorate**  
cc. Supervising Social Worker



DRAFT