



Children's Safeguarding and Family Help

Family, Friends and Fostering Service

Review and termination of carer's approval practice guidance

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.

Review and termination of carer's approval

1 Introduction

This document sets out the local practice and procedures for carrying out reviews of foster carer's approval and terminating approval. The document should be read together with the *Review and termination of approval of foster carers policy*. [Review and Termination of Approval of Foster Carers](#)

2 Frequency and purpose of reviews

- Camden's policy is that the following reviews of approval must be presented to the Fostering and Permanence Panel:
 - all first reviews
 - every 3rd review
 - reviews for specialist foster carers
 - reviews of parent and child fostering settings
 - where there have been significant changes to the fostering household
 - where there has been an allegation against a foster carer
 - where a change of the foster carer's terms of approval is being sought
 - where the deregistration of a foster carer is being sought, either at their own request or on the application of the Fostering Service.
- All other reviews will be decided by the Corporate Parenting Head of Service as Agency Decision Maker based on information provided by the supervising social worker in the annual review record and other related documents.
- The purpose of annual review process is to consider:
 - whether the foster carer and their household remains suitable to foster and if their approval should be renewed
 - whether there should be any change in the terms of their approval, based on evidence shown of the carer's ability to meet fostering competencies.
- The review process can also be a mechanism for:
 - looking at how the care provided by the foster carer has contributed to improving outcomes for the children in the placement
 - appraisal of the foster carer's performance
 - planning for the carer's professional development and training and set targets and goals for the coming year

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- gaining the foster carers views on the level and quality of support they have received from the Family, Friends and Fostering Service.

3 Consultation for reviews

- The purpose of consultation is to gather relevant information in order to provide a thorough overview and evidence of the continuing suitability of the fostering household and the effectiveness of the foster carer in meeting the child's needs.
- Consultation should begin at least 2 months before the review is due to be considered and supervising social workers are responsible for ensuring that the relevant consultation forms are provided to the relevant individuals.
- Completed consultation forms should be shared with the foster carer and made available to panel or the Head of Service as part of the decision-making process.

Consultation should include the views of the following:

Looked after children:

- CLA should be able to state their views about their foster carer and the standard of care they receive and this should be facilitated by their allocated social worker.
- The CLA social worker should decide whether a child is able to understand and engage with the process; children aged 8 and over should generally be encouraged to complete the consultation form independently, with the social worker providing limited support. Younger children may need more support.
- Where the child has a disability or communication difficulties, the allocated social worker should ensure that a suitable resource is made available in order to facilitate this process for the child so that they are able to make their views known.

Birth parents

- Parents should also be able to express their views on whether they feel the foster carer is capable of meeting the child's needs and supporting the overall care plan. Allocated social workers are responsible for obtaining their views.

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- Supervising social workers may also include comments made by parents about the placement from the child's statutory review and record these in the annual review record.

The child's social worker

- The allocated social worker should complete a consultation form for each child who was placed with the foster carer during the previous year. The consultation form allows the social worker to comment the suitability of the placement in terms of the child's needs, how the foster carer is meeting the child's needs and how this contributes to the child's development and helps them to achieve good outcomes.
- The consultation form should be signed by the social worker, their manager, and the foster carer.

The foster carer's children and other household members

- Supervising social workers are responsible for obtaining the views of the foster carer's children and other household members and these views should be recorded on the consultation form.

The foster carer

- Foster carers need to be fully involved in the consultation process and supervising social workers should use time set aside during supervisory visits to help them plan for the review.
- The foster carer should use the consultation form to reflect on their experiences during the previous year and what work needs to be carried out to help them maintain standards and meet fostering competencies.
- The supervising social worker should encourage the foster carer to comment on the support they have received and services provided both to them and to the children they are looking after.

Other checks

- The supervising social worker should carry out a health and safety audit of the foster home to ensure that any previous health and safety issues have been addressed and that the home environment is safe and suitable for the children placed there.

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- The supervising social worker and the foster carer should discuss the family's current safe caring policy to ensure that it is relevant to the children who are living in the placement and is being fully implemented by the foster carer and their family.
- Supervising social workers should arrange the renewal of the following checks and ensure that responses are available in time for the annual review.
 - DBS checks must be renewed every 3 years on all members of the foster carer's household who are 16 years and over.
 - Foster carers must have a medical every 2 years to ensure that they remain in good health and are able to cope with the stresses of fostering.
 - Local authority checks must be renewed every 3 years on the foster carer's current address.

4 The annual foster carer review record

- The annual review record can be found in the "Approved Foster Care Review" episode on MOSAIC and should be completed by the supervising social worker.
- The completed report should be sent to the team manager via the task on MOSAIC for authorisation. The manager may make a decision at this point as to whether the review needs to be presented to the Panel due to any issues arising.
- The supervising social worker should arrange to visit the foster carer with the independent reviewing officer (see below) so that the carer may read through all the consultation forms and the annual review report and make their own comments and clarify any factual discrepancies.
- Termination of approval should be considered when evidence obtained from the review process shows that the foster carer is consistently failing to meet fostering competencies or required standards of care and all work to improve their performance over the year has failed to make an impact.
- The recommendation should be discussed with the Fostering manager, who may take advice from the agency advisor.

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- If the supervising social worker recommends that the foster carer's approval should be terminated, they should notify the foster carer of this as soon as possible and explain the reasons for this.

5 Role of the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO)

- All reviews will be overseen by an independent reviewing officer who is not connected with the Fostering Service and to ensure that reviews of foster carer's approval is as fair, objective and transparent as possible. IROs will provide independent scrutiny of reports and assure the quality of information gathered and standards of reports
- Once the annual review report is completed, the supervising social worker should contact the independent reviewing officer to make arrangements to visit the foster carer in order to share the contents of the report and the recommendation.
- The supervising social worker should ensure that the independent reviewing officer has access to the consultation forms and the annual review report.
- The role of the independent reviewing officer is to:
 - ensure consultation records and the annual review report meets a good enough standard of information
 - ensure that all aspects of the review procedure have been carried out satisfactorily
 - advise the supervising social worker on any changes required to the report
 - interview the foster carer regarding the review process and to obtain their views on the report . This meeting should provide the foster carer with the opportunity to give their perspective on aspects of the placement that they may view differently from the social worker, which allows for a balance in the report.
 - advise the supervising social worker on any issues arising from the review process
 - provide a report for the Panel or Head of Service.

6 Applications to the Fostering Panel or Head of Service

- Where the review of approval needs to be heard by the Panel, the supervising social worker should contact the Panel administrator to book in to the next available Panel meeting at least 1 month before the review needs to take place.
- The supervising social worker should also ensure that the following documents are sent to the Panel administrator (at least 14 days before the Panel meeting) or Head of Service:
 - the annual review record
 - all consultation forms
 - the health and safety questionnaire
 - the safe caring questionnaire
 - the independent reviewing officer's report
 - where appropriate, responses from renewed statutory checks.
- Foster carers should be encouraged to attend Panel meetings to clarify facts and make their views known. Supervising social workers should also attend to support the foster carer.