



Children's Safeguarding and Family Help

Corporate Parenting Service

**Kinship care for looked after children:
Procedures for social workers**

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.

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1. Introduction

This document sets out the procedures for making decisions on placing looked after children with a Kinship carer and for assessing, monitoring and supporting carers. The document should be read together with the *Placement with connected persons* policy.

[Placements with Connected Persons](#)

For details of Kinship care arrangements where the child is not looked after, please see the *CIN Kinship care procedures*. [Kinship Care](#)

2 Roles and responsibilities

- **Children’s social workers** are responsible for identifying potential Kinship carers in the child’s network and carrying out viability assessments under Regulation 24.
- **CIN managers** are responsible for authorising a family member or friend to be considered as a potential carer and approving the viability assessment under Regulation 24, on the advice of the Family, Friends and Fostering service.
- **The Family, Friends and Fostering service** is responsible for assessing Kinship carers as Camden foster carers and monitoring and supporting carers during this assessment up to their approval as foster carers. The service will also provide information and advice to children’s social workers on Kinship care. The service is also responsible for the supervision, training and support and review of approval of Kinship carers following approval.
- **The Fostering and Permanence Panel** is responsible for making recommendations to the Agency Decision maker regarding the approval of Kinship carers as Camden foster carers and for granting extensions to a Regulation 24 arrangement where the approval process is likely to exceed 16 weeks.
- **The Agency Decision Maker** is responsible for making decisions on the approval of Kinship carers as Camden foster carers following the recommendation of the Fostering and Permanence Panel.

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- **The Resources service** is responsible for helping children's social workers to devise suitable packages of care for Regulation 24 carers and Kinship foster carers that meets the child's needs and supports the carer.

3 Identifying kinship carers

- Where possible, social workers should be placing looked after children with Kinship carers in order to secure their permanent care. Social workers need to be aware of those children who may not be able to remain at home and identify and assess potential Kinship carers as early as possible. This way, the child's placement can be better planned.
- During care proceedings, the Court will require Camden to provide evidence of what efforts have been made to place the child with a family and friends carer, and it will be an expectation that assessment of Kinship carers will have been undertaken prior to care proceedings being issued.
- Potential Kinship carers must be identified as part of pre-proceedings work where care proceedings are being considered and should be discussed at legal planning meetings and permanence planning meetings.
- Advice should be sought from the Family, Friends and Fostering service particularly around any possible bars to a potential Kinship carer being approved as a foster carer in advance of any decision being made.
- Camden has developed a ***pre-assessment questionnaire*** that can be used:
 - to help potential Kinship carers explore the possible impact on themselves and their family of looking after the child so that they can make an informed decision about putting themselves forward for assessment as a foster carer
 - to help social workers to decide whether or not to pursue assessment of the individual as a Kinship carer and identify earlier those potential carers who are unlikely to be approved as a Camden foster carer
 - to help the Family, Friends and Fostering service to select the best candidate for Kinship care where more than one individual has come forward to be considered. [family-and-friends-kinship-care-self-assessment-questionnaire.docx](#)
- Potential Kinship carers should be given a copy of the guidance on viability assessments. [sw-guidance-viability-sgo-and-reg-24-assessments.pdf](#)

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- Family Group Conferences should always be offered to a family who are considering Kinship care arrangements for a looked after child and must be held whenever a child is accommodated or pre-proceedings steps under the PLO commence. [Family Group Conferences \(FGCs\) | Children's Policy & Practice Hub](#)

4 Regulation 24 procedures

4.1 Viability assessment

- Social workers carrying out viability assessment prior to a looked after child being placed with a Kinship carer should refer to the Kinship assessments practice guidance. Social workers should record the assessment on the viability assessment template available on MOSAIC.
- Social workers need to be able to recognise those candidates who are unlikely to be approved as a Camden foster carer as early as possible and take advice from the Family, Friends and Fostering service. The following situations are likely to lead to the carer not being successfully approved:
 - The carer does not have a safe, secure place to live. ie. the carer lives in temporary accommodation, is a squatter, or has no legal right to remain in the UK etc.
 - The accommodation is not suitable as it does not offer enough space or will not meet the child's needs.
 - The carer or an adult member of the household has convictions or cautions for specific criminal offences against children that will exclude the household from being considered for fostering.
 - The carer or a member of the household refuses to consent to police and network checks.
 - The carer's GP reports that their health may seriously impact on their ability to care for the child.
 - Concerns have been raised by agencies about the household which suggests the child's safety and welfare may not be safeguarded in the placement.

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- Regulation 24 placements must be authorised by the CIN service manager following advice from the Family, Friends and Fostering service manager, who will advise on:
 - whether or not the proposed family and friends carer is likely to be formally approved as a Camden foster carer **and**
 - whether the arrangements will endure and will meet the child's need for permanence.
- If it is decided that the placement cannot go ahead, the social worker and their manager should meet with the proposed Kinship carer to explain the reasons for this, and a record of the meeting noted in the case notes of the child's MOSAIC record. The social worker will be responsible for making alternative care arrangements for the child.

4.2 Placing the child

Once the placement has been authorised, the social worker should:

- convene a placement agreement meeting involving the carer, the child and the parents (where appropriate) and make arrangements for the child to be taken to the placement;
- complete the *placement Agreement Plan* and *Delegated Authority Checklist* and ensure a copy of these are given to the family and friends carer;
- notify the child's professional network about the Kinship care arrangements; where the child is placed in another borough, a formal notification of the placement should be made by the Business Support Officer;
- schedule weekly visits to the placement via the MOSAIC visits screen;
- ensure the carer signs the *Regulation 24 agreement* (available on MOSAIC) and that the document is uploaded onto the child's MOSAIC record.

All Regulation 24 carers who are caring for a looked after child **must** sign the agreement **before the child is placed**, and it is the responsibility of the allocated social worker to ensure that the agreement is discussed with carers so that they are fully aware of their responsibilities to CSFH and agree to abide by its terms.

4.3 Notifying the Family, Friends and Fostering service

The Family, Friends and Fostering service should be notified of all Kinship care arrangements under Regulation 24 as soon as it is known that a placement may be made so that the team can:

- provide information and advice to social workers
- advise on the suitability of potential Kinship carers and the likelihood of them being approved as Camden foster carers
- begin the fostering assessment
- track the Regulation 24 placement to ensure that statutory timescales are met for approval
- provide support for the Kinship carer.

5 Support for Regulation 24 carers

- Social workers should be aware that Regulation 24 carers are likely to be more emotionally involved in the care of the child due to their on-going relationship with the child and the birth parent and may also face hostility from the birth parent and other family members because of their caring role. For this reason, they may need extra support from CSFH, particularly around contact.
- All Regulation 24 carers should have an allocated supervising social worker from the Family, Friends and Fostering service who is the social worker carrying out the fostering assessment. Support should also be provided by the child's social worker where appropriate.
- The supervising social worker should visit the carer to provide advice and support and details of any support plan should be written down as an agreement between the social worker and the carer. The plan should cover:
 - Frequency and purpose of visits: Visits should be recorded in the same manner as supervisory visits to approved foster carers. The visits may also afford the kinship social worker an opportunity to observe the carer's abilities with a view to deciding whether any proposed assessment of the carer as an approved foster carer is likely to succeed.
 - Areas of concern requiring practical help or support and what support will be provided.

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- Details of any equipment to be provided: The Family, Friends and Fostering service is responsible for providing any equipment that the carers may need to enable them to meet the specific needs of the child. This should be facilitated by the supervising social worker.
- Details of any training for the carer: all training available to foster carers are open to Kinship carers but carers must attend the 1 day preparation group if they wish to be assessed as a foster carer.
- Regulation 24 carers should be given the same information as that provided to Camden foster carers, including information on practical issues such as overnight stays and contact as they are sometimes unsure about the legal implications of many situations that arise when caring for a looked after child.
- Regulation 24 carers will be paid at the same fostering maintenance rate as all Camden foster carers from the time that a decision is made to place the child with them. The Family, Friends and Fostering team will be responsible for the payment of the fostering allowance but initially payment will be made by the relevant CIN or CLA team until the Permanence team have set up the on-going payment.

6 Termination of Regulation 24 placements

- Regulation 24 placements may be terminated by CSFH at any time during the placement if it is felt that it is not the most appropriate placement for the child in terms of safeguarding and promoting their welfare or meeting their needs. This would need to be discussed by the social worker and the child's IRO and agreed at the child's statutory CLA review.
- During the course of the fostering assessment of the carer, the assessing social worker in the Family, Friends and Fostering service may raise concerns that the carer is unlikely to be approved as a Camden foster carer. These concerns should be discussed between the Family, Friends and Fostering manager, the CLA team manager and the child's IRO and a decision made regarding the placement.

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- Regulation 24 placements must end as soon as the 16 week period has expired or any other period of extension granted by the Fostering and Permanence Panel if the carer has not been approved as a Camden foster carer in that timescale (see section 7).
- All Regulation 24 placements will come to an end once the carer has been approved as a Camden foster carer.

7. Assessing Kinship carers as foster carers

- Fostering assessments of Regulation 24 carers will be carried out by social workers based in the Family, Friends and Fostering service, who **must** be notified in advance of any proposed Kinship care arrangement or any Regulation 24 arrangement so that the case can be allocated and the assessment started.
- Although Kinship carers will generally be expected to meet the eligibility criteria for all Camden foster carers, assessment will focus mainly on the carer's ability to meet the specific needs of the individual child they will be caring for rather than all children. This will be reflected in the assessment process and social workers should refer to the Family and Friends/Kinship care assessment practice guidance for more details. [family-and-friends-kinship-assessments-practice-guidance.pdf](#)
- An extension of 8 weeks can be granted for the foster carer assessment by the Fostering and Permanence Panel. Assessing social workers should notify the Family, Friends and Fostering manager of any required extensions in order to book into the next Panel meeting and should provide a short report detailing why the extension is needed.
- The Family, Friends and Fostering service manager should track and monitor the progress of fostering assessments for Regulation 24 carers to ensure that:
 - statutory time limits on assessment and approval are met
 - extensions are requested from the Fostering and Permanence Panel in good time
 - assessments are being carried out in a timely manner
 - placements are not allowed to run over the 16 week period.

8 Role of the Fostering and Permanence Panel

- The Fostering and Permanence Panel's role is to:
 - approve the extension of Regulation 24 placements past 16 weeks where a decision on approval has not been made or the carer has applied for review under the Independent Review Mechanism;
 - recommend that a Kinship carer or Regulation 24 carer be approved as a Camden foster carer;
 - confirm the legal option selected by the family and the child's social worker to secure the child's long-term placement with the carer.
- Cases where there is a request for extension of a Regulation 24 placement should be jointly presented to the panel by the child's social worker and the assessing social worker.
- Cases where there is a request for approval of a Kinship foster carer should be presented by the assessing social worker who carried out the fostering assessment.
- Cases where there is a request for approval of long-term plans for a child living with a Kinship foster carer that involve applying for legal orders to secure the placement should be presented by the child's social worker.
- Kinship foster carers will only be approved to care for the child for whom they have been selected to care. Once approved, carers will have the same status as all Camden foster carers and will be subject to the same policies, procedures and standards of care.

