**Stage 3**

**Initial Guidance Notes**

**This form is for use in assessing family and friends carers to care for a specific child or children. It is designed to incorporate the requirements of the fostering regulations and the special guardianship regulations.** **It is also appropriate for use in considering whether a child arrangement order is appropriate however, its use is not mandatory in those circumstances.**

The authors of this form should have familiarity with the requirements of special guardianship and the fostering national minimum standards and regulations. Care should be made when completing the assessment to ensure that the person being assessed understands the range of care options available to them.

Before placing a child with a family member or friends such person must be approved as a Local Authority foster carer. The carer should ideally be approved by fostering panel before any placement is made. Placement includes any placement brokered by the social worker whether or not in emergency situations where there is a requisite degree of control and coercion in the arrangement of the placement.

This form should not be used for interim approval and the Viability for Reg 24 form should be used instead.

The subjects of the assessment should have it explained to them that the process of assessment will involve discussions of past events within their lives which they may find difficult to discuss or distressing. They should be warned that the information shared within the assessment is likely to be placed before either or both the fostering panel and the Court and shared with the parties. In the event that there is any information which they would explicitly wish to be kept from the Court and the parties then this should be identified to the worker so that a suitable way to proceed can be found.

Please complete all sections of the form. In the event that the form is completed by more than one worker please initial each section you complete.

***Each bullet point within the form must be addressed. In the event that there is nothing relevant then this must still be stated for each element of the bullet point.***

***Reminders for practitioners:***

* Advise them to seek Legal Advice;
* Ensure close liaison throughout between C&F and Fostering Team at the start of any assessment (see process map);
* The purpose of this report is to comment on the prospective carers’ ability to care. The nature of proposed order to secure the child’s permanence will be the recommendation of the child’s social worker within the Care Planning Process.

**Kinship Assessment**

**The following matters are prescribed for the purposes of section 14A(8)(b) of the Act.**

(If in pre-proceedings by week 13; if in proceedings by week 10)

Parts 1 -3 to be completed by the Child’s social worker. NB one report for each child

**1. In respect of the child:**

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| Name | |  | | | Gender |  |
| Date of birth | |  | Place of birth |  | | |
| Address |  | | | | |
| LA Area |  | | | | |

(b) a physical description of the child and photograph;

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(c) nationality (and immigration status where appropriate);

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(d) racial origin and cultural and linguistic background;

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(e) religious persuasion (including details of baptism, confirmation or equivalent ceremonies);

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(f) details of any siblings including their dates of birth;

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(g) the extent of the child's contact with his relatives and any other person the local authority consider relevant;

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(ga) any harm which the child has suffered;

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(gb) any risk of future harm to the child posed by the child’s parents, relatives or any other person the local authority consider relevant

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(h) whether the child is or has been looked after by a local authority or is or has been provided with accommodation by a voluntary organisation and details (including dates) of placements by the authority or organisation;

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(i) whether the prospective Applicant is a local authority foster parent of the child;

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(j) a description of the child's personality, his social development and his emotional and behavioural development and any related current or likely future needs;

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(k) details of the child's interests, likes and dislikes;

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(l) a health history and a description of the state of the child's health which shall include any treatment the child is receiving;

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(m) names, addresses and types of nurseries or schools attended with dates;

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(n) the child's educational attainments;

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(o) whether the child is subject to a statement of special educational needs under the Education Act 1996[[5](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2005/#note5)]; and

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(p) details of any order made by a court with respect to the child under the Act including the name of the court; the order made; and the date on which the order was made.

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**2. In respect of the child's family**

(a) name, date and place of birth and address (and the date on which their last address was confirmed) including local authority area of each parent of the child and his siblings under the age of 18;

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(b) a photograph, if available, and physical description of each parent;

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(c) nationality (and immigration status where appropriate) of each parent;

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(d) racial origin and cultural and linguistic background of each parent;

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(e) whether the child's parents were married to each other at the time of the child's birth or have subsequently married and whether they are divorced or separated;

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(f) where the child's parents have been previously married or formed a civil partnership, the date of the marriage or civil partnership;

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(g) where the child's parents are not married, whether the father has parental responsibility and, if so, how it was acquired;

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(h) if the identity or whereabouts of the father are not known, the information about him that has been ascertained and from whom, and the steps that have been taken to establish paternity;

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(i) the past and present relationship of the child's parents;

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(j) where available, the following information in respect of each parent:

(i) health history, including details of any serious physical or mental illness, any hereditary disease or disorder or disability;

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(ii) religious persuasion;

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(iii) educational history;

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(iv) employment history;

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(v) personality and interests;

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(k) in respect of the child's siblings under the age of 18:

(i) the person with whom the sibling is living;

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(ii) whether the sibling is looked after by a local authority or provided with accommodation by a voluntary organisation; and

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(iii) details of any court order made with respect to the sibling under the Act, including the name of the court, the order made and the date on which the order was made.

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**3. In respect of the wishes and feelings of the child and others:**

(a) an assessment of the child's wishes and feelings (considered in light of his age and understanding) regarding:

(i) special guardianship;

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(ii) his religious and cultural upbringing;

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(iii) contact with his relatives and any other person the local authority consider relevant;

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(iv) and the date on which the child's wishes and feelings were last ascertained.

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(b) the wishes and feelings of each parent regarding:

(i) special guardianship;

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(ii) the child's religious and cultural upbringing;

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(iii) Contact with relatives and any other person the local authority consider relevant

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(iv) and the date on which the wishes and feelings of each parent were last ascertained.

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(c) the wishes and feelings of any of the child's relatives, or any other person the local authority consider relevant regarding the child and the dates on which those wishes and feelings were last ascertained.

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**Child’s Social Worker:**

I have written this report from my reading of the Children and Young People’s Services records and from my own personal knowledge. I believe that the facts stated in this report are true.

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| Signed |  | Dated |  |
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| Name |  |  |  |

**Team Manager**

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| Signed |  | Dated |  |
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| Name |  |  |  |

**4. THE PROSPECTIVE CARERS – GENERAL INFORMATION**

**(Parts 4-6 to be completed by the Fostering social worker (where appropriate) within timescales outlined)**

(a) name, date and place of birth and address including local authority area;

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Applicant Name |  | Applicant Name |  |
| Address |  | Address |  |
| Date of Birth |  | Date of Birth |  |
| Place of birth |  | Place of birth |  |
| LA Area |  | LA Area |  |
| Gender |  | Gender |  |
| Nationality |  | Nationality |  |
| Date CRB Check |  | Date CRB Check |  |
| Social Care records |  | Social Care records |  |
| Medical Report |  | Medical Report |  |

(b) a photograph and physical description of applicant(s);

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(c) nationality (and immigration status where appropriate);

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(d) racial origin and cultural and linguistic background of applicant(s);

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(e) if the prospective applicant(s) are:

(i) married, the date and place of marriage; (ii) has formed a civil partnership, the date and place of registration of the civil partnership; or (iii) has a partner, details of that relationship;

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(f) details of any previous marriage, civil partnership, or relationship;

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(g) where the prospective applicant(s) wish to apply jointly for an SGO, the nature of their relationship and an assessment of the stability of that relationship;

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(h) if the prospective applicant is a member of a couple and is applying alone for a special guardianship order, the reasons for this;

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(i) whether the prospective applicant is a relative of the child;

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(j) an assessment of the nature of the prospective special guardian’s current and past relationship with the child;”

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(k) a health history of the prospective applicant including details of any serious physical or mental illness, any hereditary disease or disorder or disability;

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(l) a description of how the prospective applicant relates to adults and children;

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(m) previous experience of caring for children;

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(n) an assessment of the prospective special guardian’s parenting capacity, including:

(i) their understanding of, and ability to meet the child’s current and likely future needs, particularly, any needs the child may have arising from harm that the child has suffered;

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(ii) their understanding of, and ability to protect the child from any current or future risk of harm posed by the child’s parents, relatives or any other person the local authority consider relevant, particularly in relation to contact between any such person and the child;

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(iii) their ability and suitability to bring up the child until the child reaches the age of eighteen;”.

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(o) where there have been any past assessments as a prospective adopter, foster parent or special guardian, relevant details as appropriate;

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(p) details of income and expenditure;

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(q) information about the prospective applicant’s home and the neighbourhood in which he lives;

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Family Support Networks

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(r) details of other members of the household and details of any children of the prospective applicant even if not resident in the household;

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(s) details of the parents and any siblings of the prospective applicant, with their ages or ages at death;

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(t) the following information:

(i) religious persuasion; (ii) educational history; (iii) employment history; (iv) personality and interests;

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(u) details of any previous family court proceedings in which the prospective applicant has been involved (which have not been referred to elsewhere in this report);

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(v) a report of each of the interviews with the three persons nominated by the prospective applicant to provide personal references for him;

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(w) whether the prospective Applicant is willing to follow any wishes of the child or his parents in respect of the child's religious and cultural upbringing;

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(x) the views of other members of the prospective applicant’s household and wider family in relation to the proposed special guardianship order;

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Prospective applicant;

(y) an assessment of the child’s current and future relationship with the family of the prospective special guardian

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(z) reasons for applying for a special guardianship order and extent of understanding of the nature and effect of special guardianship and whether the prospective applicant has discussed special guardianship with the child;

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(aa) any hopes and expectations the prospective applicant has for the child's future;

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(bb) the prospective applicant’s wishes and feelings in relation to contact between the child and his relatives or any other person the local authority considers relevant.

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**5. In respect of the local authority which completed the report:**

**Author(s)**

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| --- | --- |
| Social worker name |  |
| Qualifications obtained and year |  |
| Fostering Social Worker Name |  |
| Qualifications obtained and year |  |
| Local Authority preparing this report |  |
| Local Authority Address |  |

(b) details of any past involvement of the local authority with the prospective special guardian, including any past preparation for that person to be a local authority foster parent or adoptive parent or special guardian;

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(c) where section 14A(7)(a) of the Act applies and the prospective applicant lives in the area of another local authority, details of the local authority's enquiries of that other local authority about the prospective special guardian;

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| Summary of checks | 1st applicant  Yes or No | 2nd applicant  Yes or No | Comments |
| DBS check |  |  |  |
| Local authority checks |  |  |  |
| Health and safety check |  |  |  |
| Personal references |  |  |  |
| Employer’s reference |  |  |  |
| School reference |  |  |  |
| Health visitor |  |  |  |
| Medical report |  |  |  |
| Previous partner |  |  |  |
| Voluntary work with children |  |  |  |

Please detail any issues arising from the above checks:

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(d) a summary of any special guardianship support services provided by the authority for the prospective special guardian, the child or the child's parent and the period for which those services are to be provided;

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(e) where the local authority has decided not to provide special guardianship support services, the reasons why;

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**6. A summary prepared by the medical professional who provided the information referred to in paragraphs 1(l) and 4(k);**

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**7. The implications of the making of a special guardianship order for:**

(a) the child; (b) the child's parent; (c) the prospective Applicant and his family; (d) any other person the local authority considers relevant.

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| ***NB: REMOVE BLUE GUIDANCE BEFORE FILING***  *Please set out the implications of the prospective carer being approved as an SGO carer and/or foster carer on:*   * *The child* * *The child's parents* * *The prospective carer and his family* * *any other person considered relevant* |

**8. The relative merits of special guardianship and other orders which may be made under the Act or the Adoption and Children Act 2002 with an assessment of whether the child's long term interests would be best met by a special guardianship order.**

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| *This section should start by summarising in 1-2 sentences whether the prospective carer is able to provide good enough care and manage the family boundaries and relationships. (Ie carers demonstrate that they are suitable to provide a permanent home to the child and meet holistic needs)* | |
| **Benefits of the prospective carers** | **Detriments of the prospective carers** |
| *The child's Family & Social Relationships will be maintained.* | *Although there is risk of exposure to the family network the concerns are chronic rather than acute and are able to be managed by MGM.* |
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**9. A recommendation as to whether or not the special guardianship order sought should be made in respect of the child and, if not, any alternative proposal in respect of the child.**

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**10. A recommendation as to what arrangements there should be for contact between the child and his relatives or any person the local authority consider relevant.**

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**Prospective Carers:**

I have read this report and been given opportunity to amend where necessary any information in this report which I believe to be incorrect. I [agree with the report] / [do not agree with the report for the reasons set out below.]

My Comments are:

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Signed |  | Date |  |
|  |
| Name |  |  |  |
| Signed |  | Date |  |
|  |
| Name |  |  |  |

**Social Worker:**

I have written this report from my reading of the Children and Young People’s Services records and from my own personal knowledge. I believe that the facts stated in this report are true.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Signed |  | Date |  |
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| Name |  |  |  |

**Fostering Team Manager:**

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| Signed |  | Date |  |
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| Name |  |  |  |

**Please set out which of the following documents are available by ticking the list:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **✓** |
| Family tree |  |
| Ecomap |  |
| Carer’s chronology (if appropriate) |  |
| Medical adviser’s summary of the health of the Applicant |  |
| Summary of reports from the applicant ’s home Local Authority over the last 10 years |  |
| Education references |  |
| Health & safety report |  |
| Previous partner’s references |  |