

FOSTER CARE ASSESSMENT PROCESS



Timescales and what happens in the process

Now you are starting the Foster Care Assessment process we wanted to outline and reiterate to you what to expect and when, and also what we need you to prioritise and when we need this information returned to us.

STAGE 1 AND URGENT

You will have completed a home visit and initial interview, so the following Points 1-3 are now deemed to be your highest priority and this is classed as urgent.

Please provide all and any outstanding documents as soon as possible – we cannot process what we need without all documents and completed documentation. This must be finalised within one week of your home visit.

1. Medical

Telephone your GP practice today and ask for an appointment for a Fostering Medical. The appointment can take a while to get organised. If you do not get an appointment by telephone then we suggest you walk in and ask for the appointment. Telephone Nurture Fostering Ltd and let us know the date of your medical so we can track it and ensure we get the medical back as soon as possible. Please ensure you complete Section B in full prior to attending your medical. If you have any problems with your GP practice then please let us know immediately in order for us to try and resolve the issue. If you are asked to pay, please don't, contact us immediately. If you are under the hospital for any conditions please ensure we have the full name and address and contact information of your Consultant as the Medical Advisor may need to seek/clarify some information about your condition for the Medical Advisor.

2. Local Authority Checks

We need to conduct a Local Authority/Social Services check on you and your family. If you have had contact with Social Services please let us know just so we can anticipate and make arrangements to view the file as part of the assessment process. This can include previous applications, if you have applied to foster/adopt previously.

3. DBS

All adults aged 18+ living in the household will be required to conduct a DBS check. This requires a form to be completed and supporting documents to be provided. These checks can

take up to 12 weeks and we cannot apply for them without the documentation. Your nominated back up carer also needs a DBS check, again we require the form completed and the documents. Please telephone us and bring in all your DBS checks as soon as you receive them. These three checks are crucial and can take a long time to come back; the medical, DBS and LA checks. We cannot apply for them without your help and support.

4. References

The following references will be needed as a minimum:

- Character references: 2 friends and 1 family (not birth children) Mum, Dads, Aunts, Uncles, Cousins etc.
- Adult birth children references.
- Education.
- Employment.
- Birth children schools reference (we will also require the last school report).
- Former partner's reference/s.
- If you are self-employed any Accountant references or client references.
- Previous fostering agency.

We will require names, addresses, telephone numbers and email addresses. Could we also ask that you give your referees a gentle reminder to get the completed references to us as soon as possible.

STAGE 2

Once all of your documents and forms have been completed we can then allocate you a Social Worker, the Social Worker will start to complete your assessment and will be responsible for conducting the following:-

- Meeting you a minimum of 8-10 times and each meeting will last between 2-3 hours
- In the case of couples you will also be seen individually.
- The Social Worker will interview all of your birth children.
- The Social Worker will interview your family and character referees
- Interview your back up carer
- Any former partners you have where you have had children together

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- You will be given homework to complete i.e. your family tree to complete back to your Grandparents. The chronology of your life – school dates, work dates, house moving etc.

When the Social Worker has completed this you will be able to read part of the assessment and be asked for your comments. In the meantime Nurture Fostering Ltd will be gathering the references, chasing your medicals and DBS checks to ensure we have everything we need in readiness for Panel. This can sometimes be a really busy time for everyone so the more we do at the beginning the less we will need to do at the end.

Fostering Profiles

After your initial home visit we will require you to work on your fostering profile and return this to us completed within 4 weeks. If you feel you are unable to do this we will require you to either make a 30 minute appointment with one of the team in Nurture Fostering Ltd and bring the following photographs with you:

One of you, one of your birth children, one of the outside of your house, one of the fostering bedroom, a picture of any pets you may have. Alternatively we can do this over the telephone and email. This really does need doing early on in the process. Please do not leave it to the last minute.

Skills to Foster

As part of the assessment process you will need to attend and participate in Skills to Foster training before your assessment can be submitted for Panel. Please ensure you and your partner, if you have one, are booked to attend.

Once everything has been completed and finalised the Social Worker will submit the assessment to Nurture Fostering Ltd to Quality Assure. This can take up to 7 working days. During this time you could receive a number of telephone calls and/or emails from Nurture Fostering Ltd and the Social Work to clarify any points in the assessment.

Once the assessment has been accepted for Panel you will be given a date and a time. You will be asked to come into Nurture Fostering Ltd for some support/training in preparation for Panel attendance.

When attending Panel can we please ask that you are wearing

smart clothes i.e. suits or business dress, Panel like to see you have made an effort.

When attending Panel you will be asked a number of questions which you will need to answer in a succinct way as honestly as you are able to. During Panel you will be asked to step outside whilst they make a decision. This can be for up to 30 minutes, you will then be asked to go back in and you will be given a decision on your fostering application.

If they are going to recommend approval, you are on your way to being a foster carer.

After Panel your case goes to the Agency Decision Maker for ratification and you will receive an official notification confirming that you are now a foster carer. This part can take up to 2 weeks so please don't worry.

After that you will attend core training, be visited by your Supervising Social Worker and be placed on the list as an available foster carer.

Good Luck.

Please contact us for further information on **020 8690 9012** we look forward to hearing from you.

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