**Connected Persons Carers – Checklist for Social Workers completing a Viability Assessment**

To enable a relative, friend, or other person connected with a Looked After child to care for them, the Connected Carers must be approved by the Local Authority as foster carers under the 2011 Regulations or temporarily approved as foster carers under the 2010 Regulations.

There are situations when the most appropriate care arrangement for a Looked After Child is with a Connected Person. Under the 2010 regulations all Connected Carers should be approved fully before any children are placed with them. However in exceptional circumstances where a placement for a child is required in an emergency, Regulations 24 and 25 of the 2010 regulations, set out the arrangements for the temporary approval of a connected person as a foster carer.

The viability assessment (template available on TRI X, **https://kentchildcare.proceduresonline.com/**) will provide the information, evidence and analysis as to the suitability of the connected person arrangement. A positive recommendation will require signed agreement by the connected carer/s, the Child/ren’s SW, the manager and the AD.

Consultation and pre discussion is helpful to inform planning and early decision making for a viability assessment and to ensure that the proposed carers understand the role they are committing to and have the ability to work towards meeting the Fostering National Minimum Standards.

**The Viability Assessment will need to consider the following areas-**

* The reasons for the child/ren needing to be Looked After
* The child/ren’s history.
* Current family relationships.
* Ability to safeguarding the child/young person including ability to manage contact.
* Parenting capacity
* Motivation to care for the young person.
* Health. This includes physical and mental health of the carer/s. The carers should not be using illegal substances e.g. cannabis.
* Previous significant relationships – to include history of any domestic abuse
* Carers own feelings and understanding of the commitment to meeting the child’s needs
* Accommodation. Any Housing issues need to be explored. Children are required to have their own bedroom/area at three years and above unless risk assessed to ensure that they are able to share with another child/young person. Adult carers and children/young people, need a bedroom/area of their own and cannot sleep in communal areas within the home e.g on a sofa or mattress.
* Household. Any additional members within the home. If adults they will need DBS checks. There should also not be a transient population (i.e rooms within the home being rented out)
* Location and logistics for schooling, activities etc.
* Criminal convictions
* Carers financial circumstances e.g. any debt or housing arrears that may cause instability of placement.
* Commitment to the full fostering assessment process and working with professionals – see connected carers leaflet (TRI-X under Connected Persons Placement)
* Any additional support they need to care for the children

When a decision has been made to place a Looked after child in the care of a Connected carer the following checklist applies-

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| **Task** | **Complete** |
| **Referral**  The fully signed (as above) viability assessment is e-mailed to the connected persons inbox ( [connectedpersonreferrals@kent.gov.uk](mailto:connectedpersonreferrals@kent.gov.uk) ) The carer’s e-mail address and telephone number/s must be included. |  |
| **Appendix A** (the carer’s agreement)  This is signed by the Connected carer/s and sent to connected persons in box |  |
| **Referral to Total Placement Service** The child’s social worker makes a referral using the child’s placement plan, with a request for a Connected persons placement. |  |
| **Carer/s bank details** and name as this appears on the bank account to be sent by the child’s social worker to the Connected Persons inbox so that payments can be started. |  |
| The Fostering Assessment Team will then add the carers details to Liberi. |  |
| **All Looked after processes are started** by the child’s social worker (draft care plan, health assessment, PEP, delegated authority for the carers etc) |  |
| **Progress to CLA** The child’s social worker progresses the child to CLA status on Liberi |  |
| **Placement plan/s**  to be completed before the child/ren is/are placed or within 5 working days of the child being placed. A Fostering Social Worker **must** be at this meeting to lead the discussion. |  |
| **Independent legal advice** to be funded by KCC and explained to the connected carers by the child/ren’s social worker. |  |
| The child’s social worker to invite the assessing social worker to the child/ren’s **Looked After meeting** |  |
| Clear communication is essential in regards to care planning and task ownership (e.g. an SGO report is the responsibility of the child’s social worker and the assessing fostering social worker is responsible for the Connected Carer’s assessment). Task agreement can be agreed and the assessing worker’s assessment can usefully contribute to information for another legal order e.g. SGO, to avoid duplication of work for the carers and the social workers. |  |
| The Connected Carer Assessment is **a joint assessment** of the family by the child’s SW and the FSW with the FSW completing the detailed assessment in relation to the carers. |  |
| **The Child’s Social Worker completes sections A and B** of the Connected Assessment template (this relates to the child/ren’s needs, siblings and the birth parents) |  |
| The Fostering Social Worker and Child/ren’s Social Worker must both attend the Fostering Panel for Connected Person approval. |  |

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