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One Minute Guide: Connected Persons

What is this about?

Under the [Children Act 1989](#) the Local Authority has a "duty to make arrangements for a child to live with a member of his family, a relative or friend unless not reasonably practicable or consistent with his or her welfare". Below is a brief overview of the key principles underlying Family and Friends Care and will cover the following domains:

1. Legal framework and statutory guidance
2. Who is responsible for assessing Connected Persons as Foster Carers?
3. What are the timescales for presenting the report to Panel?
4. What is the process for assessing connected person's
5. Viability assessments
6. Temporary Approval
7. Approval as Foster Carers

1. Legal framework & Statutory Guidance

- [Statutory Guidance for Family and Friends Care 2010](#);
- [The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review \(England\) Regulations 2010](#);
- [The Fostering Service \(England\) Regulations 2011](#) and [guidance 2011](#)
- [National Minimum Standards for fostering services 2011](#), including standards for [family & friends foster carers \(standard 30\)](#) (page 58)
- [Statutory Guidance for LAs on Family & Friends Care 2011](#)
- [Children Act 1989 - Guidance and Regulations, Volume 4: Fostering Service.](#)

2. Definitions

Family and Friends foster care is a formal arrangement where the child is looked after by the Local Authority and placed with a relative, friend or Connected Person.

'Relative or Friend' is defined as a: grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt (whether by blood or by marriage), step-parent, or friend of the child.

'Connected Person' is anyone who has a pre-existing connection to a child through their extended network. This may be someone who knows the child in a more professional capacity such as a childminder, a teacher, a youth worker, although these are not exclusive categories.

Family & Friends/Connected Persons care can therefore be defined as an arrangement where:

Children are living with a relative, friend or Connected Person away from their parental home because they cannot live with their parents.

The placement has in some way been assisted or initiated and/or is supported by Children Services often with a view to securing permanency via a Child Arrangements Order or a Special Guardianship Order.

3. Legal Status

Under the regulations, **before** a child who is subject either to an **Interim Care Order**, Care Order, or is to be, or is currently Accommodated under **Section 20**, can be placed with a friend or relative, an assessment must be completed under **Regulation 24 - Schedule 4 Connected Person Practice Guidance**. The Care Planning, placement and Case Review (England) Regulation 2010. Temporary approval is given by the Designated Manager who is the Chief Officer for Child and Families. Placements that are made without an assessment and approval by the Designated Manager are deemed as “unregulated” under the regulations. The BAAF Form C is to be used for Viability Assessments and Temporary Approvals.

4. Process

The assessment process is detailed in a **flow chart** on the attachment to this OMG.

5. Types of Connected Person Assessment

Viability Assessment

Before a placement can be made with a relative or friend, the “Connected Person”, the expectation is for the allocated social worker of the team holding case responsibility, to complete a Viability Assessment of the Connected Person using the relevant parts of BAAF Form C.

Please note viability assessments are the first stage of determining whether a person is suitable to be considered to care for a looked after child and should still be seen and signed by the relevant team manager of the assessing social worker;

A viability assessment is a relatively brief assessment undertaken to decide whether a full assessment should be embarked upon. It is necessary to focus on the key areas that might indicate whether someone is potentially suitable to look after a child, usually as a foster carer or special guardian.

Temporary Approval Assessment

Under Regulation 24 of the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010 the local authority may approve a Connected Person as a temporary foster carer for **up to 16 weeks** subject to an assessment before the child is placed for a longer period. . Statutory guidance makes clear that temporary approval is intended to be used exceptionally, where the connected person is already known to the child, to avoid

unnecessary move to a stranger foster carer, and in “circumstances which could not easily have been foreseen”.

Where the Viability Assessment is positive this is sent to the Designated Manager for approval of the Connected Person as a temporary foster carer/s under Regulation 24. The nominated officer must be satisfied that the temporary approval of Connected Person is the most appropriate plan for the child. If approval is agreed by the Designated Manager, the child is placed with Connected Person as a Child Looked After.

This temporary approval can be extended for up to 8 weeks (if it is likely to expire before the assessment is completed) or until the outcome of the review if the outcome of the assessment is that the Connected Person is not approved and seeks a review.

7. Assessment and Approval of Connected Person as Foster Carers

If the plan is for the placement to last longer than 16 weeks, the fostering assessment process should commence as soon as possible after the placement is made and the child's social worker should make a referral to the Fostering Service immediately so that a social worker will be allocated for this purpose.

A file will be opened for the foster carer's assessment. The Team Manager /allocated assessing social worker will immediately arrange for a slot to be booked on the Fostering Panel within 16 weeks for the assessment to be considered;

8. The Placement

When a child is to be placed with a Connected Person a Placement Planning Meeting should be held before the placement or, where this is not possible because of the urgency of the placement, within 5 working days. On the placement of the child, the child's social worker will ensure the child's Child Plan and the written Placement Plan is given to the carer.

If the child was not previously Looked After, the child's social worker will send a notification of the child's placement and a request for the child's first Looked After Review to the Independent Review Service. If the child was already Looked After, the social worker will send notification of the placement to the child's Independent Reviewing Officer.

9. Supervisory Responsibilities

The allocated social worker for the child is responsible for the overall assessment and service provision to that child for conducting the initial screening of the prospective carers using the BAAF Form C, obtaining management approval for the placement, for referring to the appropriate fostering team and for supervision of the placement. The Fostering Team will allocate a supervising social worker to the connected carer on placement of a child in cases where this is required

10. Ending the Placement

When the placement ends, the child's social worker must update the child's electronic record and send notification to the finance section so that payments to the carer/provider will cease. (This can be done via the team manager of the fostering team) The social worker will also send copies to those notified when the placement was made. Where appropriate, consideration may be given to holding a Disruption Meeting.

11. How can I find out more?

For more information, contact the [Fostering Team](#) or view the Statutory Guidance – [Family and Friends Care: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities](#).

FLOWCHART

