

Darlington Borough Council

Children's Social Care

Family and Friends/Connected Care and Family Arrangements Policy and Guidance on the assessment process

Introduction

Darlington Borough Council (the Local Authority) Children's Social Care believe that in the great majority of cases families and friends are able to make suitable arrangements for the care of their children without any statutory intervention.

Diversity statement

A child's age, gender, health, personality, race, culture and life experiences are all relevant to any consideration of needs and vulnerability and have to be taken into account when planning or providing help.

The authority recognises that many of the children and those who apply to become connected person's Foster Carers will come from diverse ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds, and/or may have particular disabilities, and that these factors must be taken into consideration when establishing the best arrangements for children.

Scope of policy

Family and friends arrangements coming within the scope of this policy and procedure will have been initiated, facilitated, or supported by Darlington Children's Social Care.

There are differences between the arrangements for the care of children as outlined below which will determine the Local Authority's response.

A child whose parents or those with parental responsibility have made arrangements for family members or friends to care for their child;

AND

- i. A child placed by the Local Authority (and this is usually when responding to an emergency situation and placed with family and/or friends under Regulation 24 Care Planning, Placement and Case Review regulations 2010);

OR

- ii. A family member or friend who is identified as a suitable carer to be assessed as a connected persons Foster Carer for a specific child during the current involvement – where a child has not yet been placed.

The following are excluded from the scope of the policy:

- informal placement of the child by parents with family members or friends (known as Family Arrangements)
- Private fostering.

A 'connected person' means a relative, friend or any other person connected with a 'Looked After Child'.

When children cannot live with their birth parents they usually prefer to live with their extended family. There are inherent benefits for children in experiencing normal family life in their own families.

Statement of values, principles and objectives

1. Families themselves are often best placed to find their own solutions and to make safe arrangements for children within the family and we would expect families to care for their kin without the intervention and involvement of the Local Authority.
2. Consideration of children's welfare and best interests will always be at the centre of the work we do
3. Intervention from the Local Authority should be at the minimum needed to safeguard the welfare of those children for whom it has a duty of care.
4. We will provide support based on the assessed needs of the child, not simply on his or her legal status, and will seek to ensure that family and friends carers are provided with support to ensure that children do not become looked after, or do not have to remain looked after for longer than is necessary.
5. Where a child cannot live with his or her immediate family and the Local Authority is considering the need to look after the child, care by family and friends is the placement of first choice, provided this meets the needs of the child.
6. Children are active participants, and their wishes and feelings must be taken into count in all relevant processes and decisions about them.

Legal Framework

It is important to note that Local Authorities do not have a general duty to assess all arrangements where children are living with their wider family or friends network rather than their parents, but it does have a duty where it appears that services may be necessary to safeguard or promote the welfare of a "Child in Need."

A child in need is defined under the Children Act 1989 as a child who is unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable level of health or development, or whose health and development is likely to be significantly or further impaired, without the provision of services; or a child who is disabled.

Looked after children will always come within the definition of children in need, whether they are accommodated under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989 or are in care subject to a court order, whereby the Local Authority shares parental responsibility for the child. The Local Authority has a responsibility, wherever it is possible and safe to do so, to make arrangements for a Looked After Child to live with a family member.

For a detailed summary of the meaning and implications of different legal situations, the rights of carers and parents, and the nature of decisions which family and friends carers will be able to make in relation to the child please see Appendix A - "Caring for Someone Else's child" (Department for Education – Statutory Guidance 2010).

If a 'Looked After Child' under a Care Order or Interim Care Order, or Section 20 Agreement who has already become the responsibility of the Local Authority is enabled to live with family, friends or any other connected person then the carer **must** become approved as a Local Authority connected person Foster Carer. The child will no longer be "Looked After" should those carers obtain an appropriate order (e.g. Special Guardianship Order or Child Arrangement Order with the residence element).

The Children Act 1989 (as amended by the Children and Young Person's Act 2008) requires the Local Authority to seek first to place a looked after child with a relative, friend or connected person. This requirement is strengthened by the Public Law Outline, which requires Local Authorities to demonstrate that they have considered family members and friends as potential carers at each stage of the decision making process. It is therefore important that any discussions held with family, friends and connected persons are recorded effectively as details will be required by the court.

Looked After Children may only be placed with a relative, friend or connected person if they have been approved as Foster Carers under the Fostering Service (England) Regulations 2011, or have been temporarily Approved as Foster Carers under Regulation 24 of the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010. These regulations, together with Fostering National Minimum Standards 2011, set out the requirements in relation to the assessment, approval, support and supervision of all Foster Carers, including those who are family members, friends or other connected persons.

Regulation 24 provides a temporary approval period for family and friends /connected persons placements for up to 16 weeks. This time period has been set to allow sufficient time for the full Foster Carer process to be undertaken. Regulation 25 allows one extension period of a further 8 weeks in specific circumstances.

A Viability Assessment must be carried out to ensure that the quality of care for the child is good enough. It must be agreed and signed off by the designated Head of Service.

Connected Care Foster Care

Immediate situations

If a child needs to become looked after the Local Authority Social Worker will ask the parents whether there is any appropriate person they can identify who would be willing to care for the child. The Social Worker should consider a Family Group Conference to assist in identifying appropriate care or support arrangements for a child.

The child's Social Worker must seek agreement from the Head of Service for a child to 'Become Looked After'.

If a family member, friend or connected person is willing to offer care for the child, the child's Social Worker with support from the Fostering Service will undertake a viability assessment to establish whether that person is likely to be able to meet the child's identified needs, both now and in the foreseeable future.

When an immediate placement of the child with a family member, friend or connected person is required, a viability assessment must be completed. When an emergency placement is required, temporary approval can be given by the Head of Service on the basis that the following checks have been undertaken as a minimum – (pending the full viability

report recorded on the child's electronic file being approved by the Team Manager and Head of Service):

- Safeguarding checks to the address.
- All adult members of the household subject to PNC.
- Social care record checks for all members of the household – including children.
- A visit to the family home of the potential carers to check the suitability of the accommodation including where the child will sleep.
- A full discussion with potential carers around their understanding of the current situation and their ability to safeguard the children and work with the Local Authority.

The Viability Assessment must then be presented to the ADM (Agency Decision Maker-Assistant Director or designated Head of Service (via Liquid Logic) within 3 working days of the start of the placement, who will decide whether this is an appropriate arrangement under Regulation 24.

A person temporarily approved for 16 weeks as a connected persons Foster Carer will be entitled to the same supports and services that are available to Local Authority Foster Carers. Temporary approved Foster Carers will receive the training and support they need to provide an appropriate level of care to the child.

A person who is temporarily approved as a connected carer following a viability assessment will then need to be fully assessed as a connected person's Foster Carer. Connected carers are entitled to receive a fostering allowance. This is not means tested.

Planned situations

In planned situations a viability assessment will be undertaken. If the viability assessment is positive and quality assured and agreed by a team manager and approved by the Head of Service, the viability assessment should be referred to the Fostering Service. A Fostering Social Worker will be allocated, and will make contact with the prospective connected carer to commence a 'connected person's assessment'.

A planned situation is when a child is already in a looked after placement and does not need to move immediately or when care proceedings are planned and a family member has been identified.

Temporary Approval will commence when the child is placed.

The Fostering Service Social Worker will assess the applicants and the child's Social Worker will provide information about the child and parents. This assessment will then be presented to the Fostering panel – please refer to Guidance on the Assessment Process document.

The Fostering Service undertake Connected Carer assessments only in situations where the child is Looked After. If the child is not Looked After then the connected carer assessment/SGO assessment is the responsibility of the Child's Social Worker.

The Assessment Process

It is important to note that the completion of the Connected Carer Assessment Report is the responsibility of both the child's Social Worker and the Fostering Social Worker.

The form used is Coram BAAF Form C (Connected Persons Assessment)

Information about the child and the child's birth parents – Parts A and B - should be available for the assessing Fostering Social Worker who will need to ensure that the connected carer applicants are able to meet the needs of the child and understand the safeguarding concerns.

The Assessment Report

In each section, the assessing Social Worker should provide an analysis of the information obtained from the applicants, giving consideration to how the applicants will be able to meet the needs of the child/children for whom they are being assessed. Consider what extra support might be required in order to meet those needs, or identify in what respect the applicant may be unable to meet the identified needs of the child/children.

See "Child's Social Worker Guidance re Connected Person's Assessment"

Training

There is an expectation that connected carers will undertake "Skills to Foster" training. The purpose of the course is to raise the awareness and understanding of the key issues which need to be addressed by kinship Foster Carers. This course will be offered either prior to approval or just after approval at fostering panel. The course will consist of three full days and three evening sessions.

All connected carers are required to complete the Training, Support and Development Standards (TSD Standards) workbook. It is the responsibility of the supervising Social Worker to ensure that this is completed within 18 months of approval. The connected Foster Carer will be expected to develop their skills and knowledge by undertaking relevant training which will be identified jointly by the kinship carer and their supervising Social Worker.

The Fostering Panel

Once the Connected carer assessment has been completed and shared with you for your comments, it will be presented to the Fostering Panel. The assessing Social Worker will attend the Panel meeting, together with the child's Social Worker and the applicants if they so wish. The decision to attend rests with the applicants and a wish not to attend will not prejudice consideration of their application. However, it is often helpful for the applicants to attend as this gives further amplification to the written assessment. Applicants who decide they wish to attend should be fully prepared.

The Panel will consider the reports together with all the supporting documentation and any additional information presented verbally, and make a recommendation to the Agency Decision Maker regarding the suitability of the applicant to foster.

The recommendation, with reasons, will be recorded in writing and, where approval is recommended, the category of fostering, any limitations of the approval to named children (for example in the case of a family and friends Foster Carer) or conditions as to the age range or number of children to be placed in the foster home will also be specified.

Where the applicant does not attend the Panel meeting, the Social Worker undertaking the assessment will advise the applicant of the Panel recommendation within 24 hours of the Panel meeting. This will be verbally, by telephone or, where appropriate, a home visit.

After the Panel Recommendation

The Agency Decision Maker will make a decision as to the suitability of the applicant, based on the reports presented to the Fostering Panel and the minutes detailing the Panel's recommendation. Where the decision is to approve the applicants as Foster Carers, the Agency Decision Maker will specify the terms of the approval i.e. the number and age range of children to be fostered, the type of placement and any specific inclusions/exclusions.

The decision must be made within seven working days of the Panel meeting and must be recorded, together with reasons. Applicants should be advised in writing of the appeals and representations process including the Independent Review Mechanism in respect of contentious issues.

The Fostering Social Worker will arrange for the applicants to be given verbal notification of the decision within 24 hours. Written notice of the decision, with reasons, signed by the Agency Decision Maker, will be sent to the applicants within five working days of the decision.

If the decision is to refuse approval, the assessing Social Worker and fostering manager will assess the need for further counselling and arrange any necessary follow-up action.

Minutes of the relevant part of the Fostering panel meeting which relates to the carer must be kept on Foster Carer files.

Representations / Independent Review Procedure

If a decision is made to refuse an application, the applicant will be advised that if he or she wishes to challenge the decision, applicants should be advised of their right to submit representations within 28 days of the date of the written notice of the decision to the Service Manager. In addition, as an alternative, they may exercise the right to apply to the Secretary of State to request a review of the decision by the Independent Review Mechanism (IRM). Any such application must be made in writing within 28 days of the decision and supported by reasons.

The only circumstances where the Foster Carer will not have the right to request a review by an Independent Review Panel is if he or she is regarded as disqualified as a result of a conviction or caution for a specific offence. If no written representations or notification of a request for a review are received within this period, the decision to refuse the application can be confirmed.

If written representations are received within the period, the Panel Adviser will arrange for the reports and other documentation to be reconsidered by the Fostering Panel, taking into account the written representations, and make a new recommendation to the Agency Decision Maker.

The Panel Administrator will confirm in writing to the applicants the details of the Fostering Panel they have agreed to attend at which their written representation will be considered

In these circumstances, applicants who wish to attend the meeting of the Fostering Panel can arrange for a friend or supporter to accompany them.

After considering the representations, the Panel will make further recommendations either confirming or amending their previous views, which the Agency Decision Maker will consider before a final decision is made.

If the decision remains not to approve the application, the team manager will arrange for the applicants to be informed verbally within two working days. Written notice of the final decision, together with reasons, must be sent to the applicant by the Panel Adviser within seven working days of the Panel meeting. Information about the Complaints Procedure must also be sent. A copy of the report to the Panel, the Panel's recommendation and the decision, with reasons, must be retained on the applicant's case file.

If the applicant decides to refer the matter to the Independent Review Mechanism, the relevant Panel reports, any new information obtained since the Panel meeting, a record of the decision made and reasons, a copy of the written notification of the decision and a copy of the Panel minute, if different, will be sent to the Independent Review within 10 working days of their written request.

After considering the representations of both the Local Authority and the applicants, the Independent Review Mechanism may make a recommendation, which the Agency Decision Maker will consider before making their final decision.

Written notice of the final decision, together with reasons, must be sent to the applicant within seven working days of the receipt of the Independent Review Mechanism recommendation. If the decision is to approve the application, the procedures set out in the section "Post Approval" will be followed.

Guidance on criteria for prospective Foster Carers

Individual and Joint

Applications will be considered from married couples, civil partners, unmarried couples, same sex couples or single people.

Religion

Applications will be considered from people of any or no religious persuasion.

Ethnicity

Applications will be considered from people of any race or culture.

Age

The minimum age for Foster Carers is generally 21 years. In exceptional circumstances, e.g. with some Family and Friends Carers, the minimum age may be reduced to 18 years. There is no specific upper age limit.

Gender

Applications will be considered from people of either sex.

Sexual Orientation

Applications will be considered from people of any sexual orientation.

Income and Work Commitments

Applicants may be in work or not.

Health

Applicants will be required to have a full medical and undergo any further tests/checks that may be required by the Fostering Panel's Medical Adviser. The Medical Adviser will advise on the applicants' ability, from a health point of view, to meet the needs of a child who is fostered. Any comments or advice given by the Medical Adviser must be taken seriously by the applicants and will be addressed during the assessment process. Applicants are expected to positively promote a healthy life-style which will enable a child to reach his or her full potential. This would encompass attention to nutrition, exercise, routine and hygiene.

It is expected that Foster Carers will comply with nationally recommended alcohol consumption levels and that children's needs and safety will be met at all times.

Criminal Convictions

A person who is seeking approval as a Foster Carer will not be considered if s/he or any adult member of the household is within the category of Disqualified Persons (Foster Carer) unless the application is to foster a child who is already living with the applicant(s) and at least one of the applicants is a relative of the child, in which case the caution/conviction will not automatically preclude the application but will be taken into account when assessing the suitability of the applicant - see Persons Disqualified from Fostering Procedure.

Other convictions will not necessarily preclude an application, but this will depend on the seriousness of the offence and how long ago it was committed. All such cases will be referred to the Fostering Service Manager who may also consult the Agency Decision Maker.

Accommodation

Applicants may own their own home or live in rented accommodation.

They will need living and sleeping accommodation appropriate to the number and ages of the children they are seeking to foster. They must be able to offer separate bedrooms for each foster child. Only in exceptional circumstances would sharing bedrooms be allowed and this would never be with adult sons or daughters of the Foster Carer.

For connected foster care it is sometimes necessary for children to share a bedroom in order to keep siblings together within the extended family. Where the placement is intended to be long term, it may be necessary for the Foster Carers to seek alternative housing or where this is not possible to seek approval for financial support to provide additional space via an extension. The assessing Social Worker must discuss shortfalls in accommodation at an early stage.

It is important that the home environment is child-friendly, welcoming to children, safe and meets acceptable levels of hygiene. All applicants will have a safety check on their home undertaken by the applicant and the Fostering Social Worker. This will include the outdoor space, animals (including the sleeping and toileting arrangements for any pet) and the holding of any firearms.

Child Care Experience

It is important that the applicant who is going to be the main carer has some experience of 'hands-on' care of children of the age group in which the applicants are interested or are family members with close ties to the children they intend to care for.

Family Contact

All applicants must be prepared to promote and where appropriate facilitate contact between any foster child and his or her parents and significant family members.

Post Approval

Once approved, the administrative staff will update the record of the Foster Carers' to include their approval details, and the Fostering Social Worker will arrange first annual review. This will take place approximately 11 months after initial approval and will be chaired by an Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) and presented to the Fostering Panel.

The Foster Carer will be allocated a Supervising Fostering Social Worker, preferably the one who has undertaken their assessment. If the Social Worker does not know the new carer he or she will read the assessment form and the supporting documentation presented to the Fostering Panel including the references prior to introducing themselves to the carers and arranging to meet the carers, their family and members of their support network as appropriate.

Connected Foster Carers are provided with a Foster Care Agreement and a Foster Carer Handbook, which contains information about fostering in the Local Authority and covers policies, procedures, guidance, legal information and insurance details.

The Foster Carers will receive, within one week of their approval by the Agency Decision Maker a letter which will include details of their registration.

The Fostering supervising Social Worker will visit with two copies of the Foster Care Agreement, which will be signed by the Foster Carer (s), Supervising Social Worker and Team Manager. The Foster Carer will retain one signed copy. The other will be kept on the Foster Carer's file, together with the report and supporting documents presented to the Fostering Panel, a copy of the Panel's recommendation and a copy of the approval decision.

The Foster Care Agreement should be used by supervising Social Workers at the carer's first supervision session post approval, to explore and develop carers' understanding of their roles and responsibilities, Foster Carer tasks, and what carers may expect from the Fostering Service.

At the first supervision meeting, the Supervising Social Worker will provide details of training and support groups and will ensure that the Foster Carer has a copy of the Foster Carer handbook.

Register of Foster Carers

A register of all approved Foster Carers will be maintained by the fostering service containing the following particulars:

- a) The name, address, date of birth, sex and ethnic origin of each Foster Carer;
- b) The date of approval and of each review of the approval;

- c) The category and current terms of the approval;
- d) The name, address, date of birth of each person with whom a child is placed under Regulation 24 who is a relative or friend (but not an approved Family and Friends Foster Carer) and who has entered an agreement to provide care for the child placed, together with the date and terms of the agreement.

Once approved, the administrative staff will be informed and will enter the Foster Carers' approval details, including their first review date, on the Fostering Register database.

Changes in the Foster Carer's Household or Circumstances

The supervising Social Worker will ensure that any newly approved Foster Carer is clear about his or her responsibility to notify the fostering service before any change in the composition of their household occurs or where there is any significant change in their circumstances which affects their fostering, for example any new relationship, pregnancy or bereavement.

If the supervising Social Worker discovers that there has been a change in the Foster Carer's household without prior notice, the manager must be informed and an immediate review of the Foster Carer's approval must be convened. In these circumstances, a suspension of the Foster Carer's approval may have to be considered at the review.

Foster Carer's Partners

Where the proposed new member of the household is a partner of the Foster Carer, there will be a presumption that he or she will have a part to play in caring for any child in the placement and therefore a full assessment of his or her suitability for this role must be completed before the partner moves into the foster home. The same procedure for this assessment will be carried out as for any Foster Carer applicant and it will be presented to the Fostering Panel and the Agency Decision Maker. There will be no presumption that any such assessment will be approved.

Pending the completion of the full assessment, where the Foster Carer wishes his/her partner to stay overnight before the full assessment is completed, a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) enhanced check must be carried out, and a risk assessment must also be completed to determine the level of additional checks required, before agreement to overnight stays can be given. The risk assessment should take account of, amongst other things, the number and ages of the children in the placement, their views about the Foster Carer's partner, the significance and stability of the relationship (including how long they have known each other) and the Foster Carer's history of fostering. Any agreement to overnight stays must be endorsed by the Fostering Service Manager.

Other members of the household

Where a Foster Carer proposes that any person will join the household, notice must be given before this occurs in sufficient time to enable a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) enhanced check to be carried out on the relevant person and an assessment at the appropriate level to be undertaken before the change in household composition occurs. The required detail of the assessment will depend on the extent to which the new member of the household will undertake a caring role in relation to any child placed. Where the new member of the household will play a part in caring for the child in the placement, consideration will be given to the need for a full Form F assessment as for any new partner of the Foster Carer. Otherwise, the assessment will be considered at a Foster Carer Review which should be convened to consider the change in the Foster Carer's circumstances. This will determine whether any change to the Foster Carer's terms of approval is required and if so, a report to the Fostering Panel will be prepared.

Ending the Placement

Where a placement is proposed to end for any reason other than a placement for permanence then the guidance within the placement stability strategy should be followed:-
[Trix Procedures](#)

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 will cease.

The Social Worker will also send copies to those notified when the placement was made, including the independent reviewing officer.

Where appropriate, consideration must be given to holding a Disruption Meeting or an unplanned placement ending meeting to evaluate the reasons for the placement ending.

ANNEX A: CARING FOR SOMEBODY ELSE'S CHILD – OPTIONS

	Private fostering	Family care (informal)	Family and friends foster care	Unrelated foster care	Residence order	Special guardianship order (SGO)	Adoption	
Route into the caring arrangement	<p>This is a private arrangement whereby the child is being cared for for 28 days or more (or the intention is that the arrangement will last for 28 days or more) by anyone who does not have parental responsibility, and who is not a close relative.</p> <p>Relative means grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt (by full blood, half blood or by marriage or civil partnership) or a step parent.</p> <p>The child is not a looked after child.</p>	<p>The relative has chosen to take on the care of the child but does not have parental responsibility, and the arrangement was not made by the local authority.</p> <p>The child is not a looked after child.</p> <p>Relative may perceive the parents to be unable to care for the child;</p> <p>or the parents may be dead or otherwise not available (e.g. in prison);</p> <p>or there may be an agreement between relatives due to difficult family circumstances.</p>	<p>The child has been placed with the relative or friend by the local authority, because the person who had been caring for the child was deemed not to be providing suitable care.</p> <p>The child is a looked after child and so the local authority must approve the relative or friend as a local authority foster carer.</p> <p>The child may be accommodated voluntarily with the agreement of the parents or may be subject to a care order.</p>	<p>The child is a looked after child being accommodated by the local authority under section 20 Children Act 1989 or because the child is subject to a care order; but has been placed with a foster carer by the local authority.</p> <p>(Alternatively, the local authority may choose to place a child into residential care where this is considered to best meet the child's needs).</p>	<p>The child may be at risk of becoming 'looked after' and a friend or relative applies for an order, or</p> <p>The child may have been 'looked after' and their foster carer or other relative/friend applies for an order.</p> <p>In either circumstance, application can be made without the support of the parents or the local authority. Relatives may apply for an order after the child has lived with them for one year.</p> <p>Or, there can be benign reasons, e.g. after parents' death and in line with a prior agreement between the birth parents and the carer.</p>			<p>Looked after children: the LA may decide that the child should be placed for adoption. They can only do so with the consent of the birth parent or under a placement order made by a court.</p> <p>An approved foster carer can apply for an adoption order after a year of caring for the child.</p> <p>Other informal carers could apply for an adoption order if the child has lived with them for a period of 3 years.</p>
Parental Responsibility (PR)	Remains with birth parents	Remains with birth parents but the person who cares for the child may do what is reasonable to safeguard or promote the child's welfare	Remains with birth parents if child accommodated under section 20 CA, or if the child is subject to a care order or emergency protection order the local authority will have parental responsibility and determines the extent to which it may be exercised by others.		Shared by parents and holder of residence order.	PR shared with parents and any one else with parental responsibility for the child. The special guardian may exercise parental responsibility to the exclusion of all others with PR, apart from another special guardian.	Transfers to adopters and relationship with birth parents is severed.	
Approval basis	The arrangement is assessed by LA, but the carer is not 'approved' as a local authority foster carer is. The arrangement may be prohibited if assessed by the local authority as unsuitable.	None	Approved as local authority foster carers in accordance with Fostering Services Regulations. (If child is looked after, carers must be approved as foster carers even if close relative.)		Appointed by court following application.	Appointed by court, following application from the applicant. LA must investigate the matter and prepare a report for the court dealing with the suitability of the applicant to be a special guardian.	Adoption agency assesses and approves prospective adopters, court makes order regarding specific child. If the child is not looked after then notice of intention to adopt must be given to the LA who then carry out an assessment / report for the court.	

	Private fostering	Family care (informal)	Family and friends foster care	Unrelated foster care	Residence order	Special guardianship order (SGO)	Adoption
Duration	Subject to discretion of person with PR and readiness of private foster carer.	Subject to discretion of person with PR	So long as placement remains in line with child's care plan, as determined by LA		Age 18.	Age 18 unless varied or discharged by the court before the child reaches 18 years.	Permanent lifelong relationship
Placement supervision	It is not a placement, but there are statutory visits to child by social worker (minimum 6 weekly in first year, then 12 weekly)	None	Statutory: visits to child by social worker and supervision of foster carers by supervising social worker			None	When child is placed for adoption by the LA, the placement is supervised and there are statutory reviews. Once the adoption order is made, none.
Review of placement	It is not a placement, but the LA may do formal reviews in addition to ongoing assessment during visits.	None	Statutory reviews of child's care plan (minimum 6 monthly) and annual reviews of local authority foster carers' approval		None	None	See above
Support services	Provision of advice and support as determined necessary by the LA, which may assess the child as a child in need, with a child in need plan, and provide services / support for child/family under section 17 of the Children Act 1989	No entitlement but the LA may assess the child as a child in need, with a child in need plan, and provide services / support for child/family under section 17 of the Children Act 1989	Support to meet child's needs including health plan and personal education plan. Training and practical support to foster carers in accordance with the Fostering services Regulations, NMS and CWDC standards. Young person may be entitled to leaving care support services		No entitlement (But LA has discretion to provide services / support for child/family under section 17 of the CA)	If child was looked after prior to making the SGO, LA must assess for need for special guardianship support services. LA has discretion whether to provide support. Young person may be entitled to leaving care support services if was a looked after child prior to making of the SGO.	Entitlement to assessment for adoption support services, which may be provided at discretion of LA in accordance with Regulations and NMS.

	Private fostering	Family care (informal)	Family and friends foster care	Unrelated foster care	Residence order	Special guardianship order (SGO)	Adoption
Financial support – entitlement	<p>Can claim child benefit and child tax credit if not being paid to parent.</p> <p>Financial responsibility to maintain the child remains with holders of PR</p>	<p>Can claim child benefit and child tax credit if not being paid to parent.</p> <p>Financial responsibility to maintain the child remains with holders of PR.</p> <p>Guardians Allowance payable if both parents have died, or the only surviving parent cannot be found or serving 2 years or more prison sentence.</p>	<p>Child benefit and child tax credit not payable.</p> <p>Weekly allowance to meet the costs of caring for the child. This should meet at least the national minimum rate set by DCSF.</p> <p>The Manchester City Council judgment ruled that allowances must be the same for all foster carers, whether or not family & friends.</p>		<p>Can claim child benefit and child tax credit if not being paid to parent.</p>	<p>Can claim child benefit and child tax credit if not being paid to parent.</p>	<p>Can claim child benefit and child tax credit if not being paid to parent.</p> <p>Entitlement to assessment for financial support (part of adoption support) if child looked after prior to order.</p>
Financial support – discretionary	<p>LA has discretion to make one-off or regular payments under section 17 Children Act</p>	<p>LA has discretion to make one-off or regular payments under section 17 Children Act</p>	<p>Some fostering providers pay their foster carers a fee to recognise the carers' skill, experience and commitment.</p> <p>The Manchester City Council judgement (which requires allowances to be paid on the same basis regardless of the relationship of the carer to the child) did not consider fees. However, Statutory Guidance for Fostering Services requires that any policy in relation to the payment of fees must be applied to all foster carers who meet the criteria in the same way and must not discriminate on the grounds of a pre-existing relationship with the child.</p>	<p>LA has discretion to pay residence order allowance – usually if child was previously fostered by the carers, or exceptionally if making residence order prevents child becoming looked after. Any allowance reviewed annually.</p>	<p>Entitled to an assessment for financial support under the Special Guardianship Regulations 2005 if child looked after prior to order and meets the criteria in the regulations.</p> <p>Subject to assessment as above and for former foster carers can include an element of remuneration.</p> <p>Regular or one off payments.</p> <p>Any allowances reviewed annually.</p>	<p>Subject to assessment, one off payments or regular adoption allowance may be paid.</p>	