#

**Parent and Child Placement Policy**

**Children and Families Service**

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**Version Control**

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# **1.** **Introduction**

The Parent and Child Foster Placements Policy has been designed and written to ensure that action taken by Halton BC is in line with legislation, national policy and guidance. It aims to ensure that all foster carers, supervising social workers, parents and children’s social workers have the same understanding about the placement tasks they are required to undertake, and the legal basis for doing so.

This policy should be implemented following:

* A pre-birth assessment; or
* Children’s Safeguarding Conference which recommends a parent and child placement; or
* At the direction of the Court during Care Proceedings.

In exceptional circumstances, where the required assessments have not been completed, a clear plan, with timescales, must be agreed at the Pre-Placement Meeting for the completion of the assessment.

 Parent and child foster care is an exceptional arrangement for very young babies and their parents. The maximum age for a child within such a placement must not be beyond school age (4 years).

**2.** **Legal Context**

There are three scenarios that apply to parent and child fostering, with different implications depending on the regulations that apply.

# **2.1** **Parent Looked After, Child Looked After**

Where the parent is under 18 and is looked after by the Local Authority and the child is also looked after by the Local Authority, each will be subject to all the requirements of the:

* Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010;
* The Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011.

# **2.2** **Parent Looked After, Child not Looked After**

During Care Proceedings it could be that the Child Looked After of a parent under the age of 18 is placed with them, in a foster placement, under the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010 (Placement of child in care with parent). The requirement of the 2010 Care Planning Regulations will apply to both parent and child, but the 2011 Fostering Regulations will apply only to the parent.

# **2.3** **Parent not Looked After, Child Looked After**

In this situation the parent could be either under or over the age of 18, and only the child will be subject to all the requirements of the 2010 Care Planning and 2011 Fostering Regulations. The regulations in relation to placement with parents will not apply, and the parent will be considered as part to the fostering household. In this situation the parent, if under 18, will have been assessed but not identified as a child in need in her own right.

# **3.** **Pre-Placement Planning Guidance**

The Pre-Placement Meeting and contract are essential tasks to be completed prior to any placement. Failure to do so could result in delay in making a placement, or a poor placement outcome. A pre-birth assessment is expected in all cases, except where the pregnancy has been concealed or only identified at a late stage. In these cases, where a placement is required in an emergency, a Child and Family Single Assessment should be completed as soon as is practicable.

A placement should be agreed for a maximum of 14 weeks. A review at 7 weeks is a requirement of all placements as this will prevent drift and enhance decision making. An extension to the placement timescale can only be agreed, by a senior manager, if there is an identified need for continued parenting work or assessment.

The Fostering Service recognises the duty to foster carers and parents to ensure that the best help and support is provided from the outset. Establishing a clear contract clarifies roles and responsibilities to the placement for all parties involved.

All placements will have an assessment component. The prime aim of any placement should be to assess the safe parenting capability of the parent. Where the parent is also a Child Looked After, realistic timescales for independent living should form part of the assessment and planning.

However, parent and child foster placements should not be treated as the only means of assessment or training in parenting skills. The foster carer will be *informing* the assessment, which is the responsibility of the child’s social worker. The parenting assessment will support and work alongside the foster placement.

For a Parent and Child placement to successfully meet its objectives there must be multi-agency working and assessment. The child’s social workers will need to take the lead in negotiating with other agencies to ensure that every placement is fully supported.

Where the child is in placement and subject to either an ICO or a Care Order, [**Parental Responsibility**](http://trixresources.proceduresonline.com/nat_key/keywords/parental_respons.html) is shared, and the Local Authority will need to negotiate with the parent(s) the most appropriate arrangements for exercising their respective parental responsibilities. These arrangements must be discussed, agreed and recorded at the pre placement meeting.

At the Pre-Placement Meeting a clear statement as to the objectives of the placement and the timescale for assessment must be provided by the social worker. Those involved in the meeting must agree how progress towards meeting the objectives will be tracked, and how success will be measured. This must be made clear to the parent.

Following the placement a foster carer *may* agree (under new contract) to provide further support via outreach support within the parent’s home for up to 2 weeks. This arrangement will only be put in place following a Placement Planning Meeting and the completion and signing of the placement contract.

Where the parent is also Looked After various scenarios could apply. If the parenting assessment concludes that the parent is able to safely parent the child then the aims and timescales of the placement must be re-negotiated to include clear criteria for moving on into independent living, or to another form of supported arrangement not involving fostering. Should, however, the parent be assessed as unable to safely parent, then by the direction of the Court, or with the agreement of the parent, the child should be moved to a different placement. This may also involve a change of placement for the parent if the placement is designated only as a parent and child placement.

# **4.** **Role of the Foster Carer**

The foster carer(s) will be expected to offer guidance and assistance to the parent in managing the care tasks for the baby. This may include direct instruction or modelling, it may include responding to questions, or it may include practical support such as accompanying the parent to parent/baby groups, health visiting clinic, shopping etc. The placement should provide a safe and friendly environment to provide supervision and support to the parent, to improve and consolidate parenting skills.

The foster carer will be expected to show the parent how any technical appliances work so that they are able to use cooking and cleaning facilities appropriately. If the placement progresses positively it must be expected that the parent demonstrate less reliance on the carers support.

The foster carer should promote and support the key attachment between child and parent.

The foster carer will be expected to keep one daily record noting observations of the parent’s ability to respond to their baby’s needs, manage the routine, and manage the practical tasks of washing, ironing, shopping, budgeting etc. These observations will inform any parenting programme or assessment that has been agreed. The foster carer will be expected to be open and honest about the parent’s strengths and difficulties when recording their observations and the parent must be given the opportunity to read and comment on these observations.

Foster carers will agree to provide 24 hour support when required, transport parent and baby when appropriate, and as agreed.

Foster carer will baby-sit for one evening a week (subject to contract discussion) provided that 24 hours’ notice is given.

Foster carer will provide a fully furnished bedroom complete with bed, cot, and cot linen and ensure the parent has use of a sitting room with home entertainment. Foster carer will make available and provide full use of toys and equipment for both inside and outside the home.

Foster carer will complete and provide an updated safer care policy in relation to the individual parent and child placement. Foster carer will inform parent of any household rules and routines and of the safer caring policy.

Foster carer will be expected to periodically check on the care and safety of the child in placement, and therefore must have access to the child at all times whilst in the home environment.

Foster carers should intervene if the level of risk to the child from a parent would be detrimental to their welfare.

Foster carer will always seek medical advice or treatment for any fall or injury that a child has sustained. A report of any injury should be made to the child’s social worker and supervising social worker as soon as possible.

Foster carer will respect and give recognition to the importance of a parent and child’s ethnic origin, cultural background, religion, language, gender, sexuality and disability.

Foster carer will attend Pre-Placement Meeting, Family Centre Service Agreement Meetings, Reviews, Core Group Meetings, Planning Meetings, Child Protection Conferences and any other meetings required.

Foster carers will receive full information prior to placement from the child’s social worker in relation to both the parent and the child. If the information has not been received the carer must inform the supervising social worker 2 days before the placement commences. If a placement is made on an emergency basis the foster carer should expect to receive relevant information within 5 days.

Foster carer will liaise with child’s social worker, health visitor and supervising social worker and any other professionals involved.

Should the placement be terminated because of a decision made by the Authority relating to a serious breach of the contract, so that the well-being of the child is compromised or because the parent has left the placement without the agreement of the authority, the expectation will be that the child will be moved to a child only placement unless it is the child’s best interests to remain with the foster carer.

Although the progress of the placement will be reviewed according to the schedule set out in the contract, the child will also be subject to the Children Looked After Review mechanism according to the statutory schedule, as will the parent if also looked after. The foster carer will remain subject to the foster care review mechanism.

Foster carers offering parent and child placements may do so alongside existing long-term placements. When carers are holding a vacancy a new placement can be considered in consultation with all those involved in the existing placement but careful matching is paramount.

It is not appropriate for a foster carer to take fostering leave during a parent and child placement, and no respite will be granted until after the first 10 weeks, unless this is as a result of an emergency or has been pre-arranged.

# **5.** **Responsibility of the Parent(s)**

Parent(s) will be expected to care for their child at all times (getting up, bathing, feeding, changing under supervision from carer until it is agreed it is no longer necessary).

Parent(s) will be expected to manage the day and bedtime routine, which fits in with the foster carer’s household. When the parent is settling a child for bed it is their responsibility to check on the child throughout the evening and during the night as required.

Parent(s) will be expected to demonstrate their competence in attending to all their child’s physical needs as well as interacting positively with their child.

Parent(s) will be expected to shop, budget and cook for self and child and attend to all clothes washing and ironing. One of the placement aims will be for the parent to achieve greater independence and skill in these areas.

Parent will keep their room tidy and leave the kitchen, bathroom and any other communal areas in a tidy, clean condition after use.

Personal clothing and belongings must be kept in parent’s own room. The foster carer cannot be responsible for property or articles that are lost or damaged.

Parents will contribute to the wellbeing of everyone in the foster carers’ home and in public by demonstrating non-aggressive, non-threatening behaviours.

If agreed in the contract the foster carer will offer babysitting one evening per week; parent will provide 24 hours’ notice for request.

Foster carer may make random room checks to ensure safety of parent and child and therefore all bedroom doors must be kept unlocked.

The foster carer will write accurate daily record sheets, which will be shared daily with parent(s) and signed by both parent(s) and carer.

If there are any differences of opinion on childcare these should be discussed and recorded. However, the parent will need to accept the final decision from the foster carer who will endeavour to contact the health visitor at the first opportunity.

The foster carer will complete and share the safe caring plan with the parent.

Smoking is not permitted inside the foster carer’s home. If a parent smokes it must be in the designated outside area. On returning to the home, the parent must wash their hands before contact with their baby.

If there are other children in the household the parent in placement must not provide any practical or supervisory care.

No alcohol should be kept by the parent in the carer’s home.

No involvement with any illegal substances is permitted in the foster carer’s home. However, it is recognised some parents may be supported in a parent and child placement whilst the parent is supervised by a treatment programme for drug or alcohol misuse.

Parent should inform the foster carer and child’s social worker of any appointments, and check if childcare cover is required.

Parent’s circumstances and history is strictly confidential to the named foster carers and not their families or friends. Parents can feel reassured that no discussions will take place between family members and friends.

Parents over the age of 18 will be subject to [**Disclosure and Barring Service**](http://trixresources.proceduresonline.com/nat_key/keywords/dis_barring_service.html) Checks and the results will be fed into the pre placement risk assessment.

# **6.** **Role of the Supervising Social Worker (SSW)**

All Parent and Child foster carers must be fully supported by a designated and experienced supervising social worker who will offer 3 weekly support and supervision.

Any known or potential risks to foster carer and family from members of the child’s family or others must be assessed. No foster carer or member of the fostering household should knowingly be placed at risk as a consequence of providing a placement.

Supervising social worker (SSW) to ensure full parent and child information is passed on by child’s social worker to foster carer prior to placement commencing. If this is not the case then SSW should inform parent and baby lead who will, in discussion with manager, make a decision if the placement goes ahead or is delayed.

SSW will be responsible for monitoring/supporting/supervising/ inspecting the management of the placement.

SSW will visit in the first week of placement and three weekly thereafter to provide supervision and support as well as weekly phone contacts. SSW will also undertake unannounced visits.

SSW will read and sign off all daily record sheets and report any issues that are appropriate. SSW will discuss with the carer the recorded observation to ensure objectivity remains.

SSW to liaise with lead professional to update on placements.

SSW will inform foster carers of any annual leave of one week plus.

SSW will check with foster carers that they have researched/accessed groups or courses available (if appropriate) for the parent and baby in the local area.

# **7.** **Role of the Child’s Social Worker**

Child’s social worker must visit the placement every 2 weeks and make weekly phone/email contact in addition to the SSW contact with the carer. During these visits social workers should discuss individually and together with parent and carer how the placement is going in relation to the contract, and provide opportunity to share concerns/worries.

Child’s social worker should undertake a room check.

Child’s social worker must arrange and chair regular placement reviews following the placement planning meeting. Placement reviews should be structured around the original placement plan, and the reviewing process should highlight placement progress.

Placement reviews should be arranged at 2 weeks, 4 weeks combined with first Child Looked After Review, 7 weeks and 10 weeks. Every review should consider placement exit and future plans for family.

Child’s social worker should check out any arranged appointments and childcare cover that needs to be approved by the carers.

Child’s social worker needs to consider the second parent, and attention and scrutiny must be given to the parent’s relationships, both of their involvement in the assessment process and future planning.

Should a dispute arise within the placement, SSW and child's social worker will initially undertake joint visits. If necessary the child’s social worker will then arrange a follow up meeting to include parent, SSW and carer and locality team manager.

Child’s social workers will liaise with housing benefits and senior management (if necessary) if the placement continues past 13 weeks. At this point, if the parent is in receipt of Housing Benefit then their entitlement will cease unless they return to the property and sleep overnight once a week. The alternative is for the Local Authority to pay the rent to secure the tenancy.

To ensure prompt payment to the carers, the supervising social worker will inform Fostering Finance of the placement start date, confirm the status of the parent, and if the child is subject to Care Proceedings. If the parent is not CLA then the need for a parent lodgings should be discussed.

Child’s social worker must ensure that the carer has all relevant information at the latest by the date of the pre-Placement Planning Meeting. If the placement is made in an emergency basis, placement information must be supplied within 5 days.

Child’s social worker should provide parent(s) with complaints procedures leaflets.

Child’s social workers will inform carers of any arranged annual leave of one week plus.

# **8.** **Looked After Parents**

The child’s social worker must visit the placement every four weeks to meet with the parent and the foster carer. The parent's social worker / support worker (either from Locality or Pathway Team) will provide an opportunity for the parent to discuss any issues or worries, and will assist the parent to address them.

Child’s social worker, parents and SSW must work closely together in monitoring and reviewing the placement.

The Placement Planning Meeting is an essential meeting in preparing for a change of placement for the looked after young person. The parent’s responsibilities in this document will be referred to, and adjusted within the Placement Agreement Meeting.

Foster carers will support the parent in relation to education, home tuition and legal appointments and provide transport and childcare if necessary.

Regard must be given to the parent’s contact with their family members, time out (with and without baby), babysitting, household tasks and level of practical support.

A list of daily tasks for parent to complete, in relation to the child, and their own routine, will be used by the carer to support expectations of parent.

All Parent and Child foster carers offering this specialist service must be fully supported by a designated and experienced supervising social worker who will offer 3 weekly support and supervision.

Any known or potential risks to foster carer and family from members of the child’s family or others must be assessed. No foster carer or member of the fostering household should knowingly be placed in a position of risk as a consequence of providing a parent and child placement.

Daily written evidence based reports will be shared by the foster carer with the parent to highlight and encourage further discussion. These reports will be signed by both parties and may be used in Court Proceedings. The reports will be shared with the child’s social worker every week.

# **9.** **Allowance Breakdown for Parent/Child/Foster Carer**

Foster carers should make a regular weekly payment out of their fostering allowance to the parent of baby in a parent and baby placement. The payment of an allowance to the parent is an important part of the support and supervision of the parent by the foster carer. The amount paid will depend upon any benefits received by the parent and must be clarified at the outset of the placement and incorporated into the placement plan.

Where an allowance is paid for the parent, the foster carer will be expected to provide all the ingredients to enable the parent to prepare a main meal each day unless stated otherwise in Placement Planning Meeting.

In exceptional circumstances only, the carer may need to provide the parent with an allowance for meals particularly for cases when a parent is away from the carer’s home.

 **Appendix 1**

**Parent and Child Placement Contract**

This contract forms an agreement between Halton Borough Council Children and Families Service and the below named Parent (s) in relation to the below named child.

For Contract Guidance please refer to Appendix 2.

**1.0 Contact Details**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name of parent:  |  |
| Date of birth:  |  |
| Name of parent:  |  |
| Date of birth:  |  |
| Name of child:  |  |
| Date of birth:  |  |

**1.1 Social Worker Details**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Child’s social worker:  |  |
| Team:  |  |
| Email:  |  |
| Mobile:  |  |
| Office telephone number:  |  |

**1.2 Supervising Social Worker Details**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Supervising social worker:  |  |
| Team:  |  |
| Email:  |  |
| Mobile:  |  |
| Office telephone number:  |  |

**1.3 Emergency Contact Office Hours**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Emergency contact out of hours:  |  |

**2.0 Objectives of the placement**

|  |
| --- |
|  |

**2.1 Anticipated length of placement**

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| --- |
|  |

**2.2 Parents understanding and consent to placement**

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**2.3 Expectations of parent whilst in placement**

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| --- |
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**3.0 Financial arrangement between foster carer and parent**

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| --- |
|  |

**4.0 Parent’s expectations from the placement**

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**5.0 Level of Supervision by foster carer**

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|  |

**6.0 Contacts**

|  |
| --- |
|  |

**7.1 Health issues for parent**

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| --- |
|  |

**7.2 Health issues for child**

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| --- |
|  |

**8.0 Foster carers will be expected to:**

|  |
| --- |
|  |

**9.0 Guardian’s views/Court specifications**

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| --- |
|  |

**10.0 Who should the parent contact if there are any concerns?**

|  |
| --- |
|  |

**11.0 Are there any cultural, ethnic, religious, language, gender, sexuality or**

**disability needs for either parent or child?**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Parent: |  |
| Child: |  |

**12.0 Any other issues?**

|  |
| --- |
|  |

**13.0 Signatures**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Parent: |  | Date: |  |
| Foster Carer: |  | Date: |  |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Child’s Social Worker: |  | Date: |  |
| Supervising Social Worker: |  | Date: |  |

 **Appendix 2**

**Guidance for Parent and Child Placement Contract**

**Contract to be completed 7 days (minimum) prior to placement.**

This guidance should be used when completing the Parent and Child Placement Contract.

**1.0 Contact Details**

**1.1 Social Worker Details**

**1.2 Supervising Social Worker Details**

**1.3 Emergency Contact Office Hours**

A Carer’s first point of call in crisis should be the child’s social worker or supervising social worker. There will be times when neither is available and carers should know who to contact in this scenario. For example practice supervisor (knowledge of the case is vital).

In addition consider what out of hours support can be offered e.g. emergency duty team.

**2.0 Objectives of the placement**

It is important that the child’s social worker provides clear reasons for the purpose of parent and baby placement.

**2.1 Anticipated length of placement**

Placement period can be for a maximum of 14 weeks duration and if necessary 2 weeks outreach support programme by foster carer (following end of placement) potential maximum total of 16 week assessment period.

**2.2 Parents understanding and consent to placement**

It is essential that the parent understands why they are being asked to commit to living in a foster home with their child and that they have been informed of the potential outcomes.

**2.3 Expectations of parent whilst in placement**

Check parent has read and agreed synopsis of expectations. Following can be commented/included:

* Use of TV, computer or phone?
* Retire to bed no later than 11.30pm
* Parent to be up by 07.30am to work with carers current household routine
* Babysitting to be agreed
* Time out – daily, weekend?
* Household tasks? (Vacuuming lounge 1 x week etc.)
* Cooking? (e.g. 3 x week)
* Changing bed clothes weekly/fortnightly?
* To attend family centre days?
* Use of mobile phone (e.g. restrictions to evening whilst baby sleeps)

**3.0 Financial arrangement between foster carer and parent**

Is the parent entitled to their own income? Is there particular need to look at routine/budgeting with parent?

* Expectation of contribution from parent to carer? (Milk tokens, baby clothes etc.)
* How will expenses be managed (e.g. parent and carer buy shopping together)
* Who will monitor what items are needed (nappies, milk, toiletries so they don’t run out)

**4.0 Parent’s expectations from the placement**

Is parent clear of their role and responsibility?

* Does parent want a separate food cupboard in kitchen?
* Are there any classes/activities parent regularly attends?

**5.0 Level of Supervision by foster carer**

* Babysitting / time out?
* Baby alarm needed?
* How will parent get to and from family centre appointments?
* Should baby be with parent at all assessments/Health appointments?
* Agreement needed by foster carer as to caring for baby whilst parent attends such appointments
* Unsupervised time?
* Guidance if parent leaves with baby without notice/agreement?

**6.0 Contacts**

Contact with identified family and specified friends (frequency with or without baby). Another available parent (contact supervised or unsupervised)

* Any identified individuals who must not have contact?

**7.1 Health issues for parent**

Any known on-going medications (storage of)?

* Pre-arranged health appointments?
* Any health needs to be considered?
* Dental/eye appointments or needed?

**7.2 Health issues for child**

Any known on-going medications and appointments.

**8.0 Foster carers will be expected to:**

In this section clearly list the expectations of the foster carer. For example:

* Provide clean linen/towels on weekly basis
* Provide cleaning materials and equipment so parent can keep agreed areas clean and tidy
* Will carer be available during labour/childbirth, postnatal appointments?

**9.0 Guardian’s views/Court specifications**

Views from Guardian and/or specifications set by the court.

**10.0 Who should the parent contact if there are any concerns?**

If the parent has any concerns please list who the parent should contact.

**11.0 Are there any cultural, ethnic, religious, language, gender, sexuality or**

**disability needs for either parent or child?**

Each parent and child need to have needs recognised and these should be valued and promoted.

Are there any specific services needed to be accessed, cultural. Ethnic, religious, gender, sexuality, language or disability can be recorded in this section.

**Appendix 3**

**Parent and Child Placement Risk Assessment Form**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Parent’s Name:  |  | Parent’s D.O.B: |  |
| Child’s Name: |  | Child’s D.O.B |  |

Please give details and assess level of risk using risk this assessment form.

1. **Risk to others**

(E.g. Aggression, Bullying, Violence, Light fires, Offending etc.)

Please give details:

|  |
| --- |
|  |

1. **Risk of Exploitation**

(E.g. Victim of abuse, Risky sexual behaviour, No self-protective behaviours etc.)

Please give details:

|  |
| --- |
|  |

1. **Medical/Health Risks**

(E.g. Epilepsy, Diabetes, Asthma etc.)

Please give details:

|  |
| --- |
|  |

1. **Community,/Environment**

(E.g. Anti-social behaviour, Offending, any outstanding court dates or offences etc.)

Please give details:

|  |
| --- |
|  |

1. **Child Protection Issues**

(E.g. Abuse of younger/smaller children, Violence towards other children,

Taking children away from home etc.)

Please give details:

|  |
| --- |
|  |

1. **Risk to Self**

(E.g. Self-harming, Suicide, Alcohol/substance misuse, Risky behaviour, Absconding etc.)

Please give details:

|  |
| --- |
|  |

1. **What Safeguarding strategies/precautions are to be put in place to address identified risks above?**

Please give details:

|  |
| --- |
|  |

1. **Signatures**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Name and role of person carrying out assessment: |  | Date: |  |
| Supervising Social Worker: |  | Date: |  |
| Foster Carer: |  | Date: |  |

 **Appendix 4**

**Parent and Child Daily Report**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Date: |  |
| Completed by: |  |

**RECORD OF DAY**

1. **Child’s Needs**

(Please consider routine, play/stimulation e.g. games/reading/singing), physical care (nappy changes, bathing, clean clothes, encouraging development) emotional care (attachments, eye contact, smiles, reassurance)).

|  |
| --- |
|  |

1. **Parent’s Presentation**

(Please consider parent’s stability/emotional wellbeing (frame of mind), timekeeping, cleanliness of bedroom, household chores undertaken and personal self-care (showers, teeth/hair and clean clothes)).

|  |
| --- |
|  |

1. **Budgeting**

(E.g. Any money given, how money is managed and planned for etc.).

|  |
| --- |
|  |

1. **Preparation of Bottles**

(E.g. cleaning/sterilisation, cooking (Who cooked for parent and child, prepared meals, type of food etc.)).

|  |
| --- |
|  |

1. **Summary of discussion of the day between Foster Carer and Parent**

(E.g. concerns/positives, intervention, skills to work on etc.).

|  |
| --- |
|  |

1. **Parent’s comments**

|  |
| --- |
|  |

1. **Signatures**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Foster Carer: |  | Date: |  |
| Parent Signature: |  | Date: |  |
| Supervising Social Worker |  | Date: |  |