

Interim amendments to Fostering Recruitment Processes in response to Covid-19 –

To support the timely recruitment of foster carers including previously retired fostering households returning to caring.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the fostering department has been in consultation with retired foster carers, the chairs of the Leeds Fostering Panels and Agency Decision Maker to discuss safe application of the new powers made available through [the Adoption and Children \(Coronavirus\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2020](#) (SI 2020/455). This emergency legislation has been passed in order to support Local Authorities respond to the increased demand on services as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The processes set out below have been agreed to ensure that our services safely implement new powers which, *inter alia* amend requirements for recruitment and assessment processes, set out in *Assessment and approval of foster carers: Amendments to the Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations – Volume 4: Fostering Service – July 2013* and [The Fostering Services \(England\) Regulations 2011](#)

Identified process:

1. Foster carers who are currently socially shielding will not be approached.
2. Identify ex-carers who have retired/de-registered (in a positive manner) in the last 24 months.
3. Fostering Recruitment Team to make contact and ascertain where retired carers are available and appropriate to return to fostering in support of our efforts to meet demands on Childrens Services due to Covid-19.
4. Fostering Recruitment Team complete a home visit report applying current guidance on home visiting and gain Team Manager Approval to progress to next stage.
5. Initial checks completed which include a local Police Check, review of last held Enhanced DBS, and a self-certification medical report.
6. A Supervising Social Worker to review the proposed carers fostering past documentation including (as a minimum) the de-registration report, the minutes of the last 2 fostering reviews, the original assessment, any LADO/CP comments or concerns. The last Supervising Social Worker/Fostering Team Manager for the ex-carers to be emailed for a supportive reference.
7. The above to be written into a succinct assessment, signed off by Fostering Recruitment Team Manager, Fostering Service Manager and then sent to the Agency Decision Maker for approval.
8. The ADM would only approve re-registering carers as Emergency and/or Short Term carers to meet pressures relating to Covid-19. Fostering approval would be granted for up to 6 months only. Post 6 months a thorough fostering assessment would need to be presented back to fostering panel in accordance with current guidance and regulations.

9. These temporary foster carers would be supported in the same way as all mainstream foster carers, through the area fostering support teams, with additional support as agreed by the SSW, carer ad Team Manager

In addition the process outlined above to approve carers to support our response to Covid 19 there are also powers that enable the re-registration of past carers by utilising the process outlined under regulation 24 as amended by the *Adoption and Children (Coronavirus) (Amendments) Regulations 2020*. The fostering and Kinship services are therefore able to utilise this process to support urgent temporary approval for carers for emergency situations for up to 24 weeks.

These amendments to Leeds fostering recruitment process will be reviewed in line with any change in associated national guidance / secondary legislation.

Implementation Date: 1/5/2020

JH