**Kent County Council**

**Variation and change of approval policy**

**Integrated Children’s Services**

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Introduction

When a child or young person is placed with a foster carer, the foster carers terms of approval must be compatible with the age and number of children and young people they are caring for.

However, should the child or young person be placed in an emergency and the age or number of children and young people are not covered within the foster carers’ approval, then an emergency change to their terms of approval will be required.

Regulation 23 of the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010 allows a child or young person to be placed, in an emergency, outside of a foster carers’ terms of approval for up to 6-working days on a variation.

The Fostering Team Manager is the decision maker in respect of Regulation 23 and is responsible for ensuring that the recording of their decision is on the foster carers file under case notes. However, should the Fostering Team Manager be absent, the Head of Fostering for the area will take responsibility for this decision.

Beyond 6-working days

Should the emergency placement be required beyond 6-working days and there is not enough time to make a change in the foster carers terms of approval by going to panel, then the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review and Fostering Services (Miscellaneous Regulations 2013 Section 8) amends the Fostering Regulations 2011 to allow for a change in the foster carers approval to be agreed outside of the panel process.

This will allow a decision to change a foster carers terms of approval to come into effect immediately.

Change of approval process beyond 6-working days without going to panel

For a change of approval beyond 6-working days without going to panel to happen, the foster carer must provide a written agreement to the change of their approval.

The written agreement can come in the form of an email or letter to their Fostering Social Worker or Team Manager. Once this has been received, a written statement must be made by the Supervising Social Worker regarding any additional support the foster carers may need in looking after the child or young person in the placement.

The *placement outside of foster carers approval* form on Liberi must be completed with this information and sent to the Fostering Team Manager for their comments.

Once all the above information and forms have been completed and collated, they will be submitted to the Agency Decision Maker, who will be able to make a decision on a permanent change to a foster carers’ approval.

Agency Decision Makers decisions

Approved

Should the foster carers change of approval be agreed by the Agency Decision Maker, a change of approval letter must be sent to the foster carers, informing them of the change under Regulation 28 of the Fostering Regulations 2011.

The Team Manager will then be responsible for ensuring the recording of the decision is completed on the foster carers records and that their data is amended to reflect this change.

Rejected

However, should the change of approval be denied, the child(ren) who have been placed outside of the foster carers approval will need to be identified an alternative placement, following the end of the 6th-working day, under Regulation 23 of the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations 2010.

In these circumstances, there will be no recourse to the independent reviewing mechanism as no change to the foster carers’ approval has taken place.

Variation and change of approval