

DORSET COUNCIL

Fostering Service

Checklist for Fostering Panel Submissions

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Signed off by Louise Drury and PPP Group

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Fostering Panel Process and Paperwork

The Fostering Services regulations 2011, National Minimum Standards for Fostering, and The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 4: Fostering Services all offer instruction about the Fostering Panel.

The purpose of this policy is to set out the process and the paperwork which is required for the Dorset Council fostering panel.

The role of the fostering panel is to scrutinise the work of the Fostering Service.

The panel makes recommendations about foster carers to the Agency Decision Maker and provides robust feedback on the quality and effectiveness of the work presented to panel.

Process and timeline

The administration of the panel is a complex task, the panel members are allowed five working days within the Regulations to read the paperwork and in order for this to happen, all papers need to be submitted in good time. Dorset council Fostering Panel members have up to 15 days to read the paperwork, with time allocated for them to complete a pre-panel prep form, providing feedback and questions, to the Panel Chair.

Applicants should have a week to read, comments and sign their completed reports prior to submission to the Fostering Panel.

Approved foster carers would have read, commented, and signed off their annual foster carer reports prior to their Review Meeting with the Fostering Review Officer, prior to the submission to the Fostering Panel.

Proceedings at the Fostering Panel are recorded. All attending Panel will be informed and will be given the options if they do not wish to be recorded audibly or visually. The primary purpose is to ensure accuracy of the minutes taken. These proceedings will be destroyed when the minutes have been completed.

Following panel, the Agency Decision Maker has seven working days from submission of the final minutes to decide, and then a further five working days to ensure the foster carers are informed of the decision.

Paperwork

In Dorset Council, the fostering panel considers:

- Initial assessments of foster carers
- Regulation 24 assessments of connected carers
- First annual reviews
- Every subsequent third annual review
- Annual reviews following an allegation against a foster carer and following some standard of care concerns and complaints
- Resignations and De-registrations of foster carers

MAINSTREAM FOSTERING PANEL CHECKLIST

Name of Carer:	Mosaic No:
FSW:	Team Mgr:
Panel Date:	

This should be signed by the applicant, the assessing social worker and the team manager.

If it is a new partner assessment, the previous annual review, most recent Panel minutes and ADM decision for the established carer should also be included in the paperwork.

If there is/are no ex-partner's references, this must be signed off by a Senior Management, and a note is made in the main Report. No requirement for email confirming this decision.

Documents to circulate to Panel:

	Date Checked by FSW	Date Checked by Manager	Date Checked by Panel Adviser	Added to Share file. (BH = -14)
Date Required (These are the deadlines by which actions and documents <u>must</u> be completed at the latest)	To be with Team Managers by:	Panel date -22 days prior to Panel:	Panel date -22 days prior to Panel:	Panel Date -15 days prior to Panel:
Form F Assessment Includes front sheet, factual information, description & analysis, supporting information, specialist reports, Journey to Fostering feedback, summary & recommendation FSW signatures on documents				
Adult Health Report				
Foster Carer's Profile				
A Weekend in Our Home				
Family Tree & Eco Map				
References				
Foster Carer Training Record				

<p>Date checklist completed and Zip file of documents sent to each stage checker</p> <p>Must be CC'd to fostering Panel Admin each stage</p>	<p>Date to TM:</p> <p>CC'd Panel admin</p>	<p>Date to Panel Advisor:</p> <p>CC'd Panel admin</p>	<p>Date to Panel Admin identified as final documents for panel:</p>	<p>Date uploaded:</p>
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Notes:

CONNECTED PERSON'S PANEL CHECKLIST

Name of Carer:	Mosaic No:
FSW:	Team Mgr:
Panel Date:	

This should be signed by the applicant, the assessing social worker and the team manager.

If it is a new partner assessment, the previous annual review, most recent Panel minutes and ADM decision for the established carer should also be included in the paperwork.

If there is/are no ex-partner's references, this must be signed off by a Senior Management, and a note is made in the main Report. No requirement for email confirming this decision.

Documents to circulate to Panel:

	Date Checked by FSW	Date Checked by Manager	Date Checked by Panel Adviser	Added to Share file. (BH = -14 days)
Date Required (These are the deadlines by which actions and documents <u>must</u> be completed at the latest)	To be with Team Managers by:	Panel date -22 days prior to Panel:	Panel date -22 days prior to Panel:	Panel Date -15 days prior to Panel:
Form C Section A Completed by child's Social Worker CCSW signature on documents				
Form C Section C Form C Section D Form C Chronology FSW signature on documents				
Adult Health Report – FSW				
Family Tree & Eco Map				

- FSW				
Personal Development Plan - FSW				
References				
8-Week Extension Requested: Approved by ADM on: 24-week temporary approval expiry date:				
Date checklist completed and Zip file of documents sent to each stage checker Must be CC'd to fostering Panel Admin each stage	Date to TM: CC'd Panel admin	Date to Panel Advisor: CC'd Panel admin	Date to Panel Admin identified as final documents for panel:	Date uploaded:

Notes:

POLICY AND PROCESS FOR REQUEST FOR 8-WEEK EXTENSION OF TEMPORARY APPROVAL TO FOSTER FOR CONNECTED PERSONS

Children's Services Local Guidance for Extension of Temporary Approval to Foster for Connected Persons

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this guidance is to set out the steps to be taken when an eight-week extension is sought to the temporary approval of foster carers who are Connected Persons.

2. Background

2.1 The governing procedure for this guidance is Placements with Connected Persons which can be found in the Contents section of the Children's Services Procedures library. Section 4 of that procedure states:

2.2 If it is likely that the 16 weeks will expire before the full assessment is complete the temporary approval can, in exceptional circumstances be extended for a further period of up to 8 weeks under regulation 25 (The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010). Before deciding whether to extend the approval, the Local Authority must consider if the placement is still the most appropriate placement available. All such requests for an extension should be presented to the fostering panel setting out what work is still outstanding, the views of the QARO and timescales to completion. The fostering Panel will make a recommendation to the Agency Decision Maker who will make the agency decision.

2.3 An extension to temporary approval should only be sought in these circumstances.

3. Procedure

3.1 The steps to be followed when seeking an extension to temporary approval are set out in the following paragraphs.

3.2 It is the responsibility of the Fostering Social Worker to identify when an extension is required, and to initiate the approval process before the expiry of the original 16-week period.

3.3 The Fostering Social Worker should complete Form C, Section D. They should ensure that the Summary of Assessment field contains the following information:

- The child's legal status and any other key background information
- When the eight-week extension period would expire, if granted
- The assessment work that has already been undertaken, including titles of individual assessments, interviews, and references

- Assessment work that remains to be completed, and why this cannot be completed within the standard 16-week timescale
- Assurance that the temporary placement with the Connected Person(s) will remain safe and appropriate during the extended approval period

3.4 The Fostering Social Worker should submit Form C, Section D to their Team Manager for Quality Assurance; there is no need to complete the panel checklist. At the same time, they should share Form C, Section D with the applicants.

3.5 The Fostering Social Worker should start the Refer to Fostering Panel workflow on Mosaic.

3.6 Once they have completed Quality Assurance, the Team Manager should send Form C, Section D to the Fostering Panel Adviser and the Fostering Panel Business Support Team.

3.7 The Business Support Team should add the following to the Panel Recommendation field on Form C, Section D:

“Panel will be notified of the request for 8-week extension for the connected carer assessment and ADM’s approval.”

They should then attach Form D to the workflow step using the Mosaic ‘paperclip’ function, before sending the updated Form c, Section D to the Agency Decision Maker.

3.8 The Agency Decision Maker will review Form C, Section D and decide whether or not to approve the extension and notify Business Support.

3.9 If the extension is granted, Business Support will complete the step on Mosaic and close the workflow. They should then initiate a new assessment for the Fostering Social Worker.

3.10 The Fostering Social Worker should rebook the final Panel date.

4. Implementation

4.1 This guidance will be issued via the Workforce Wordout and hosted in the Local Resources section of the Children’s Services Procedures library.

4.2 It is the responsibility of Fostering Team Managers to ensure that Social Workers and others are aware of the requirements of this guidance.

Review Paperwork to go to Fostering and Permanence Panel (including Allegations and Three Year review)

Note: Post-allegation reviews: please read Policy for Panel Reviews following Management of Allegations and Standards of Care Processes listed below

Name of Carer:	Mosaic No:
FSW:	Team Mgr:
Panel Date:	

Documents to circulate to Panel

	Date Checked by FSW	Date Checked by Manager	Date Checked by Panel Adviser	Added to Share file. (BH = -14)
Date Required (These are the deadlines by which actions and documents must be completed at the latest)	To be with Team Managers by:	Panel date -22 days prior to Panel:	Panel date -22 days prior to Panel:	Panel Date -15 days prior to Panel:
Reviewing Officer Report (signed)				
Supervising Social Worker's Report (signed)				
Adult Health Report (if 3 year review)				
DBS confirmed as renewed (if 3 year review)				
Management of Allegations Outcomes (if this is the reason for Review)				
Foster Carer Report (signed)				
Child's Social Worker Report (signed)				
Fostered Young Person's Comments or Fostered Child's Comments (signed)				
Sons and Daughter's (Child) Comments (signed)				
Other Professional				
Foster Carer Training Record				
Date checklist completed and Zip file of documents sent to each stage checker	Date to TM:	Date to Panel Adviser:	Date to Panel Admin identified	Date uploaded:

Must be CC'd to fostering Panel Admin each stage	CC'd Panel admin	CC'd Panel admin	as final documents for panel:	
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Notes:**Reviews to Panel:**

- **1st Review**
- **3rd Review and three yearly afterwards**
- **Outcomes of Allegations Review**
- **Standards of Care**
- **Change of Approval up.**

Policy for Panel Reviews following Management of Allegations and Standards of Care Processes

1. Introduction

1.1 Standard 22.8 of the Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards states:

“As soon as possible after an investigation into a foster carer is concluded, their approval as suitable to foster is reviewed.”

1.2 It is the policy of Dorset Council to refer all such reviews to the Fostering and Permanence Panel under Regulation 25(1)(c) of the Fostering Services Regulations (England) 2011. The role of the Panel is:

“to recommend whether or not a person remains suitable to be a foster parent, and whether or not the terms of their approval (if any) remain appropriate –

- (i) on the first review carried out in accordance with Regulation 28(2); and
- (ii) on the occasion of any other review, if requested to do so by the fostering service provider in accordance with Regulation 28(5)”.

1.3 Regulation 28 sets out the procedure to be followed for reviews and terminations of approval.

2. Content of the Review

2.1 Reviews following the conclusion of Management of Allegations (MoA) or Standards of Care (SoC) processes should be conducted using the same CoramBAAF Review paperwork on MOSAIC as for any usual annual review. However, the following additional information will be needed in order to enable the Panel to come to an informed view about the suitability of the foster carer to continue to foster, and their terms of approval.

- (a) A chronological list of the current allegations against the foster carer(s) and the outcome of each of those allegations i.e. whether they were substantiated, false, malicious or unsubstantiated (Working Together to Safeguard Children July 2018)
- (b) A description of the circumstances giving rise to the allegation – detail the event or actions which led to the allegations being made and any mitigating factors
- (c) Details and dates of any meetings held e.g. PAIM, SoC meeting, Strategy discussion, Stability Meeting, Disruption Meeting, and what the outcome or recommendations of that meeting were

- (d) Details of any other children in the household
- (e) Views from the foster carer(s), other professionals and children in care, in line with the review process (see Regulation 28(b)). This must also include, wherever possible, all the children in care currently living with the foster carer and those formerly living with the foster carer since their last annual review. Views from the children should be obtained independently i.e. children should not be helped by the foster carer to complete their feedback form. Views should also be sought from the child(ren)'s IRO, the child(ren)'s social worker(s), and any other relevant professional working with the foster carer(s) or child(ren) e.g. psychologist, CAMHS Worker. If it is not possible to obtain any of these views, the fostering social worker should explain why this is
- (f) A chronological list of all previous allegations in the carer(s) fostering career, the outcome of these and any support or measures subsequently put in place e.g. change in approval, training identified, extra supervision and support visits etc
- (g) What support has been provided to the foster carer(s) throughout the process e.g. FosterTalk, increased support calls and visits, extra supervision visits, support from the child's social worker or the psychologist, respite care
- (h) An analysis by the fostering social worker taking into account:
- the circumstances and seriousness of the current allegation(s)
 - the impact on the child(ren)
 - the context of the current allegation alongside any former allegations
 - the views of the children and other professionals
 - the impact on the foster carer and their own family
 - the foster carer(s) response to the allegations and throughout the process i.e. regarding their relationship with the child(ren) in care, with those who have made the allegations if not the children in care, their relationship with the fostering social worker and the child(ren)'s social worker, their ability to maintain a working relationship in the future and future commitment to fostering, training etc.
 - A recommendation to the Fostering and Permanence Panel regarding the foster carer(s) suitability to continue fostering, whether their current terms of approval should be maintained or changed, and whether, and what, actions should be put in place to prevent the likelihood of further allegations e.g. training, respite etc.

2.2 Whilst the review will make some reference to information shared in the PAIM and the outcome, the minutes of any formal meetings (IEM, PAIM) as part of

the Management of Allegations process, should not be shared with the Fostering and Permanence Panel members as these are confidential.

3. Quality Assurance

- 3.1 In line with all annual reviews undertaken, the fostering social worker's report should be quality assured by their Team Manager to ensure that all of the review paperwork has been fully completed, and that any review following MoA or SoC processes incorporates the content outlined above.
- 3.2 The foster carer must see a copy of the full review prior to the panel meeting in time for them to be able to correct any factual inaccuracies and to have the opportunity to write their own response for the panel to consider. Foster carers are also entitled to attend and be heard at all panel meetings and to bring a supporter to the panel if they so wish.
- 3.3 In line with its quality assurance role, the Fostering and Permanence Panel must:
- (a) "advise, where appropriate on the procedures under which reviews in accordance with regulation 28 are carried out by the fostering service provider, and periodically monitor their effectiveness." (Regulation 25(4))
- 3.4 The Panel Chair and Panel Adviser will discuss any themes, concerns and good practice that they have noted in their regular meetings with the Service Manager and make recommendations to Dorset Council to ensure good practice in future reviews.

4. Panel Recommendations

- 4.1 The Panel will make a recommendation to the Agency Decision Maker (ADM) as to whether the foster carer remains suitable to foster, and, if so, on the terms of their approval, after considering the written report submitted by the supervising social worker, the written report of the fostering reviewing officer, any representations made by the foster carer, and the discussion at the panel meeting.

5. Agency Decision Maker's Decision

- 5.1 The ADM must take into account all of the information available to them, including the recommendation of the fostering and permanence panel, when making their decision regarding the foster carer's suitability to continue fostering (Standard 14.9, National Minimum Standards). They must make their decision with 7 working days of receipt of the final set of panel minutes. The foster carer should be informed orally of the decision within two working days and written confirmation of this decision should be sent to them within five working days (Standard 14.10, National Minimum Standards).

- 5.2 If the ADM's decision is that the foster carer is no longer suitable to foster, or that their terms of approval must be revised, they must:
- “(a) give written notice to the foster parent that they propose to terminate, or (as the case may be) revise the terms of the foster parent's approval (a “qualifying determination”), together with their reasons and a copy of any recommendation made by the fostering panel, and
 - (b) advise the foster parent that, within 28 days of the date of the qualifying determination, the foster parent may-
 - (i) submit any written representations that the foster parent wishes to make to the fostering service provider. Or
 - (ii) apply to the Secretary of State for a review by an independent review panel of the qualifying determination.” (Regulation 28(7)).
- 5.2 Regulation 28(7)(b) does not apply if the foster carer has been convicted of an offence against a child or sexual offences against an adult (see Regulation 26(5), (6), (7) and (8) and Schedule 4 of the Fostering Services Regulations (England) 2011.
- 5.3 If Dorset Council's Fostering Service receives any written representations within 28 days they must:
- “(a) refer the case to the fostering panel for further consideration, and
 - (b) make their decision, taking into account any further recommendation made by the fostering panel.” (Regulation 27(9))
- 5.4 If the foster carer chooses to opt for a review by the independent review panel, Dorset Council must take into account their recommendation, as well as the original recommendation of the Fostering and Permanence Panel, in making the decision as to whether the foster carer should continue to foster and, if so, the terms of their approval. The person making this decision on behalf of Dorset Council will not be the original Agency Decision Maker but a nominated officer such as the Executive Director of People – Children. As in paragraph 5.2 above, the foster carer will receive written confirmation of the decision, with reasons for it, and a copy of this letter must also be sent to the Secretary of State. This decision is final, and the foster carer has no further recourse to appeal

Rebecca Holmes
Operational Manager
July 2020

PAPERWORK FOR NOTIFICATION TO PANEL ON RESIGNATION FROM FOSTER CARER:

1. Completed Notification of Resignation from Foster Carer/s Form.
2. Foster Carers must have a copy to read, comment and sign off before submission to Panel.
3. Their written notification of resignation, most recent panel minutes and ADM decision are to be included in the bundle for Panel.
4. Foster carers are to be informed of the date when this notification is presented at the Fostering Panel, and to check with them if they wish to attend Panel to express their views regarding their fostering experience and reasons for their resignation.
5. If the foster carers do not wish to attend Panel, the fostering social worker do not need to attend, unless this is requested by the Panel Chair.

- **TEMPLATE FOR NOTIFICATION OF RESIGNATION FROM FOSTER CARER**

DORSET COUNCIL FOSTERING SERVICE

NOTIFICATION OF RESIGNATION BY FOSTER CARERS	
Date of Report	
Name + address of carer's:	
Name of Fostering Social Worker:	
Date of registration	
Current terms of Approval:	
Reason for resignation	

<p>Any concerns or issues that would impact on carers being approved as foster carers in the future, including LADO involvement:</p> <p>Yes or No.</p> <p>If yes, please provide details, and to include actions Fostering Service would have taken if they have not resigned</p> <p>If recommending de-registration, have the carers being informed of their rights of appeal – directly to the ADM or via IRM?</p> <p>Have they received independent advice and support from Foster Talk?</p> <p>Recommendation for referral to DBS: YES OR NO</p>	
<p>Fostering Experience:</p>	<p>Strengths and achievements:</p> <p>Areas for development:</p>
<p>Any Other Comments:</p>	
<p>Attached:</p>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written notification of their resignation • Most recent panel minutes and ADM decision letter 	
Signatures:	
Foster carer's Name:	
Signed:	
Date:	
Supervising social worker Name:	
Signed:	
Date:	
Team Manager Name:	
Signed:	
Date:	

DORSET COUNCIL FOSTERING SERVICE

BEST PRACTICE GUIDANCE:

1. Bedroom Sharing Assessment

ROOM SHARE ASSESSMENT – FOSTER PLACEMENTS

Guidance

Dorset Fostering Service do not support looked after children sharing a room unless the children involved are related. The aim is to accommodate all our fostered children safely and in comfort, helping to ensure that they have sufficient privacy, personal space and room for play or study.

Children of differing genders may generally only share a room up to the age of 5 years unless they are siblings, if this was the case at home or if the arrangement would enable them to stay together.

Babies / infants may only share the foster carer's room if they are up to 24 months of age.

A room share assessment form (appendix) needs completing and approving to ensure any shared arrangements are appropriate.

For room sharing, the following factors need to be considered as a minimum:

- The size of the room
- The intended duration of the placement i.e. holiday/respite or longer term
- The chronological ages and genders of the children
- The developmental stages of the children
- The known quality of the existing relationship between the children
- Background information provided about the children

Background information minimum requirements:

If the background information indicates that any of the children intended for a room share arrangement have experienced any of the following, then this would indicate likely non approval:

- sexual abuse
- involvement in any sexualised play or predatory behaviour
- any bedwetting and / or soiling
- have any significant behavioural issues
- where bullying has been identified as a concern

Personal Space and Privacy:

Single or 'Box' rooms are only suitable for room share even by siblings for short term stays - possibly only days or weeks (e.g. for holiday cover / respite)

Health & Safety & Comfort:

Bunk beds are more suitable for primary school age children but may not appropriate for the under 5's or for teenagers.

Process for room share assessment and approval:

- The child's Social Worker is responsible for providing a good quality referral and risk assessment
 - Room share assessments are normally undertaken by the Childs Social Worker or Supervising Social Worker (Fostering) in consultation with the children's Social Worker/s and Foster Carer
 - The Supervising Social Worker and the Foster Carer need to discuss any presenting issues and make any necessary revision to the foster carer's Safe Care Plan in the event of an agreed room share arrangement
 - The Supervising Social Worker must present the completed assessment to an appropriate Manager for approval e.g. Fostering Team Manager / Duty Fostering Manager /Child care manager/ Operational manager
 - Copies of the approved assessment should be placed on the Foster carer file and subsequently reviewed by the Supervising Social Worker with the foster carer
-

ROOM SHARE ASSESSMENT FORM

1. Name(s), Ages, Gender of the children:

Name:	d.o.b:	Gender: M [] F []
Name:	d.o.b:	Gender: M [] F []
Name:	d.o.b:	Gender: M [] F []
Name:	d.o.b:	Gender: M [] F []

2. Name(s) / Address of Foster Carer for intended room share:

3. Has the Social Worker provided the following background information?

Placement Referral Yes [] No []

Risk Assessment Yes [] No []

4. Please detail below why this proposed room share arrangement is appropriate:

5. Names and Designation of staff involved in this assessment (e.g. Supervising Social Worker / Children's Social Worker)

Name:	Designation:
Name:	Designation:
Name:	Designation:
Name:	Designation:

6. Approval

Name: Designation:

Signed: Date:

TO ADD: ANY OTHER POLICIES/BEST PRACTICE

- **Exemptions and Variations of Approval Status**