

Children's Services

Procedure for Parent and Child Fostering Placements

1. Introduction

This procedure sets out guidance on arranging and supporting Parent and Child Fostering Placements. It is additional to our core Fostering guidance, the requirements of which apply to all Parent and Child Placements.

The purpose of Parent and Child Placements is to provide:

- Support and guidance to parents so that they have the best opportunity to demonstrate their capacity to parent successfully
- Detailed assessment of parents' abilities and progress, so that a decision can be made as to whether it is in the child's best interests to remain with their parent

2. Who can benefit from Parent and Child Fostering Placements?

A Parent and Child Fostering Placement may be relevant where the parent, or their child, or both are in the care of Children's Services:

2.1 The parent and child are both in care

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 The parent is in care, but their child is not

During Care Proceedings it could be that a child of a Looked After 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 requirements 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 The parent is not in care, but their child is

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 of the

fostering household. In this situation the parent, if under 18, will have been assessed and found not to be a child in need in their own right.

- 2.4 The Social Worker should record whether or not the parent, the infant or both are in care in the relevant case notes and include a rationale for this.

3. Assessment process and decisions

- 3.1 The need for a Parent and Child Fostering Placement will be identified through one of the following mechanisms:

- A pre-birth assessment
- A Child Protection Conference that recommends such a placement as a means of reducing the likelihood of significant harm to the child
- A Court Order

- 3.2 Whilst most Parent and Child Fostering Placements will be for the first months of a child's life, there may be times when it is appropriate to consider such an arrangement for a parent with an older child, for example:

- Where the parent's relationship with their partner has ended, and an assessment is needed of their ability to parent on their own

4. Multi-agency assessment and information sharing

- 4.1 Whichever assessment pathway applies, there will be a need for efficient and robust work with partner agencies and professionals. It will be especially important that the child's social worker agrees with the parent and with other professionals which types of information may be shared, and when and how this should happen. Where Child Protection procedures are in effect, the Child Protection Conference Chair should ensure the sufficiency of these arrangements.

- 4.2 In the case of babies and very young children, the observations and insights of health professionals are likely to be key to understanding the child's wellbeing and any risks to this, both at assessment and once the placement begins.

- 4.3 Where the parent has a learning disability, or will have significant difficulties engaging in the assessment, placement and review process for other reasons, they should be offered access to local advocacy support.

5. Agreeing the Placement

- 5.1 The Placement Planning process set out in the [Placements in Foster Care](#) procedure should be followed, and a Placement Plan agreed as set out there. The Placement Plan should set out clearly the purpose of the placement, and any skills or capabilities that the parent is required to demonstrate and/or learn. It should also record the remit and responsibilities of the Foster Carer, both for support of the parent and child and also for reporting to Dorset

Children's Services. Agreements in respect of conduct (communication, the playing of music etc.) should also be recorded at this point.

- 5.2 Since the placement is also an assessment, an initial period of not more than 28 days should be agreed. This may be extended by subsequent reviews.
- 5.3 Placement reviews should occur at least monthly, at least one week before the end of any review period.
- 5.4 A single Placement Plan should cover both the parent and the child, whether or not the parent is in care. Where the parent is in care, the Plan should address the fostering needs of both parent and child, as well as setting out expectations of the parent. Where they are not in care, the Plan should set out the expectations of the parent, and the help they will receive to meet these expectations.

6. Resources

- 6.1 The viability of Parent and Child Fostering Placements depends upon there being a sufficient number of sufficiently skilled, trained and remunerated Foster Carers. It is the role of the Fostering Panel to support and challenge the Fostering Service to ensure this is the case.
- 6.2 Dorset Fostering Service recognises the particular skills and expertise required in the support of Parent and Child Fostering Placements and will therefore ensure that only Foster Carers accredited to Level 4 or above will be asked to take on these roles.
- 6.3 Where no suitable Parent and Child Fostering Placement is available in the Dorset Council area, the Fostering Service will endeavour to find a placement outside that area.

7. Placement outcomes

- 7.1 Where a placement is successful (that is, where the parent demonstrates the skills and capabilities required by the assessment, the parent should be assisted by the professionals involved to plan their future family life.
- 7.2 Whether or not the parent is in care, their child should be assessed for any needs for ongoing support (for example, through Early Help or as a Child in Need) through the Step Up, Step Down, Step Across procedure.
- 7.3 Where the parent is a young person in care, arrangements should be made with them and their child for a long-term fostering placement (if they are under 16) or for an appropriate independent living arrangement (only where the parent is 16 or 17).

- 7.4 Where the parent is not in care, the professionals involved in the review of the placement should assist them to identify and engage with whichever services will be required to support them and their child in the future.
- 7.5 Where it is identified during, or at the end of the assessment, that the parent cannot safely and successfully care for their child, then:
- If the child is already a child in care, they will be removed to another foster placement
 - If the child is not already a child in care, **either** the agreement of the parent will be sought for them to be placed under the care of the local authority (S20) and they will be placed elsewhere, **or**
 - The local authority will seek a Court Order for the child's placement elsewhere
- 7.6 It is important that, so far as possible, contingency arrangements are made for all possible outcomes at the start of the placement, so that action can be taken promptly as required.
- 7.7 Where it appears a placement may not be successful the child's Social Worker and the Fostering Social Worker should consider what extra support the parent and the Foster Carer may need in managing potential distress.

8.0 Financial arrangements

- 8.1 The amounts given in this section are the rates for 2022-23 as set out in the Fees and Allowances Policy. Please check the Fostering Together site to confirm current rates.
- 8.2 For placements where one parent and one child are supported, 2 All Inclusive allowances (AIA, 1 for the child, 1 for the parent) will be paid, plus Level 4 Skills fee of £340. This gives a total of £738 p/w.
- 8.3 Where two parents are placed 3 AIA's (1 for the child, 2 for the parents) are paid plus one Level 4 skills fee. This gives a total of £878 p/w.
- 8.4 Where one parent and 2 children are placed, 3 AIA's (2 for the children, 1 for the parent) are paid plus one Level 4 fee giving a weekly total of £884.
- 8.5 If the parent is in care, the amount of payment, and responsibility for it, will depend on the legal status of the infant. The fostering budget only pays for children in care; if the infant is not in care, the childcare team should be approached with a request that they fund the infant's AIA. The fostering budget would pay the Level 4 fee and parent's AIA as usual.