

Fostering Service

Foster Carer Training Guidance

(PDP)

1. General information:

Training for foster carers is linked to the Payment for Skills scheme. In order to conform to PFS requirements, evidence of training must be provided by foster carers. At the completion of each course a certificate will be issued to course participants. Please keep certificates in your PDP (Personal Development Portfolio) and these can then be used at your Foster Carer Review when your PFS level is discussed.

Where appropriate, courses will be linked to National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) competencies and the Training, Development and Support Standards as set out by the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC). Occasionally we may be offering training opportunities in addition to this programme. Details of these courses will be circulated via other mailings from the fostering service so please keep any details in your PDP.

2. Confidentiality:

Foster carers who participate in the training programme will be encouraged to discuss children in their care as part of the training. However, all participants must respect confidentiality of this information outside of the training session.

Where there are any concerns arising from information shared on a training programme in respect of any carer's practice, this will be referred by the trainers to the relevant manager in the fostering service. A carer will always be informed that this action is being taken and that concerns are being raised.

If you need to discuss issues of confidentiality further please discuss this with your supervising fostering officer.

3. How to Apply for a Course:

We welcome applications for training courses throughout the year.

Step 1: Please complete the Application Form (see Appendix 1) with your Supervising Fostering Officer. It is important to use this form to explain to us how the course is related to your work. If a course is oversubscribed we will use this information to ensure we allocate places to those who need them most.

Step 2: Your Supervising Fostering Officer also needs to put a statement on the form supporting your application to the course. They will then send this to the Business Support Centre.

Step 3: Once the closing date has passed, course places will be allocated. You will only be contacted by letter if we are able to allocate you a place. Once the closing date has passed, you can contact the Business Support Centre directly on 2475570 to see if you have a place on a course.

4. If you can't attend:

Once you've booked onto a course, it is important you try your hardest to attend. We run waiting lists for each one - but if you cancel too near to the date, or simply don't turn up at all, then it's impossible to fill your place. And this means that you are effectively preventing another foster carer from taking advantage of the training opportunity.

Fostering is full of unpredictable events, but an empty seat on a course costs money – so only cancel if you have to, and please do it as soon as you know you can't attend. Even if it is on the day of the course, it is essential that you contact the Employee Development Unit with your apologies.

Supervising Fostering Officers are now sent the attendance list for every course. This will ensure we can monitor attendance on courses. If foster carers continually fail to attend courses, priority can no longer be given to them when we allocate places.

5. Financial Support:

We are able to reimburse foster carers attending both the NVQ and other training events described in the Training Calendar. This is for mileage to and from these events and for out of pocket expenditure on child care costs. Claims for all expenditure must be made using the SS/383 form (Appendix 2).

Please complete these forms as soon as possible after a training course and ask your supervising fostering officer to countersign it. This can then be sent to the Organisational Development team. Please indicate clearly the date, venue and name of the course you have attended. Where child care costs are being claimed, please attach a receipt. This can be handwritten from the person who delivered the childcare and should include; their name, the number of hours they delivered the childcare, number of children, the total cost and their signature. Under normal circumstances mileage will be paid at the casual user rate.

6. Specific Training Requirements:

We have tried to make the courses as convenient possible by locating them in central venues with parking and at times which do not clash with school delivery or collection.

However, if there are any issues that are making it difficult for you to access training then please make sure you record this within your fostering review. This information is collected and helps us to plan how we will deliver future training.

If there are courses that you would like to see on the Calendar, or if you would like to explore different ways of learning, for example through the internet, please also make sure you mention this in your Foster Carer Review. This is the time to make your opinion count!

7. Personal Development Portfolio (PDP):

We encourage carers to use the training opportunities which are provided as part of their learning and development. In order to make the most of the training opportunities which are available, your Supervising Fostering Officer will discuss your learning and development needs as part of their ongoing work with you and as part of the Foster Carer Review process. This information will be used for our review of the training programme to see how we can better meet foster carers' needs.

Confirmation of training attended (including certificates) should be retained in your Personal Development Portfolio (PDP) file as a record of what has been experienced or achieved on the learning programme.

Why keep a Portfolio?

- To meet the requirements of continual professional development
- For personal satisfaction
- To build your confidence
- For career development
- As evidence for a vocational qualification such as NVQ
- As the basis for your CV
- As evidence for a job interview
- As a tool to help your learning and development
- As a portable record of learning

The Portfolio is your property. Throughout the training there will be individual exercises that you will complete and these can be included in your portfolio.

The Portfolio file will have compartments so materials and training and development information can be added or amended as your fostering career progresses.

Materials given by the trainers during their courses should be kept in your portfolio. These include Reflective Learning Logs (see Appendix 3) which you should complete after each training session. They can also be used for NVQ purposes and most importantly your annual Fostering Review with your Supervising Fostering Officer.

For foster carers wishing to pursue an NVQ, the keeping of a Portfolio is very important as once you have enrolled on the NVQ programme your Assessor will guide you as to how the evidence can be used.

8. Take an NVQ:

In addition to the training courses in this programme, Leeds City Council also offers its foster carers the opportunity to undertake the NVQ in caring for children and young people.

What's an NVQ?

NVQ stands for National Vocational Qualification and this award is perfectly designed to the work you do as a foster carer. You will not be required to take on any other work or sit any examinations, just carry on with what you already do on a day to day basis. You will just need to record your experience as you go about your daily foster care tasks and use this as the evidence for your NVQ.

Who can do it?

You do not have to be brilliant at grammar, spelling or writing as long as you and your assessor can understand what you are trying to say. That's all that counts!

You will be assigned your own assessor who will arrange regular meetings with you to help you understand the award and what is required of you. Assessors are there to support and advise you and to listen to your views and value your experience as an approved foster carer.

NVQ is not just for new carers, anyone can take up the challenge. It does not matter if you have been fostering for 20 years or just 1 year. NVQ can be rewarding and an enjoyable experience. There are limited spaces on the NVQ course and priority will be given to level 4 carers initially.

What's involved?

NVQ will take up at least 3 hours of your time each week and up to 18 months to complete. Most of the work will be done in your own home but you will also have the opportunity to attend some induction sessions designed to provide the underpinning knowledge required for your NVQ. For more information please contact the Employee Development Unit.