



One minute guide

Foster Carer Reviews

No. 194, April 2021

What are foster carer reviews?

Foster carer reviews are a way of assessing and improving a foster carer's support, supervision and practice. The reviews are required by statutory regulation under the [Fostering Service Regulations 2011 Regulation 28 \[2\]](#). They take place every year but an early review can also be called due to change of circumstances, practice issues or safeguarding concerns. Fostering reviews are statutory meetings and should be accorded the same significance and priority as other statutory meetings such as children looked after reviews or child protection conferences.

These reviews take place for all Leeds carers whether they are Payment for Skills (recruited and approved foster carers for full time foster placements), short breaks carers, or kinship carers and are usually very positive events, providing a space for carers to reflect on their fostering achievements.

Foster carers who work for Independent Fostering Agencies (IFAs) will also have annual reviews, carried out by their own agency.

Who carries out these reviews and what is the purpose?

Leeds foster carer reviews are conducted by a team of independent Fostering Reviewing Officers (FROs) who are experienced senior social workers with extensive knowledge of fostering. FROs are based in the Integrated Safeguarding Unit, alongside Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs).

The primary role is to ensure that foster carers are reviewed independently, by consulting with the carer and others about their contribution to achieving good outcomes for looked after children. Currently the team are responsible for independently reviewing over 600 foster carers approved by Leeds.

The purpose of the reviews is to:

- Provide an opportunity to assess the carer's performance;
- Hear from the children fostered by them, their social workers, IROs, parents and other professionals, about how the support provided by the foster carer has made a difference;
- Enable the carer, their Supervising Social Worker (SSW), and FRO to evaluate the overall quality of the fostering task during the preceding year;
- Hear from the foster carer's own children about what life is like for them in the foster home;
- Facilitate discussion about aspects of the foster carer's practice where there may be differences of view;
- Consider areas for further development or progression; and
- Identify any gaps in support or training available to the carer and identify necessary actions.

What is the fostering reviewing process?

A few weeks before the review, consultation forms are sent to foster carers, children and young people, social workers, SSWs, and IROs. Once returned, these are evaluated by the FRO before the review meeting, and form the basis for the review agenda. The FRO may also seek the views of others such as parents, teachers or therapeutic workers.

The review also considers a number of standing items and statutory requirements, including [Disclosure and Barring Service](#) checks, health and safety, attendance at mandatory training, and recording.

The review meeting is usually held at the carer's home, though not always, and is attended by the foster carer/s, their SSW and the FRO. On some occasions reviews may be held early, for example when there have been difficulties or allegations made about the carer. In the case of an early review the foster carer may be supported by an independent person.

Following each review, the FRO completes a summary report setting out actions and recommendations regarding the foster carer's suitability to continue in the role. The report recommends whether the carer should continue to be approved or whether there need to be changes. Any training, support or development needs are also identified.

Foster carers' first reviews and any subsequent 'early' reviews, or reviews recommending significant changes, are considered by the Leeds Fostering Panel, so that there is wider oversight of these.

Otherwise, the reviews form part of the foster carer's record and personal development planning, in much the same way as an appraisal.

What should practitioners do?

If any practitioner is consulted as part of a fostering review, they should complete and return their information in the timescale required.

Key contacts

The key contacts are the Fostering Reviewing Officers :

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