

Blackpool Council

FOSTER CARERS HANDBOOK OF POLICIES & PROCEDURES



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References

- a) The Children Act 1989
- b) The Care Standards Act 2002
- c) Fostering Services Regulations 2011
- d) National Minimum standards for Fostering 2011

The Regulations are made under Section 22 and 48 of the Care Standards Act.

The Standards are issues under Section 23 and 49 of the Care Standards Act 2000.

1. Introduction

Foster Care is frequently the preferred way of providing care and nurture for children who need to be looked after by Blackpool Council. The Fostering Services Regulations 2011 and The Government National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services 2011 underpin the way in which the Fostering Service in Blackpool operates.

The aim of the foster placement and the skills required can be varied and wide-ranging. The nature and purposes of different types of placements need to be identified and understood so that the need for foster homes as resources can be assessed and Foster Carers recruited and prepared and so that clear agreements with Foster Carers about the aim of placement can be reached to avoid mistaken expectations. The continuing role of the parent in the child's life and the arrangements to ensure that parental responsibility is not diminished must be explained and agreed. Planning needs to address the aim of the foster placement any specific tasks associated with the aim and the expected duration of the placement for each individual child.

Blackpool Council's Fostering Procedures set out the way in which these tasks are undertaken.

1.A Equal Opportunities Statement

Blackpool Council is committed to a positive policy of equal opportunity in the delivery of services and employment.

The Council will actively oppose all forms of discrimination carried out on the grounds of gender, colour, creed, ethnic or national origin, disability, social background, age, marital status, those with HIV status and discrimination against gay and lesbian people.

To achieve our aims we will:

- Promote equal opportunities and ensure that it is integrated throughout the organisation.
- Design our services to meet the needs of our community.

- Combat discrimination whenever it occurs and, in particular, discrimination against the groups within the scope of statement.

Diversity & Cultural Identity

The following is a list of some of the ways in which Foster Carers can actively involve themselves in the child's culture. The list is by no means definitive but does include some important ideas:

- Find out about special dietary rules.
- Find out about essential cultural customs, like hair and skin care.
- Make sure you have a stock of appropriate toys, books, etc
- Find out about the rules of religious observance.
- Find out about religious festivals.

Blackpool Council believe that a child's cultural background is fundamental to their identity and as such, needs to be maintained and encouraged, and that Foster Carers, can help in this and reduce potential confusion. They will need to be committed to the notion that this is a special task requiring careful consideration.

All Foster Carers should remember that they must respect birth parents' wishes and encourage all children to value their background, and care for the child in accordance with the parents' views. Birth parents may be greatly distressed if their child breaks food laws or the observances of religion.

2. The Role of the Fostering Team

2.1 The Fostering Team aim to provide services which: -

- a) promote a high level of care and safety within a family environment.
- b) give full consideration to child's race, gender, sexuality, disability, cultural background and religion.
- c) promotes children's health, education, and identity and also their physical, social and emotional development.

2.2 The Fostering Team offers: -

- a) an ongoing recruitment strategy, which focuses on inviting applications from all sections of the community.
- b) support to Foster Carers, which enables them to carry out the complex tasks involved in caring for children.
- c) regular visits and communication by qualified Social Workers. Each Foster Carer has a designated Supervising Worker.
- d) social work support during office hours. Outside office hours, support can be accessed in an emergency from the Out of Hours Team and telephone support from the Fostering Team.
- e) assessments and initial training of prospective Foster Carers. Appropriate post-approval training is also offered to Foster Carers.

3. Recruitment of Foster Carers

- 3.1** The appointment of a Recruitment and Training Co-ordinator within the Fostering Team has the delegated responsibility for: -
- a) Advising on advertising campaigns.
 - b) Monitoring the effectiveness of advertising through feedback from enquirers.
 - c) Responding to enquiries.
 - d) Organising initial training for new potential carers.
 - e) Facilitating ongoing training for Foster Carers including NVQ Level 3 in Childcare.
- 3.2** Foster Carers can be involved in recruitment and are invited to assist in information evenings and in training.
- 3.3** The aim of advertisements is to draw a good response from potentially suitable applicants. Advertisements should give details of the types of children who require Foster Carers, the remuneration offered and who to contact.

4. Initial Enquiries

- 4.1** Telephone enquiries are taken during office hours by the Fostering Team Duty Officer.
- 4.2** The Duty Officer should take the name, address, telephone number and ethnic origin of enquirers. This will include advising the enquirer of the Department's policy on smoking. Enquirers should be given information about the Fostering Service in Blackpool. Enquirers should be given the opportunity to ask questions and be offered the option of arranging a home or office visit. The visit will be within one week of the initial enquiry.
- 4.3** Written enquiries should be acknowledged by letter from the Training and Recruitment Officer offering a home visit and enclosing the appropriate foster care information leaflets. The letter should invite the enquirer to telephone if they would like more information or a home visit. The same response as detailed in 4.2 of these procedures should be given to potential applicants who call in person for information rather than telephone.
- 4.4** Enquirers who did not follow up the initial enquiry should be contacted six months after their initial enquiry to give them an opportunity of proceeding with their application.
- 4.5** In the case of a large scale, high profile recruitment campaign, it may be more appropriate that there is an information evening, and then any interested potential Foster Carers should be followed up with a home visit.
- 4.6** Within a home visit or an information evening, the following information needs to be conveyed:-
- a) Information about Blackpool Council's Children, Adult and Family Service how fostering fits into childcare.
 - b) Description of the fostering task.
 - c) Types of children needing a foster family.

- d) The competencies required.
- e) Timescales for assessment.
- f) Payment system.
- g) Training and support provided.
- h) Explanation of statutory checks and medical references that will be made before an approval to foster is given and an explanation of the application form which requires to be completed prior to these checks and references being carried out.

4.7 When undertaking the initial home visit the following will require to be considered:-

- a) Motivation to foster and understanding of the fostering task.
- b) Suitability of the accommodation.
- c) Other demands on the applicants such as elderly relatives requiring care, young children, and employment.
- d) Medical contra-indications.
- e) Impact of disclosed offences, marital difficulties and financial worries.
- f) Department's policy on smoke free living accommodation.
- g) Safety considerations in relation to household pets.

4.8 It is the responsibility of the Fostering Service Team Manager to decide whether or not to take up the application. Where applications are not taken up the enquirer should be informed and given the reason in writing.

4.9 Enquirers who do proceed should be given an information pack including application form to complete and statutory references (CRB enhanced checks, Health, Social Services and Education) for all adults in the household. Applicants should also give their written permission for checks to be made with their GP at this stage.

It is usually appropriate to leave forms with applicants to complete and return to the office, in a stamped addressed envelope, which should be enclosed in the information pack. Some potential applicants who have literacy and other special needs may require help in completing the forms.

4.10 Once the application form and the signed permission papers for checks to be sent out are returned. Administration staff should then open the case and:-

- a) Set up a file.
- b) Send for statutory references.
- c) Send for medical references.

4.11 The person who has undertaken the home visit is responsible for maintaining contact with the applicants and for inviting the applicants to the initial training group. In some cases the assessment process may begin before the applicants have undertaken the initial training.

5. References

5.1 It is the responsibility of the Fostering Team administrative staff to send out for statutory references and to receipt and file the returns. Any concerns arising from the references should be discussed with the Fostering Team Manager, and a decision made whether or not to proceed to the next stage of the application. If a decision is made not to proceed

with an application this needs to be communicated to the applicants sensitively and the Fostering Team Manager should follow this up with a letter.

5.2 Personal References:

Adult children who no longer live in the household and any former partners who the applicant have had children with must be approached for a reference. Personal referees should be people who have known the applicants for some time and who have appropriate knowledge of the applicants' relationships with children. Personal referees should not all be related to the applicants. These references are not taken up until the commencement of the assessment. Six references should be asked for during the first assessment visit. Three of these references should be taken up, two of whom must not be related to the applicants.

5.3 Employer References:

Social Workers should use their discretion in taking up such references as, in some circumstances, an applicant's employment may be jeopardised and potentially good Foster Carers lost as a result. However, where the applicants have been employed working with children, or in any care capacity, references must be taken up.

5.4 Education References:

In addition to the standard statutory request to Education, the assessing Social Workers should contact the school attended by the applicants' own children. The school may provide information that is helpful to the assessment. Prior to contacting the school attended by the applicants' children, the Fostering Team Social Worker should seek the applicant's permission.

5.5 Medical References:

The request for General Practitioner medical references requires the signed permission of the applicants. The Fostering Team administrative staff will send the appropriate letter and forms to the General Practitioner. Medical reports should be sought prior to the assessment beginning as they may provide evidence, which would affect the application.

5.6 Blackpool Council pays for the cost of providing the medical reference. Payment is arranged by the Child Care Administrative Office.

5.7 The contents of the medical, school and personal references are confidential to Blackpool Council and should not be shared with the applicants without the permission of the writer.

5.8 CRB Enhanced Checks:

CRB checks should be made on all those in the household who are over 18 years of age. (Such checks will not necessarily identify convictions for offences committed overseas, nor at present, in the Armed Forces. Where applicants have lived or worked abroad, consideration should be given to seeking help in obtaining information from the relevant British Embassy).

5.9 Social Services Records:

These checks need to be made in respect of all members of the household, and if possible in respect of adult children who have recently left the household. If the applicants have lived in another Local Authority, consideration needs to be given to checking with that Local Authority's records. This is essential if the applicants disclose that they have either fostered or applied to foster elsewhere.

5.10 Pet Assessments:

In some cases there will be an expectations for pet owners to have a pet assessment undertaken by an independent expert, who will complete a report on the suitability of the pet to be introduced to different children and adults in the family home. The applicant will be expected to meet the cost of the pet assessment.

6. Pre-assessment Training

6.1 Opportunities for training and support should be provided at two levels, before an assessment begins.

- 1) Advice and discussion in the home.
- 2) Initial training.

6.2 Initial training is provided pre-assessment. This training should run every two months to ensure that potential Foster Carers do not lose interest. Initial training may take place during the evening or in the daytime. It is expected where there are two adults in one household who wish to be approved as joint carers that both applicants will attend but exceptions can be made. Initial training should be made available to all Foster Carers pre-assessment including carers of named children.

6.3 The organisation of initial training is the responsibility of the Recruitment and Training Co-ordinator. Generally there will be two facilitators. An experienced Foster Carer is also involved. Children and young people with experience of being looked after by Foster Carers can also be involved as they may be able to make a useful contribution.

7. Assessment of Prospective Foster Carers

7.1 Assessment commences with the completion of the application form, and continues until a decision on approval is reached.

- 7.2 Prospective Foster Carers should be advised that the household as a whole is being assessed. This will include being able to contact all children of applicants who do not live in the family home and ex-partners with whom the applicants have had children.
- 7.3 Assessments should be carried out by qualified Social Workers. Applicants should be given personal profiles to complete. It is expected that most applicants will produce their own profiles. Ecomaps, house rules and safe caring policy will be undertaken jointly with the applicants and assessing Social Worker.
- 7.4 Most assessments should involve four to six interviews. The target time from initial enquiry to approval is eight months.
- 7.5 If there is a joint application by a couple, each partner should be interviewed at least once on their own and any children or adult members of the household should also be interviewed, separately.
- 7.6 Adults who are not members of the household but who are likely to be closely involved in the day to day care of a child placed, should also be interviewed, separately, and CRB checks undertaken on those over the age of 18 years.
- 7.7 Birth certificates, marriage certificates, divorce certificates need to be seen and their details recorded on the Form F, these are important for identity purposes.
- 7.8 On completion the Form F Assessment, (less any third party information such as that from the General Practitioner and personal referees) must be shared with the applicants, to check that the information is accurate. The applicants should then be asked to give their signatures to the form.
- 7.9 Assessors should be careful to evidence statements and where there are still gaps, to detail how these will be addressed.
- 7.10 The report for Fostering Panel should detail matching issues very carefully, the type of fostering, numbers and ages of children and also the proposed accreditation level.
- 7.11 Three personal referees should be interviewed. The referees should be visited near the beginning of the assessment. Care must be taken not to divulge to the referees information given in confidence by the applicants. Similarly, information given by the referees is in confidence and cannot be shared with the applicants. At least two referees should not be related to the applicants.

8. Assessment of Prospective Family and Friend Carers (Connected Persons)

- 8.1 The Fieldwork Social Worker will complete the referral for assessment of proposed carers and children to be placed. (Form FFR1)
- 8.2 The Fieldwork Social Worker will complete the relevant Children Looked After documentation. The Head of Service must agree that the referral is appropriate as a Family Friend application.

- 8.3** The manager of the Fieldwork Social Worker should make a referral to the Fostering Team Manager, where timescales and practicalities will be discussed.
- 8.4** The Fieldwork Social Worker will inform the finance administrator of the details of placement for payment to begin.
- 8.5** The Fostering Team Manager will allocate the assessment to a Social Worker in the Fostering Team who will complete the assessment on BAAF Form F.
- 8.6** The Social Worker from the Fostering Service will arrange for the completed assessment to be presented to the Fostering Panel and to ensure that the Fieldwork Social Worker is available to attend. The applicants will also be invited to attend the Fostering Panel.

9. Approval Process and the Fostering Panel

- 9.1** A full assessment report should be submitted to the Fostering Panel for consideration. In most cases a recommendation whether or not approval should be given and detailing any conditions that should be applied to the approval, will be included in the assessment report.
- 9.2** When the Foster Carer's Assessment has been completed and the Form F signed by the Social Worker and the applicants, it should be passed to the Fostering Team Manager. The Fostering Team Manager needs to check that the file contains: -
- a) An application form.
 - b) References.
 - c) Responses to all the checks.
 - d) Medical Report.
 - e) Information from home visits.
 - f) Assessment report.

The Fostering Team Manager may require further work to be undertaken before approving the report. The Fostering Team Manager's signature on the Form F indicates that the report is ready to be submitted for Fostering Panel.

- 9.3** The Fostering Panel meets monthly. Reports need to be completed for distribution to Fostering Panel members by a final deadline of one week prior to Fostering Panel.

Applicants are invited to attend part of the Fostering Panel where they will be asked questions, which have been prepared in advance of their attendance.

The function of the Fostering Panel is to consider applications for approval and to recommend whether or not a person is suitable to act as a foster carer. The Fostering Panel also considers applications for the approval of family members and friends carers.

The Fostering Panel should recommend the terms in which the approval is given, for example, the numbers and ages of children or whether the approval relates to any particular named child, or to any particular type of placements.

The Fostering Panel should recommend whether or not a person remains suitable to act as a foster carer after the first review or after any other review when requested to do so by the Fostering Team.

9.4 The recommendations of the Fostering Panel are made to the Fostering Service Agency Decision Maker who has responsibility to:

- Read the same paperwork as presented to Panel members and the draft minutes to understand the process, which leads to the recommendation.
- Take into account the recommendation of the Fostering Panel when deciding whether to approve a person as a Foster Carer, and the terms of such approval
- Consult with the Chair or Professional Advisor on any points of clarification.
- To write to the applicant specifying the terms of approval, if the decision is a positive one.

9.5 After taking into account the Panels recommendation, should the Agency Decision Maker consider that the applicant is not suitable to foster, they have a responsibility to give the applicant written notice that the proposal is not to approve the applicant as suitable to be a foster parent. This is called the qualifying determination.

The applicant requires to advise the Agency Decision Maker within 28 working days from the date of the written notice that:

- a) the applicant has accepted the qualifying determination or
- b) the applicant is submitting a written representation to the Agency Decision Maker or
- c) the applicant is applying for the qualifying determination to be reviewed by an Independent Review Panel.

Where the applicant has chosen (b) to make representations to the Fostering Service Provider, this must be in writing and be received within 28 working days from the date of the letter from the Agency Decision Maker. On receipt of the written representation, the applicant's case and written representation may be referred back to the Fostering Panel to consider and make a fresh recommendation. The Fostering Panel's recommendation will be taken into account when the final decision is made by the Agency Decision Maker.

Where the applicant has chosen to apply to the Independent Review Panel to review the Agency Decision Makers qualifying Determination, the applicants written application and the applicant's reasons for the application, must be received by the Independent Review Panel within 28 working days from the date of the Agency Decision Makers original letter.

Where the Fostering Provider receives a recommendation from the Independent Review Panel, the Agency Decision Maker will take this into account with the original Fostering Panels recommendation when making the final decision. Where the Agency Decision Maker has not heard from the Independent Review Panels Administrator after the period of 28 working days has expired, a decision will be made by the Agency Decision Maker and the applicant notified of that decision.

9.6 In the exceptional case where a Foster Carer has made an application to adopt a child in their care in most cases, there will be no further foster placements made until one year after the Adoption Order is granted. The same applies where a foster carer has made

an application for a Special Guardianship Order or Residence Order, that is, there will be no further Foster placements made until one year after the Order is granted.

Where a Foster Carer wishes to continue offering foster placements one year after the Adoption Order is granted a report completed by the Social Worker from the Fostering Team will be submitted to Blackpool Council's Fostering Panel, with a recommendation regarding the suitability of the Foster Carer's continued registration as a Foster Carer.

The report must include details of the Adoption and will also include details of the carer's fostering career, compliments and complaints.

Sections 9.4 and 9.5 are followed in these cases.

9B Case Recording

9B.1 Social Services have a duty to protect and support vulnerable people in the community, which include children and their families and/or Carers.

To carry out these duties, Social Services collects information from individuals and third parties such as, Health professionals and other Local Authority Departments.

Social Services will not disclose information about Foster Carers outside Social Services unless the law permits us to do so.

Social Services will seek your consent for information to be shared with third parties.

Social Services hold information on computer and paper files.

How Social Services collects, process, shares and allows access to and destroys information is directed by the Data Protection Act 1998.

9B.2 Foster Carers Files

Computer Files

Each Foster Carer's personal details such as address and date of birth are recorded on the Computer File. The Computer File also has the capacity to store Case Notes including Supervision Visits and records of Foster Carer Reviews, Placement Plan Meetings/Foster Placement Agreement and Training Portfolio.

Paper Files (general)

These files have the following sections for each foster family.

Before Dividers

Foster Family Basic Information Form

Pink Section

Report for Panel (F1 Form)
Fostering Panel minutes relating to approval (most recent at top)
Foster Carer's Personal Profiles

Blue Section

Foster Care Agreements (most recent at top)

Red Section

Foster Care Review Pack (including, carer and child feedback form, Social Worker feedback form, health and safety checklist form, letter confirming status of foster carer after review or panel) (most recent at top)

Front Green Section

General correspondence, memos and emails relating to Foster carers (most recent at top)

Back Green Section

Financial information (most recent at top)

Front Yellow Section

All third party correspondence (most recent at top)

Back Yellow Section

CRB Clearance Recording

G.P. Reference

Education Check

Department of Health Check

Probation Check

Health Authority Check

Personal References

Application for assessments including permission to undertake Statutory References

Paper Files (Complaints/Incidents)

These files are kept in a red sleeve separately from the general file and are used for collating all the information relating to allegations or incidents, which are referred to the Fostering Team and require to be investigated by the Fostering Team and in all cases where LSCB Safeguarding Procedures are followed.

9B.3 Children's Files

Paper Files

Each child has a paper file for storing third party information.

Computer Files

Each child has a computer file, which has the capacity to store the following:

- Personal Details
- Case Notes
- Placement Information Records
- Childcare Reviews
- Care Plans
- Child Protection Plans
- Pathway Plans

9B.4 Recording and Information stored by Foster Carers in relation to children

Foster Carers are required to keep a diary or notebook on each child they care for, which records significant events and details including contact. Information must be made available to the child's Social Worker and the Foster Carers Support Worker.

Foster Carers also have a Specific Incidents log book. Copies of recordings on these records are given to child's Social Worker and Support Worker and a copy kept by Foster Carer.

When a child moves from a Foster Carers home, all the written information relating to that child must be given to the child's Social Worker.

All Case Recordings must be stored securely.

9C Placement Discussions and Moves

9C.1 Placement Discussion Meeting

Where a Foster Carer, young person or other professional has raised concerns in relation to a child's placement, the Fostering Team Support Worker should as soon as possible and on the same day, visit the Foster Carers home.

The Fostering Team Support worker will be responsible for acquiring accurate information regarding the concerns prior to visiting the Foster Carers home.

The Placement Discussion Meeting will be between the Foster Carer and the Support Worker and other professionals should only be invited with the agreement of the Foster Carer.

The minutes of the meeting will be recorded and filed on the Foster Carers file.

9C.2 Planned Move Meeting

Where the plan for a child or young person is to move to an alternative placement, a meeting should be arranged by the Fostering Team Support Worker.

The Fostering Team Support Worker should invite the Foster Carer where the placement is ending and also the Carers from the proposed placement. Other professionals involved with the child or young person should be invited to attend the meeting.

The minutes of the meeting will be sent to all attendees and filed in the Document Section of the Foster Carers file and also the child's file.

9C.3 Unplanned Move Meeting

When a child or young person has lived with the same Foster Carer for at least two years and where the placement has ended in a unplanned way, a meeting should be arranged by the Fostering Team support Worker wherever possible prior to the placement ending or at the soonest date after the child or young person has moved.

The Fostering Team Support Worker should invite the Foster Carer where the placement has ended or is ending. Other professionals involved with the child or young person should be invited to attend the meeting, which should be held away from the Foster Carers home.

The Support Worker or Independent Reviewing Officer will Chair the meeting.

The minutes from the meeting will be sent to all attendees and filed in the Document Section of the Foster Carers file and also on the child's file.

10. Expectations of Foster Carers

- 10.1** Foster Carers must complete separate "diaries" on each child. The Foster Carers need to ensure the record is kept safely and confidentially. At the end of a placement, these diaries should always be returned to the child's Social Worker for his file. In addition to the diaries Foster Carers should keep an "Achievement File" for each child where certificates and other paraphernalia is kept together.
- 10.2** During the course of a child's placement, Foster Carers are expected to attend the child's reviews and to participate in the assessment of need process.
- 10.3** Foster Carers are expected to facilitate contact in their own home or to supervise contact at a Family Centre wherever practicable.
- 10.4** Foster Carers are requested to inform the Fostering Team of any changes in circumstances, which affect their capacity to look after a child or the suitability of the household. This should include any occasion in which they or a member of their household or anyone in regular contact with the child, are interviewed in connection with any offence.

- 10.5** Part of the monitoring work of the Supervising Worker should include unannounced visits. Foster Carers should be advised at the outset that such visits will take place. The visits may include checks on the accommodation, including bedrooms. Supervising Workers must also ensure that each child owns suitable luggage.
- 10.6** There are statutory requirements to visit the child at minimum prescribed intervals and to see the child alone. Foster Carers should expect the child's Social Worker to visit them in their home. Foster Carers should expect the child's Social Worker to provide information about the child and his/her background at the beginning of the placement. There should be a Planning Agreement Meeting, within the first month of placement.
- 10.7** Foster Carers must not smoke in sight of children and their homes must be smoke free.
- 10.8** Foster Carers who childmind or intend to childmind must write advising the Manager of the Fostering Team in order that the register can be kept of Foster Carers who also childmind.

11. Placement of Children and Matching Considerations

- 11.1** All placement requests can be referred directly to the Duty Officer, Fostering Team. The Internal Referral and Matching Form should be completed by the Fostering Team Duty Officer.
- 11.2** Referrals for placements are considered at the Fostering Team Allocation Meeting, although the majority of referrals are looked at retrospectively. These meetings are held once each week.
- 11.3** Referral for respite placements are also considered for the Fostering Team Allocation meeting. Children and young people receiving Respite placements must be collected before 5:00pm on the last day of Respite.
- 11.4** In order to assist Foster Carers in meeting the needs of children and young people and to facilitate matching and positive placement choice the Fostering Service has developed the Foster Home Request Placement and Follow Up Forms, which aim to collate the essential information required for Foster Carers prior to and immediately following placement.
- 11.5** When a request for a Foster Care placement is made from Front Line Child Care Teams, the Duty Social Worker from the Fostering Service will be responsible for completing Foster Home Request and Placement Forms Part A, in consultation with Front Line Social Worker of child/young person, Duty Officer, Manager or Duty Manager. Form A sets out the reasons for referral and matching considerations. Form A includes the support and task management plan, which is completed by the Fostering Team Manager or Senior Social Worker on the Fostering Team.
- 11.6** When a child/young person placed 'Out of Hours Team' Form A is to be completed on the next working day by Fostering Service Duty Social Worker in consultation with Front Line Social of child/young person, Duty Officer or Manager or Duty Manager.

- 11.7** All information on Form A should be shared with Foster Carers by telephone prior to placement of child.
- 11.8** Form B will be completed by Fostering Service Duty Social Worker. The information regarding existing children/young people in placement will be discussed with their Social Worker and recorded on Form B by Fostering Service Duty Social Worker. If child/young person's Social Worker is not available then the opinion of the Duty Manager, Front Line Services will be sought with respect to the effect of proposed placement.
- 11.9** Form C which is the 'Follow up form' will be completed by the Fostering Service Duty Officer on the next working day following placement of child with Foster Carer.
- 11.10** Included in Form C information will be recorded in relation to the Placement Information Record. If the documentation has not arrived to the Foster Carer the Foster Service Duty Officer must immediately contact the child's Social Worker to ensure that documentation is delivered.
- 11B** **Children leaving hospital to a Foster Carers home where there are concerns about their health**
- 11B.1** Where there are concerns about a child or young persons ongoing health needs a discussion will usually be held between the Paediatrician, Nursing Staff, Health Visitor and Children's Social Care, before the child/young person is discharged from hospital to a Foster Carers home.
- 11B.2** The purpose of this discussion is to identify and assess the risk factors the child or young person is exposed to and plan post discharge support and to ensure that the Foster Carer is provided with information, which will enable them to care for the child. Areas of professional agreement and disagreement will be clearly noted.
- 11B.3** If either the Paediatrician, Medical/Nursing Staff, Children's Social Care, have any concerns about any health risk associated with the child/young person's planned discharge from hospital then a Hospital Discharge meeting will be called. Medical/Nursing Staff must liaise with Designated and Named professionals to discuss their concerns before discharge. This meeting will usually include attendance of the Consultant Paediatrician, Nursing Staff, Health Visitor and Children's Social Care. Foster Carers will also be invited to ensure that they have all the necessary medical information to enable them to care for the child or young person.
- 11B.4** Foster Carers will be given appropriate training at the hospital by Health professionals prior to the child or young persons discharge from hospital, in areas such as invasive care and tube feeding and other medical procedures. The medical professionals must ensure that Foster Carers are proficient when undertaking health care and Foster Carers must be confident that they can manage this level of care prior to the child or young persons discharge from hospital.
- 11B.5** Before the child is allowed home to the Foster Carers, the Paediatrician and Children's Social Care will identify and assess any risk factors. Children's Social Care will take responsibility for recording and circulating notes of this discussion. Areas of professional agreement and disagreement will be clearly noted. This discussion will include

consideration of ongoing medical needs of the child or young person and plan for their care. This will inform the Children's Social Care's assessment and subsequent actions.

12. Support and Management Process

12.1 It is important that sufficient support is available to Foster Carers. Support should consist of:-

- a) Delegated Support Worker who should visit the Foster Carer regularly (once monthly as a minimum) whilst a child is placed with him/her and who keeps in regular contact when there is no placement.
- b) Advising on training opportunities and encouraging take-up.
- c) Encouraging attendance at the Foster Care Support Groups and links with other Foster Carers.
- d) Developing a good working relationship with children's Social Workers and chasing up any pressing issues or gaps in provision.
- e) Ensuring Foster Carers have equipment suitable to the needs of children and young people they care for.
- f) Ensuring Foster Carers are aware of the "Listening Ear" Service and the Out of Hours Service.
- g) Preparing Foster Carers for their annual review.
- h) Advising Foster Carers of new developments in the foster services.
- i) Ensuring prompt payment of allowances and fees.
- j) Providing insurance cover for all Foster Carers.
- k) Foster Carers Forum takes place 3 times each year, all Foster Carers are invited.
- l) Individual membership of the Foster Network.
- m) Providing opportunities for birth children to be heard, through the forum for birth children of Foster Carers.
- n) The Fostering Team Manager being available and accessible to Foster Carers.
- o) Acknowledging exceptional service through "civic awards".
- p) Dealing with problems or concerns as they arise and providing honest and clear feedback to Foster Carers.

12.2 The Support Worker should record all visits and telephone calls. Matters of concern and actions to be taken should also be recorded on the Complaints/Incident Forms and kept separately in carer's red file. These should all be passed to the Fostering Team Manager for countersignature. Issues should be discussed in supervision and recorded. A copy of the supervision notes should be on the Foster Carer file.

13. Post Approval Training

13.1 Foster Carers should be invited to take part in organised training events such as conferences and day courses. The Basic Essential Training Award for Foster Carers is a mandatory course of sessions, which all Foster Carers must complete post approval. Foster Carers have the opportunity to undertake the NVQ Level 3 in Child Care, which is a recognised competency based qualification. Annual reviews should record training undertaken and future training needs.

13.2 Family and Friend Foster Carers should be invited and encouraged to participate in post approval training. Where they live at a prohibitive distance from Blackpool they should be given the option of been given training in their local area or in their homes.

13.3 The Recruitment and Training Co-ordinator is pivotal in developing post approval training and all training should be co-ordinated through her.

14. Reviews

14.1 Local Authorities are required to review at least annually whether a Foster Carer and their household remain suitable to continue as Foster Carers. The review should take account of performance over the year, written feedback from Social Workers who have had children placed with Foster Carers, written feedback from the Foster Carers themselves and written feedback from children placed should be sought, prior to the review. It is the responsibility of the Support Worker to send out the standard forms and make these available to the Independent Reviewing Officer prior to the review. Training and department requirements of the Foster Carers are also discussed at the Review. The Reviewing Officer should be an appropriate person who can form an independent judgement and is knowledgeable about foster care.

14.2 Prior to the review, the Supervising Worker must ensure that the Foster Carers Enhanced CRB checks have been completed for all adult household members (every three years). The Supervising Social Worker must also ensure that Consultation Forms for children and young people, and child's Social Worker have been completed.

14.3 It is the responsibility of the Supervising Worker to request a review, and ensure that all approved Foster Carers will be present. The Supervising Worker should arrange for the consultation forms and Foster Carer file to be available to the Reviewing Officer at least 24 hours prior to the review. Consultation forms are given to Foster Carers, children in placement and children's Social Workers. The annual premises inspection report should be included with the necessary documents for the review.

14.4 It is the responsibility of the Reviewing Officer to explain the purpose of the annual review and to complete the review form during the review and ensure that all parties sign the form at the end of the meeting. The review should provide an opportunity to acknowledge training, development and good practice, as well as offering the Foster Carer the opportunity for issues to be formally raised and addressed. The Reviewing Officer should share with the Foster Carers the contents of the Social Workers feedback forms, including critical comments. One purpose of the review is to look at ways to address weaknesses and to ensure that Foster Carers are used appropriately and are not overstretched. Following the annual review, some Foster Carers will seek advancement in their accreditation and others may choose to go to a lower accreditation level. The annual review is the only forum whereby accreditation levels can be discussed and recommendations for adjustments made to the Fostering Panel. The recommendations for adjustments should be in the form of a report to Fostering Panel and the Supervising Worker should be available to answer any questions resulting from his or her report. In writing the report the Supervising Worker should take care that it addresses all the competency levels in the accreditation level recommended.

14.5 Prior to the review, a health and safety check of the home needs to be made using the checklist. If work needs to be done to ensure compliance, it is appropriate that

reasonable time limits are given. With Family and Friend Foster Carers some allowances can be made in respect of accommodation space and amenities, but there should be the same regard to hygiene and minimum standards.

- 14.6** Following the review, the Independent Reviewing Officer may feel it appropriate to share with the Foster Carers an action plan with targets. The Foster Carers may also express some concerns. All issues that are raised must be reported to the Fostering Team Manager by the Reviewing Officer who will decide on any action that might be required.
- 14.7** The Independent Reviewing Officer should ensure that a letter is sent out to the Foster Carers confirming their continued registration and detailing any changes in status and any conditions to their registration. The letter requires the signature of the Fostering Team Manager. Enclosed with the letter should also be the Foster Carer's copy of the review form.
- 14.8** The Fostering Panel should be informed in writing of any changes in fostering status. More complex changes such as a change of status from respite to long term fostering or a change in accreditation will require a report to be completed by the Supervising Worker to the Fostering Panel. The Fostering Team Manager will attend and present these reports.
- 14.9** If at the conclusion of the Foster Carer's review, termination of approval is believed to be appropriate, the Supervising Worker will write a report, which will be submitted to the Fostering Panel for consideration. If the Fostering Panel recommend that termination is appropriate the Service Director of Social Work and Safeguarding, Children, Adult and Family Service will write to the Foster Carer. The letter will inform them of the decision, outline the reasons for the decision and inform them that they can make representations within 28 days of this letter by writing to the Service Director of Social Work and Safeguarding, Children, Adult and Family Service. There is a representations procedure to deal with an applicant's dissatisfaction with the decision making process at Fostering Panel. (Please see Section 18.9)

15. Equipment

- 15.1** Supervising Workers need to ensure that new carers receive equipment and arrange its delivery. New equipment is purchased and must be of EU Standard. Mattresses must be changed regularly with cots and prams and beds routinely checked. Foster Carers are asked to store equipment in their homes, and if not being used or no longer usable dispose of it. Newer equipment that is not being used can be transferred between carers. Older equipment should be disposed of.

16. Behaviour Management

- 16.1** The Fostering Service is encouraged to care for children in a manner that minimises the need for police involvement in dealing with challenging behaviour to avoid the criminalisation of children. No form of corporal punishment will be used on any child placed with a foster parent. If a child is displaying behaviours such as biting, hitting, kicking or spitting, it is important that carers remain calm and are consistent in their approach to such behaviours. In the first instance it may be advisable to remove the

child from the situation and explain to the child that he/she has behaved inappropriately. It may be necessary to explain to the child what might happen if their behaviour is repeated and the sanction will require to be enforced if this behaviour is repeated. Physical restraint may only be used where it is necessary to prevent likely injury to the child or other person or likely to cause serious damage to property. The Foster Carer must report such incidents to the child's Social Worker and Fostering Support Worker, complete an Incident Form to be given to child's Social Worker and Fostering Support Worker and seek advice from Support Worker and child's Social Worker.

17. Absence from Foster Carers Home

Where a child is absent from a Foster Carer's home, the Foster Carer must ensure that the Social Worker to the child is informed, or in his/her absence, the Manager. Out of office hours, the Out of Hours Social Work Team must be informed. In all cases, the Foster Carer must phone the police and alert them. Foster Carers should keep a list of names and addresses of all persons that are known to the children placed with them, this information can be invaluable. The Foster Carer must complete an Incident Form where absences occur, a copy of which must be given to the child's Social Worker and Fostering Support Worker.

The Fostering Team Duty Worker or Support Worker will record the details of each incident in the "missing from home" file and will be responsible for ensuring the child's Social Worker and Manager have been emailed.

18. Managing Allegations against Foster Carers

18.1 Local Authorities should ensure that every reasonable precaution has been taken to keep children from harm. It is for this reason that Foster Carers must come under scrutiny.

Any member of staff receiving such an allegation should immediately refer the matter to their Manager. All allegations against Foster Carers must be reported in the first instance to the Fostering Team Manager who has the responsibility of reporting allegations to the Senior Quality Assurance Officer (Allegations). The Senior Quality Assurance Officer (Allegations) will make a decision in respect of whether the information received meets the criteria of an allegation and a strategy discussion should be held as soon as possible to discuss all of the information and formulate a plan.

Where an allegation is made against a Foster Carer or concern is raised, which relates to a child, the procedure for managing allegations against people who work with children should be evoked. An allegation is where: -

- A person has behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have caused harm to a child.
- A person has committed or may have committed a criminal offence against or related to a child.
- A person has behaved in a way towards a child, which makes them unsuitable to work with children.

The procedures may also be evoked where there are concerns raised about the Foster Carers: -

- Behaviour towards their own children.
- The behaviour in the private or community life of a partner, member of the family or other household member.
- A person's behaviour in their personal life, which may impact upon the safety of children to whom they owe a duty of care.

- 18.2** **The Local Safeguarding Children's Board Procedures state that on the receipt of any referral under these Procedures, where there is a suggestion that there is an immediate and continuing risk to the child/young person any protective measures, including removal may be taken. Protective measures may also involve removing any other child placed with the Foster Carer and removing the Foster Carer's own children. Children may be removed at any point during the course of the investigation. If a child placed with the Foster Carer is removed, the Fostering Allowance will cease being paid. The Foster Carer will continue to receive fees if they are suspended and prevented from working as a Foster Carer during an allegation. Fee payments should continue until the investigation is completed and the Foster Carer resumes work or their approval is terminated.**
- 18.3** A Strategy Meeting should be held at the earliest opportunity, but within five working days. The Fostering Team Manager and the Foster Carer's Support Worker should be invited to the Strategy Meeting. The Foster Carer will not be invited to the Strategy Meeting, but will be kept fully informed of recommendations made at the meeting.
- 18.4** The meeting will identify support for the Foster Carers. The Supervising Worker will be responsible for advising and supporting the Foster Carer but the welfare of the child will remain the first priority. Consequently, Foster Carers may need separate support and advocacy. This may be available from Fostering Network or an Independent Support Consultant. It is recommended that when the Supervising Worker visits the family, he or she visits with the Fostering Team Manager, or another Social Worker. This visit should be minuted and a copy given to the Foster Carers.
- 18.5** **Foster Carers can usually be informed of the details of the allegation immediately. Unless to do so would jeopardise a criminal investigation or leave a child vulnerable. The timing of when a Foster Carer can be informed will be decided by the members of the Strategy Meeting. This will be recorded within the strategy meeting minutes as per the procedures relating to allegations against professionals who work with children.**
- 18.6** During the investigation, other children should not be placed with the Foster Carers. Consideration, usually at the Strategy Meeting needs to be given as to whether or not the matter is serious enough to warrant suspension of the Foster Carer's approval. In some cases the Manager of the Fostering Team in consultation with a Group Manager can take action to suspend the Foster Carer prior to the Strategy Meeting. Subsequent contact between children previously placed with carers will be considered in each individual case.
- 18.7** If the allegation is substantiated, then a recommendation to the Fostering Panel for termination of approval is the most likely outcome or at the very least conditions placed on any continued registration. Where the allegation cannot be either substantiated or disproved, the Fostering Panel needs to decide whether the approval should be continued and if so, whether additional safeguards, training or monitoring are required.

18.8 The Foster Carers need to be made aware of the information that will be presented to the Fostering Panel. The Foster Carers should be offered the opportunity to reply to the information and for their reports of events to be presented at Fostering Panel. The Foster Carer's report, and report by the Supervising Worker should be presented to the Fostering Panel, usually with a recommendation as to the Foster Carer's suitability to continue fostering for Blackpool Council. The Foster Carer should be given the opportunity of attending Fostering Panel. The Supervising Worker needs to be available at the Fostering Panel to answer any questions that may arise.

18.9 After taking into account the Panels recommendation, should the Agency Decision Maker consider that the applicant is not suitable to foster, they have a responsibility to give the applicant written notice that the proposal is to terminate the Foster Carers approval. This is called the qualifying determination.

The applicant requires to advise the Agency Decision Maker within 28 working days from the date of the written notice that:

- a) the applicant has accepted the qualifying determination or
- b) the applicant is submitting a written representation to the Agency Decision Maker or
- c) the applicant is applying for the qualifying determination to be reviewed by an Independent Review Panel.

Where the applicant has chosen (b) to make representations to the Fostering Service Provider, this must be in writing and be received within 28 working days from the date of the letter from the Agency Decision Maker. On receipt of the written representation, the applicant's case and written representation may be referred back to the Fostering Panel to consider and make a fresh recommendation. The Fostering Panel's recommendation will be taken into account when the final decision is made by the Agency Decision Maker.

Where the applicant has chosen (c) to apply to the Independent Review Panel to review the Agency Decision Makers qualifying Determination, the applicants written application and the applicant's reasons for the application, must be received by the Independent Review Panel within 28 working days from the date of the Agency Decision Makers original letter.

Where the Fostering Provider receives a recommendation from the Independent Review Panel, the Agency Decision Maker will take this into account with the original Fostering Panels recommendation when making the final decision. Where the Agency Decision Maker has not heard from the Independent Review Panels Administrator after the period of 28 working days has expired, a decision will be made by the Agency Decision Maker and the applicant notified of that decision.

18.10 The Foster Carer should be given a copy of the recommendations and a copy should go in the Foster Carer's file with the minutes of the Fostering Panel.

18.11 Records of allegations of abuse should be recorded in full and filed in the Foster Carer's red file. These records should be monitored by the Fostering Team Manager and where there is an accumulation of unproven allegations, a report should be presented by the Supervising Worker to the Fostering Panel for consideration.

- 18.12** Local Authorities are required to keep registers of approved Foster Carers. Foster Carers removed from local registers following investigations or charged with offences against children and are awaiting the outcome of a criminal investigation or trial should be referred to the Independent Safeguarding Authority. Any serious complaint about any foster parent approved by the Fostering Panel must be reported to OFSTED. The Head of Children's Social Care must be kept informed about the progress and outcome of any investigations.
- 18.13** If Foster Carers who have been de-registered apply to other agencies to foster, a letter should be sent to the agency advising them. The Foster Carers will have received a copy of the letter previously so will be familiar with the contents.
- 18.14** In all cases where there are concerns regarding the care of children by Foster Carers who are also childminders, it will be the responsibility of the manager of the Fostering Team to write and advise OFSTED of the concerns.
- 18.15** Where an allegation is made against a Foster Carer, consideration should be given at the Strategy Meeting/discussion regarding the welfare and safety of all children that the Foster Carer may come into contact with, i.e. birth children/extended family members. In some instances it may be necessary to initiate assessments and/or Section 47 Enquiries in respect of birth children of Foster Carers.

Foster Carers should be informed at the onset of the investigation that it may be necessary to initiate safeguarding enquiries in respect of all children they come into contact with.

19. Complaints from Foster Carers on behalf of a child/young person

- 19.1** The Foster Carer and the childcare Social Worker should explain to the child/young person in an age appropriate way that they have a right to make a complaint and how they make a complaint.
- 19.2** Where a child is unable to complain due to their age or disability but the Foster Carer believes that it is in the child's best interests to make a complaint, the carer should raise any concerns with their Supervising Worker who, together with the appropriate child care Social Worker (when necessary), will address those concerns within ten working days.
- 19.3** If the Foster Carer is dissatisfied with the response they have received, then they should contact the Customer Care Manager who will ensure that the complaint is processed as per the Blackpool Council's Compliments, Comments and Complaints Procedure for children and young people.

20. Complaints from Foster Carers in their own right.

- 20.1** Foster Carers may wish to complain about issues, which relate to their own treatment.
- 20.2** Initially Foster Carers need to raise any concerns with their Supervising Worker who will address the concern and discuss with the Manager of the Fostering Team. Contact will be made from the Manager to the Foster Carers where the concern might be resolved.

- 20.3** If the Foster Carer remains dissatisfied then they should contact the Customer Care Manager.
- 20.4** In line with Blackpool Council's Compliments, Comments and Complaints Procedure, on receipt of the complaint the Customer Care Manager will acknowledge the complaint (ideally within five working days) and pass the complaint to the Manager of the service concerned. The Manager will respond to the complaint ideally within ten working days (maximum 28 working days).
- 20.5** If the Foster Carer remains dissatisfied they should be advised to contact the Customer Care Manager. The Customer Care Manager will arrange to meet with the Foster Carer and where appropriate the Fostering Service or the Social Work Team Manager, to clarify the complaint and seek a resolution. The Foster Carer may choose to have a friend or representative present at the meeting. Where a resolution is not achieved then the complaint will be processed as per stage two of the Social Services Complaints Procedure. This involves the Customer Care Manager, together with an Independent Person, investigating the complaint and producing a report within twenty-eight days of the complaint being registered. The Customer Care Manager will then arrange to meet with the Independent Person to decide the content of the Director's formal response and the action to be taken in light of any recommendations made. A copy of the response and the report will then be sent to the Foster Carer.
- 20.6** If dissatisfied, the Foster Carer can proceed to stage three of Blackpool Council's Compliments, Comments and Complaints Procedure. The Review Panel is established and consists of two Councillors and an Independent Chair, whose role is to review Blackpool Council's formal response to the complaint and if appropriate make recommendations to the Director of The Children and Young People Department.
- 20.7** For further information concerning the Social Services Complaints Procedure contact the Customer Care Manager at Seaside Way on (01253) 651950.

21. Bullying

- 21.1** Foster Carers have an important part to play in helping deal with bullying.
- Foster Carers should discourage children from using bullying behaviour at home or elsewhere and show them how to resolve the difficult situations without using violence or aggression.
 - All schools should have an anti-bullying policy. It is a document that sets out how the school deals with incidents of bullying. Foster Carers have a right to know about this policy, which is for parents and carers as much as staff and pupils.
 - Foster Carers and families are often the first to detect that a child is being bullied. The Foster Carer should inform the child's Social Worker immediately.
- 21.2** If a child in foster care has been bullied, the carer should calmly talk with him about his experience and make a note of what he says, particularly who was said to be involved; how often the bullying has occurred; where it happened and what happened.

The Foster Carer should reassure him that he has done the right thing in telling the Foster Carer about the bullying. The Foster Carer should explain to him that should any further incidents occur he should tell them immediately.

The Foster Carer should make an appointment to see his class teacher or form tutor and explain to the teacher the problems he is experiencing. Together with the Social Worker the Foster Carer should take responsibility for ensuring that a plan is in place to minimise the possibility of the young person being alone with the bully.

21.3 When talking to teachers about bullying, Foster Carers should:

- Try to stay calm, bear in mind that the teacher may have no idea that a child is being bullied or may have heard conflicting accounts of an incident.
- Be as specific as possible about what the child says happened, give dates, places and names of other children involved.
- Make a note of what action the school intends to take.
- Ask if there is anything you can do to help the child.
- Stay in touch with the school; let them know if things improve as well as if problems continue.

21.4 Foster Carers who feel that their concerns are not being addressed appropriately by a school might like to consider the following steps:

Check with the school anti-bullying policy to see if agreed procedures are being followed.

Discuss your concerns with the parent governor or other parents.

21.5 Bullying which occurs outside of school should be discussed with the child's Social Worker, and Supervising Worker who will be able to offer advice and support.

22. Numbers of Children in Foster Home

22.1 Schedule 7 of the Children's Act 1989 refers to a "usual fostering limit of three children". The limit does not apply if the children concerned are all siblings with respect to each other.

22.2 When considering whether to grant an exemption to a Foster Carer, the Supervising Worker for the foster family for whom the exemption certificate is required should complete a brief report and attach the exemption certificate to be signed by the Group Manager.

22.3 A copy of this exemption and of the report should be placed on the Foster Carer's file and a copy given to the Foster Carers.

22.4 The Group Manager will periodically visit the homes of Foster Carers “over the usual fostering limit” to ensure that appropriate support is being accessed for the Foster Carer and that the living accommodation continues to be appropriate.

23. Death of a Child in Foster Care

In the tragic circumstances of a child dying in the carer’s home the carer should immediately contact the GP and either the child’s Social Worker or Out of Hours Emergency Duty Team.

Carers should inform if the child dies following admission to hospital from the carer’s address.

23.1 Carers will be visited by either the Supervising Worker or the Social Worker as soon as is practicable following notification.

Carers will be offered bereavement counselling (if requested) to be arranged by the Supervising Worker.

23.2 The Foster Carers Supervising Worker will take on responsibility for informing carers that a child they previously cared for had died. Previous carers should also be offered the opportunity to participate in saying goodbye to the child.

23.3 If carers are required to give evidence at an inquest, the Carers’ Supervising Worker should prepare the Carers for this potentially traumatic experience. The Fostering Team Manager should accompany carers to the inquest if requested by the Carers. If Carers need legal representation, their expenses should be covered by the Department.

23.4 Carers should be informed by their Supervising Worker about how the media is to be handled, and by whom.

23.5 Whilst the legal responsibility for funeral arrangements will lie with the parents, or in their absence with the Local Authority, the Department should give consideration to the role of those caring for the child at the time of death in funeral arrangements.

23.6 If carers have been unable to make the funeral arrangements, they should be assisted by their Supervising Worker in organising their own memorial service, if appropriate.

24 Access to Personal Records

Information about you

Social Services have a duty to protect and support vulnerable people in the community. These include:

- Children and their families and/or carers
- Adults with physical disabilities, learning or mental health disabilities
- People with hearing or visual disabilities
- Older people and their families and/or carers

To carry out these duties and plan to meet peoples care needs Social Services collects information from you and third parties such as health professionals and other local authority departments.

- We will not disclose information about you to anyone outside Social Services unless the law permits us to do so.
- We will seek your consent for information to be shared with third parties.
- Social Services hold information on computer and paper files.
- How Social Services collects, processes, stores and allows access to and destroys information is directed by the Data Protection Act 1998

What you should do

To obtain information that may be held about you on computer or paper files you must make a formal request.

- To do so, complete, sign and return the attached form to:
**Customer Care Team, Housing & Social Services,
Blackpool Stadium, Seaside Way, Blackpool FY1 6JY**
- Include any information that may help us to trace your records e.g. where and when services were provided.
- Send evidence of your identity.
- If acting on behalf of another person you must provide evidence of then having given you the authority to do so. This could be a signed letter of instruction or Power of Attorney.
- If you require an assistance with this form or require it a different format please contact the Customer Care Team at the address above or by telephoning 01253 651950.

What Social Services will do

- We will acknowledge receipt of your application.
- We will contact you if we need further information to help us deal with your application.
- You will be provided with access to the records that you have requested, that Social Services hold about you, within 40 days from the receipt of your application.
- We will contact you to make an appointment to provide access for you. This will normally be at one of the Social Services offices - although a home visit can be made in exceptional circumstances.
- If we are not able to provide access to the information that you requested, we will tell you why.

Information that we cannot give

There are some circumstances where Social Services will not be able to give you information.

For example:

- Where disclosure of information would cause serious harm to an individual.
- Where disclosure would be prejudicial to crime prevention and detection.
- Where other legislation prevents disclosure e.g. adoption records
- When people not employed by the Council refuse consent

Further information

If you need further help with your application please contact the member of staff who provided this form or contact any member of the Customer Care Team on Tel:01253 651950.

If you wish to make a comment, compliment or complaint about any other aspect of Social Services please contact the Customer Care Manager on Tel: 01253 651950.



**THE DATA PROTECTION ACT 1998
SUBJECT ACCESS REQUEST FORM
(FOR PERSONAL INFORMATION)**

The Data Protection Act 1998 provides Data Subjects with a right to obtain copies of information held about themselves. A data subject is the person information is requested about. The Council is entitled to request a fee of £10 for each subject access request and is obliged to fulfil your request within forty days from receipt of the fee and satisfactory proof of identity.

To enable the Council to deal promptly with this request and satisfy legal requirements please complete this form as accurately as possible. Address all requests to:

Customer Care Team, Blackpool Stadium, Seaside Way, Blackpool FY1 6JY

DATA SUBJECT DETAILS

Please write clearly in black or blue ink

Title tick box where applicable	Mr		Mrs		Miss		Ms		Other	
Surname/Family Name										
First Names										
Former/Maiden Names										
Date of Birth										
Address										
Post Code										
Home Telephone Number					Mobil e					
Previous Addresses You only need to include ones that are relevant to this Council										

PROOF OF IDENTITY

To establish your identity please provide a copy of an official document e.g. Current drivers licence, passport, birth certificate or medical card. It may be necessary for the Council to obtain more detailed information in order to be satisfied as to the data subject's identity.

FEE

The fee for a Subject Access Request under the Data Protection Act 1998 is £10, payable by cheque or postal order to '**Blackpool Borough Council**', or by cash at the Customer First Centre. You will be exempt the fee If you only wish to access Blackpool Social Services records

Tick box if you <u>only</u> require access to Blackpool Social Services Records.	Tick Here.
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SEARCH AREAS

To assist the Council in searching for your data please give details or reference numbers that you feel will help identify your information. It may help to list any Council Services that you think hold information about you.

Service i.e. Council Tax, or Landlord Services.	Reference i.e. Council tax account number	Description of Data i.e. Correspondence, case history or records of payment

DECLARATION

Note: A person who impersonates or attempts to impersonate another may be guilty of an offence. It is illegal to coerce a person to obtain personal data (i.e. for a job reference) for other than that person's private use.

A full description of the laws are set out in the Data Protection Act 1998 obtainable from H.M.S.O or on the Information Commissioner's Website, www.dataprotection.gov.uk

DATA SUBJECT (The subject is the named person) The Information, which I have supplied in this application, is correct and I am the person to whom it relates:

Signed by

Date

--	--

*If you are **NOT** the Data Subject but a solicitor or agent appointed by the Data Subject or otherwise please attach a signed copy of the authority to act on the data subject's behalf.*

DATA SUBJECTS' AGENT The Information, which I have supplied in this application, is correct and I am authorised to act on behalf of the Data Subject:

Signed by

Date

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In accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 this form will be kept in a secure place for a period of twelve months then destroyed.

Form Date Received	Date request closed	Officer
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Approval Sheet

Foster Carers Handbook of Policies & Procedures

.....
Janet Hambly
Service Director Social Work and Safeguarding

Date.....