



Worcestershire
FOSTERING

GUIDANCE TO FOSTER CARERS ON RECORDING

(including matters to be monitored and notified under Schedule 7 by WF)

July 2019



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1. INTRODUCTION AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The Fostering Regulations 2011 require Worcestershire County Council (WCC) to monitor and in some cases notify Ofsted and other agencies of matters relating to the WF and the children placed with their foster carers. These are set out in Schedule 6 and 7 of the Regulations.

Standard 29 of the National Minimum Standards for Fostering also sets out the requirement of WF to notify matters set out in Schedule 7.

In addition to this the Statutory Guidance for Foster Care 2011 requires fostering providers to have in place policies which enable foster carers and staff to keep clear records about children in placement and the work and care that foster carers undertake with those children. Information recorded should be non-stigmatising and distinguish between fact and opinion.

Standard 26 of the National Minimum Standards (2011) further states that

- Information about the child should be recorded clearly and in a way which will be helpful to the child when they access their files now or in the future.
- The importance of the foster carer understanding the important supporting role they play in encouraging the child to reflect on and understand their history.
- The child, subject to age and understanding should be encouraged to keep appropriate memorabilia (including photographs) of their time in the placement.
- The fostering service makes this role clear to their foster carers and ensures they can record, and help children make a record of (subject to age and understanding), significant life events.
- Children are actively encouraged to read their files, other than necessarily confidential or third party information, and to correct errors and add personal statements

1.1 WHY KEEP RECORDS

All foster carers are required to keep foster care records on children who are placed with them. These records will

Provide Worcestershire Fostering (WF), the placing social worker, the supervising social worker and the foster carer with information on the child that will assist in good planning for that child

- The records should offer the child's social worker an accurate picture of the child, which in turn should help them in their understanding of the needs of that young person
- Identify progress and development that the child is making
- Help identify any concerning patterns of behaviour and possible triggers for these
- Provide children and young people with information about their time as looked after children and help them understand the decisions that were made by others about them.
- Writing down information provides a more reliable record than memory alone.
- If an allegation is made against a foster carer, the existence of full and accurate recording will help the carer recall the specific circumstances.
- Recording gives foster carers a system of passing information to social workers/team managers between social worker visits.
- When foster carers present reports for children's reviews, based on their records, this ensures that their views and concerns are taken into account in planning for the child's future.
- Records will be very helpful to foster carers who are called on to give evidence in court or to a children's guardian.

Foster Carer recordings belong to WF and will form part of the child's record and this is an important role of the foster carer. If foster carers need support to complete the records required this should be discussed with their supervising social worker who will support foster carer to put in place strategies to assist them with their recording.

2. PROCESS FOR RECORDING

Foster carers will be provided with a recording template on which to keep the records.

Appendix 1 should be completed for most recording

Appendix 2 should be complete if the child makes a disclosure to the foster carers and should be reported to the child's social worker and their supervising social worker as soon as possible (Please refer to WF's Safeguarding Children policy)

Appendix 3 should be completed for those matters set out in Section 6 of this policy where there is a duty of WF to monitor or notify.

Foster carers will receive blank copies of these templates at the set up meeting following their approval.

If a foster carer is keeping records on a computer these should be password protected so that they cannot be accessed by other members of the household. Paper recordings should be kept in the lockable boxes provided by WF. There should be a separate record for each child in placement.

The supervising social worker should read these records at every supervision session with the carer. The child's social worker should also read them on a regular basis. Both should sign to evidence that they have read the recordings.

During the time the child is in placement the supervising social worker will copy or be sent electronically the recordings and these will be uploaded onto the child's file on a regular basis. When the records are sent electronically foster carers should use the initials of the child, ensure there is no identifying information and password protect the document. The foster carer will then need to phone or text the supervising social worker with the password.

During supervision sessions with the foster carer the fostering social worker must review all incident forms completed and check with the foster carer whether any incidents have taken place which should have been notified since the last supervision session.

When a child's placement ends original paper records need to be returned to the supervising social worker and these will then be kept on the child's file and the foster carer must delete all electronic records that they hold on the child. Foster Carers will be given access to the recordings held on the child's file following the end of the child's placement if this becomes necessary.

3. 10 TIPS FOR RECORDING

1. Before you start, be clear about why you are recording.
2. Use plain language and avoid jargon, keep it simple
3. Wherever possible stick to the facts.
4. When you give an opinion separate it from the facts and explain why you have come to that particular opinion.
5. Try not to "label" the child for example Susie does not like vegetables rather than Susie is a fussy eater
6. Describe behaviour for example Jack refused to get dressed for 30 minutes this morning rather than Jack was badly behaved this morning.
7. Record in a way that you would be happy for the child or family to read what you have written.
8. If you are making a record about a specific incident and the date of record is different from the date of the incident both dates should be recorded
9. Don't forget to sign and date each record.
10. Corrections made to records previously made should be dated and signed

4. WHEN TO RECORD

This is likely to vary depending on the length of time that children have been placed with the foster carer but should as a minimum be weekly.

At the initial stages of the assessment recording levels are likely to be higher as this is the period during which the foster carer is getting to know the child and gain a better understanding of their needs. Information recorded by the foster carers will assist discussion at the child's first review and assist the child's social worker in completing their assessment of the child and their family.

After that initial stage recording is more likely to be a summary of the child's progress, achievements changes in behaviour and family time. Foster carers will need to continue to record any significant incidents and events and should refer to Section 6 of this policy for those that need to be notify immediately to their supervising social worker.

Even when the placement is settled the expectation is that foster carers will record on a weekly basis as this will help monitor the child's ongoing development.

Respite foster carers will need information about the children they care for, which will be given to them by the main carer and the child's social worker. Whilst the child is in placement the respite foster carers should make records about the events, experiences and reactions of the child while they are placed, to pass back to the main carer/social worker.

5. WHAT TO RECORD

Health

The child's emotional and physical well-being, health interventions; periods of illness; eating/feeding/sleeping patterns, self-harming behaviours. Foster carers should also use the child's health folder to record planned health appointments including dental and opticians and the outcome of these, any emergency health appointments and outcomes and any medication (including over the counter medication) that they administer.

Child's Development

The child's physical, emotional and behavioural development (for example are milestones age appropriate, if not what areas does child struggle with), self-care skills, mobility, speech/language; independent skills; note any progress/achievements made whilst in placement).

Child's Presentation

How does the child present emotionally (for example contented, sociable, angry, withdrawn, anxious)?

Education

What progress is the child making within school/college/training/employment. What contact have you had with the school etc including feedback from parents evenings. and social activities. Have you any concerns re the child being bullied or bullying?

Social

Has the child got a friendship grow, are they able to make and maintain friendships? What social activities are they involved with and with whom?

Family Time

What family time has the child had who was it with and where; was this a positive or negative experience for the child. Child's presentation before and after contact.

Safer Care

Is the child displaying any concerning behaviours (for example aggressive, sexualised, absconding; drugs/alcohol). Have you had any conversation with the young person about your concerns or put any strategies in place to manage them.

Fostering Household

What is the relationship between the child and members of the fostering household including other looked after children. Are there any issues or concerns? Does the child respond to the house rules? What if any sanctions have you used?

Ethnicity and Culture

Where the child has a different ethnicity or culture from your own what have you done to promote this?

6. MONITORING AND NOTIFICATIONS

6.1 MATTERS TO BE MONITORED BY THE REGISTERED MANAGER (SCHEDULE 6 AND 7)

The Registered Manager of WF has a legal responsibility to monitor a number of matters in respect of WF. Some of these are to do with recruitment, assessment and approval of foster carers, panels and staffing and this information is monitored in a number of different ways. There are a number of matters that relate directly to the child and to assist with the monitoring of these we ask foster carers to notify WF of these either by

contacting their supervising social worker or completing the notification template and sending this to their supervising social worker. Notification forms should be completed for the following, as soon as possible after the incident or event

1. Child needs medical treatment at hospital:

this includes:

- treatment in an emergency, usually at A&E
- planned treatment which involves child staying overnight or longer

everything else to do with the child's health, including all medicals and dental treatment, must be recorded in your Health Record Folder. You should keep a copy of this notification for the Health Record.

If the child has a serious illness or accident this will need to be reported to Ofsted.

2. You become aware that the child/young person may have been abused (physically, sexually or emotionally) by another person, child or adult.
3. The child/young person has been physically aggressive towards you, other fostered children or a member of your household/family.
4. Child/young person is absent from your home without your agreement and you do not know where they are; you have contacted EDT and/or the police. (Do not complete for short absences where there is no need to contact EDT/police).
5. Child/young person has absconded - absent from the placement without permission and who is subject to an order or requirement resulting from the criminal justice process (e.g. remands, curfews, tagging, conditions of residence, other bail conditions, PACE detention or ASBO's), or a secure order made in either civil or criminal proceedings. A young person in this category must be reported to the police

without delay.

6. You have found it necessary to physically restrain a child or young person.
7. Bullying either where the child has been a victim or a perpetrator. The following are also reported to Ofsted.
8. You suspect the child/young person may have committed an offence.
9. You suspect that the young person is involved in prostitution.
10. The police are called to your home as the result of the child/young person's actions (Except absences – see 4).
11. Child/young person has a disease which is so serious that the doctor attending the child has to notify the Department of Health.(Appendix 3)

The supervising social worker will complete the electronic notification and send to the relevant team manager who will then review and forward to the Registered Manager for oversight and a decision on whether any further action is required.

The Registered Manager will report on the areas above in their quarterly report to WCC's board identifying any patterns or trends or any actions that WF has taken.

6.2 SCHEDULE 7 NOTIFICATIONS.

Below is the complete list of events where WF has a duty to notify other statutory bodies or partner agencies. If an event or incident has occurred which appears on the Schedule 7 list, the foster carer must inform their supervising social worker on the day of the incident or if it is out of hours the Emergency Duty Team. This will be in addition to any action which the foster carer believes to be necessary at the time of the incident, e.g. calling police, ambulance, taking the child to the doctor, informing EDT.

The supervising social worker should inform the Registered Manager on the same day and complete the notification form as set out above.

The Registered Manager has the responsibility to notify the organisation(s) indicated within the list as appropriate.

The Registered Manager will report on any Schedule 7 notifications in their quarterly report to WCC's board identifying any patterns or trends or any actions that WF has taken.

SCHEDULE 7 - Events and notifications

Event	To be notified to:					
	Chief Inspector	Responsible authority	Secretary of State	Area authority	Police	Primary Care Trust
Death of a child placed with foster parents	yes	yes	yes	yes		yes
Information is provided to the Independent Safeguarding Authority under any of sections 35, 36, 39, 41 or 45 of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006(1) in respect of an individual working for a fostering service	yes	yes				
Serious illness or serious accident of a child placed with foster parents	yes	yes				
Outbreak at the home of a foster parent of any infectious disease which in the opinion of a general practitioner attending the home is sufficiently serious to be so notified	yes	yes				yes
Allegation that a child placed with foster parents has committed a serious offence		yes			yes	
Involvement or suspected involvement of a child placed with foster parents in prostitution	yes	yes		yes	yes	
Serious incident relating to a child placed with foster parents necessitating calling the police to the foster parent's home	yes	yes				
A child placed with foster parents is missing from the placement		yes				
Any serious complaint about any foster parent approved by the fostering agency	yes	yes				
Instigation and outcome of any child protection enquiry involving a child placed with foster parents	yes	yes		yes		

7. SHARING INFORMATION WITH THE CHILD AND YOUNG PERSON.

Foster carers need to remember that their recording will be part of the child's file and the child will have the right to access them. At the time of making the recording the foster carer should consider if it is appropriate to involve the child given their age and understanding in the recording. They may also want to consider whether it is appropriate to share the recording with the child and give them the opportunity to negotiate a different way of recording the incidents or recording their own version of events.

8. CONTRIBUTING TO THE CHILD'S LIFE STORY

Collecting mementos can provide an important part of a child's memories. This can be any item no matter how trivial it seems to you, as it may be both important and have meaning for the child. They may bring mementos with them, they may choose to bring nothing or they may have nothing to bring. It is an idea to keep a child's mementos in a special place decided, and perhaps decorated, with the child.

Significant items and events such as a new born baby's hospital identity tag, School certificates or other items recognising a child's achievement should be kept and passed on to the child or social worker at the end of the placement. Foster Carers should consider the use of video or photographic records for events such as birthdays or holidays but be sensitive to the wishes and feelings of the child and their family.

APPENDIX 3

NOTIFICATIONS FROM FOSTER CARERS

Please complete this form only if the child/young person has been involved in one of the incidents listed. This is to help us monitor the frequency of these incidents and to report as necessary to Ofsted (Fostering Services Regulations 2011 Schedules 7). We also have a duty to record and monitor all incidents of bullying.

If you have concerns about any other type of incident or activity please talk to your social worker or the child's social worker about how to record this.

Your name:

Child's name:

Date incident happened:

What sort of incident was it? - Please tick

1. Child needs medical treatment at hospital:

This includes:

- treatment in an emergency, usually at A&E
- planned treatment which involves child staying overnight or longer

Everything else to do with the child's health, including all medicals and dental treatment, must be recorded in your Health Record Folder. You should keep a copy of this notification for the Health Record.

2. Child/young person has a disease which is so serious that the doctor attending the child has to notify the Department of Health.

3. You become aware that the child/young person may have been abused (physically, sexually or emotionally) by another person, child or adult.

4. Child/young person is absent from your home without your agreement and you do not know where they are; you have contacted EDT and/or the police. (Do not complete for short absences where there is no need to contact EDT/police).

5. Child/young person has absconded - absent from the placement without permission and who is subject to an order or requirement resulting from the criminal justice process (e.g. remands, curfews, tagging, conditions of residence, other bail conditions, PACE detention or ASBO's), or a secure order made in either civil or criminal proceedings. A young person in this category must be reported to the police without delay.

6. You have found it necessary to physically restrain a child or young person.

7. You suspect the child/young person may have committed an offence.

8. You suspect that the young person is involved in prostitution.

9. The police are called to your home as the result of the child/young person's actions
(Except absences – see 4).

10. The child/young person has been physically aggressive towards you, other
fostered children or a member of your household/family.

Please briefly describe the incident and what happened as a result. Make sure to include where the incident happened, frequency if more than one incident took place, who else was involved.

Please then make sure that your Supervising Social Worker (or member of the fostering team) receives this information within one working day, either by sending the form by email, fax, or post, or by describing the incident over the telephone so that the Supervising Social Worker can complete the form.

