

## Permanence in Long Term Foster Care Match Guidance April 2022

(Please note this is subject to review)

### **Regulations and Context:**

Where it is the case that the most appropriate route to permanence is long-term foster care, the 2010 Regulations (as amended) set out the arrangements for making such a placement [regulation 2(1)]. These include:

- that foster care is the 'plan for permanence' and is recorded in the child's care plan [regulation 5(a)];
- that the foster carer has agreed to act as the child's foster carer until the child ceases to be looked-after; and
- that the responsible authority has confirmed the arrangement with the foster carer(s), the birth parents and the child.

3.108. The assessment and planning process for long-term foster care **should address the child's current needs and likely future needs, and the capacity of the foster carer to meet these needs now and in the future.**

(This will be contained within the Matching report. )

The length of placement will vary according to the child's age and the long-term plan for the child, including the transition to adulthood. These factors must all be taken into account in planning for

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support and services where long-term foster care has been identified as the plan for permanence for a child. 3.109. Before deciding to place a child in a long-term foster placement, (whether or not this means moving to a new carer) the responsible authority should assess the ability of the identified long-term foster carer to care for the child. It is expected that the responsible **authority will have a process in place to consider the capacity of the carer to meet the needs of the child now and in the future, and to identify the likely support and services that will be needed to ensure that the placement is stable, secure and meets the child's needs. This should take account of the carer's previous fostering or other childcare experience, family configuration (including placement of other children under fostering arrangements), existing relationship (if any) with the child, knowledge and skills and capacity to care for the child long term under a fostering arrangement.**

(Matching Report and Support Plan)

3.110. It is imperative that the foster carer fully understands **and explicitly agrees to the long-term commitment they are making to the child** [regulation 22B (2)(f)]. The responsible authority should record this discussion and the outcome as part of the assessment process. -

(Foster Carer Review and/or IRO Minutes.)

3.111. The decision to place a child in a long-term foster placement with a particular foster carer should be discussed and recorded as part of the review process. (CLA review) This decision should then be recorded in the placement plan [schedule 2, paragraph 3, 1ZA] and agreed and signed by the foster carer [regulation 9(3)].

3.112. Where it is agreed that the child will be placed in a long-term foster placement, this should be communicated clearly to the foster carer, the child's parents or any other person who is not a parent but has parental responsibility and the child [regulation 2(1)].

3.113. Where the decision has been taken that the plan for permanence is long-term foster care and the child is in an existing foster care placement, it may be that the carer and (where appropriate) the child want the existing foster placement to be the long-term foster placement. **The responsible authority should consider this in a reasonable timescale taking into account the existing relationship between the child and the foster carer, the length of time in placement, the child's relationships with the foster carer's wider family and community. Consideration should also be given to the progress the child has made in the placement, recorded through the case review process.**

(Matching Report)

#### **Independent Fostering Agency: IFA Placement consideration:**

Where the proposal is that a child/young person continues within an IFA as a long-term fostering placement approval for funding must already have been agreed by the Assistant Director before going to the Fostering Panel. See below for requirements in paperwork.

#### **Requirements and Essential Paperwork**

- **Matching report** (including overview from school or inclusion of recent FCR 7 comments.) Ensuring voice of the child/ child's wishes. **Signed by Social Workers and Foster Carers**

To include a section on support available from the fostering support network.

- **Support Plan**
- **Permanence Panel minutes (agreeing the plan of long-term fostering for the child/children)**
- **Business case agreeing finance if IFA placement.**
- **Last Foster carer review (FCR4) and if approved within the last 5 years the full review paperwork.**
- **Child's Team Manager submission**
- **Carer's Team Manager submission**

- If a Recent disruption/ unplanned ending has occurred (within the last 2 years) please submit the minutes and ensure the matching report includes reference to this and learning evidenced.
- If a previous disruption has occurred, please ensure this is referred to in the report and learning evidenced.

**EVIDENCE THAT THE FOSTER CARERS HAVE BEEN APPROVED AS LONG-TERM CARERS AND THE APPROVAL EXTENDS TO THE CHILD SEEKING TO MATCH**

**Good practice points:**

- Use of the Secure Base Model as a template is useful.
- Voice of the child.
- Clear section of fostering support network.
- Ethnicity/ identity of the child/ children/ young person/ people.
- Please include a list of the other children in placement, anonymised if required but with ages.

**Available legal orders to support this permanence option:**

- Care Order.

Information regarding the legal order should be contained within the paperwork.

**Attendance at Fostering Panel requirements and Considerations:**

Fostering Social Worker, Child Social Worker, Foster Carer(s) will be required to attend fostering panel.

The Child/ Young person who is being considered for Permanence may request to be in some way part of the fostering panel, For Young People this may be attending a part of the fostering panel.

Cumbria County Council's Fostering Service wish to promote this attendance in an appropriate way. The Child SW, Fostering SW should liaise with the Panel Advisor/ Admin if attendance is requested by the young person in good time ahead of fostering panel.

**Considerations for Panel:**

What if any other legal orders have been considered, is there clear explanation regarding this as to why not, or not currently applicable.

What consideration has been given to Staying Put Placement.

How robust is the Fostering Support Plan, do the vulnerabilities raised in the Matching report feed through into the support plan, are there any outstanding vulnerabilities where no support has been identified.

Are there any actions set out in the Permanence Panel Minutes that are outstanding?

What consideration has been given to any future fostering placements, foster carers career?

What consideration has been given to the Fostering Support Network?

Any scheduled/ considered changes in contact with birth family and impact of this.

Foster Carers views on the support plan, do they have any concerns of any possible unmet need?

What progress has child made whilst in placement?

**Panel Members should consider the strengths of the match and vulnerabilities in line with the matching report/ support plan and any additional documents relating to the matching considerations provided.**