

The Foster Carer Review

Regulations require that the fostering service reviews the approval of each foster carer and their household at least once a year. A Review should also take place if there have been major changes such as health problems, births, marriages or deaths, a move to a new address, if there have been allegations or complaints against a household member or serious difficulties with a placement. Renewal of health, OFSTED, DBS and local authority checks will be considered at each review.

Foster carers can request a review, if, for example, they want to vary or extend the work they undertake or raise difficulties with the fostering service.

The first review following your approval will be presented to the Fostering Panel as will any subsequent review recommending a change of approval terms or where there have been concerns about standards of care. You are encouraged to attend the Fostering Panel and to contribute to the discussion.

Where there are major changes to the household, such as a new partner there will be a presumption that he or she will have a part to play in caring for any child in the placement and all checks and references with a full Form F assessment of his or her suitability for this role must be completed before the partner moves into the foster home. This will be presented to the Fostering Panel and the ADM for a decision.

Termination of approval

If you want to resign

If you wish to cease fostering for Ealing you must tell us in writing. Under the Regulations, your approval will cease 28 days after the Department receives your written notice. You will be notified of the termination of your approval.

It is expected that Ealing's foster carers will have a discussion with their supervising social worker if they are considering applying to foster for another agency. As set out in the Foster Care Agreement carers are expected to confirm in writing the outcome of any approach or application to foster for another agency.

If you wish to adopt or seek a [Special Guardianship or Child Arrangements Order](#) for a child you foster:

For many children who will not be able to return to their family of origin adoption provides the most suitable way of meeting their needs for a permanent alternative family. A child who is adopted from care will no longer be '[looked after](#)' by the local authority. An [Adoption](#) Order severs legal ties with the child's birth family and transfers [parental responsibility](#) to the adoptive parent(s).

Adoption does not meet the needs of every child, especially if the child still identifies with, or has regular contact with, members of his or her birth family. For these children, Special Guardianship may provide a better option for permanence. A Special Guardian shares parental responsibility with the child's birth parents, but can exercise it independently, with some exceptions, where necessary. FOSTER CARERS' HANDBOOK 2016 14

A Child Arrangements Order establishes where a child should live, but parental responsibility continues to be shared with the child's parents who must be consulted on any major decisions about the child's life.

In all three cases application must be made to the court. If an Order is made for a child in care he or she will cease to be looked after by the local authority. If the Order is made to a foster carer then he or she ceases to foster the child in question.

Further information on who can apply for these Orders and their effects is in the Glossary at the end of this Handbook and in [Section 2.2: Adoption and Children Act 2002](#). However foster carers are recommended to seek legal advice if considering such an application.

We will consider carefully if a foster carer makes an offer to adopt or apply for Special Guardianship for a child in their care. If it is agreed that the offer may meet the child's needs a full assessment of the carer's suitability for this different task will be undertaken. The assessment will not necessarily result in a recommendation that supports the foster carer's offer, and even if it does, the court may not award the Order. Where a court order is made, Ealing may agree an Adoption or Special Guardianship Allowance, however carers should note this will be mean tested and subject to annual review.

As it is considered important to allow the adopted child, or child for whom Special Guardianship or a Child Arrangements Order has been made, to settle in the family for some time foster carers to whom such an Order is made will be regarded as having resigned from fostering as they will no longer be acting as foster carers in relation to the child. The only exception would be if the carers continued to foster another child.

Retirement

There is no upper age limit to fostering and many older people make excellent carers - they bring a wealth of skills and experience to the role. What matters is that you are fit and well and able to understand the needs of children and young people growing up in present-day society.

If Ealing wants to end your approval:

Ealing will consider the termination of carers' approval/agreement in the following circumstances:

- ☐ Where the carer(s) are in serious or continuing breach of its conditions as laid out in the Foster Care Agreement and any supplementary documents and guidance given by Ealing. This includes any actual or perceived abuse of children, including your own and can also include continued low standards in childcare
- ☐ The carer(s) consistently or regularly fail to meet the set requirements or the individual young person's care plan
- ☐ The carer or anyone else living in the home is convicted in law as a Schedule 1 Offender or is charged or cautioned for an offence which would jeopardise the safety and stability of children placed..

A review of approval will be held with you and presented to the Fostering Panel. You will be asked to submit your views in writing and to attend the Panel in person. If, after careful consideration Panel recommends your approval should be terminated, the papers will be forwarded to the Agency Decision Maker who will make a 'determination' about whether your approval should be terminated. FOSTER CARERS' HANDBOOK 2016 15

Following a Panel recommendation to terminate a foster carer's approval, the placing authority of any child in placement must be notified immediately and their views taken into account when Ealing makes the decision about termination.

If your approval/agreement is terminated for the above reasons then Ealing is obliged to make this known to anyone who seeks a reference about you and, in some circumstances, would have to notify the [Disclosure and Barring Service](#) (DBS)

Appeals against a decision on approval terms or to terminate approval

If the 'determination' is that you are no longer considered suitable to act as a carer for Ealing, you will be notified of this in writing and you will receive a copy of the Panel recommendations.

Regulation 28(7) of the Fostering Services Regulations 2011 outlines that notice of a 'determination' to end your approval as a foster carer or to change your approval terms against your wishes will include details of your right to submit any representations you wish to make within 28 days of receiving this notice. Your representations must be made in writing to Ealing or to the Secretary of State for review by an independent review panel of the qualifying determination (IRM).

If the 'determination' was to terminate your approval and you do not make representations within 28 days to either Ealing or through Independent Review Mechanism (IRM) your approval will be terminated.

If a written representation is received by Ealing the matter will go back to the Panel for further consideration. Whether representations are considered by Ealing's Panel or an independent Panel appointed by the IRM, the Panel's recommendations will be passed to the Agency Decision Maker for a final decision, taking into account any recommendation made by fostering panel or the independent review panel.

If after this process Ealing makes a decision to continue your approval you will be notified in writing of this decision and the terms of your approval. If, on the other hand, Ealing decides to terminate your approval you will be notified in writing and have the right of appeal as outlined above.