

# Wirral Council Fostering Service

## Statement of Purpose

**December 2015**

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Group Manager – Fostering & Adoption  
Children & Young People's Department  
Hamilton Building  
Conway Street  
Birkenhead  
Wirral  
CH41 4FD

**Approved by: Councillor Tony Smith**

**Date:**

**Lead Member Children's Service**

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## **Wirral Fostering Service Structure and Personnel:**

### **Head of Service**

John Skinner (interim)

### **Senior Manager**

Simon Fisher

### **Group Manager – Fostering & Adoption**

Sue Leedham

### **The Fostering Team:**

#### **Team Managers**

Sheila Khan & Diane Burns

- 1 Admin Team Leader
- 1 Advanced Social Work Practitioner (interim)
- 15.5 Full time equivalent Social Workers
- 1.5 Full time equivalent Support Workers
- 1 Team Support Officers
- 1 Panel Administrator
- 1 Finance Officer

Children & Young People's Department  
Hamilton Building  
Conway Street  
Birkenhead  
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CH41 4FD

Recruitment phone line Tel: 606 2400

Email: [fostering@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:fostering@wirral.gov.uk)

Fax: 0151 666 4240

The managers and all of the fostering team social workers hold a relevant social work qualification and have extensive experience of children and families social work.

### **Inspection details**

The Fostering Service is inspected by OFSTED.

The contact details for OFSTED locally are:

OFSTED

Piccadilly Gate,

Store Street,

Manchester, M1 2WD.

Tel: 0300 123 1231

Email: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

Wirral Fostering Service is part of Wirral Council. The service aims to provide high quality foster placements for children and young people who are in care for a period of time. These placements may last until the child reaches adulthood, or beyond if they are in education, employment or training, depending on the needs of the child and their family. This statement of purpose and function describes the way in which the service is run and managed.

### **Service principles**

- We will make sure children's needs are best met within their own families, where this is consistent with their welfare.
- We make sure children benefit from being in care.
- We make sure each child is listened to and is a respected individual whose needs will be met through proper assessment, and matched to foster carers who are best able to meet those needs.
- We make sure we arrange services that are local and able to help children form and maintain quality attachments and relationships.
- We value and promote diversity and acknowledge the rights of both children and adults.
- We assess potential foster carers in line with the Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2013 and to meet the Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards (2011) to make sure children reach their potential.
- We will respond as soon as possible to all potential foster carers who have applied.
- We will make sure that all potential foster carers who apply will be treated fairly, and with respect.
- We will provide information and training to all applicants so that they are properly prepared for the fostering task.
- We will support, guide and supervise foster carers to achieve a professional and high standard of care.
- We will respect the skills and the experience foster carers bring to the service.
- We will actively seek out the views of foster carers so that we can improve our service and constantly review and develop our practice to take into account user feedback.
- The Fostering Service works according to the principles given above and makes changes as the needs change.

## **Service Aims and Objectives**

Wirral Fostering Service consulted with young people in care about what the young people wanted from the fostering service. The aims and objectives of the service are therefore a combination of the young peoples' wishes and how the fostering service will meet these.

Our aim is to look after children in care very well and help children and young people to achieve their potential.

This means:

- Keeping children healthy
- Keeping children safe
- Helping children with school
- Letting children have fun and enjoying being themselves
- Staying in touch with people young people care about
- Helping children to make new friends
- Asking children what they think - and listening
- Helping children stay out of trouble
- Helping children to grow and develop

We will do this by:

- Finding the best foster carers for children who need them
- Checking foster carers are suitable to look after children
- Supervising foster carers and giving them advice and training
- Working with children in care, their social worker, their foster carer and their family to make decisions about their future

## **Service delivery**

### **Range of fostering provision**

Wirral Fostering Service has expertise in all areas of fostering work, but specialise and focus on various aspects or 'schemes', allowing for the development of a wide range of provision:

- Short term
- Permanency
- Connected Person Carers
- Short breaks for children with disabilities
- Family link
- Teenage
- Teenage family link
- Parent and child
- Staying Put placements

### **Number of foster carers**

The numbers of carers needed in each scheme is identified on an ongoing basis and recruitment is targeted according to the needs of the service.

Currently, the service supports 319 fostering households.

### **Numbers of children placed**

The number and needs of children placed varies, therefore Wirral Fostering Service actively makes sure that foster carers and staff are given the training and skills to care for individual children and for fostering generally. There are currently 497 placed children.

### **Recruitment**

Recruitment is planned, which takes account of:

- Local demographic changes
- Number and type of referrals for placement in the preceding year
- Number and type of placement for children on the waiting list for placement
- Development of new fostering schemes
- New service developments.

### **Advertising**

The council's marketing team, in conjunction with the Fostering Service, is responsible for producing recruitment material and arranging advertising which is placed in local papers, road sides and roundabouts, Council vehicles and the One Stop Shop LCD screens.

To provide an efficient, prompt service, all recruitment telephone calls are directed to the council's call centre.

### **Assessment**

The Council's call centre staff responds to the initial telephone contact and complete an initial inquiry form which is immediately forwarded to the Fostering Service. Prospective carers can also apply on line directly to the fostering service or are recommended to the service via existing carers.

A pack about fostering is sent out, and an invitation to request a visit from a member of the Fostering Service.

If a visit is requested it is our aim to make an appointment to visit within two weeks.

Preparation training is planned throughout the year, no more than three months apart taking account of summer holidays and festivals when attendance is difficult for prospective carers. This makes sure there is a maximum wait of three months for training. Additional training can be arranged if necessary.

A new two stage process for the assessment of applicants to become foster carers has been introduced from 1 July 2013. Parts 1 and 2 can be run in parallel; there is no requirement to complete stage 1 before starting stage 2.

### **Stage1:**

An assessment begins with an introductory visit from a Supervising Social Worker (SSW) who provides prospective carers with information about the process, how to complete the assessment and how to gather evidence.

The Fostering Service collects information about the applicant and their household, and undertakes routine checks. This will include information from personal referees, Disclosure and Barring Service, which is a check of criminal records, General Practitioner (GP), Children's Services, social care and education records, Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED), employers (and previous employers if that work involved children) and details of current and any previous marriage, civil partnership or similar relationship.

Prospective foster carers attend their GP for a medical examination. This report is sent to the community physician for an independent opinion regarding any medical condition that needs to be taken into account in the assessment.

A health and safety check is made of the home and outside area. Any family pets are considered in terms of the risk that they may pose to children or young people.

When the information gathering for Part 1 is completed, the decision to proceed, or not, is made and applicants informed of the outcome by a member of staff from the Fostering Team.

### **Stage 2:**

This is focused on the skills and experience of the applicant. Prospective carers can then start writing information about them which will form part of their final assessment report. This is followed by further visits by a SSW to complete the assessment.

All necessary information is collated by the SSW into a report. The report and the recommendations contained within it are agreed with the prospective carers and signed by the parties.

### **Approval**

The assessment report is presented to the fostering panel; a recommendation is made whether to approve as a carer, and the details of the registration, e.g. Short term for two children aged 0-18 years with a preference for the ages of five to twelve years. Prospective carers will be invited to attend the Panel if they wish.

These recommendations are sent to the Agency Decision Maker who makes a decision to agree to approve as a foster carer or a 'qualifying determination' not to approve as a foster carer. Foster carers are informed verbally within two days of this decision or determination, and in writing within five days.

Prospective carers who are not happy with the 'qualifying determination' can, in writing to the Fostering Service (usually through the Team Manager), make

representations for it to be referred back to Fostering Panel, or can apply to the Secretary of State for a review by the Independent Review Mechanism (IRM). This must happen within 28 days of the qualifying determination. Where the Independent Review Mechanism (IRM) makes a recommendation, the Agency Decision Maker will take account of the original fostering panel recommendation and IRM before reaching a decision.

Once approved, foster carers are then required to sign a Foster Care Agreement, which provides written information about the terms and conditions of the partnership between the Fostering Service and the foster carers.

Newly approved foster carers are issued with a wide variety of essential/useful information and details of how to access policies and procedures through the council website. Full copies of Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards 2011 and Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2013 are also made available.

### **Fostering Panel**

Wirral maintains a central list of persons who are considered suitable to be members of a fostering panel. Wirral Fostering Services has an established fostering panel, which comprises of, social workers with at least 3 years post qualifying experience, an elected member, a foster carer, a medical advisor, a fostering service advisor, an independent chair and a vice chair.

The fostering panel meets every three weeks and additional meetings are convened if required.

The purpose of the panel is to provide a mechanism for scrutiny, quality control and recommendations to be made to the fostering service about individual cases and the overall operation of the fostering service (See Purpose & Function Wirral Fostering Panel – for further information).

### **Placement of children**

When thinking about where children and young people would be best placed, Wirral Fostering Service staff undertakes a process called 'matching'. This process looks at the needs of the children, and which potential carers are able to meet these needs. The needs of the children may be related to a number of issues, such as a physical, emotional or behavioural, educational, and also incorporates needs such as ethnicity, religion, language and culture.

Children are placed as near to their home as possible, to maintain school and important links within their own community, and when necessary where foster carers can take the children to where they need to be for school, contact or activities. Children are matched not only to the carer's skills, but also to other children already in that placement. The views of the children involved in the placement, their social workers and Independent Reviewing Officers are taken into account during the matching process.

Very often when children move into a new placement, the move is a planned one and wherever possible, children are given written information about their prospective foster family. The child will visit the prospective carers at least once before the placement starts.

## **Support**

New foster carers are invited to regular support groups. This provides peer support and support from the Fostering Service. Often there is an element of training during the support groups, focusing on issues usually identified within the group, with outside experts presenting for approximately an hour on their field of expertise.

There is a peer mentoring scheme which provides a one-to-one practical advice and support service by experienced foster carers for all new foster carers and others who will benefit from the provision. The scheme is managed and co-ordinated by the Fostering Service but does not replace the support from the supervising social worker.

Carers have their own Supervising Social Worker who visits their home by arrangement and will also carry out at least one unannounced visit per year. These supervision visits have a support, training and monitoring purpose and are recorded. At least four visits a year are formal supervision for the carers, and one visit will be for the review meeting. However Supervising Social Workers will visit more often as the need arises.

Carers are paid appropriate allowances and/or fees in accordance with the agreed levels for the type of foster care placement the child requires, and the current registration and training status of the foster carer.

There is a partnership group in which foster carers meet with Senior Managers within children's social care and managers within the Fostering Service. Within the partnership group, issues affecting children, foster carers and the development of the Fostering Service, including new policies and procedures are considered; the group does not however have any role in decision making.

Foster carers own children are recognised as being very important to the stability of the fostering household and are encouraged to attend the 'Kids for Caring' support group where they can raise issues, share ideas, make new friends and take part in organised social activities. This has become a well-established and attended group.

## **Review**

Foster carers and their supervising social worker complete an annual review. This reflects on the preceding year's fostering, training completed, and plans the following year's training and fostering registration. The foster carer's first review is reported to the fostering panel. In following reviews, if carers want to change their registration details, or progress through the skills bands, a report can be presented to Panel, although sometimes this is done during their review with the Independent Reviewing Officer and then sent to the Agency Decision Maker for consideration. If

consideration is to be given to de-registration the report is presented to panel. Foster carers are invited and encouraged to attend fostering panel if they so wish.

If the review is not presented to fostering panel, the Independent Reviewing Officer will meet with carers and their supervising social worker to consider their review. The outcome of the review will be confirmed in writing. If there is disagreement concerning registration, carers can request that the review is presented to the fostering panel for consideration.

If carers disagree with the outcome of their review, they can put their views in writing to the team manager of the Fostering Service, or apply to the Independent Review Mechanism (IRM) within twenty-eight days of being informed of the outcome. Arrangements are then either made for fostering panel to reconsider the registration or where the Independent Review Mechanism (IRM) makes a recommendation, the Agency Decision maker will take account of the original fostering panel recommendation and IRM before reaching a decision.

The outcome of the agencies decision will be confirmed in writing.

### **Family and friends carers/connected persons**

Some children, who need to be Looked After, have a member of the family or a family friend or other person with a prior connection to the child who is able to take on the responsibility of their day-to-day care. The Fostering Service take the view that children are best cared for within their extended families and within their community where this is possible, as this is least likely to disrupt their social networks. Where this is the case, these families can be given temporary approval under Regulation 24 of the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010 for a period of sixteen weeks. During this time the assessment is commenced, with the usual checks done by the service. These foster carers are assessed in the same way as recruited foster carers. Where the full assessment and approval cannot be completed within the sixteen-week period the temporary approval may be extended for a further 8 weeks.

### **Training**

Foster carers receive four day preparation training, 'Skills to Foster', before they begin fostering although some family and friends foster carers begin looking after the child, whom they know, before attending this training. Following approval, carers attend further training alongside social workers and other staff, although some training is delivered specifically for foster carers.

From April 2008, newly approved foster carers have followed a work book provided by the Department for Education, to ensure they can demonstrate they reach a minimum standard in terms of their role as a foster carer. They receive training and information and are supported by their Supervising Social Worker, to demonstrate their knowledge and an ability to meet the standards. They must successfully complete the workbook and reach the required standards within 12 months of being approved. By reaching these standards, there will also be direct benefits to the children placed with them.

There is an expectation that all foster carers will attend training on a regular basis with a copy of what is available being sent to them.

### **Children's guide**

Two versions of a children's guide is available, one for children under 10 years of age and the other for young people aged over 10. These have been developed alongside a care leaver's guide. These guides are provided to all Children Looked After and those leaving care to ensure they have appropriate information about the fostering service, their rights, the standards of care they can expect, information about advocacy services, complaints and Children's Involvement Officer. The children's guides are also provided to foster carers to assist their ability to support children placed with them.

### **Advocacy Service**

All Children in Care have access to independent advocacy services through Barnardo's.

### **Policies & procedures**

The service adheres to the following departmental policies and procedures:

- Missing children
- Children and young people who go missing or run away from home or care protocol
- Wirral Safeguarding Board safeguarding procedures
- The care & control of young people who are looked after
- Recording procedure
- Whistle-blowing policy
- Anti-bullying for looked after children
- Looked after children procedure
- Complaints procedure
- Managing allegations against staff, volunteers, foster and adoptive carers who work with children
- Sexual health for young people who are looked after
- Child pornography on the Internet
- Delegated consent to outings, visits and activities
- Consent to medical treatment in foster care placements
- Promoting child contact with families
- Medication policies, Homely remedies
- Foster carers contacting the police
- Carers possessing guns and weapons
- Guide to the payment of foster carers
- Issues of race and culture in the family placement of children
- Safeguarding children placed with foster carers
- Foster carer approval
- Reviewing approval of foster carers
- Foster Carers and Adopters who Smoke

## **Complaints & allegations**

The departmental complaints procedure is available to children, their family and friends, foster carers, members of the community, social work staff or staff from other agencies.

Any complaints received are taken seriously and responded to. When a complaint moves to Stage Two of the complaints procedure, it is the subject of an independent investigation by the Customer Resolution and Information Team

The outcomes of all complaints and allegations are monitored to identify learning points or policy changes that are required.

Serious complaints and allegations relating to child protection issues are considered in line with the child protection procedures, the Local Authority Designated Officer will be consulted. Foster carers are usually suspended from taking any more children until the outcome of the investigation is decided. Within the consideration of these issues the welfare of the child will be the paramount consideration. If the outcome is that concerns remain, or it is founded, the foster carer's registration is reviewed and presented to Panel.

Between April 2015 and December 2015, 19 allegations of misconduct were made against foster carers.

Between April 2015 and December 2015 six formal complaints were made about the Fostering Service.

Children are encouraged and supported to raise complaints to their social worker, or foster carers will make complaints on the children's behalf to their Supervising Social Worker. Foster carers are encouraged to raise their concerns with their Supervising Social Worker, and they can, along with other professionals, speak directly to the Team Manager, which often means that issues are resolved at an early stage.

## **Support and partnership**

The Fostering Service will ensure that suitable supervision, support and guidance is available to foster carers and the children/young people who are looked after by them. This helps to make sure that the placement plans and objectives for each child can be delivered. The following services and initiatives support foster carers, children and young people and the work of the Fostering Service as a whole.

## **Practical support**

The Fostering Service provides practical support to foster carers. Some children may need types of equipment such as fireguards, stair-gates, pushchairs or other specialist equipment for children with specific needs or disability. These are all provided within agreed time scales by the Fostering Service.

## **Financial support**

The service recognises the importance of making sure that foster carers are paid the correct amount, and on time. The service is efficient at managing this. On the occasions when mistakes do occur, the service corrects the error quickly. Foster carers are paid a fee in recognition of their skills and training, and willingness to work with the department and the challenges which fostering can present. The three skills bands represent different levels of competency of carers linked to the complex nature of the children placed.

## **Looked after Children Education Service**

The Education team for Looked After children work's with the child's social worker and designated teacher at their school, to track and monitor the child's progress and their Personal Education Plan. Foster carers play a crucial role in helping children and young people achieve their potential and are expected to attend parent evenings and PEP meetings. PEA funding is available to support children and young people to achieve better outcomes, both educationally and socially. This is an area the fostering service is strengthening.

## **CAMHS Looked After Children Team**

A designated service set up jointly by Wirral Council and the Cheshire & Wirral Partnership (NHS) Foundation Trust so that a more suitable response can be made to the emotional health needs of children, young people and their carers where they are looked after and/or been affected by abuse, particularly sexual abuse. The service offers a consultation and advice service to foster carers and other professionals and will undertake specific work with children and young people and/or refer for more suitable or specialist services if required.

## **Cultural Inclusion Officer (Children in Care)**

This post is based within the CYPD and has been developed to make sure that children and young people who are in care and their carers have access to, and knowledge about, a range of services that provide positive activity and interests for children and young people. The post ensures there is easy access to services and specialist services developed where required. Children in Care are helped to develop positive interests that will help them develop and achieve their full potential. The Cultural Inclusion Officer provides activities in school holidays for children in care and at times foster carers own children, the children themselves identify what activities they most like to do.

## **Named nurses for Children in Care**

Three full time qualified nurse posts are funded by health, working closely with the community paediatricians, and school nurses. They monitor health plans and make sure that services are delivered in a way that is sensitive and appropriate to the needs of young people and their carers. They liaise with the Child and Adolescent

Mental Health Service (CAMHS) Looked After Children team on emotional health issues and the Cultural Inclusion Officer on areas where activity or the development of specific interests would be beneficial. Foster carers can contact the named nurses for advice at any time during office hours.

### **Independent Reviews of Foster Carers**

Foster carers are reviewed every year by a team of Independent Reviewing Officers, who are managed independently from the fostering service by WIRED. The service has two named Officers who conduct reviews of foster carers. This assists us in maintaining consistency in relation to standards both over time and across the service. An additional benefit is that reviews are always done by an independent person, who has a thorough knowledge and grounding in the Regulations, Standards, and Guidance for Fostering Services.

### **Children's Involvement Service**

All Children in Care have access to the Children's Involvement Service, based within social care. The Service ensures that Children in Care are consulted about any concerns they have. The Children's Involvement Service also facilitates and supports Children in Care within meetings (such as the Corporate Parenting Group - see below) and other activities such as interviewing social work staff applying for permanent posts within social care.

### **Children in Care Council**

This is a group of children in care and care leavers who raise concerns, and suggest changes and developments to improve services for children. The fostering service listens carefully to suggestions to change/improve the service and will make act on these whenever possible.

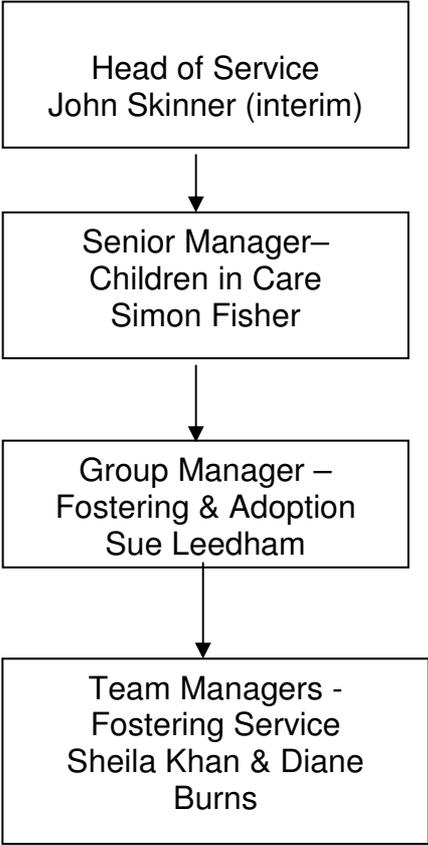
### **Kids for Caring**

This is a support group for the sons and daughters of foster carers. This enables young people to get together with other people in foster families in their area to talk about their experiences. Activities are also arranged periodically and young people are encouraged to attend.

### **The Corporate Parenting Group**

The Director of Children's Services and Lead Member for Wirral Council take their corporate parenting responsibilities seriously and have ensured that a Corporate Parenting Group meets and the responsibilities extend to the entire Children's Trust Partners. The Corporate Parenting Group has an agreed plan to ensure that children's views are heard, that they will challenge officers in relation to performance and outcomes for children in care, to raise the profile of children in care and those leaving care, and to share positive messages about children in care. There are a number of actions in the Corporate Parenting Group Action Plan relating to the fostering service, which are actively being progressed and reported on to the group.

**Management Structure**



# **Wirral Fostering Service**

## **Statement of purpose and function for Wirral Fostering Panel December 2015**

## **Statement of purpose and function for Wirral Fostering Panel**

### **1. Introduction**

The Children's Act 1989, sets out the authority's duties in establishing mechanisms for approving, reviewing and monitoring foster carers. This duty is delegated to the fostering panel, although the Director, on behalf of Wirral Council is ultimately responsible for all decisions. In agreeing the appropriate delegations the Director of Children's Services maintain the authority, where appropriate, to make decisions on behalf of the Council. The Director has delegated the Agency Decision Maker role to the Senior Manager, Children in Care.

### **2. Panel membership and composition**

The Panel membership will be drawn from a 'central list' of people who have the appropriate qualifications and/or experience to serve as panel members. The 'central list' will be maintained by Wirral Fostering Service.

The core membership for a Panel meeting will be a total membership comprising of the following:

- 1 Chairperson (Independent of the fostering service and children's social care )
- 1 Member of the Fostering Service
- 1 social worker with a minimum of three years post qualifying experience in child care social work
- 1 Member from Health (independent)
- 1 Foster Carer (Vice Chair)
- 1 Former Looked After Child - vacancy
- 1 Elected Member
- From January 2015, 1 Agency Adviser to panel

The Fostering Service is currently in the process of recruiting to its core membership following recent resignations. Two further social workers, one foster carer and 2 young people are required to expand the core membership. From January 2015, the LAC Service Manager will undertake the role of Agency Adviser to panel.

#### **2.1 Quoracy**

No business shall be conducted by a fostering panel unless at least five of its members, including the person appointed to chair the panel, or the vice chair, at least one social worker with 3 years post qualifying experience and there is at least one independent member meet at a panel.

#### **2.2 Membership requirements**

Each panel member will have been subject to relevant identity, DBS, local authority checks and references obtained.

All panel members would be expected to attend a significant number of meetings and apologies made in advance if they are not able to attend. Membership will be subject to annual review against agreed performance objectives. Members will also be subject to review if their attendance is poor.

Where the fostering service identifies that a panel member is not performing to the required standard this will be discussed with them promptly and any development needs will be addressed through advice and training.

Where the panel member's performance continues to remain below the required standard following advice, support and training, they will be informed that their services are no longer required. Notice of termination will be given in writing with the reasons for the decision.

A panel member or a person included on the central list may resign at any time by giving one month's notice in writing.

### **2.3 Confidentiality/conflict of interest**

All panel members will be asked to sign a confidentiality statement which states that "all information received by me in the course of my duties as a member of the panel will be regarded as strictly confidential and shall not be disclosed or communicated to an unauthorised person under any circumstances".

If a panel member is aware that a family is known to them in a capacity which may involve a conflict of interest i.e. personal friend, etc. the panel member concerned will notify the Chair prior to the panel when a decision will be made on whether a substitute should preside for the panel.

### **3. Objectives**

- To act in the best interests of children and young people placed in foster care by Wirral Council
- To ensure that foster carers registered by Wirral Council are able to discharge the responsibilities placed on them, to provide children and young people with a safe, stable and caring environment where their individual needs can be met and their potential realised
- To discharge their responsibilities the foster panel will scrutinise and review all information gathered by children's social care officers to make sure that informed recommendations can be made on the approval or otherwise of prospective foster carers and other associated issues.
- In making recommendations on the approval or rejection of prospective foster carers the panel will review all the information gathered during the assessment and ensure that it is complete.

### **4. Panel duties and responsibilities**

- To make recommendations on the approval or rejection of prospective foster carers having reviewed all the information gathered during the assessment and ensure that it is complete

- Agreeing the approval details e.g. age and number of children
- Matching children to long-term foster carers
- Considering any changes in foster carers approval
- Making recommendations about termination of a registration
- Considering foster carers annual reviews 1<sup>st</sup> review/changes to registration criteria
- Providing the quality assurance function in relation to the assessment process, in particular:
  - To ensure there is consistency of approach in assessment and reviews across the agency;
  - To monitor and review the work of assessors, identify problems, and provide feedback to children’s services management team (CSMT)
- To monitor the range and type of foster carers available to the authority in comparison to the needs of children
- To receive management information about the outcome of foster carers annual reviews
- To play an active role in monitoring and developing local fostering policy, procedure and practice and provide advice and recommendations

## 5. Duties and delegations

<b>Duties</b>	<b>Delegations</b>
Approval or rejection of applications from prospective foster carers	Recommendation made by fostering panel either by full agreement or majority approval
Termination of approval of foster carers	Recommendation by fostering panel either by full agreement or majority approval
Considering action required following the outcome of investigations in respect of foster carers	Recommendation by the fostering panel either by full agreement or majority approval
Approval of the registration category of foster carer or alteration of registration category	Recommendation by the fostering panel either by full agreement or majority approval
Consideration of continued approval as foster carer at 1 <sup>st</sup> annual review	Recommendation by the fostering panel either by full agreement or majority approval
Matching of children to long-term placements	Recommendation by the fostering panel either by full agreement or majority approval
Agreement of immediate placements with a connected person (Regulation 24 The Care planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010 )	To be decided by the Senior Manager, Children in Care
Agreement of planned placements with connected persons ((Regulation 24 The Care planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010 )	Recommendation by the fostering panel either by full agreement or majority approval
Agreement of an immediate exemption of placement or placements outside of registration	To be agreed by the LAC Service Manager, and reported to the next panel

Decision to suspend and resume foster placement after an investigation of a child protection nature	Recommendation by fostering panel
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**6. Minutes of panel**

Minutes of panel will be taken by the designated minute taker and for each case will record the recommendation and reasons. The Senior Manager for Children in Care decides whether to accept the Panel recommendation. The minutes are circulated prior to the next panel.

**7. Agency decision maker**

Following each panel the fostering panel agency advisor will meet with the agency decision maker to ensure that the decisions are made within the required timescales of seven working days of receiving the panel minutes.

Applicants are informed of the decision in writing and those approved are provided with all relevant information and asked to sign the Foster Care Agreement. They are allocated a Supervising Social Worker and supported/prepared to take a placement and receive regular supervision.