



Learning and Development for Foster Carers – October 2024

1. Introduction and Legal Framework

The Fostering Regulation 2011 require a fostering agency to “provide foster carers with, training, advice, information and support as appears necessary in the interests of the children placed with them”.

The Statutory Guidance on Fostering says that foster carers should be supported to maintain an ongoing training and development portfolio which demonstrates how they are meeting the skills required of them. Foster carers should be able to evidence the fostering Training Development Standards (TSD) within the specified timescales.

Worcestershire Fostering (WF) recognises the importance of training which supports carers to increase their skills and knowledge and has a positive impact on the care they of e after children. This policy sets out how WF meets the requirements set out above.

WF has a payment for skills fee structure which is based on the training and development that foster carers have undertaken and their active experience of fostering. The Payment for Skills Policy should be read in conjunction with this policy as it sets out the training requirements that foster carers must meet to progress and maintain the fee level.

2. Types of training and learning opportunities

WF recognises that there are a wide variety of training and learning opportunities available to foster carers which are delivered in a variety of formats. There is an expectation that foster carers will access training provided by WF. WF also recognises that foster carers may also access training from other sources such as their work or through personal research and where this is relevant to their role as a foster carer this should be included in their Training Record.

Formal training

This includes formal classroom or video conferencing training sessions with other foster carers and professionals provided by WF, specific conferences and training courses run by organisations including foster carers workplace.

Online training and distance learning

This includes online learning (e-learning) courses accessed through WF, information that foster carers have obtained via the internet and courses run by external organisations. This must be evidenced by certificates and through discussion with the supervising social worker on how it relates to their practice as a foster carer.

Independent learning

This includes reporting on the radio, TV or in newspapers that foster carers have listened to or read. This must be evidenced through discussion with the supervising social worker on how it relates to their practice as a foster carer.

Specialist training

WF will commission training for foster carers looking after children with specific needs this is required to care for the child or is beneficial to the child.

3. Foster Carer Training Programme

The Learning and Development Programme runs from April to March each year. A copy of the programme will be sent to foster carers prior to the start of the new training year and includes details on how to book on training. Additional training may be added during the year and foster carers will be notified of this by the WF Training Team.

The WF Training Team will regularly email foster carers and staff an update on the courses plus other training-related news and information.

4. Pre-Approval Training

E-learning

During the assessment process applicants will be asked to complete the following training:

- Emergency First Aid
- Safeguarding
- Safer Caring
- Understanding Behaviour
- Valuing Difference

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Mandatory Core Training

Foster Carers who are new to fostering are expected to complete the courses set out in the table below and renew them every 3 years via Refresher training sessions. They will be unable to progress to Level 2 under the Payment for Skills unless they have completed these courses.

The Supervising Social Worker should check with those who have fostered before whether they have completed these courses with their previous agency, and that the training was in timescale. i.e. have they completed First Aid training in the preceding 3 years.

Training and timescale
Emergency First Aid To be completed by the one carer during the Assessment Stage, and by the second carer within 6 months of approval.
Safeguarding To be completed by both carers during the Assessment Stage
Safer Caring

Developmental Training

WF offers a wide range of developmental training which builds on the mandatory core training. There are no timescales for completing developmental training but foster carers need to be aware of the training criteria for progression to and maintenance of the payment for skills level.

In discussion with their supervising social worker the foster carer should identify courses that will develop their skills and knowledge to support them to meet the needs of the children placed with them. Foster Carers may also want to develop their skills and knowledge to enable them to offer placements to a wider range of children.

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Post Approval

As a minimum as part of the foster carers annual review their supervising social worker will discuss safer caring with other household members

When drawing up individual Safer Caring\Risk assessment for children to be placed consideration needs to be given to what information needs to be shared with other household members while respecting the privacy of the child to be placed.

In some situations it may be beneficial for household members to complete an e course or to attend the classroom or video conferencing session on Safer Caring when they are likely to be involved in supporting the approved foster carer

e.g. an adult child who is baby sitting or taking the child out to activities. The supervising social worker should discuss this with the foster carers and book the household member on the training if appropriate.

Appendix 1 - Guidance for Foster Carers for the completion of the Training, Support and Development Standards Workbooks

The aim of the Training, Support and Development Standards workbook is for you to show that you have the relevant skills and knowledge as foster carers. You will be able to show evidence of this through your practice and the knowledge that you have gained. You may do this through a number of ways which can include: training courses, supervision sessions, reviews (for children and yourselves), reading relevant information, distance learning course, e-learning etc.

Foster carers are expected to complete the relevant TSD course to evidence they have the relevant skills and knowledge to be approved as foster carers. There are 3 workbooks for different types of carers and with different timescales which are on the Department of Education Website www.gov.uk/collections/guidance-for-foster-carer or your supervising social worker.

Type of Carer	Timescale for Completion
Mainstream Foster Carers	12 months from approval
Family and Friends Carers	18 months from approval
Short Break Carers	12 months from approval

The workbooks can be completed on a computer or can be printed so you can handwrite.

All workbooks will have some guidance and information in them as well and you should read through this to help you to understand what is expected. This guidance has been written to provide you with some further guidance and hopefully clarify some of the questions you may have.

