



Tier Information

Foster Carer Requirements and skills

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Requirements and skills foster carers must demonstrate to achieve progression through the skills levels

1. Applicants who apply to become mainstream foster carers for children not known to them receive initial training, skills to foster, undertake a detailed family assessment, and commence their Training, Support and Development standards (TSD) portfolio, which provides evidence to demonstrate how they meet the required range of competencies for the appropriate level. The TSD workbook must be completed within 12 months of approval.
2. Applicants who are relatives or friends of children they care for must complete a detailed family assessment. Receive initial training, skills to foster training. They must complete their TSD portfolio within 12 months of approval.
3. These TSD competencies cover areas involved in both caring for children who are in public care and working with the Local Authority and other agencies, and are designed to address how foster carers meet the required national standards.
4. Applicants are required to provide evidence of how they meet all the competencies, required by the TSD, of which there 7 standards in total.

The training, support and development standards for foster care

Standard 1: Understand the principles and values essential for fostering children and young people

Standard 2: Understand your role as a Foster Carer

Standard 3: Understand health and safety, and healthy care

Standard 4: Know how to communicate effectively

Standard 5: Understand the development of children and young people

Standard 6: Safeguard children and young people

Standard 7: Develop yourself

5. Once the portfolio is completed, this is presented to Fostering Manager to be assessed and competencies agreed as being met.

6. Most foster carers will have had a formal assessment, attended the fostering panel and be registered foster carers with Lancashire County Council before a child is placed. Further they will have attended Skills to Foster training and commenced their TSD workbook.

7. However for Family and Friends carers the child may have been in placement prior to the full assessment being completed.

Requirements and skills foster carers must demonstrate to achieve progression through the skills levels

1. The level of skills uplift will be considered at a carer's annual review and carers must be able to demonstrate that they have attended **support groups** and **training** as required.
2. The requirements for each level are as outlined below:

TIER 1

- (a) Have sufficient accommodation for child/children for which they wish to be approved.
- (b) Mainstream carers; have successfully completed an initial preparation group – Skills to Foster.
- (c) Have completed a Form F assessment or equivalent, and been approved by Fostering Panel and the Agency Decision-maker.
- (d) Live within Lancashire or bordering authorities if offering a short-term placement, unless to be approved for a specific child where the existing relationship indicates this placement is likely to best meet their needs.
- (e) You are committed to attend support groups on a regular basis, at least six per review period.
- (f) Complete the following five training courses within the first year of fostering:
 - Recognising & Respecting Differences
 - First Aid for Foster Carers (both carers if a two carer household)
 - Effective Communication & Keeping Written Records
 - Introduction to Safeguarding & Child Protection
 - Introduction to Child Development, Attachment & Promoting Resilience
- (g) Foster carers should attend additional courses outlined in the annual Foster Carer Training Programme, identified as a training need during their assessment and/or during their first year of fostering.

It would be expected that one carer is available during the times the child is at home. Work outside the home would usually be limited to no more than 18.5 hours per week as long as this has been discussed and agreed with their supervising social worker. A post of 18.5 hours usually constitutes approximately half of a fulltime post and often opens the opportunity to job share. This factor may assist foster carers in successfully negotiating a reduction of working hours with employers and maximises their income from other sources:

- (a) **Hours of work must be compatible with their fostering task and the level of need and required care of the child in placement.** This needs to be discussed with your supervising social worker to ensure you can

meet the child's needs during times such as school holidays, illness or other absence.

- (b) Foster carers must be committed to promoting and facilitating contact.

Tier 2

- (a) Completion of the TDS workbooks
Completed or evidenced they have booked on the five mandatory courses and additional three training courses identified as part of their training needs.
- (b) To maintain Level 2 carers must complete further training courses **according to the carer's identified needs** as determined at review. These courses are outlined in the annual Foster Carer Training Programme, the Children and Young People Service general annual Training Programme and the Safeguarding Programme.
- (c) Where a carer does not agree with any aspect of their review, including any identified training needs, they may make representations to the Practice Manager.
- (d) Evidenced their commitment and ability to be able to work positively within a multi-disciplinary team of professionals to meet a child's care plan.
- (e) To have attended a minimum of six support group sessions.
- (f) To have the ability to meet the needs of most children in the age profile for which they are approved and have demonstrated that they are committed and able to meet the needs of children who exhibit challenging/distressed behaviour or children with complex needs.
- (g) To be able to present accurate information on a child within the child's care planning and statutory review process, including a commitment to assist the child's participation in his/her care planning and review process.
- (h) To be committed to develop through experience and training, a range of skills in contributing to an assessment of a child's needs, and presenting this information accurately within a child's care planning and statutory

review process. Also to be able, creatively, to assist the child's participation in his/her care planning and review process.

- (i) To be prepared to assist in events to recruit other carers including giving information to members of the public.
- (j) Are able to offer some planned respite placements or day care support to other carers in line with their profile.
- (k) It would be expected that one carer is available during the times the child is at home. Work outside the home would usually be limited to no more than 18.5 hours per week as long as this has been discussed and agreed with their supervising social worker. **Hours of work must be compatible with their fostering task and the level of need and required care of the child in placement.** This needs to be discussed with your supervising social worker to ensure you can meet the child's needs during times such as school holidays, illness or other absence.
- (l) To promote and facilitate contact, including transport.

Tier 3

To achieve Tier 3 is exceptional as you have gone above and beyond the already high standards described in Tier 2.

- (a) To have achieved all the necessary requirements for level 2 and have achieved NVQ level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People or a recognised equivalent qualification. This would be at the discretion of a senior manager.

Keeps up to date with aspects of professional development as a Foster Carer utilising knowledge gained in working alongside more newly approved, less experienced Foster Carers.

- (b) To facilitate, transport and manage contact in accordance within the child's care plan. Can work productively with the child's Care Plan and be confident and capable to facilitate contact either within their own home or the community.

Is available and flexible with regard to working with parents to rehabilitate a child home.

- (c) Have evidenced experience and proven ability in assisting at Fostering Service events to recruit other carers. This includes working alongside fostering team social workers at information sessions. Sessions may be for other members of Lancashire County Council staff and/or the general public. And/or they may be required to provide support to less experienced carers e.g. mentoring with the TSD Workbook.
- (d) It would be expected that a carer is available to the child for most of the time and not be over reliant on other people. Work outside the home would usually be limited to no more than 18.5 hours per week as long as this has been discussed and agreed with their supervising social worker. **Hours of work must be compatible with their fostering task and the level of need and required care of the child in placement.** This needs to be discussed with your supervising social worker to ensure you can meet the child's needs during times such as school holidays, illness or other absence.
- (e) Is available to support, guide and advise other Carers.
- (f) To have proven they have participated in providing 24 hour emergency cover and support to other foster carers, through either planned or unplanned short breaks/day care or by telephone support, according to any accommodation constraints in the foster home.
- (g) Is flexible and receptive to a variety of placement requests, such as Parent & Baby Placements; High Risk Behaviour; Children Involved With Criminal Activity; Large Sibling Groups; and maintains good outcomes for the child.
- (h) Continue to attend support and training groups and be prepared to assist as requested by workers in planning and delivering these groups. To have evidenced a proactive approach to their own personal and professional development.
- (h) Take a lead role within service development. Uses their experience and skills in a variety of communicative ways with others, e.g. presenting at Support Groups, conversations with Foster Carers, writing an article for the Newsletter, presenting at childcare meetings and representing the service at events.
- (i) To represent the local area at the County Forum.

Progressing from Tier 2 to Tier 3

The foster carer will complete the **Tier Evidence Level 3** document and submit it as part of their foster carer review paperwork, if the evidence is supported by their allocated social worker and practice manager it will be submitted to a senior manager from the Fostering & Adoption service who will give it consideration. The decision regarding the request will be made six weeks after the date of the foster carer review.

Tier statuses are reviewed annually or before if required for example at an early review.

LEVEL 3+

Level 3+ is dependent on the needs of the child, this will only be awarded at the discretion of the Fostering and Adoption senior manager in consultation with the Childs senior manager.