



Ordinary people doing something extraordinary

## Foster Carer Induction Pack



**We foster for  
Bradford.**



V1 2025

# WELCOME TO FOSTER FOR BRADFORD

## Part of Bradford Children and Families Trust

We are delighted that you have joined our Bradford fostering family and we are looking forward to working with you. This induction pack is a short practical guide to help and support you in your very first days as a foster carer. We hope you find it useful and if you have any feedback (good or bad) about this pack or your journey to becoming a foster carer, please do let us know – you can email [Foster for Bradford@bradfordcft.org.uk](mailto:FosterforBradford@bradfordcft.org.uk)

This pack has been created to support you in your first year as a foster carer working with Foster for Bradford and should be used alongside the online foster carer handbook. We hope that it will help you in your fostering role, help you with your first and any subsequent foster children or young people you will care for and help you develop your skills to benefit Bradford's children.

As we hope you know, foster carers in Bradford provide family homes for most of the children who are looked after in our district. Bradford Children and Families Trust prefer for children and young people to live in a fostering household because it has been proven that children have better outcomes rather than in any other type of care provision.

Foster care is vital and our need for foster carers has never been greater. The number of children in our district is rising – Bradford is Britain's youngest city. One in four of our residents are young people and the child population is predicted to grow at around 2,000 per year. Such a large youth population inevitably means we have more children in need of a foster home.

If any of your friends or family are interested in finding out more about becoming a foster carer with Bradford, please put them in touch with us. We are happy to talk to anyone who is interested in fostering.

Thank you for stepping forward to support Bradford's children who are looked after and good luck.

Sincerely



Linzi Nicholson  
Service Manager



Kim Bray  
Service Manager

## **YOU'VE BEEN APPROVED, WHAT NOW?**

Now that you have been approved as a foster carer, the following will happen:

### **Meet with your supervising social worker**

All approved foster carers are allocated their own supervising social worker (SSW). Your assessing social worker (ASW) will inform you who your SSW is and arrange a meeting between you, your ASW and your new SSW. This may take a few weeks, so in the meantime, your ASW will continue to support you.

In some cases, your ASW may support you for the first six months.

Your SSW will be your main source of support from Foster for Bradford, and they will help you, advise you, give you regular supervision and be responsible for completing your annual reviews.

### **Sign your written foster carer agreement**

By law, all foster carers must have a written agreement which sets out what is expected from the carer and the support that will be provided.

You should have received two copies of your foster carer agreement, which include your terms of approval: one is for you to sign and return to us in the enclosed stamped addressed envelope and the other is for you to keep for your records. If there are any questions or problems with these documents, please email [fostering@bradfordcft.org.uk](mailto:fostering@bradfordcft.org.uk) and the business support team will help sort it out for you.

### **Request your ID badge**

Trust foster carers are required to have a Trust ID badge. You will be supplied with a partially completed form that includes some details and our cost code. Please complete the rest of this form and return to your ASW / SSW or as advised by them.

### **Get to know the fostering handbook**

The fostering handbook is online and can be found at [www.fosteringhandbook.com/bradford](http://www.fosteringhandbook.com/bradford)

This is a useful resource that will support you in all aspects of fostering (see section: The Fostering Handbook and Communications from Foster for Bradford).

### **Induction training**

Your ASW / SSW will give you some information about the training that is run for foster carers. There is a mandatory induction programme that newly approved foster carers must complete, but there may be other courses that you or your SSW feel would be beneficial. Training newsletters are regularly emailed to foster carers (see section: Fostering Handbook and Communications from Foster for Bradford).

Your ASW / SSW will ask business support to create an account on our online training system called 'The Training Hub'. If you are fostering as a couple, you will need individual email addresses. More information can be found in the Training section on page 13.

## **Payments**

Included in this pack is information about the payments you will receive and the other items that you can claim for such as school uniforms, mileage and equipment. If there is anything you are unsure about, make sure your SSW explains this to you clearly. If you have not already done so, you will need to fill out a form giving the details of the bank account that you would like your payments to be paid into.

The Trust uses an automated payments system and can only make payments into an account in the main carer's name. This can be a joint or shared account, but it cannot be in someone else's name (see Payments and Money Matters on page 14).

## **When are you available? (applicable to mainstream and short break carers only)**

You will need to make sure that your SSW knows how to contact you and when you are available, so that if a suitable referral is received by the Family Finding team, they can contact you.

## **Essential policies and procedures**

There are several procedures that you need to familiarise yourself with fairly quickly. These can be found online on our handbook or on our Procedures website (link on home page of handbook site): [www.fosteringhandbook.com/bradford](http://www.fosteringhandbook.com/bradford)

We do not expect you to read all of them straight away, but you should know where they are and have an overview of the following:

- Developing a Safer Caring Plan Guidance (handbook)
- West Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Procedures  
(<http://westyorkscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/contents.html>)
- Recording & reporting (handbook)
- Bradford Children's Services Online Procedures  
(<http://bradfordchildcare.proceduresonline.com/index.html>)

# THE FOSTERING HANDBOOK & COMMUNICATIONS FROM Foster for Bradford

Your fostering handbook can be found online at:

[www.fosteringhandbook.com/bradford](http://www.fosteringhandbook.com/bradford)

We wrote the fostering handbook to advise and support foster carers working with us as short term, long term, short breaks and kinship carers.

The handbook provides you with guidance and information on procedures and good practice and to be a useful reference manual.

In the handbook, you will find the Trust's policies, procedures and guidance for situations foster carers commonly face. It has been written to help you understand what we expect of you.

The handbook contains links to the Minimum Standards for Fostering Services and references to the relevant Training, Support and Development standards. You should use the handbook to support your learning and development, particularly during your induction and in relation to meeting the relevant Training, Support and Development (TSD) standards for foster carers relevant to your role. It also provides you with information about how to complain on behalf of your child or yourself if you are not happy about the services you/your child receives.

We update the handbook regularly. The Resources section contains useful information, forms and records, meetings, events, training and support as well as a comprehensive list of local contacts.

## Communications and notices

We will communicate with you (and other foster carers) via regular e-newsletters and email. These contain information about events that might interest you, opportunities for you to get involved more in Foster for Bradford, training and support provision, important updates and reminders about policies and procedures.

You will need an email address to receive the newsletter, as well as to access the online training and training booking system.

If you do not have an email account, you can easily set one up for free. Five popular ones that are easy to use, have lots of storage and can be accessed via computer, tablet and phone are: Gmail, AOL, Outlook, Mail.com and Yahoo! mail.

If you think we do not have your correct email address, please send your name and email address to [fostering@bradfordcft.org.uk](mailto:fostering@bradfordcft.org.uk) stating clearly that you are asking them to check we have your correct email address on our systems.

You can also join our supportive online community of foster carers on Facebook. Please search Facebook for **Official Foster for Bradford** group and answer the membership questions to join this private group.



### **Sharing information securely**

You must not send any unsecured emails to your supervising social worker or anyone else that contain confidential, personal information about yourself or any child you look after, such as names, addresses, dates of birth, records, etc.

To help you to communicate by secure email, we need you to sign up for a **free** Galaxkey individual account. This will allow you to send, receive, open and reply to secured emails.

You can also secure any documents on your (Windows) personal computer and securely share these with your supervising social worker or someone else.

Galaxkey is a relatively simple way of receiving and sending confidential information over the internet, but it does require you to set up an account. You can do this one of two ways:

1. The easiest way is to follow the instructions contained in the first secure email you receive from your SSW, make sure your SSW has your correct email address, or
2. Type **Galaxkey register me** into your search engine and then follow the online instructions to register for your free account.

You can then access your secure emails either through a web browser (such as Chrome or Firefox or Edge) or by downloading and installing the Galaxkey app on your mobile device from your app store of choice.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality for children who are looked after is extremely important. Children must have confidence that their carers will respect their right to confidentiality. Children must also be able to see and understand how foster carers do this.

You must ensure that you securely store information about the child or young person. This information must not be shared with anyone who is not authorised.

You must make sure that information relating to children and their families remains private and confidential. We expect that you will not share information with anyone outside of Foster for Bradford and is only shared with relevant staff involved in the child's care, this includes your wider family and friends.

All information about a child should be considered confidential. You need to ask yourself the following questions before giving out information (either verbally or written):

### **Questions to ask yourself before sharing information:**

- Who am I passing information to?
- Am I clear about the reasons why I am sharing this information?
- Does the child know that I am sharing this information and is it in their best interest that it is shared?
- Should anyone else know that I am passing on this information?
- Have I made it clear to others that this information is private and confidential?
- Child protection issues / disclosures cannot be kept confidential, and information should always be passed on in these cases. You should share your concerns with your SSW.
- You must not share information about children you look after, or have looked after in the past, with other foster carers unless the child will be moving on to be cared for by that foster carer.
- Basic confidentiality guidelines are incorporated in your agreement that you have signed.
- When the child move out / moves to another family, all the information you have gathered about the child, should be returned to the Trust via a Social Worker.

## **LOOKING AFTER A CHILD IN CARE**

**Not all of this section will apply to you if you already know the child coming to live with you.**

### **Agreeing to look after a child or young person in care (this is not applicable to kinship carers)**

In order to arrange for a child to come live with you, either your SSW or a Family Finding social worker will contact you to discuss the child (or children). This is so you can decide whether or not to proceed.

Although we hope that you will not turn down a child or young person, it is important that you feel able to say no if you do not feel that the child or young person is a match with you and your family for whatever reason.

Don't be afraid to ask questions such as: What does the child like and dislike? What are the family time arrangements? How long will I be looking after the child? Are there any risks you need to be aware of?

### **Placement planning meeting**

If you have agreed to care for a child, then a pre-placement meeting should happen before the child moves in with you to plan how the needs of the child will be met. If a pre-placement planning meeting has not been possible (for example, if it is an emergency arrangement), then it must take place within 5 working days of the child moving in.

The meeting is usually attended by your SSW, the child's social worker, sometimes the child and sometimes the child's family if this is seen to be appropriate.

### **What documents should I have?**

By this point, you should have all the information about the children including their full name, date of birth, schools, social workers, GP, dentist, etc. You should also have received signed consent to allow the child to receive medical treatment.

This information is usually contained in the Placement Plan and the delegated authority tool, which lays out who makes decisions about different aspects of the child's life (see the handbook chapter: What decisions can I make? for more information).

The plan will include any risks relating to the child and how these should be managed. Your household safer caring policy will need to be reviewed, and all looked after children will need an individual safer caring policy.

### **Equipment**

Hopefully, you are already set up and the bedroom /bedrooms have the necessary furniture such as a bed or cot, wardrobe and bedding. However, if you need additional equipment such as a pram or car seat or other specialist equipment to care for the child, the child's social worker or your supervising social worker will be able to help you get what is needed.



## **Your profile (not applicable to kinship carers)**

During your assessment, you should have produced a profile of your family and household that will be used to support children and young people coming into your care to know what your house looks like, what everyone is called, if there are any pets and so on. If you have not yet written your profile, your SSW will help you write this.

## **Life story work**

One difficulty that children in care often find is that they have no record of the things they have done, holiday snaps, mementos, etc. It is important then that as well as your daily recordings, you start to keep items such as these from the moment that a child comes to live with you. Buy a memory box for the young person and start to keep the things that you have collected and the photos you have taken so that they will have them to go back to as they get older. Keep notes with the mementos and photos that explain why you have kept them.

## **Child in care / looked after child review**

The first review should be held within 20 days of a child being looked after and will be chaired by an Independent Reviewing Officer. This will review the plans for the child and look to ensure that their needs are being met. A further review is held within the next three months and further reviews will then be held throughout a child's time in care at a frequency never less than once every 6 months.

## **Medicals**

All children who come into foster carer should have a medical with a paediatrician within 28 days. Subsequent medicals then take place at least annually for the duration of the time that a child is in care. Carers are often required to accompany children to these appointments as they may need support; this is something you should discuss with your SSW.

## **Recording**

If you have taken a new child into your care, your SSW will have explained how to make / keep records. Further guidance on what to record is provided in our online policy and in the handbook and you must take the time to read this. Briefly, you must record every day, keep it factual, write the positives as well as the negatives and keep it brief if possible!

## **Communication**

As a simple rule, always remember to keep your child's social worker and your own SSW up to date in terms of what is going on for the foster child you care for and your family as a whole. Any significant changes, any anxieties or problems you are facing should be communicated sooner rather than later. Please remember that it's much better to make others aware of what is going on than trying to struggle on without the help, advice and support you need. If you are not sure about something, then ask your SSW, never assume they are aware of the issue.

## **What decisions you can make**

In the pre-placement planning meeting, you should all discuss what decisions you are and are not allowed to make on behalf of the child, this is called Delegated Authority. If you feel this hasn't been covered in the meeting, make sure you mention it to your SSW before the meeting finishes.

## **What you might be feeling**

However anxious you are, it's nothing compared to how scared your foster child is....

A lot of foster carers say that their scariest moments came when they cared for their first child or young person; would they look nervous? Would the child sense they were inexperienced? How would they know what to say? Your social worker has faith in you, you've been through months of assessment and training, and you wouldn't have been approved if we didn't think you could do it.

## **Helping the child settle into your home**

On the next page you will find some top tips to help you settle the child into your home and there are also some tips online (see the handbook chapter: Helping a child settle into your home). It is a good idea to read this through as it provides information about what you should expect before the child moves into your house as well as some tips to help you be prepared.

## **Emergencies**

There is a substantial section in the handbook called Safeguarding everyone in your household, which includes all the areas that constitute an emergency. It is advisable to familiarise yourself with the section as soon as possible. Here are a few scenarios that, if they occur, you should contact your SSW (or EDT if outside of office hours) to keep you, your family and the child safe:

- Any incidents or changes in circumstances that present any potential risk to children in your care. This includes concerns about your own children or immediate family.
- Emergency trips to hospitals - you will need medical consent from the Trust.
- Allegations – if the child says you have hit them, or they are overtly challenging, in order to make sure that you are protecting yourself and your family
- Missing – if your child has not returned a substantial time after curfew and you can't get hold of them.

## HELPING A CHILD SETTLE IN

Your duties as a foster carer start as soon as a child walks through the door, so it is important that the child feels welcome and relaxed from day one. Each child brings their own challenges and rewards and provides a different experience of being a foster carer.

Both the child and you and your family will have to make adjustments.

Here are four ways which will help aid a smooth transition of your child or young person into your home (as written by an experienced foster carer).

### **1. Be approachable**

It is important you are friendly, so meet the child with a smile and positive body language so they know the door is always open. If your child is of a young age and proportionally smaller than you, kneel down to meet them at eye level when you are talking to them. This way, you won't seem so scary but someone they can learn to trust.

### **2. Be sensitive**

You may want to give the child a welcoming hug and show your affection, but some children may be sensitive to touch. After all, in their eyes you are still a stranger. Be aware of the child's reactions but don't overact or make a big deal about things. Trust will build slowly if you have created a warm and welcoming environment.

### **3. Introduce routines and rules**

Routine will be influential in creating a sense of normality, so let them know how things work in your house. Don't be forceful but try to be as clear as you can. The child might have problems adjusting to your rules because of their past so always be understanding. Remember the child may be too afraid to ask questions so try to cover all angles. Keep the house running as close to normal so the atmosphere stays at a more relaxed level.

### **4. Be patient**

The amount of time it takes for a child to adjust is completely unique to that child; no two children will ever be the same. The child's temperament and previous circumstances will play an influential role, and children who have had multiple care givers may take longer to feel at home with you. The first weeks in a new home will be the most traumatic, and a difficult period for children to be able to retain all the information they have been exposed to. Don't be afraid to repeat yourself and ask the child what you can do to make them feel more comfortable.

# SUPPORT AND TRAINING

## Support

### Supervision

Your supervising social worker (SSW) will be your go-to person for any support, information, questions you might have during your life as a foster carer. The SSW you work with may change over the years. There may be times when your SSW is not available, but there will always be a duty worker during office hours in fostering you can contact for support by phone 01274 434475.

Email: **fostering.dutyteam@bradford.gov.uk**

You can contact your SSW at any time Monday to Friday between 8.30am and 5pm/4.30pm Fridays (depending on their work pattern). You should have their phone number, but you can also call Foster for Bradford business support team on

**01274 437343**

Email: **fostering@bradfordcft.org.uk**

The high level of supervision you will receive will make sure that you and your SSW are working together as a team to meet the needs of the looked after children you care for and to ensure that fostering is working well for you and your family.

Your SSW is working according to Fostering Practice Standards and will visit you a minimum of every 4 weeks.

In supervision, your SSW will help you identify your learning and development needs.

### Out of hours support

The Emergency Duty Team (EDT) provide out-of-hours cover for all social care emergencies within the Bradford district.

To contact the Emergency Duty Team, phone **01274 431010**

The service is available outside of normal office hours 365 days a year: Monday to Thursday 5pm to 7.30am the following morning; Friday 4.30pm to Monday 7.30am, with 24-hour cover at weekends and throughout Bank Holidays.

The EDT will respond to all calls as soon as possible but at certain times the worker on duty may be dealing with several matters or may be out on an urgent assessment. The telephone staff will advise you if this is the case and your call will be returned as soon as possible.

## **Support groups**

There are several support groups, both formal and informal. Please check these out on the Resources section of the Fostering Handbook and the dates will be published monthly in the Training & Support newsletter.

We highly recommend you attend these as they will offer support and information to help you understand your role as a carer.

## **Buddy**

If you feel you would benefit from an experienced foster carer “buddy”, please talk to your SSW. We will be able to put you in touch with someone who either lives near you or is fostering in the same way as you.

## **Bradford Independent Foster Carer Association**

Bradford has an independent foster carers’ association that can offer support to other carers. They hold their own coffee mornings and events.

Bradford Independent Foster Carer Association (BIFCA):

Email: [committee.bifca@outlook.com](mailto:committee.bifca@outlook.com)

## **The Fostering Network**

Upon approval as a foster carer in Bradford, Foster for Bradford signs you up to become a member of The Fostering Network, a national support organisation that provides everything from advice on all kinds of matters, a free counselling service and advice if you are worried about any aspect of fostering, accountancy advice (a paid for service), hundreds of high street discounts, and regular newsletters and emails. You will soon receive a welcome pack from them.

## **New Family Social –support for lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender foster carers**

We can provide membership to carers who would like to join a national community of foster carers and adopters who are LGBTQ+. If you identify as LGBTQ+, please either ask your SSW or contact [Helen.Picton@Bradfordcft.org.uk](mailto:Helen.Picton@Bradfordcft.org.uk) who will arrange.

## **Max Card**

Foster for Bradford purchases Max Cards for foster carers. The Max Card is designed to make days out more financially accessible for foster families by providing free or discounted entry to many great attractions. Your new Max Card is included in this pack if you have not already received it.

## **Bradford Leisure Card**

Bradford foster families can apply for a BLC. Currently, an adult card costs £3 and children’s cards cost £1.50 each. BLC entitles you and your family to reduced admission to a wide range of leisure activities in Bradford.

## Training

You are expected to complete the induction training program in your first 12 to 18 months outlined in your initial Personal Development Plan (PDP). This includes completing the national TSDs (Training, Support and Development Standards) workbook (one per household). **This workbook is a legal requirement for you to remain a foster carer.**

Please see: [www.gov.uk/government/collections/guidance-for-foster-carers](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/guidance-for-foster-carers)

Your SSW will talk to you about your training needs and organise for you to be signed up with an account with the online Training Hub.

You are required to do the following online/face to face training courses in the first 12 months of approval:

### **Year 1 core training for all carers** (correct as of January 25)

- Training, support & development (TSD) standards
- New carer induction training (delivered by training officer – 6 sessions)
- First Aid (in person) (Needs to be completed every 3 years)
- Equality & diversity (training hub) (Needs to be completed every 3 years)
- GDPR (training hub) (Needs to be completed every 3 years)
- Internet safety (training hub) (Needs to be completed every 3 years)
- Safeguarding (training hub) (Needs to be completed every 3 years)
- Safer caring & risk (training hub) (Needs to be completed every 3 years)
- De-escalation and managing challenging behaviour

### **Notification of training courses**

We will send you regular emails about the training that is available via an e-newsletter. It is vital that your email address is correct on our system. If you do not receive the training newsletter, please email: [fostering@bradfordcft.org.uk](mailto:fostering@bradfordcft.org.uk) with your name and your SSW's name and we will make sure your email is added to the list.

## PAYMENTS & MONEY MATTERS

### Up to date information about fees and allowances

The current fees, allowances and the principles that underpin the payments scheme can be found below and in the fostering handbook (section: Money Matters and Insurance).

Allowance Rates 2025-26					
Age Band			BCFT weekly rates (full-time carers)	BCFT daily rates (part-time carers) pro-rata / 74% of weekly allowance	BCFT weekly rates (part-time carers) 74% of weekly allowance
			£	£	£
0-4			176.00	18.61	130.24
5-11			194.00	20.51	143.56
11-15			220.00	23.26	162.80
16+			258.00	27.27	190.92

Weekly Skills Fee Rates 2025-26				
Year	Level	1 child	2 children	3 children
2025-26	Entry	124.44	186.66	248.88
	1	183.72	275.58	367.44
	2	260.20	390.30	520.40
	3	370.40	555.60	740.80
	Mockingbird / PACE / Shared Care Contracted Care	596.84		

Daily Skills Fee Rates 2025-26					
Year	Level	1 child	2 children	3 children	4 children
2025-26	Entry	17.78	26.67	35.55	44.44
	1	26.25	39.37	52.49	65.61
	2	37.17	55.76	74.34	92.93
	3	52.91	79.37	105.83	132.29

If you have any questions about your payments, please email the fostering finance team via [bcftbsproviderservicesfinance@bradfordcft.org.uk](mailto:bcftbsproviderservicesfinance@bradfordcft.org.uk)



### **When are fees and allowances paid?**

Allowances and / or fees are paid from your first placement every two weeks directly into your bank account. The payments are made in arrears.

Our automated payments system can only pay into a bank account that is in the name (or joint name) of the main carer on our system.

### **Additional allowances**

You will also receive additional financial support to purchase any essential equipment to prepare you for your first child or young person, such as bedroom furniture, safety gates, car seats and so on. More details can be found in the fostering handbook under Money Matters and Insurance; you should also speak to your SSW about these purchases.

Full time mainstream and kinship carers will also receive additional allowances when you have a child or young person in their care for summer holidays (paid in June), a festival allowance (paid in November) and a birthday allowance paid on the nearest pay date to the child's birthday.

Other allowances may be payable, so do check the fostering handbook.

### **Questions about payments**

If you need to speak to someone about carer payments, please email [fostering.adminteam@bradford.gov.uk](mailto:fostering.adminteam@bradford.gov.uk) requesting a call back.

### **Tax, National Insurance and Universal Credit**

Please see: [www.gov.uk/support-for-foster-parents/tax-arrangements](https://www.gov.uk/support-for-foster-parents/tax-arrangements) Financial

support if you are on a low income and are of working age: Please see:

[www.gov.uk/support-for-foster-parents/claiming-benefits](https://www.gov.uk/support-for-foster-parents/claiming-benefits) Local advice and help

The Bradford & Airedale Advice is a network of advice centre's that can offer advice to claimants regarding benefits.

Web: [www.bradfordandairedaleadvice.org.uk](https://www.bradfordandairedaleadvice.org.uk)



## **Annual Leave Entitlement**

In the Foster Carer Handbook – Money Matters & Insurance chapter it stipulates that foster carers are entitled to:

*Up to 28 days' holiday pay per annum (skills payment only) (section 2.4)* The leave

period should be calculated from 1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> March each year. The leave will

also be pro rata from the point of approval.

### **Annual Leave Requests and Notification to SSW/Fostering Service**

A foster carer should discuss their intentions and requests regarding when they would like to take their annual leave with their SSW during their supervision visits.

When considering taking their annual leave and planning for their fostered child(ren), the foster carer should consider their Back-Up Carers (BUCs) in the first instance. It is in children and young people's best interests to stay for extended periods with people they know.

Where alternate foster carers (holiday care) are required, the SSW must make enquiries initially with any foster carers who have previously cared for the child/young person before consulting with the Placement team about a search. The task of liaising with previous foster carers. should not be undertaken by the foster carer.

The foster carer should give at least 8 – weeks' notice when making an annual leave request. This is expected for leave periods where BUCs or alternate foster carers (holiday care) are being considered or where the child/children are going on the holiday as this allows sufficient time for necessary risk assessments, matching and permissions etc to be achieved.

There is an expectation that any annual leave requests for 2-weeks or over should be referred to a Fostering Service Manager for consideration and agreement. For agreement to be given a clear plan as to how the child/young person's needs will be met during the leave period should be provided.

Any requests received within the 8-week notice period should give very careful consideration as to the needs of the fostered child(ren), young person and whether the short-notice is likely to impact on their emotional well-being as planning could be impacted.

### **Tracking Annual Leave Days and Payments**

It is the foster carers responsibility to count the number of annual leave days they take over the 12-month period.

When carers wish to take their leave, they must complete a Foster Carer Annual Leave Notification form (Appendix A) and forward to their SSW via email.

The SSW must sign and then forward the Foster Carer Annual Leave Notification form to Fostering Finance so the carers' leave can be tracked by the service and relevant payments be made.

Fostering Finance will ensure the carer is paid the skills allowance during the annual leave period. The carers will not receive the maintenance part of the foster carer allowance as the fostered child/young person will not be in their care.

If a foster carer does not take all of the 28-days entitlement over the 12-month period, the leftover days cannot be carried over to the next 12-months. The carers also will not be paid in lieu of the leftover days. The days will effectively be lost.

## **A TO Z OF PEOPLE AND TERMS YOU MAY COME ACROSS**

### **Adoption / OAWY – One Adoption West Yorkshire**

If you are a foster carer looking after babies and younger children, you will meet and work with family finding social workers from One Adoption West Yorkshire, the adoption agency that covers West Yorkshire.

### **Agency Decision Maker ADM**

The Agency Decision Maker is responsible for making the decisions as to who can or cannot foster. In making a decision, the ADM must consider the papers that have been submitted to the fostering panel and document what they have taken into consideration.

### **Birth families**

Children who come into foster care may still have family time with their birth families including their mum, dad, brothers, sisters, grandparents, aunts and uncles. The amount of family time is decided by the courts.

### **CAMHS – Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service**

This service is run by the NHS but is part of the support provided by the Trust. The team includes psychologists who provide a service that support and promotes the mental health of children who are looked after. The services provided include direct individual and group work with children as well as consultation with carers and other professionals.

### **CCHDT – Children with Complex Health and Disabilities Team**

CCHDT is part of the Integrated SEND Assessment and Support Service. The team provides a social care assessment and care management service to those disabled children and young people with the most complex needs.

### **CSW – child's social worker**

This is the social worker who will hold direct case responsibility for the child. They are responsible for co-ordinating the plan for the child, and they should also visit regularly and communicate with you about any plans or arrangements that have been made for the child. Children's social workers work for Bradford Children and Families Trust.

### **Duty**

Foster for Bradford has a duty system for all fostering queries and emergencies. Foster carers can call the duty worker when they are unable to get in touch with their social worker. The duty desk is covered Monday – Thursday 8.30am to 5pm and 4.30pm on Fridays, the desk is closed for lunch from 12.30 to 1.30pm. Out of hours calls go to the Out of Hours Emergency Duty Team.

## **Early Help & Prevention**

This team provides services for families to help them do well, stay safe and resolve problems at the earliest possible opportunity, before they become more serious.

## **EHCP – Education Health & Care Plans**

EHCPs replace the old Statements. An EHCP is for children and young people aged up to 25 who need more support than is available through special educational needs support.

EHCPs identify educational, health and social needs and set out the additional support to meet those needs.

## **Edge of Care**

The term 'edge of care' has become general shorthand for defining children and families with a high level of need, such that an immediate or potential risk of family breakdown is present and entry to care is imminent.

## **Foster for Bradford Registered Manager**

Emma Naylor is the Registered Manager. It is her role to oversee the progress of Foster for Bradford and drive positive change.

## **IRO - Independent Reviewing Officer & FIRO - Independent Fostering Reviewing officer**

All children who are looked after must have a regular review meeting and this is chaired by an independent reviewing officer. The reviewing officers are members of the Trusts Safeguarding and Child Protection team and are separate from the child social workers' teams. The IRO's job is to ensure that the plans for the child are in place and appropriate. Reviews can be held at the foster carer's home if this is felt to be appropriate and carers are expected to be a part of this meeting and to give their view.

Foster for Bradford has independent fostering reviewing officers (FIRO) who provide an independent oversight of the service's procedures, processes and decisions. They will chair your annual review meetings each and every year and provide a recommendation about your continued approval as a carer.

## **Looked after child / child who is looked after**

All these terms are sometimes used to refer to children and young people who are being cared for by the Trust. This includes children placed with foster carers they don't know, children placed with carers they have a connection to (such as relatives or family friends) who have been formally approved as a foster carer to look after them; children living in residential care; children who are subject to care orders but are still living with their parents. Children can only become 'looked after' with the consent of their parents (which is called a Section 20) or through a care order made by the Court.

### **Recruitment & Assessment Team**

Foster for Bradford has 1 recruitment and assessment team that promotes the service and recruits new carers and 2 assessment teams that assess kinship foster carers. If you are interested in getting involved in recruiting new foster carers, speak to your SSW or email:

### **Mockingbird**

The Mockingbird Family Model was originally developed by The Mockingbird Society in America in 2004. The model works by linking 6 to 10 fostering families with an experienced hub home carer forming a “constellation” of foster carers in a local community.

The hub home carer offers planned overnight and emergency short breaks for foster carers within the constellation, coordinates activities and offers training and support. The aim is to build relationships and empower families to support each other and manage problems before they escalate.

If you would like to find out more about joining a hub, please speak with your SSW.

### **MASH - multi agency safeguarding hub**

This team is a multi-agency approach to children in need and child protection. The team is made up from the Trust social work service, the Police, health & education professionals. MASH screens all new referrals and provides a multi-disciplinary consultation service for safeguarding concerns relating to children.

### **EDT - Out of Hours Emergency Duty Team**

EDT provides a telephone service to support foster carers (and other types of carers) across the Bradford district outside of office hours.

### **(Pre-) Planning Placement Meeting**

A meeting must be held before a child moves into a foster carer’s home, or within 5 working days if it is an emergency so that information can be shared with the foster carer about the child’s needs, routines, family time arrangements, etc.

### **SGO - Special Guardianship Order**

A SGO is an order of the court which grants the holder of the SGO parental responsibility over a child until they reach 18. This allows the special guardian to make day-to-day decisions on behalf of the child, for example in relation to their education. The child is no longer in the care of BCFT.

### **SGO Support Team**

Many carers have taken SGOs, and Foster for Bradford continues to support them as needed.

### **TMs – fostering social work team managers**

The managers' role is to supervise their team of social workers. They will also support with any complex fostering queries.

1. Jason Marrs (Fostering Support Team 1 Bradford South)
2. Yasmin Smith (Fostering Support Team 2 Shipley)
3. Sharon Denby (Fostering Support Team 3 Keighley)
4. Shaista Yaqoob (Fostering Support Team 4 Central and Short Breaks)
5. Sue Barron (Kinship Assessment Team / SGO Support)
6. Andrea Coldwell (Kinship Assessment Team / SGO Support)
7. Ben Whitehead (Foster Carer Recruitment & Assessment)

### **TAC - team around the child**

Foster carers are part of what's often termed the team around the child, which is responsible for the well-being and development of looked after children. This team involves you, your SSW, the child's social worker and can also include other people from education and health teams, CCHDT, depending on the child's specific needs.

### **Therapeutic social worker (Fostering)**

Foster for Bradford has its own Therapeutic Social Worker who can offer support and training for foster carers, as well as direct work with carers and their SSWs. Therapeutic thinking time (TTT) gives a safe space for carers and their SSW to think about solutions to situations that are proving difficult.

[r.akhtar@bradfordcft.org.uk](mailto:r.akhtar@bradfordcft.org.uk)

### **Virtual School for Looked After Children**

The Virtual School makes sure that the Trust fulfils its duties to ensure education for all of our looked after children. They aim to promote achievement, raise attainment and ensure equal opportunities for all our looked after children.

### **Youth Justice Service**

This service's focus is to prevent offending and re-offending by young people. The work carried out by the team could include direct work with a young person to address particular issues of concern and the production of reports to advise the courts in terms of what would be an appropriate sentence.



\*You can also find a list of other acronyms and abbreviations that are commonly used in children's social care in the fostering handbook under Resources.

**END**