

FOSTERING AGENCY TRANSFERS

Children's Social Care



These procedures are supplementary and directly linked to the Recruitment, Assessment and Approval of Foster Carers Procedures. These supplementary procedures set out specific requirements relating to enquiries and applications to be come a Foster Carer for Plymouth's Fostering Service where the enquirer / applicant is already a Foster Carer but for a different Fostering Agency.

N.B. Foster Carers may transfer from an Independent Fostering Agency or from another Local Authority Fostering Service. For the purpose of these procedures the Independent Fostering Agency and Local Authority Service will be referred to as 'Fostering Agency'.

I. Recruiting Foster Carers from other Fostering Agencies

- 1.1 No members of the Fostering Service is to approach a Foster Carer working for another Fostering Agency specifically to persuade them to move from that Fostering Agency to Plymouth's Fostering Service.
- 1.2 In an exception it is admissible for a staff member involved in an advertised recruitment campaign in a public area to approach a known Foster Carer for another Fostering Agency if they are in the vicinity of the stand. The Foster Carer would exercise their own freewill to engage in discussion about fostering for Plymouth or not.
- 1.3 Plymouth's Fostering Service is not to specifically forward recruitment literature to home addresses to known Foster Carers for other Fostering Agencies unless specifically requested by that Foster Carer.
- 1.4 Plymouth's Fostering Service may advertise for Foster Carers via radio, television, circulars, websites and newspapers. In the course of this the Fostering Service may state that they are interested in hearing from anyone who is currently fostering in order to advise them of the benefits of fostering for the Plymouth Fostering Service.
- 1.5 Specifically, when an Independent Fostering Agency that Plymouth has placements with decides to merge or is taken over by another Independent Fostering Agency, the Foster Carers are to be afforded the right and opportunity to consider all their options and decide who they would like to foster for. The [established network protocol on movement between IFAs with existing placements](#) sets this out.
- 1.6 If an Independent Fostering Agency ceases to operate within the Plymouth Local Authority area and does not make arrangements with another provider to take over its service, each of its approved Foster Carers will, by default, become Foster Carers for the Council's Fostering Service. The Fostering Service then must decide within 16 weeks whether or not to re-approve them after following the assessment process. Where it is not possible to complete the approval within 16 weeks the period can be extended to enable the assessment process to be complete.

- 1.7 Plymouth Fostering Service reserves the right to approach Foster Carers from Independent Fostering Agencies who are merging or being taken over, if they are within 20 miles/50 minutes drive of Plymouth, to enquire if they wish to transfer to Plymouth's Fostering Service. However, these Foster Carers must be without placements or have children in placement from Plymouth. The placing authority are fundamental to the Foster Carers transfer process and are to be included to ensure that the needs of the child remain served by the Foster Carers.

2. Initial Enquiries

- 2.1 When the enquirer is a Foster Carer for another Fostering Agency, the Plymouth Fostering Service Administrator is to advise them that legally no Foster Carer can foster for more than one Fostering Agency, therefore if they wish to foster for Plymouth Fostering Service they are to at a later point have to resign as Foster Carers for their current Fostering Agency.
- 2.2 The Fostering Service Administrator is to send the enquirer an Information Pack about fostering for Plymouth, regardless of their experience of being a Foster Carer.
- 2.3 When the enquirer is a Foster Carer for another Fostering Agency and they have a child or young person currently placed with them from Plymouth, the Fostering Service is to provide information on the transition /protection of payment arrangements on offer. Transition / protection of payment arrangements apply if the Foster Carers were to make a formal application, and successfully become approved as Foster Carers for the Plymouth Fostering Service.

3. Reassessment of Foster Carers who wish to become Foster Carers for Plymouth's Fostering Service

- 3.1 Although the applicant may remain as a Foster Carer for their current Fostering Agency the application is not an automatic guarantee that they will be deemed suitable as a Foster Carers for Plymouth's Fostering Service. The applicants are therefore to be subjected to the full assessment processes as outlined in section 2 of the Recruitment, Assessment and Approval of Foster Carer procedures. A BAAF form F assessment is to take place whilst the applicant remains registered with their current Fostering Agency. If the existing Fostering Agency agree to share information from its own assessment of the Foster Carers, it may not be necessary for the Assessing Supervising Social Worker to collect again all the information required for the new assessment. The Assessing Supervising Social Worker can take account of the information obtained by the existing provider as long as they are satisfied as to its quality and continuing relevance, for example, interviewing previous employers.
- 3.2 Any training, including 'Skills to Foster' training, can only commence after Part A and D of the BAAF form F has been received and deemed as an acceptable application by the Plymouth Fostering Services.
- 3.3 The Plymouth Fostering Service is under no obligation to inform the Foster Carers current Fostering Agency if they visit to informally discuss fostering for Plymouth. However if the enquirer decides to make a formal application to become a Foster Carer for the Plymouth Fostering Service, they are to be advised that on receipt of Part A and D of BAAF form F the Plymouth Fostering Service will contact the current Fostering Agency to inform them of the application and to take up references.

- 3.4 Prior to the start of the BAAF form F assessment (or earlier if they have provided a staff member from the Fostering Agency as a referee) the Foster Carer must supply a letter to their current Fostering Agency that outlines their intention to transfer to Plymouth Fostering Service, subject to a successful reassessment and approval by Plymouth's Agency Decision Maker. They must also inform their current Fostering Agency that they have agreed to a reassessment. A copy of this letter is to also be made available to the Plymouth Fostering Service.
- 3.5 The Foster Carers are to be transferred to Plymouth's Fostering Service on being approved by Fostering Panel and the Agency Decision Maker, and upon the Foster Carers acceptance of the decision.
- 3.6 The de-resignation as a Foster Carer from the existing Fostering Agency is to coincide with their new registration with Plymouth Fostering Service, with the provision that if they are not approved by Plymouth's Fostering Service they are to revert to their current registration status with the existing Fostering Agency. This is especially crucial when a child is in placement.
- 3.7 If the Foster Carers withdraw mid reassessment or are not approved by Plymouth Fostering Panel or Agency Decision Maker, they may remain as Foster Carers with their current IFA. However the IFA may decide independently to deregister them or the Foster Carers themselves may resign as Foster Carers. Special Consideration is to be given to any children in the care of the Foster Carers.

4. Proceeding with an application from Foster Carers already registered to another Fostering Agency.

- 4.1 Procedures set out in the Recruitment, Assessment and Approval of Foster Carers are to be followed.

5. Applications for Band 4 of 'Payment for Skills' from Foster Carers currently fostering for another Fostering Agency.

- 5.1 Foster Carers from another Fostering Agency can only apply for Band 4 payments if they have no children currently in placement. The exception to this is if the applicant is already looking after a Plymouth child who has complex needs and who would normally require a Band 4 Foster Carer.
- 5.2 Prior to the Fostering Panel meeting, the Foster Carer must declare whether upon their application for a Band 4 payment being unsuccessful, they would wish to be approved as a Foster Carer on one of the lower payment bands.
- 5.3 If a Foster Carer with a Fostering Agency has a child from Plymouth and is transferring to Plymouth's Fostering Service, the Fostering Service is to match the remuneration the Foster Carers received at that Fostering Agency unless this is less than the banding awarded by the Plymouth Fostering Service.
- 5.4 Any Foster Carer transferring from a Fostering Agency to Plymouth's Fostering Service with a Plymouth child in placement is to have protected payments for at least 18 months. In situations where Foster Carers receive payments higher than the banding level approved by the Plymouth Fostering Service, they are to be paid their approval banding level and an

additional top up rate in order to match the payments they received in their Fostering Agency. This is known as the 'transfer arrangement'.

- 5.5 This arrangement is to continue for 18 months even where the child present at the time of transfer, leaves the placement.
- 5.6 This arrangement is to continue beyond 18 months whilst the child present at the time of transfer remains in placement and until they are 18 years old.
- 5.7 Upon the child leaving the placement after the 18 month period, payments at the approved banding level on transfer to Plymouth's Fostering Service are to be applied.
- 5.8 If within the 18 months the Foster Carers move to a banding level higher than the transfer arrangement, they are to transfer to the banding level of payments (without top up) immediately.
- 5.9 If within the 18 month period the placement circumstances alter, and the Foster Carer remuneration is less than the payments received at their previous IFA, the Foster Carer is to receive a new arrangement which will include the banding payment agreed at transfer and a top up rate. This is to ensure a match in payments received through their previous IFA.
- 5.10 If the child present at the time of transfer, leaves the placement within the 18 month period the Plymouth Fostering Service is to continue payments for up to 12 weeks or the end of the 18 month period whichever period is shorter with the intention of placing a suitably matched child in the interim period as soon as possible.