

Approval

- The Assessment Report, excluding any third-party information, will be shared with the applicant. The applicant will be encouraged to check the Report for accuracy and make any comments before it is presented to the SWAN Fostering Panel, which applicants will be expected to attend.
- The Panel will make recommendations about the suitability of the applicant to be appointed as foster carers with SWAN Fostering.
- The Registered Manager of SWAN Fostering makes the final decision about approval/appointment on behalf of the Agency.
- Applicants will be informed verbally and in writing about the Agency decisions.
- All information about prospective foster carers will be held on file. On request to the Registered Manager of SWAN Fostering, some of this information will be made available for review. Third party information, such as references and checks cannot be accessed without the permission of that party.

As a growing Agency, it is important that we give due consideration to the comments from our foster carers about the kind of support they would like. We welcome your comments and suggestions about the service we provide.



SWAN
FOSTERING

The Process of Recruiting & Approving Foster Carers

Foster Placements with Positive Outcomes



SWAN
FOSTERING

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The Initial Stages

When someone contacts SWAN Fostering and expresses an interest in becoming a foster carer, it is usual for a home visit to be arranged prior to an application form being given or sent. The home visit provides an opportunity for questions and answers, as well as the chance to explore the suitability of the applicant in relation to the expectations of the fostering task.

On completion of the application form, the

Registered Manager will decide if there is enough information to proceed further and so invite the applicant to attend the preparation training. It is only on completion of the training that an Assessment will begin.

Decisions will be communicated to the applicant in writing and relevant checks will be commenced as soon as the decision is made to start the Assessment.

The Checks

SWAN Fostering will obtain references from:

- Criminal Records Bureau (CRB).
- Local Authorities where the applicant currently lives and has previously lived.
- NSPCC.
- Nominated Referees who will provide written references and also be interviewed as part of the assessment process.

Other checks will also be undertaken and are detailed on the declaration form.

- CRB forms will be obtained on all members of the household aged 16 years and over and other regular visitors to the home.

- In addition, employment and identity documents will also be seen and recorded on the Assessment Form.
- The applicant is required to have a medical examination completed by their GP and the report is made available to SWAN Fostering's Medical Advisor for their comments about the applicants' health.
- Where the applicant has previously worked in an environment where there have been vulnerable adults or children, or has previously fostered for a Local Authority or Agency, written references will be taken up. Where there have been previous assessments by another Local Authority or Agency, an Assessment by SWAN Fostering will still need to be undertaken.

The Assessment

- A qualified Social Worker will carry out the Assessment over a 3-6 months period.
- A minimum number of six visits will be made to the applicants' home to meet and gather information from all family members of the household about the applicants' experience and skills in relation to fostering.
- It is the expectation that all adult children living away from the family home will be interviewed.
- SWAN Fostering will use the Form F assessment tool published by the British Association for Adoption and Fostering (BAAF) to gather the relevant information.
- Each applicant is encouraged to participate actively in the Assessment and preparation of the Assessment Report. Regular feedback will be provided on the progress of his/her Assessment and if necessary, clear indications will be given of any work the applicant needs to undertake to further the process.
- Preparation training is mandatory for all applicants and will be provided prior to the start of the Assessment process.
- The Assessment will be competency based, where evidence is required of skills and abilities.

Support to Foster Carers

SWAN Fostering value the work foster carers do and the contribution they make to the lives of children and young people. SWAN Fostering acknowledge that for the best outcomes to be achieved, foster carers require access to the right support at all times.

SWAN Fostering will provide flexible support arrangements for the child/young person and their foster carers. This will be discussed during a planning meeting, which will take place when the child is first placed with a carer. The agreed plan will then be monitored and adjusted depending on the placement.

SWAN Fostering will offer the following support to all carers:

- Supervision and support from a qualified and experienced Supervising Social Worker.
- Access to a Social Worker at SWAN Fostering 24-hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days of the year.

- Home visit during the first week of placement - with a further option of a home visit every week for a further two weeks if needed.
- Minimum of one supervisory visit every four weeks for the first six-months of approval with The Agency, and then six-weekly thereafter.
- Regular telephone contact from a staff member at SWAN Fostering whilst a child is with you.
- Financial support which values the skills of the foster carers.
- Four weeks paid respite per year.
- On-going training.
- Support Groups.
- Fun Days for foster carers and their families.
- Membership to Fostering Network. With this membership, all carers receive independent advice and have access to legal advice, which relates to fostering matters. SWAN Fostering will pay for membership.

Training

At SWAN Fostering, we regard training as a crucial element to providing high quality placements. Fostering is a demanding and complex task and we are committed to providing good quality training, which is accessible and relevant to all our foster carers.

Training is provided to ensure that foster carers have the necessary skills and knowledge and that they are able to develop these. All foster carers are expected to work from the same value base as SWAN Fostering and they have to be able to reflect and look at the developing needs of children within the home, in the community and within the context of wider society. In addition, they have to have a good understanding of equality of opportunity and be competent in safe caring.

SWAN Fostering will offer core training which is mandatory for all approved foster carers and includes:

- CWDC workshops and standards workbooks
- Introduction to Fostering
- Safeguarding and Safer Caring - Sessions 1 & 2
- Recording Skills
- Life Work with Children
- Equality and Diversity
- First Aid
- Health of children in care
- Education of children in care
- Managing Challenging Behavior - all age groups
- Attachment - sessions 1 & 2

In addition to the core training, individual training-needs will be identified during regular supervision sessions. The Training Programme by the Fostering Network will be utilised and professional training will also be provided to one foster carer within each household, this would be an NVQ or equivalent qualification.