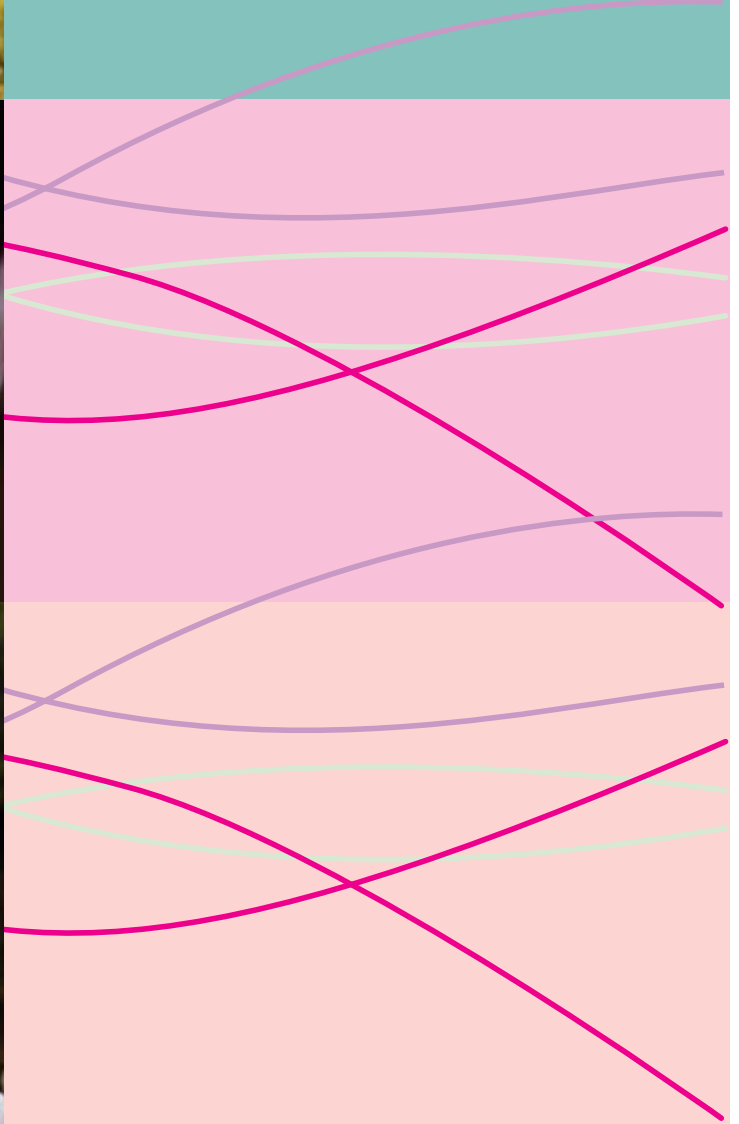




Statement of Purpose

East Riding Fostering Service

2019/20



EAST RIDING

OF YORKSHIRE COUNCIL



Contents

1	Introduction
2	National legislative and policy framework
3	Mission statement
4	Aims
5	Objectives
6	Confidentiality and conflicts of interest
7	Principles and standards of care
8	Children's guide
9	Services provided
10	Recruitment, approval and reviewing of foster carers
11	Recruitment of East Riding of Yorkshire Council employees/elected members
12	Training for foster carers
13	Supporting foster carers
14	Support to the fostering team
15	Management structure
16	The Pledge
	Contact details



1. Introduction

It is a requirement of the Fostering Services England Regulations 2011 and National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services 2011, that each fostering agency produces a statement of purpose, including its aims and objectives, a description of the service it provides and the facilities that are provided. This Statement of Purpose gives an outline of those requirements and also how the service is managed and its fitness to provide fostering services. It shows the policy and performance framework that underpins our work and shows how the welfare of children will be met and good outcomes achieved

for all children in its care. It also demonstrates the systems which we have set in place to recruit, train, supervise and support foster carers.

The Statement of Purpose also links with the Children's Guide which is provided to all children, subject to the child's age and understanding at the point of placement.

This statement is available to all members of staff, foster carers, children and birth parents and is available on our fostering website. A copy of this statement is also lodged with Ofsted. The information contained is regularly updated, and will be amended annually.





2 National legislative and policy framework

East Riding of Yorkshire Council fostering service is run in accordance with the principles outlined in the:

- Children Act 1989
- Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011
- Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards (2011)
- Children Act Guidance and Regulations Volume 4: Fostering Services (2011)
- Assessment and approval of foster carers: Amendments to the Children Act 1989
- Guidance and Regulations. Volume 4 Fostering Service July 2013
- Permanence, long term foster placements and ceasing to look after a child
- Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities March 2015
- Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations 2010
- The Disability and Equality Act 2010
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- The Children's Workforce Development Council – Training, Support and Development Standards for Foster Care (2007)
- Family and Friends Care: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities (2010)



3. Our ambition for the children and young people of the East Riding

Our ambition is for all children and young people in the East Riding to be happy, healthy, confident and safe. We will work in partnership to remove barriers to achievement and narrow the gap so that everyone can reach their potential.

Key points

East Riding of Yorkshire Council Fostering Service recognises that a child's needs are best met by a nurturing family and is committed to placing children who are not able to remain in their own family in an appropriate alternative family placement wherever possible. First priority will be for children to be placed with family and friends under Regulation 24 of the Care Planning Regulations where this placement is deemed suitable. A separate policy is available which considers more widely the service commitment to family and friends

caring for children. Other placements may include a parent and child arrangement placed together in a foster home and Early Placement Planning for adoption/fostering.

East Riding Of Yorkshire Council is committed to placing children and young people with our approved foster carers and has developed and invested in a dedicated and comprehensive fostering service that actively works to meet the quality standards required and the diverse needs of the children who become looked after by East Riding Of Yorkshire Council.

We are also committed to placing children and young people with local foster carers in order for them to maintain contact with families and friends, to continue at the same school and thrive within their community wherever possible.

Each child/young person will have access to services which recognise and address their needs in terms of gender, religion, ethnic origin, language, culture, disability and sexuality. Placement decisions will consider the child/young person's racial, ethnic, cultural and linguistic needs and match these as closely as possible with the ethnic origin, religion, culture, language and outlook of the foster carer. Children's safety and welfare will be actively promoted in all fostering placements and protected from abuse and other forms of significant harm.



4. Aims

The main aim of East Riding of Yorkshire Council Fostering Service is to provide safe, high quality foster care placements for children and young people that value, support and encourage them to grow and develop as individuals. As well as promoting their physical and emotional health and general wellbeing the service is committed to ensuring that foster carers are encouraged to help children and young people to reach their maximum education ability.

Foster carers will provide good parenting for all children who are looked after and children will be consulted and encouraged to actively participate in their care and family life.

We are committed to ensuring that the service offered is based on statutory requirements, sound principles and good practice and works within the principles of Best Value for the council.

Our service is committed to multi-agency working and develops partnerships and

protocols with organisations which can progress the needs of our looked after children. We work at all levels in partnership with the education and health providers to promote the wellbeing of children in public care in the East Riding of Yorkshire.

Our service has respect for the rights and responsibilities of looked after children and their carers and aims to involve them in all aspects of service delivery.

Our service aims to provide a high quality responsive child centred service in relation to its core functions:

to recruit new foster carers from within our community and from the connected person/family and friends networks of looked after children – wherever this best meets their needs to prepare applicants through support and training to be able to deal with the range of issues that foster carers face when looking after children with complex needs to assess each applicant comprehensively to ensure that they are suitable and carry out this role and supervise carers in a constructive manner that promotes the welfare of and protects and safeguards children.



5. Objectives

- To ensure that there is a choice of high quality foster care placements available to meet the complex and diverse needs of individual children and young people. Each carer will have a **qualified social worker (supervising fostering social worker)** and areas of particular skills and experiences will be **developed and training needs identified and addressed**
- To promote a safe, stable and enabling environment ensuring that children and young people are listened to and protected from abuse and neglect
- To promote the child's physical, social, emotional and intellectual development by providing each child with the opportunity of developing to their full potential, through health care, education and leisure activities that will enhance their life chances
- To have a positive regard for the child or young person's racial, religious and cultural needs. All children should have equal access to local family based care
- The individual child's needs/wishes and feelings are paramount and taken into considered as part of placement planning
- Siblings will be accommodated together wherever possible and appropriate
- To promote contact for the child or young person and his/her birth family, throughout their placement, and to encourage and facilitate this as appropriate
- To ensure foster carers help children and young people to be aware of their rights and the comments, complaints and advocacy process by passing on them relevant information
- To ensure that approved foster carers are clear about their role and that they are supported in their tasks, duties and responsibilities, by having adequate support mechanisms in place, outlined in their terms and conditions and foster carer agreement
- To ensure the Training Framework supports Foster Carers to offer quality care that meets the needs of children and young people who have experienced adverse care
- To ensure that all practice promotes equal opportunities for all and values diversity of both foster children and carers regardless of gender, sexual orientation, ethnic background, age, religious beliefs, disability or marital status
- To ensure that decisions are transparent and fair and that any concerns are addressed and information about the complaints procedure is made available to all
- To promote team and personal development and training for both staff and foster carers
- To consult regularly with fostering families to ensure their views inform the development of the service
- To consult regularly with children who are fostered, using a variety of methods to ensure their voice informs the delivery of the service



6. Confidentiality and conflicts of interests

Foster carers should be provided with full information about the children placed with them and are expected to observe high standards of confidentiality. We will maintain records on carers and children and young people who are looked after, who are subject to National Standards and Data Protection legislation. Staff and foster carers are expected to declare any potential conflicts of interest.





7. Principles and standards of care

East Riding of Yorkshire Council Fostering Service is committed to achieving and maintaining the highest standards and offering quality provision. It has been developed and is managed in accordance with the Fostering Service (England) Regulations 2011 and the principles outlined in the National Minimum Standards 2011. These standards apply equally to our connected person/ family and friends carers.

- The welfare of the child is paramount
- Children who are looked after are consulted regarding their wishes and feelings in regard to all aspects of their



care. They will be provided with a children's guide (see children's guide section)

- Every child who is looked after will have a health plan and a personal education plan
- Every child who is looked after will be encouraged to participate appropriately in religious and cultural beliefs in accordance with their wishes and feelings and developmental understanding
- Every child who is looked after will be cared for in an environment free from oppression, discrimination and prejudice, this will encourage them to develop a positive sense of their own identity
- The fostering service will support the identified aims and objectives of the child or young person's care plan and placement plan as well as work alongside other professionals in the implementation of this
- The fostering service will work in partnership with other professionals to promote contact between children who are looked after and family and other significant persons



8. Children's guide

Subject to the child's age and understanding, the fostering service in conjunction with the Participation & Rights Team ensures that children and young people receive the Children's Guide at the point of placement and that the foster carers explain the contents of the Children's Guide in a way that is accessible.

The Children's Guide includes a summary of the fostering service and what it can expect of foster carers, the fostering service and their responsibilities. The Children's Guide also provides information on useful contacts. These are listed below:

Office of the Children's Commissioner

Website:	www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk
Address:	Anne Longfield, Children's Commissioner for England, Sanctuary Buildings, 20 Great Smith Street, London, SW1P 3BT
Telephone:	0207 783 8330
Freephone children's helpline:	0800 5280731

Department of Education

Website:	www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus
Address:	Department of Education, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD
Telephone:	03700002288

Ofsted

Website:	www.ofsted.gov.uk
Address:	Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD
Telephone:	0300 123 1231
Email:	enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk



9. Services provided

Overview

The fostering service approves foster carers to look after children aged 0-18 years, at which time foster carers may wish to continue to care for young people as part of a staying put arrangement. The Pathway Team, East Riding of Yorkshire Council's Leaving Care Service assesses and manages staying put arrangements, the services will work together to ensure a smooth transition to the new arrangement for the carer and young person.

Many of the children placed have experienced difficulties including abuse or neglect before being fostered. Some children and young people present with very challenging behaviour, special needs or complex health conditions.

The fostering team recruits, trains and assesses prospective foster carers and supports them when they attend East Riding of Yorkshire Council's fostering panel. A range and number of different

types of fostering provision ensures flexibility in meeting children's individual needs. Approved foster carers are supported through regular visits called 'supervision visits' these are undertaken by fostering social workers, other support visits will be undertaken by support staff, from the fostering service. Following approval foster carers will continue to be reviewed in line with the National Minimum Standards, the fostering service and its partners will continue to offer support and guidance to carers so that they not only meet the minimum standards but are supported to go above and beyond and ensure children and young people are given the best opportunity to achieve their potential.

Financial allowances are paid to foster carers above the national recommended rates for each child. These allowances may be supported by additional 'skill' payments to foster carers, plus a weekly supplement for teenagers over 13 years of age.





A loyalty bonus is also paid to each fostering household on completion of their Annual Review. Additional payments may be available to support foster carers; examples of such payments are setting up costs, equipment and travel/mileage costs. In order to ensure children are appropriately placed, their needs are met and outcomes are improved, the fostering team staff work closely with a range of other professionals, these include: child care team social workers, children's safeguarding and looked after children's independent safeguarding reviewing officers, children's home staff, health service and educational staff, such as the 'looked after' children's nurse, education welfare officers and school teachers.



Mainstream fostering

'Mainstream' is a term used to describe foster carers who are approved for a particular number, age and gender of child(ren). Placements may be for:

- Short term care/place of safety - emergency care whilst assessment and care planning is carried out or until a crisis is resolved.
- Medium term care – whilst legal proceedings or a longer term birth family crisis is resolved.
- Long term care – more permanent care for children with a plan of permanence through foster care.
- Parent and child arrangements have been developed by the fostering service in line with the BAAF Good Practice Guidance November 2011. The scale of this provision is however limited in terms of the number of carers suitably experienced to provide this type of care.

Respite foster carers

There are a small number of foster carers who provide regular, planned respite to children. They may also provide a temporary home for children on either an emergency basis, or, for a planned short period of time.

Connected person/family or friends networks

Temporary approval is made for some immediate/emergency arrangements whilst more thorough assessments and arrangements are considered; temporary approval as foster carers lasts for ordinarily 16 weeks. Connected person's /family or friends are carers who have been formally approved as foster carers so that they can care for a child who is in the care of the local authority but who is a relative, family friend or otherwise known to them. Child Arrangement Orders (CAO) and Special Guardianship Orders (SGO) provide the opportunity to bring and secure permanence for children who are



placed with connected persons /family and friends; to ensure that the best outcomes are achieved for the child, their carers and the local authority. Adoption orders are another route to obtain permanence for some children.

Applications for SGO, CAO, will be considered and if appropriate endorsed by the East Riding Permanence Panel, usually prior to the court process commencing. A decision about permanence through long term fostering will also be considered and if appropriate approved by the Permanence Panel.

Short break foster carers

Foster Carers care for children and young people who have a range of difficulties and challenges in their lives. This includes looking after a small number of children and young people who have complex special needs, this could include those children and young people with physical, emotional additional needs, autism and

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

The Fostering Service works with the East Riding Disability Team to shape care arrangements in line with the requirements of the children and young people who are in need.

The Short Breaks provision is a continuing area of development and the availability of longer term specialist Foster Carers is also a priority for expansion.

Parent and child arrangements

The fostering service is working towards increasing its offer of parent and child foster carers/placements.

Early permanency planning placements

The aim of Early Permanency Placements is to place babies/children who cannot be safely cared for within their own families with a substitute family on a fostering





basis who can then adopt the child on the making of the appropriate legal order and the approval of the match by the adoption agency. These placements will be made at birth or as soon as possible after the babies have been removed from the care of their birth family. This will ensure that they do not endure the moves experienced by babies/children when local authorities follow the traditional sequential route to adoption. Early Permanency Placements will protect the children from the risk of harm to their emotional and general development caused by the disruption to their attachment as a result of the moves of placement often built into sequential planning. The emotional uncertainty associated with possible and actual placement moves is held by the adults rather than experienced by the child. In other words, the adults take the risks. Those adopters who become foster carers subject to (Regulation 25A CPP and CR England Regulations 2010 Miscellaneous Amendments 2013) for Early Permanency Placements will be required to undertake all the foster carer duties and responsibilities until either the adoption is finalised or the child returns to the birth family. A specific recruitment, assessment and training process is led by the Adoption Team.

Services provided to children in foster care

A wide range of other services are provided by the local authority for children in foster homes and some of these are listed under 'Supporting Foster Carers' below. Additional services for children include:

- Participation and rights team – CICC
- Consultation events
- Independent advocacy service
- Specialist contact support for family contact/ transport/supervision
- Connected person carers'/family and friends' have a specific supervising social worker to help with the particular support needs of this group.



10. Recruitment, approval and reviewing of foster carers

Recruitment

The fostering service produced a detailed Recruitment Marketing Plan for 2019/2020 and a further Recruitment Strategy will be developed to inform the next Marketing Plan.

Advertising is key to recruitment and East Riding of Yorkshire Council use a range of marketing activities including posters, radio, social media, newspaper advertising, information evenings, event advertising.

Enquiries are taken by the FISH Team (Family Information Service Hub) on 01482 396469 and followed up by the Fostering service.

Information for enquirers

Enquiries are responded to as soon as possible, the target is within 24 hours of the initial enquiry. Specifically designed information packs that give basic process information and highlight the needs of children who are fostered are mailed out to the enquirer.

Enquiries are followed up by telephone contact and once the relevant family detail forms are completed an initial assessment visit may be arranged.

Enquirers who wish to proceed with their fostering application will then be asked to complete an agreement/consent for checks to be undertaken. Potential foster carers will also be invited to the next available 'Skills to Foster' course but this

may be arranged to meet the needs and to recognise the differing circumstances of potential mainstream and connected person foster carers. Formal checks such as health, employment reference, Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) will be commenced; this is Stage 1 of the assessment process. Where appropriate, further visits are made to the family to explore any areas of concern. East Riding of Yorkshire Council currently uses the Coram BAAF assessment tools but other assessment reports may be used, notably Fostering Network forms and reports. The full Coram BAAF Form F assessment, this is Stage 2, will commence and will normally be completed within six months but our aim would be within three to four months (the Coram BAAF Form C used for all connected persons/family and friends will be completed normally within 16 weeks). If potential foster carers are unable to proceed with the assessment for any reason the assessment will be ended, recommencement of the assessment process may be started with completion of a new application. The foster panel will be informed of any Stage 2 assessments that are not completed.



11. Recruitment of East Riding of Yorkshire Council employees/ elected members

Staff and elected members are supported to consider fostering for the Council. East Riding of Yorkshire Council is a Fostering Friendly Employer. As a supportive and responsible employer we want to enable foster carers who work for us to balance their work whilst being a foster carer for East Riding of Yorkshire Council. This means:

- Up to three days paid leave for assessment and training prior to approval
- Flexibility at work
- Paid leave up to one day to attend Foster Panel
- Special leave policy

Consideration will be given during the Stage 1 and Stage 2 assessment about any potential conflict of interest or potential difficulties arising from access of information about

children, their circumstances and other foster carers. Arrangements will be put in place to avoid, reduce or manage any possible difficulties and maintain confidentiality.

Criteria for assessment

Applications for foster carers will be accepted on the basis of the applicant's capacity to offer appropriate care to children who are looked after, regardless of their background, race, culture, language, gender, religion, sexual orientation, age or ability. Anyone over the age of 21 may apply to become a foster carer (exceptionally over 20 years). The skills and knowledge that are required of foster carers are assessed according to the assessments criteria contained in the assessment report (currently CoramBAAF Form F or C).



Assessment and approval

Regular pre-approval training courses are held across the year and courses run in the evening and on weekends to maximise access for prospective foster carers.

Training is a regulatory and policy requirement for every prospective and approved foster carer and foster carers training skills are reviewed annually.

All foster carer applicants, members of their household over 18 years of age and any adults who are likely to have unsupervised contact with the children placed are required to apply for an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. Checks are also made with the NSPCC, SSAFA, NHS Trust, Probation Service, employer, previous employer; and with birth children, schools, nursery, health visitors, school nurse and the local authority child protection register.

A standard medical examination and report is requested from each applicant's doctor and commented on by the fostering panel medical adviser. Any potential medical issues are discussed at an early stage before proceeding to a full assessment.

Written references are sought from at least two, usually three personal referees, each referee is normally visited and a written record made of their comments regarding the applicant's suitability to become a foster carer: similar comments from two family members are also requested. Proof of identity and employment checks are also carried out.

Applicants will be interviewed in their own home. Where there is a joint application each applicant must be seen alone on at least one occasion. Applications from one

partner in a couple relationship will not be accepted, both partners must be assessed to be suitable for approval as foster carers.

Any children of the applicants will be interviewed and involved in the assessment process according to their age and understanding.

If applicants are divorced or long term relationships have ended contact is usually made with previous partners, particularly if there are children from the relationship.

A home study assessment is undertaken and includes a personal profile of the applicants own experiences, relationships (past and present), parenting capacity, experience and understanding of issues facing looked after children and their families. The CorumBAAF form F Framework is used during the assessing process. The CorumBAAF form C is used for connected person/family and friend's assessment. The form F and C are the property of East Riding of Yorkshire Council.

All of this information is shared with the prospective foster carer in a written report that is presented to the fostering panel. After commenting on the report, applicants are invited to attend the fostering panel and will be present for part of the panel discussion relating to their application. Approval is usually given for 0-18 years and a 'preference' may be included for the foster carers most appropriate fostering arrangement or restrictions put in place if there are important limiting factors for approved status.



Foster panel and approval of prospect foster carers

East Riding of Yorkshire Council fostering panel usually meets at least monthly to make recommendations of approvals, reviews and de-registrations of foster carers. A person suitably qualified and independent of the fostering team and the council chairs the fostering panel.

Following consideration of cases, the panel makes a recommendation and a verbal outcome is given immediately to attending applicants.

All applicants will receive a verbal and later a formal written notice of the fostering panel decision maker's decision about their approval. Any appeals can be made within 28 days and may either make further representation to the foster panel or have their assessment considered by the Independent Review Mechanism. Foster carers will be advised on how to use this if they are unhappy with a fostering services decision.

Review of fostering households

Foster carers are reviewed every year and a range of information is collated for a review meeting, which is chaired by an independent review officer. Every three

years a renewal of the pre-assessment checks is completed and informs the annual review. The review will address the previous year's experiences of the foster carers as well as any quality of care and support issues and past and future training health and safety issues are reviewed and fully addressed. The review process is an opportunity to acknowledge foster carers' achievements and to identify their strengths and areas for further development. A review will always be held following any issues/investigations in the standard of care or following a section 47 investigation.

The review meeting will also explore whether the terms of approval should be recommended for change. Changes of approval through the review process may be presented to the fostering panel for recommendation to the agency decision maker unless the foster carer is in agreement with the proposed change and the fostering social worker also agrees and a report is written supporting the change – this will be presented to the agency decision maker. The foster carer will have 28 days to make representations if there are changes recommended by the panel to their approval terms or status. Appeals can be made to the foster panel or the IRM.



12. Training for foster carers

Following the pre-approval training course 'Skills to Foster' all foster carers are required to progress to the Post Approval Core Training programme within their first year of becoming a foster carer and complete the Department of Education Training & Development Standard training. Additionally first aid and Safeguarding Board training are required for all foster carers.

There are further programmes of in-house training such as the Foster Care Core Development (Band 1) and Progressive Development (Band 2) programme for foster carers who wish to further improve skills and be considered for increased skill-based fee payments.

Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (Fostering), (TCI(f), is provided for foster carers who are or who may be managing children's difficult and challenging behaviour. The training promotes a positive approach, via non-physical means, in working to reduce and understand the more troubling behaviour of some children and young people being fostered. Wherever possible, other occasional courses and workshops may also be funded or made available to foster carers.

The diagram and table shown on the next pages illustrate the training and development process and contents for foster carers.





Developing skills matrix for East Riding of Yorkshire Council's foster carers

Foster carer pre approval training	Foster carer post approval core training band 1	Foster carer development band 2
Attend skills to foster programme	To be completed within 12 months or 18 months for connected person/ family and friends of approval	Minimum of 12 months experience
CoramBAAF form F assessment CoramBAAF form C assessment	Attend and complete core training	All band 2 foster carers must meet the requirements as set out in the Department of Education Workbook
Portfolio demonstrating competency to be completed	Successful completion of the Department of Education Workbook Complete first aid training Complete ERYC Safeguarding Board training	Attend foster carer training
Approval at fostering panel	Maintenance of child's placement file	Portfolio to demonstrate competency to be completed
Approved and registered to take placements	Life story memorabilia. Positive feedback through the review process	Complete therapeutic crisis intervention (fostering) training



13. Supporting foster carers

The fostering team provides a range of services to foster carers and these are designed and delivered to enable and support the foster carer to maintain and sustain children who are looked after to achieve their potential through support in a stable homely environment.

Supervising social workers

Each foster carer has a named fostering team social worker who is responsible for the foster carer's supervision, support and development. Contact with the foster carer is maintained through telephone calls and regular home visits. National Minimum Standards require foster carers to be visited regularly; however, the fostering team has a good practice target to undertake supervisory visits every month and to include an annual unannounced inspection to the fostering household. Support to the foster carer is also available from children's safeguarding team and looked after children team social workers who have children placed in the foster home as well as support from professionals who wrap around the child and the carer. Out of hours support East Riding of Yorkshire Council foster carers have access to the Out of Hours EHaSH Team (Early Hours and Safeguarding Hub) when they need social worker advice or assistance out of normal office hours. This is accessed through 'lifeline' call centre.

Social activities

The fostering team assists in organising foster care household social events throughout the year. Such events include, foster carer spring time activity, a summer activity outing and a children's Christmas party.

Support groups

These groups are held in different locations across the local authority and are open to all foster carers; the groups are dependent upon foster carer attendance. The groups discuss a variety of topics, are attended periodically by guest speakers, are facilitated by the fostering social workers but are foster carer led.

East Riding of Yorkshire Council's 'Fostering in Focus' electronic newsletter

The fostering team provides every foster carer and children in placement with up-to-date national and local information on topics, issues and developments through the bi-monthly Fostering in Focus magazine. News events, feedback and children's successes are also reported through the magazine. The magazine has been designed to enable foster carers and children to become involved and have a voice by publishing their articles and by entering competitions in the magazine.



Provision of educational support services

Specialist educational support is available to foster carers in the fostering service. There is a 'virtual' head teacher for children who are looked after who considers how to improve attainment and improve partnerships with schools in the East Riding.

East Riding of Yorkshire Council fostering service recognises the need to improve looked after children's attendance at school. The fostering service works closely with the carers in addressing this issue and this has resulted in a significant improvement in attendance of children in foster care in recent years. Within children's services we have an expectation that holidays will not be taken in term time and that children are not routinely taken out of school. There are exceptional circumstances in which a child can take a holiday during term time and the fostering service works in line with this policy

The fostering service works alongside and supports education initiatives for looked after children by promoting children's educational needs to our foster carers. Carers are expected to attend personal education planning meetings with the young people and, where appropriate, the supervising worker will also attend.

Training resources, materials, guidance and support are available to foster carers and social workers via the education welfare officers.

Complaints procedure

East Riding of Yorkshire Council and young people's social care operates a complaints service which is independent of the fostering service.

Foster carers are given a Complaints and Compliments leaflet and information including contact points, detailing the process if they wish to make a complaint.

Birth parents are given a copy of the Complaints and Compliments leaflet in the information pack for parents which is taken out by social workers of children in placements.

The child can also make their views known through the review system and are able to complete an online questionnaire or they are sent a consultation form about the placement prior to the foster carer review. Support is available from the Participation & Rights Team to complete the review documentation. Details of how to complain and how to contact Ofsted are available in the Children's Guide. It is acknowledged that many disabled children cannot access the complaints process in this form because of their learning and communication difficulties. An independent advocate can be appointed for the child where this is appropriate.

Allegations

All allegations in relation to foster carers are investigated and actioned through the Children's Safeguarding Teams or Looked After Children's teams reporting to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) on behalf of the East Riding Safeguarding Children's Board under the procedures of Investigating Allegations Against Adults Caring for Children. Foster carers are offered independent support during this process which can be accessed via their fostering officer or by direct contact



Provision of therapeutic services

The fostering service has a referral route to the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), who provide therapeutic input to children and young people in foster placements, consultation to carers, social workers and other professionals involved in the child or your personal care.

Provision of health support

Children who are looked after are likely to have had adverse care experiences prior to becoming looked after. Their physical and emotional health and well-being is monitored through an initial health assessment on entry to care and annual health assessments for children who continue to be looked after. Foster carers will ensure all health needs are supported.

Independent support

Occasionally, foster carers may be subject to allegations being made against them or the foster carers may be experiencing other difficulties.

The independent support service offers the foster carers totally independent support and advice if these situations arise.

Foster care support

Foster care support is a scheme that allows practical support to be offered to certain foster carers. Practical support can include domestic help, periods of child care or babysitting to allow the foster carer to attend training, support groups and social events. It is also offered to foster carers who have a sudden health emergency or who need a brief period of respite or assistance especially where they are caring for a number of children or a particularly demanding child. This is a limited service and is dependent upon resource availability.

Provision of leisure, sport, cultural and religious activity

Foster carer training and supervision promotes the importance of leisure provision for looked after children and young people, and the expectation that carers will seek out and support new experiences and activities to enhance children's self-worth, social development and independence.

Children who are looked after and their foster carer families in the East Riding are able to have free access to a range of leisure activities throughout the Yorkshire area. Swimming at East Riding of Yorkshire Council leisure centres is subsidised for all children in fostering households in the East Riding and foster carers are encouraged to ensure children are taught to swim. A leisure pass is available for each fostering household.

Information on community play schemes, clubs and holiday activities are provided to our carers on a regular basis through newsletters and FISH (Families Information Service Hub).

We aim to support all young people in their religious and cultural beliefs and customs. We ensure that information is available to provide understanding of different cultures and religions. We will provide resources that may be needed to ensure young people are able to practice their beliefs and customs.

We are committed to directly challenging racism and ensure that all young people who access our services are aware of our policies in relation to anti-oppressive practice and anti-racism. We will ensure that all people are treated equally, regardless of age, sex, sexuality, ethnicity, disability or religion.



Vehicle provision

When possible and subject to appropriate resources, the fostering team may assist with the occasional short term hire of appropriate sized vehicles where there are three placements or more so that foster carers, their children and foster children can have holidays and occasional outings

The setting up grant

Once approved, foster carers are given financial support with providing bedroom furniture, bed linen and safety equipment for children they are fostering. Additional discretionary financial assistance may be available dependent upon circumstances. Agreed car mileage claims will be considered and paid at the Council's standard rates (reviewed annually).

Post 18 arrangements

East Riding of Yorkshire Council is committed, wherever possible, to provide young people in care the opportunity to remain with their carers post 18, (known as a 'staying put' arrangement) and is actively working towards providing a flexible range of options to enable this to happen. All young people leaving the care system will, wherever possible, be given the opportunity to access a supported lodgings placement irrespective of whether or not they have been in foster care. This will either be through remaining with former carers, or by moving to a new placement post 18.

The council considers that early discussion and preparation for post 18 arrangements is key to a successful transition. This process will start from the age of 16, and

will involve the young person, their social worker, the carers and, where applicable, the fostering social worker. Work to help young people develop their independent living skills should begin at an earlier age, and be an inherent part of the care placement.

Young people who are fostered by carers registered with East Riding of Yorkshire Council will be given the opportunity to remain with their carers post 18 on a supported lodgings or 'staying put' arrangement, subject to the agreement of the carers concerned. This arrangement will be supported for up to 3 years, depending on the circumstances of the individual young person.

Financial support for a supported lodging placement is provided with the expectation that the young person will be increasingly financially self sufficient in a planned way, and to help them prepare for an eventual move to independent living. At this stage, it is expected they will have had the opportunity to manage their own money and budget for living expenses at a realistic level.

The Fostering Team and Pathway Team work closely together to achieve smooth transitions to adulthood for young people in foster care.



14. Support to the fostering team

Support services

Support services provide a range of administrative, minute taking and word processing tasks including CoramBAAF Form F and Form C reports and fostering panel administration to ensure compliance with the Fostering Regulations and National Minimum Standards. The fostering team and wider fostering personnel value the support they receive from support services. Normally, support services staff are expected to be experienced in clerical support work when they are appointed to post.

Children and families services staff

The child care teams, children's safeguarding teams, Looked After Children team and Pathway team are responsible for the looked after child's care plan. The fostering team works closely with the social workers to ensure that children are 'matched' to appropriate foster carers. Children's social workers are supervised by Safeguarding and Looked After Children's Team Managers, who are accountable to Area Managers, who in turn are responsible to the Service Manager and Head of Service.

Marketing officer

The marketing officer assists the fostering team with foster carer recruitment and

retention, production of the newsletter and in promoting all aspects of the fostering service.

Independent fostering reviewing officer

The independent reviewing officer is responsible for all of the East Riding of Yorkshire Council's foster carer reviews and as such works closely with the fostering team and the foster panel. The IRO is managed by East Riding Children's Safeguarding Board.

Fostering development officer

The fostering service is proud of its training programmes, which are facilitated and organised by the designated fostering development officer who sits within the foster team. The fostering development officer is a proactive member of the fostering service through the development and delivery of a range of training courses. The fostering development officer is also a foster panel member.



15. Management structure

1. East Riding of Yorkshire Council's fostering team and the wider fostering service are ultimately accountable to the elected members and the chief executive of the council.
2. The provision of day-to-day fostering services is the direct or coordinated responsibility of the fostering team manager who is accountable to and supervised by the Children Looked After Area Manager.
3. The fostering team consists of a team manager, three senior social workers, 12 fostering social workers, 1 who is newly registered and completing the ASYE, 1 social work apprentice and four experienced care coordinators. All hold a current DBS disclosure. The team also includes a specialist learning and development officer and a marketing officer
4. A strategic lead and decision-making role is provided by the Head of Children and Young People's Support and Safeguarding Services.
5. The Service Manager Early Years and Family Support is the named 'Agency Decision Maker' for the purpose of recommendations made to the East Riding of Yorkshire Council fostering panel.
6. Child care social workers are responsible for the care plans, placement plans and regulatory visits to children placed in foster care and the social workers are accountable to their respective Children's Safeguarding Team or Children Looked after Team Managers. The strategic development of the child care services is overseen by the four area managers.
7. As part of East Riding of Yorkshire Council and its corporate partners the fostering team has access to the support and services of a range of specialist staff that include:
 - Legal advisers
 - Medical advisers
 - Practice development officer
 - Specialist training officer
 - Independent reviewing officer for foster carers
 - Human resource officers
 - Health and safety officers
 - Support service staff
 - Participation and rights officer
 - Education welfare officers
 - Marketing officer (fostering)
 - Performance technician
 - Value for money and consultancy team
 - CAMHs support
 - Designated Nurse for children looked after
 - Virtual School and partners



16. The Pledge to children in care and care leavers

This is East Riding of Yorkshire Council's Pledge.

It is a promise made by the council and its partners to all children and young people in care and to care leavers.

Each year the Pledge will be checked to make sure it is working and meeting the needs of everyone involved but most importantly that it makes a real difference to the lives of

children and young people who are looked after and care leavers.

The Pledge is for children and young people and covers 'Your Health, Your Safety, Your Finances, Your Activities and Hobbies, Leaving Care'.

A full copy of the Pledge is provided to all foster carers and is available on request by contacting (01482) 396673.





Contact details

The fostering team

Childcare resources	Room BF64, County Hall, Cross Street, Beverley HU17 9BA
Telephone:	(01482) 396673
Duty desk:	(01482) 396644
Duty email:	fostering@eastriding.gov.uk
Website	www.eastriding.gov.uk/fostering

Foster carer recruitment and enquiries

FISH (Family Information Service Hub)	01482 396469
---------------------------------------	--------------

Office of the children's rights director

Website:	www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk
Address:	Anne Longfield, Children's Commissioner for England, Sanctuary Buildings, 20 Great Smith Street, London, SW1P 3BT
Telephone:	0207 783 8330

Department of Education

Website:	www.education.gov.uk/contactus
Address:	Department of Education, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD
Telephone:	0370 000 2288

Ofsted

Website:	www.ofsted.gov.uk
Address:	Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD
Telephone:	0300 123 1231
Email:	enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk