Guidance and Procedures for Completion of the Training, Support and Development Standards Workbooks for Foster Care, Short Break Care and Family and Friends Care
Training, Support and Development (TSD) Standards for Foster Care, Short Break Care and Family and Friends Care

About this document

| Title | Guidance and Procedures for Completion of the Training, Support and Development Standards Workbooks for Foster Care, Short Break Care and Family and Friends Care |
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| Updated by | Rosemarie Cronin |
| Approved by | Jenny Boyd, DLD Children and Families |
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>September 2015</td>
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<td>Rosemarie Cronin</td>
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<td>Agreement for CWDC co-ordinator to agree extensions up to one month without the agreement of the service manager where there are no particular concerns re non-compliance</td>
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<td>Update of terms used</td>
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Introduction and Legal Framework

All Foster Carers, Short Break Carers and Family and Friends carers are expected to complete the appropriate Training, Support and Development Standards. The aim of this work is to ensure that all these groups of carers are given and have the appropriate knowledge, understanding and information to enable them to carry out the important role that they have. Children and young people should achieve better outcomes if those who are caring for them are equipped with the knowledge and skills that they require.

Standard 20 of the NMS for Fostering (2011) states:

20.2) All foster carers, including all members of a household who are approved foster carers, are supported to achieve the Training, Support and Development Standards for Foster Care. Short break carers who are approved foster carers are supported to achieve the Training Support & Development Standards for Short Break Carers. Family and friends foster carers are supported to achieve the Training, Support and Development Standards for Family and Friends Foster Carers.

20.3) Foster carers are able to evidence that the Training, Support and Development Standards have been attained within 12 months of approval (or within 18 months for family and friends foster carers). For foster carers who were approved as such before April 2008, the Standards are attained by April 2011 (or by April 2012 for family and friends foster carers). Fostering households may use the same evidence workbook.

The Guidance and Regulations for Fostering Services (2011) state:

5.70 Foster carers should be supported to maintain an ongoing training and development portfolio which demonstrates how they are meeting the skills required of them. The foster carers must be able to evidence the Training, Support and Development Standards for Foster Care, within the timescales specified in standard 20. Fostering couples may evidence the Standards in one workbook.

Essex Procedure for completion of Training, Support and Induction Standards

1. As part of their assessment foster carers will have met some of the competencies within the Training Support and Development Standards workbook. At the end of their assessment process they should be provided with a cross referencing sheet to confirm which outcomes from the relevant workbook they have met.

2. Supervising social workers to work alongside the carers to ensure that the carers have all the relevant information to evidence the relevant outcomes.

3. Written guidance is available for all carers and supervising social workers to give additional information regarding expectations of completed books (see Appendix 1).

4. Workshops for foster carers are provided to help carers to understand what is expected of them in completing this work.

5. If there is more than one carer in the home all adult carers must evidence the outcomes within the standards required. If the second carer is unable to evidence certain outcomes, it should be clearly documented and signed off by the SSW as to why the carers could not meet this outcome.

6. SSW to sign off all the standards for each of the carers when they are satisfied that the carer has met the appropriate outcome.
7. When signed off by the SSW workbooks should be sent to the TSD Co-ordinator who quality assures the books and signs off as the agency representative. 
8. When workbooks are signed off they are returned to the SSW who should keep a copy of the signed certificate to place in the foster carer file. The workbooks should be returned to the foster carer.
9. TSD co-ordinator to update database and protocol with date completed.

Non-Completion of the Training, Support and Development (TSD) Standards

If carers are unable to complete within the expected time scales it is the responsibility of the allocated SSW to request an extension and undertake one of the following processes.

Extension requested due to exceptional circumstances

If a carer is unable to complete the Training, Support and Development standards within the expected time scales and extension for a longer period for completion can be agreed by the TSD Co-ordinator. Extensions can be given in the following circumstances:

- Exceptional and unexpected personal circumstances such as bereavement, ill health and personal crisis
- Foster carer experiencing difficulties with literacy/language skills
- A significant period of time without a placement
- Complex placement issues such as disruption or an allegation.
- Extensions for up to one month where there are no particular concerns re non-compliance

If an extension is agreed, it will be for a specific time period and it will be recorded on the training database/protocol and SSW’s should record the agreement in the foster carer file.

If there is not a specific reason for non-completion or an extension is not agreed the following process should be undertaken.

1. SSW to discuss circumstances of the non-completion with the Team Manager
2. A report detailing the circumstances is sent to the Service Manager responsible for fostering, this should include proposals, actions and timescales for completion.
3. Quadrant Service Manager for Children in Care to review proposal with supervising SSW/Team Manager and can agree a deferment of up to 6 months.
4. Service Manager to inform the TSD Co-ordinator of the agreed timescale.
5. TSD Co-ordinator to update spreadsheet accordingly.
6. SSW writes to the foster carer(s) outlining the terms of the deferment and a copy of this letter is kept on the carers file.
Appendix 1

Guidance for Foster Carers/Short Break Carers for the completion of the Training, Standards and Support Standards Workbooks

The aim of the Training, Development and Support workbook is for you to show that you have the relevant skills and knowledge as foster carers/short break carers. You will be able to show evidence of this through your practice and the knowledge that you have gained. You may do this through a number of ways which can include: training courses, supervision sessions, reviews (for children and yourselves), reading relevant information, distance learning course, e-learning etc.

There are 3 TSD workbooks which are available on the Department for Education website https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/guidance-for-foster-carers or your assessing social worker/supervising social worker will be able to provide it for you. The Government sets the timescales for these to be completed which are as follows:

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<tr>
<td>Short Break Carers</td>
<td>12 months from approval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foster Carers</td>
<td>12 months from approval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family and Friends Foster Carers</td>
<td>18 months from approval</td>
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The workbooks can be completed on a computer or can be printed so you can handwrite.

Please note that the foster carer workbook is in two parts and you will need both. One is a guidance document which includes the requirements that you are expected to evidence. The other document is the evidence workbook which is where you write or type your evidence. Both the Short break book and the family and friends book have all the information in one document.

All workbooks will have some guidance and information in them as well and you should read through this to help you to understand what is expected. This guidance has been written to provide you with some further guidance about expectations in Essex and to alert you to potential pitfalls! I hope that it helps you through this process and hopefully clarify some of the questions you may have.

Workshops are arranged on an ‘as and when needed’ basis and usually take place in Chelmsford usually at least twice a year. If you wish to attend these talk to your SSW and/or email Rosemarie Cronin (email below) as if there is enough interest workshops can be arranged.
General information and expectations

- If there are two carers in the household it is expected that both carers complete all parts of the workbook. If there is an area that one carer cannot cover, the reason for this should be written in the workbook. Both sets of evidence can be written in the same book and you may find that a lot of evidence is joint.

- If you are completing a joint book you must make it clear as to which carer is providing the evidence. If it is joint evidence, then put either names (or initials) at the side of it so this is clear. This is very important so it clear to those who are looking at them to know how both carers have contributed.

- The layouts of the workbooks are similar but there are some differences. The important one is for you to be sure what information you are supposed to be showing that you know! All books have key standards, The Foster Carer workbook has 7 main standards, the Short Break workbook and Family and Friends workbook both have 6.

Within these standards there are two different sections. **The Foster Carer and the Family and Friends** books have sections under ‘Skills and Knowledge’ and then underneath that are evidence requirements. As foster carers you need to show that evidence for the criteria under the ‘Skills and Knowledge’ heading. The evidence requirements under this are linked to the skills and knowledge requirement and may well give you practical ways of showing the evidence. However, if you do answer the evidence requirement always go back and check that by doing so you have covered all the areas in the skills and knowledge section.

The **Short Break Workbook** is laid out slightly differently. Under the headings of each of the standards it just lists of criteria that you are required to evidence. Underneath this there are ‘questions and activities’. You do not necessarily need to answer the ‘questions and activities’ but they may help you to think about how you will evidence the criteria above them. If you do go for answering questions for some of them always check back to the criteria above them and check that you have covered all the areas that are in the question.

For consistency I will refer to the requirements that you need to evidence as criteria for the rest of this document.

Starting the workbook – evidence from assessment process

- When you start the book – your assessing social worker should have given you a cross reference sheet. This will show you sections of the workbooks that you have already shown evidence of during your assessment process. There is a different sheet for each of the books so make sure you have a book and cross reference sheet.
that match! This is a great start and you should be encouraged by how much is already completed. As this has already been assessed, all you need to do is include the cross-reference sheet with your workbook and write in the appropriate sections of your workbook e.g. 1.1a – completed through the assessment process. The evidence you have met during this process should be joint, so you can just write it the once and put both initials at the side of it.

- When completing your evidence, it is useful to make it clear which criteria you are giving evidence for so, for example, just put a, b, c etc on the page under the section and then make sure you have written something for each of them. That is also a good way of making sure you haven’t missed any.

**Completing the rest of the book**

- So now comes to the bits you need to complete following your assessment process. Always look carefully at the wording of the section you need to evidence. For example, some will say ‘Demonstrate’ in which case you should be able to provide something that shows you have been able to do what is being expected of you. Others will say ‘Be aware of’ in which case you need to write something that will show your awareness of what you need to do – even if you haven’t done it!

- **Remember this is an induction workbook.** It is not a diploma and you do not need to write essay answers, a few sentences under each criteria should be able to cover it. **What is important is that you are showing your understanding, knowledge etc so make it personal to your experiences.** Examples are often helpful as it shows you have understood what is expected. **Some of the criteria are a bit wordy – and if you unclear as to what is expected then ask!**

- Do not use children’s real names as evidence. You can use initials if you feel you need to. This is to ensure confidentiality of children and young people’s personal information.

- It is best not to put evidence in the portfolio that includes any identifying information about the children. If you do want to use this as evidence, then you can show it to you SSW, so they can see it and sign if off and as long as it is cross referenced you do not need to actually include it in the portfolio.

- If you do want to include evidence that has children’s names in (or any other identifying information) please make sure that this information is blocked out and cannot be seen. You are likely to have to photocopy it again once it has been blocked out.
• Some of the criteria you will have covered as part of your discussions with your supervising social in supervision. If this is already recorded in your supervision – you do not need to write it again – just put discussed in supervision and the date.

• If you have gathered resources (e.g. books, leaflets, printed information from the internet or policies) that have helped you towards meeting the standards you do not need to include this as evidence – keep these for your own information. Evidence in the portfolio should be evidence of your work and your understanding of information that you have read.

• If you are wishing as part of your evidence to put in a reference e.g. foster carer handbook or a book you have read. You should also write something else to show that you have understood it.

• Similarly, if you have completed training courses, reading, e-learning etc you will need to be able to show your SSW that you would be able to put your learning from this into practice and make this clear in the book. For example, so you could have a discussion with your SSW in supervision and write in the book the date of the discussion as it should then be recorded on your supervision notes or give an example of how you have put it into practice that meets the outcome.

Role of the SSW

• Each of the individual criteria needs to be signed off by your supervising social worker. Before doing this, they should be clear that all carers in the household have met the criteria and have either provided the evidence for this in the book – or referenced where it can be found e.g. supervision, or child’s review report.

• Some supervising social workers may do this as you go along whereas others may choose to look at it all at once when the book is completed. Whichever way the workbooks should be part of supervision discussions and if you are having difficulties in any area you can ask about it

Final Sign Off

• Once your supervising social worker is happy consider the workbook is fully evidenced they will send it to Rosemarie Cronin who is responsible for signing all the workbooks off across the county. This is for quality assurance to make sure that the same standards are being applied to all the workbooks.

• Once the book has been signed off it will be returned your SSW who should return it to you. Keep it safe as this is your evidence that it has been completed. You will also receive a certificate and a letter to confirm your completion.
• If there is any area where it is considered some further evidence is required, you will be told which areas and given some further time to complete. Do not panic……..the point of doing this is for you to show you have met the requirements and for us as a service to ensure that you are guided and have the information you need to do the complex role that is expected of you as carers.

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