



The role of Family & Friends Carers

Family and Friends Care (also known as Connected Care) provides an alternative living arrangement for a child who is unable to live with one or both parents

**Brighter Futures for Children
Friends & Family
Leaflet 2
V2.0**





The role of Family & Friends Carers

Family and Friends care, also known as Connected care, provides an alternative living arrangement for a child who is unable to live with one or both parents. Family and Friends carers can be relatives of the child (e.g. grandparents, aunts, uncles or adult siblings) or someone who has an already existing close connection to the child (e.g. a close family friend or occasionally an adult such as a teacher, carer or youth worker who has been closely involved with the child).

When a child is unable to live with his or her parents, it is preferable for them to be cared for by an adult – whether related or not – who the child already knows and trusts.

- ★ In such situations, if the child is in the care of a local authority, the identified carer must be assessed and approved as a Family and Friends foster carer.
- ★ While a full Family and Friends fostering assessment is being completed, the child can live with the proposed carer under a temporary fostering arrangement. This is called a Regulation 24 or 25 arrangement (more commonly known as a 'Reg 24' and 'Reg 25').

What is a Regulation 24 arrangement?

- ★ A Regulation 24 arrangement is the temporary approval of an individual carer or carers for a specific named child who is already known to them. This temporary approval can only last for a maximum of 16 weeks. A Regulation 24 arrangement can be agreed at short notice in an emergency situation, but ideally such arrangements should be planned ahead.
- ★ When a Regulation 24 arrangement is in place, it results in the proposed carer(s) becoming temporary Family and Friends

foster carers for the named child(ren).

- ★ All foster carers are required to comply with the National Fostering Standards during the period of their approval and this includes Family and Friends carers.
- ★ Family and Friends Foster Carers are eligible to receive a weekly age-related allowance to cover the cost of caring for the child(ren) which will be paid from the point of the Regulation 24 approval.

What is a Regulation 25 arrangement?

- ★ A Regulation 25 arrangement is an extension to the Regulation 24 arrangement and can be granted for up to an additional eight weeks.
- ★ This arrangement can be used when the assessment and approval of a Regulation 24 carer cannot be fully completed during the original 16-week approval period. Delays in the completion of checks, such as medical assessments or police checks, can result in approval being delayed beyond 16 weeks.
- ★ Any request for a Regulation 25 extension will need to be considered and recommended by Brighter Futures for Children's Permanence Panel and agreed by the local authority's Agency Decision Maker for fostering.

The assessment process

- ★ While a Regulation 24 or 25 is in place, an assessing social worker will meet the prospective carer(s) to complete a Family and Friends fostering assessment.
- ★ The assessment will include a minimum of six to eight 'home study' sessions, during which the social worker will discuss topics such as their own early life experiences,





their childcare experience and the reasons they want to provide long-term care for the child(ren) concerned.

- ★ A number of statutory checks will also be completed alongside the home study. These will include DBS checks on all adult members of the household, local authority checks, GP medicals (for each applicant) and several personal references.
- ★ The information gathered will be used to inform the outcome of the fostering assessment.

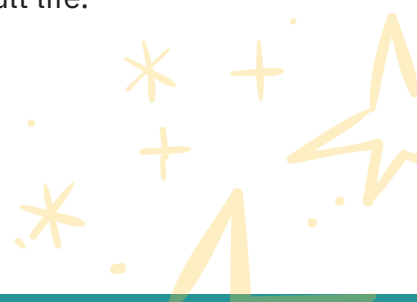
Attending panel and ADM decision

- ★ Once a Family & Friends fostering assessment is complete it will, if positive, be presented to the Brighter Futures for Children Permanence Panel. The assessing social worker will be responsible for attending the panel and presenting the application. The carers will be invited to the panel hearing but attendance is optional.
- ★ The Permanence Panel considers the approval of Family and Friends foster carers and provides a recommendation as to whether the carer(s) should be approved.
- ★ Once the Permanence Panel has made a recommendation, Brighter Futures for Children's Agency Decision Maker for fostering will review the panel paperwork and minutes and will reach the final decision whether to approve the carer(s)' application.
- ★ If the outcome is positive, the assessing social worker will then withdraw and the carer(s) will be allocated a supervising social worker, who will then supervise and support them in their ongoing role as foster carers to the child(ren) placed in their care.
- ★ If the outcome of the fostering assessment is negative, the reason for this will be

explained to the carer(s). The child(ren)'s living arrangements will then be unregulated, and it is likely the child(ren) will be removed from the home and placed with alternative carers.

What is the role of a Family and Friends carer?

- ★ Whether temporarily or fully approved, the role of a Family and Friends foster carer is to work alongside the child(ren)'s social worker, to provide safe and appropriate care and protect the child(ren) from harm.
- ★ Family and Friends carers are expected to participate in monthly supervision with their supervising social worker and to cooperate with the child(ren)'s social worker visiting the child(ren) on a regular basis.
- ★ It is also expected that all foster carers engage in Child Looked After (CLA) reviews, and Personal Education Plan (PEP) meetings, regarding the child's school progress.
- ★ All foster carers are required to complete daily recordings and if needed, medication forms, regarding the welfare of the child(ren) living with them under a fostering arrangement.
- ★ It is also expected that all foster carers complete a range of training. While Family and Friends carers are not required to complete all the training undertaken by other local authority foster carers, certain training sessions are mandatory.
- ★ Family and Friends foster care placements can be short-term arrangements or permanent arrangements where it is anticipated the child(ren) concerned will remain in placement throughout childhood, and potentially into adult life.





Ongoing Support

Brighter Futures for Children provides a range of support to Family and Friends foster carers who are looking after children who remain in the care of the local authority. These include:

- ★ Financial support
- ★ Four-weekly supervision from an allocated supervising social worker
- ★ At least six weekly visits from the child(ren)'s allocated social worker
- ★ Training sessions and access to an online training hub
- ★ The option to attend a Connected Carer's support group
- ★ Access to emergency telephone support outside of office hours

Any questions?

If you have questions about any of the information contained in this leaflet, or you require further information, please contact your assessing social worker or the Team Manager of the Brighter Futures for Children Adoption & Permanence Service:

Name:

Email address:

Phone:

Alternatively, visit us online at www.brighterfuturesforchildren.org

