

Questions asked in a Viability Assessment

Q&As to help you know what taking part
in a Viability Assessment entails.

Brighter Futures for Children
Friends & Family
Leaflet 5
V1.0



© Brighter Futures for Children 2023





Questions that might be asked

The viability assessment provides the opportunity for in-depth discussions about whether the potential carer(s) is able to take on the full-time care of the child (ren), potentially on a permanent basis and whether this is something they want to do. While different assessing social workers may approach this discussion in different ways, potential carers should expect to be asked the following types of questions:

★ *How well do you know the child(ren) and how would you describe your relationship with them?*

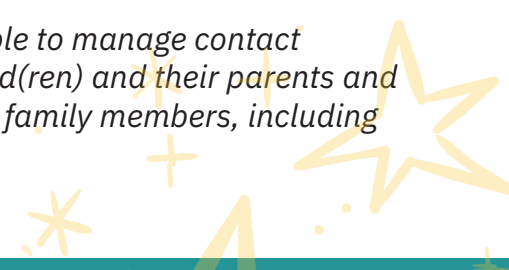
This is important as it is generally less traumatic for a child who is separated from their parent(s) to be placed with someone they already know, possibly in a home environment that is familiar and where they already feel safe.

★ *Do you understand and agree with why Brighter Futures for Children is worried about the child(ren)? Would you be ready and able to protect the child(ren) from any situation where they might feel threatened or could be harmed, including situations where their parent(s) or other familiar adults could potentially pose a risk?*

It is important that potential family and friends carers can recognise the professionals' concerns and are able to think through how they might manage different situations that could cause anxiety for, or harm to the child(ren). When planning the child(ren)'s care, Brighter Futures for Children needs to ensure they will be safe in any proposed care arrangements.

★ *Where do you live? Is there enough space in your home to care for a child(ren)? Can you provide a separate bedroom? Would you need to move house if a child was placed*

with you?

- ★ *How far away do you live from the child(ren)'s parents; if they live locally to you will this be challenging in terms of caring for the child(ren)?*
 - ★ *Do you drive and have access to a car, or do you use public transport? How would you get the child(ren) to nursery or school?*
 - ★ *You are being asked to care for the child(ren) potentially for the rest of their childhood. This is likely to be a commitment that you were not previously expecting to take on and have not previously planned for. Caring for the child(ren) may mean you have to give up or reduce doing other things that you enjoy and think important:*
 - *Is this something you want and feel able to do?*
 - *Do you feel you have a choice?*
 - *What impact would this have on your life/lives? What may you need to sacrifice?*
 - *Are you ready to commit to doing this?*
 - ★ *How would you describe your relationship(s) with the child(ren)'s parents? What is the history of your relationship with them (during their adult lives)? Has your relationship with either of the child(ren)'s parents ever included threats or actual physical violence and if so, what circumstances led to this?*
 - ★ *Can you put the child(ren)'s needs above the needs of the child(ren)'s parents? What if this means you are not able to see or help either of the child(ren)'s parents as much as you may have in the past or are doing presently?*
 - ★ *Would you be able to manage contact between the child(ren) and their parents and other significant family members, including*
- 



restricting the parents' involvement with their child(ren) if contact needed to be limited? How would this affect your relationship with the child(ren)'s parents – particularly the parent who is your relative or friend?

★ *If the child(ren) is placed in your care, how would you expect to work with the professionals who are involved with the child(ren), including social workers, teacher, health visitors, play therapist etc? Do you feel able to seek and accept help and advice from relevant professionals and to work with the decisions they make, even if you do not agree with them?*

★ *As a family and friends foster carer you will be expected to keep records, attend meetings and undertake training. Are these things you are prepared to do? How will you make time to do them?*

★ *Are you in good enough health to provide active and involved full-time care for the child(ren) you are considering caring for?*

★ *To consider your ability to provide stable long-term care for a child(ren), the local authority needs to examine the full breadth of health issues that people can suffer with over time, including the potential impact of some lifestyle choices. This is likely to require exploration of the following areas:*

- *Do you have any health problems or disability related issues that might impact on you caring for the child(ren) as they get older? If you do, how do you expect to manage this around caring for the child(ren)? Are you likely to require additional support to manage your condition as it progresses? What will be the likely impact on the child(ren)?*
- *Do you have any history of suffering from anxiety, depression or other mental health difficulties? If you have, what can trigger*

it for you? How does it affect you and how do you manage it? What support and/or treatment have you had or are you receiving?

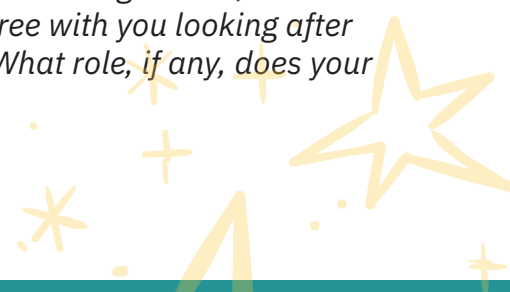
- *Smoking around children (particularly young children) is not healthy for them so if you are a smoker, you may be asked to stop or at least substantially reduce the amount you smoke. Do you think you could do this?*
- *What is your relationship with and use of alcohol and/or recreational drugs? How might this impact on the child if they are placed in your full-time care?*

- *Do you have any history of gambling? If you do, what level has this been at and how have you managed it? What is your current level of involvement and how do you manage it? How might this impact on the child(ren) if they are placed in your full-time care?*

★ *Have you parented a child(ren) before? Have you cared for this child? What do you see as being your parenting strengths and what aspects of parenting have you found to be more difficult? Have you learnt from any mistakes you may have made, and if so, what would you do differently now? How would you set boundaries around a child's behaviour? If a child was presenting difficult or challenging behaviour, how would you manage it? What sanctions, rewards and/or punishments might you employ with a child at different ages?*

★ *If you are a couple, how would you describe your relationship? What roles do each of you take within your relationship and around the home? How do you work together and what do you do when you disagree?*

★ *If you are in a relationship but you are coming forward as a single carer, does your partner agree with you looking after the child(ren)? What role, if any, does your*





partner see him or herself taking in the child(ren)'s life and upbringing? How will they help you with caring for the child(ren)?

★ *Who else lives in your home? How would you describe the relationships between the members of your household? Do they agree with the child(ren) coming to live with you or could this create difficulties within your household? How do you think the other members of your household will support you and the child(ren)? If some of your household members are not supportive, how will you manage this?*

★ *Are you happy for the assessing social worker to speak to other people who know you well to gain their views on your application to care for the child(ren)?*

Note: This may include any previous partner(s) (if you had children with them), your adult children (whether living with you or independently), younger children living in your household, wider family members, friends and your employer(s).

★ *Caring for a child is not easy and you may be faced with difficulties you do not expect. Do you think you could manage the uncertainties you might face bringing up or looking after a child who may well have suffered trauma when they were living at home? Do you have friends and relatives who will be able to help and support you; if you do, who are they and what support could they realistically offer you?*

★ *Caring for a child is time consuming. Do you have the time and energy you will need if you are to take on the full-time care of the child in addition to any other commitments you already have? Would you be able to stop working or work fewer hours if required in either the short or longer term?*

★ *As foster carer(s) or special guardian(s) you*

will probably receive some financial support from Brighter Futures for Children to help you provide for the child. However, providing full-time care for a child is expensive, so even with this support, your finances may become tighter. Do you have the financial security to be able to care for the child, particularly if this requires you to reduce your paid employment?

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

