

Foster Carer Payment for Skills (PFS) Model and the Tasks, Skills, Competencies (TSC) Framework

Introduction

The Leeds City Council Fostering Service employs a four level Payment For Skills (PFS) model. The model underpins the Fostering Service commitment to achieving best possible outcomes for fostered looked after children supported by skilled, motivated and rewarded foster carers. The model provides clear entry requirements and expectations regarding carer training and development for each level, reflective learning and support group attendance. The Tasks, Skills and Competencies (TSC) carer practice framework for each level of the model encompasses the 5 Outcomes of the "Every Child Matters" framework.

Separate published and linked documents to the Payment for Skills model and Framework are: *Financial Support for Foster Carers FN16 (details all payment procedures, allowances and fee levels)*; *Foster Carer Terms and Conditions for (Payment for Skills)*; *Tax, welfare benefits and insurance information all produced each April and sent to foster carers.*

The model has minimum entry requirements for new carers at each level (1 lowest, 4 highest) and also allows existing carers to progress up through the levels if they meet the Task, Skills and Competencies (TSC) requirements. A weekly skills fee is paid to Level 2, 3 and 4 carers (in addition to weekly maintenance allowance payments). Level 1 is a basic entry level where no fee is paid and also applies to kinship carers. Level 1 carers progress to Level 2 normally following a carer review including evidence of meeting the required TSC's within a 6-12 month period.

Foster carers will need to provide evidence to the Supervising Fostering Officers during the assessment process or progression assessment that they meet the requirements for the respective PFS level and this framework assists carers in being clear about the expectations of the requirements at each level.

Full details of all courses linked to Payment for Skills requirements are provided in the Training and Development Calendar and the Training Matrix. Courses are regularly evaluated and may be updated and amended over time.

For more details on Foster Carer Training and Development contact:

(0113) 247 8561

Overview of the Model:

<p>Level 1 (Includes Kinship Carers)</p> <p>Entry Requirements: Have some experience of childcare eg parenting / looking after other's children</p> <p>Financial Support: 1. Weekly Allowances / 2. No Fee</p>
<p>Level 2</p> <p>Entry Requirements: Have experience of childcare eg parenting / looking after other's children / paid or voluntary work in childcare / previous fostering experience (six months minimum)</p> <p>Financial Support: 1. Weekly Allowances 2. Weekly Fee: £52 (£26 each subsequent child in placement)</p>
<p>Level 3</p> <p>Entry Requirements: In addition to Level 2, evidence significant childcare experience and ability to take more challenging children with more complex needs</p> <p>Financial Support: 1. Weekly Allowances 2. Weekly Fee: £120 (£60 each subsequent child in placement)</p>
<p>Level 4</p> <p>Entry Requirements: Significant formal childcare experience eg previous fostering 3 years minimum inc children with complex needs / employment in childcare or related experience eg nursing, youth work, teaching. Ability to reflect upon professional experience and relate this to the fostering task</p> <p>Financial Support: 1. Weekly Allowances 2. Fees: 1 child £261 2 children £429 3 children £538</p>

Level 1

Entry requirement :- Have some experience of childcare eg parenting / looking after other's children

General requirements: -

1 Evidence a commitment to self development via training and support, including mentoring from an experienced carer

2 Complete 6 mandatory training courses within 12 months of approval and evidence learning from the training in practice

- Safer Care
- Promoting Pro-Social Behaviour
- Promoting Health of Looked After Children
- Attachment and Loss
- Education Issues for Looked After Children
- Equality and Diversity

(All above courses need to be completed to meet the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) requirements / Certification)

3 Attend an appropriate support group, minimum 4 per year

4 Undertake an Annual Personal Development Plan

5 Maintain a basic written log and achieve CWDC standards requirements within the first year of fostering

Practice requirements ensuring that children achieve the best possible outcomes from their care with foster carers: Be Healthy; Stay Safe; Enjoy and Achieve; Making a Positive Contribution; Achieve Economic Well Being

Be Healthy

Level 1

- Provide a good standard of care for children in a safe, healthy and nurturing environment
- Ensure the health and safety of children / young people within the home including completion of the Health and Safety checklist
- Maintain appropriate placement records, including the maintenance of a Foster Carer Diary
- Record significant events eg medical / health / dental appointments; unauthorised absences from the foster home; contact; child behaviours; incidents / events reported to child's social worker
- Help and encourage children to be Healthy via healthy diet, lifestyle and regular exercise
- Attend medical and dental appointments with the child / young person
- Encourage awareness and understanding of drug and alcohol issues and positively promote the development of good sexual health

- Facilitate the fostered child / young person to receive health care which meets his / her needs for good physical, emotional and social development
- Promote and support contact for a fostered child / young person
- Act as advocate for the child / young person in cooperation with other professionals / agencies eg school / education / health / police

Stay Safe

Level 1

- Protect children / young people from all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation and deprivation
- Set appropriate boundaries and manage children's behaviour within these without recourse to physical chastisement. Discuss and clarify boundaries in conjunction with others eg social worker; supervising fostering officer
- Provide and maintain suitable accommodation for the number, needs and age of the child / young person in placement
- Provide a Safe, Stimulating and Stable environment to the varied needs of individual children / young people taking into account their backgrounds and experiences
- Maintain a safe care plan for each child / young person in placement
- Make positive use of supervision and guidance from a supervising fostering officer and reflect and learn from advice given
- Attend and contribute to foster carer reviews, self assessment and reflective learning opportunities
- Attend and contribute to child care reviews

Enjoy and Achieve

Level 1

- Provision of foster care which values and promotes diversity and equality
- Ability to listen to and communicate with children / young people appropriate to their age, understanding, individual needs and ethnicity and culture
- Actively promote, support and encourage children's / young people's education and achievement under the guidance of a child's Personal Education Plan (PEP)
- Attend and contribute to PEP Reviews
- Establish and maintain daily routines for children / young people eg school attendance; assisting with homework
- Assist and encourage the development of children's / young people's self esteem and positive identity by supporting participation in social activities and leisure pursuits
- Play an active role in relationships with Education providers eg attending school parents evenings; contributing / commenting on school reports / supporting school – home agreements
- Maintain a Clothing Inventory for each child / young person placed and ensure that appropriate levels and standards of clothing are provided
- Assist children / young people moving to other placements when required and as part of a child's placement plan eg return to birth family; to other foster placement; to adoption placement

Make a Positive Contribution

Level 1

- Help children / young people cope with issues of separation and loss and assist them with coming to terms with previous experiences
- Assist children / young people maintain a positive view of their family and support and facilitate contact as agreed in a placement plan
- Liaise closely with a child's social worker and work to agreed plans for the child / young person
- Maintain Confidentiality
- Work closely with other professionals in the best interest of the child / young person eg School; Education; Health; Therapeutic Services
- Demonstrate a commitment to sustaining a placement as agreed in the child care plan
- Demonstrate a commitment to ending placements in a planned, agreed way
- Assist and support contact arrangements in and outside the foster home

Achieve Economic Well Being

Level 1

- Enable a child to move on positively to other placements eg return to birth family / other foster placements / adoption
- To attend and contribute to child care reviews and other meetings / forums as agreed and identified in a child's care / placement plan
- Maintain a nurturing home environment that will model family living and provide good standards to positively influence a child's / young person's aspirations
- Promote and encourage the development of independence / life skills where age appropriate
- Assist young people to develop skills, confidence and knowledge necessary for successful adult living

Level 2

Entry requirement Have experience of childcare eg parenting / looking after other's children / paid or voluntary work in childcare / previous fostering experience (six months minimum)

Progression requirement: - Have been an approved carer for at least 6 months and met the requirements of a Progression Plan evidenced through a portfolio.

General requirements :- Must be able and prepared to take placements of children with more complex needs than in Level 1.

1 Attend an appropriate support group, minimum 4 per year

2 Undertake an Annual Personal Development Plan

3 Maintain a basic written log and achieve CWDC standards requirements within the first year of fostering

4 Complete 5 mandatory training courses within 12 months of progression to Level 2 and three courses per year in subsequent years.

- First Aid
- Contact Issues
- Child Development
- Child Protection
- Helping Children Move On (or) Life Story Work

New entrants at Level 2 should complete above courses within 2 years of approval but prioritise those in Year 1 which are attached to CWDC requirements if needed.

Practice requirements ensuring that children achieve the best possible outcomes from their care with foster carers: Be Healthy; Stay Safe; Enjoy and Achieve; Making a Positive Contribution; Achieve Economic Well Being

Be Healthy

Level 2 (in addition to Level 1)

- Provide good, quality care to meet the needs of a child / young person
- Show a commitment to developing greater understanding of the range of child care and child development issues
- Utilise basic therapeutic parenting techniques under the guidance of social workers / other professionals
- Promote, support and supervise Contact, including in the foster carers own home where appropriate and agreed
- Assist with Life Story work for children in placement

Stay Safe

Level 2 (in addition to Level 1)

- Evidence skills development required to meet the needs of more complex and demanding children / young people
- Contribute to professional assessments under the guidance of the child's social worker, supervising fostering officer or other professionals

Enjoy and Achieve

Level 2 (in addition to Level 1)

- Make proactive contributions to problem resolution in school for children / young people placed

Make a Positive Contribution

Level 2 (in addition to Level 1)

- Maintain accurate placement records and provide written reports as required
- Attend Court proceedings involving placed children / young people where required
- Actively support work with birth parents / extended family where appropriate

Achieve Economic Well Being

Level 2 (in addition to Level 1)

- Actively promote the value of engaging in local activities and community links for placed children and young people where age appropriate

Level 3

Entry requirement: - Evidence significant childcare experience eg parenting / looking after other's children / paid or voluntary work in childcare / previous fostering experience(at least 2 years) and ability to take more challenging children with more complex needs

Progression Requirement : - Have been an approved carer for at least 2 years and met the requirements of a Progression Plan evidenced through a portfolio.

General requirements:- Must be able to take children with more complex needs and undertake more challenging tasks than in Level 2 and must not work more than 20 hours per week paid employment outside of fostering commitments.

1 Attend appropriate support group, minimum 6 per year

2 If progressing from Level 2, attend 4 courses with 12 months;

- Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (TCI)
- Communicating with Children
- Plus 2 other courses from the Training Menu

then complete 3 courses from the Training Menu in each subsequent year. (Level 3 carers expected to commence NVQ3 when places become available).

New entrants at Level 3 to complete minimum Level 1 courses Year 1, minimum Level 2 courses Year 2 plus TCI. Prioritise in first year Level 1 courses if requiring evidence of CWDC Standards. New entrants who can evidence previous or relevant Training and Development experience may be able to offset this against some Mandatory Training requirements. This should be discussed with new entrants as part of initial and subsequent assessment prior to approval

3 Produce an enhanced Personal Development Plan evidencing planning and action towards the development of higher level skills and competencies

Practice requirements ensuring that children achieve the best possible outcomes from their care with foster carers: Be Healthy; Stay Safe; Enjoy and Achieve; Making a Positive Contribution; Achieve Economic Well Being

Be Healthy

Level 3 (in addition to Levels 1 and 2)

- Maintain active involvement with and provide information to appropriate specialist health services to meet the needs of placed children / young people eg therapeutic services. Provide mentor support / advice to other carers in these areas

Stay Safe

Level 3 (in addition to Levels 1 and 2)

- Assist with plans / agreements for children / young people as required. Work to agreements and contracts to achieve placement plans and related outcomes
- Contribute to professional assessments of children / young people
- Evidence ability to manage more challenging and demanding behaviours and support more specialised placement commitments
- A commitment via supervision to identify own training and development needs
- Be able to offer significant flexibility in meeting the placement needs of more complex children / young people
- Work cooperatively and supportively with birth family / relatives where considered appropriate

Enjoy and Achieve

Level 3 (in addition to Levels 1 and 2)

- Demonstrate a commitment to improving knowledge and understanding of specific educational issues in order to assist child / young person placed

Make a Positive Contribution

Level 3 (in addition to Levels 1 and 2)

- Develop skills and evidence ability to work closely with birth parents / extended family in order to achieve placement plans
- Provide input to specialised / therapeutic parenting strategies with professional support and guidance

Achieve Economic Well Being

Level 3 (in addition to Levels 1 and 2)

- Provide detailed reports as required and contribute to a wide range of meetings / forums

Level 4

Entry requirement: - Significant formal childcare experience eg previous fostering 3 years minimum inc children with complex needs/ employment in childcare or related experience eg nursing, youth work, teaching. Ability to reflect upon professional experience and relate this to the fostering task

Progression Requirement : - Must have been a foster carer for at least 3 years and provide evidence of a skill set reflecting high level competencies and experience through a portfolio of evidence

General requirements:- Must be able to provide specialist foster care in one or more key areas eg: Parent /Child; Assessment; Planned Permanency for challenging children and young people; Children with Disability; Children having experienced significant disruption / placement breakdowns; Teens / Placements linked to the Youth Justice system; Emergency Placements for challenging children and young people; Placements for young people with particularly challenging behaviours where residential placements may be the alternative.

One approved carer in the household must have a full time commitment to fostering with no other paid work commitments outside the fostering service

- Act as a Mentor to newly approved carers
- Attend appropriate support group, minimum 6 per year
- If progressing from Level 3, attend minimum 3 courses per year from Training Menu (including TCI refresher) as identified via assessment of carer training needs. Commence and complete NVQ3 within 3 years (subject to availability of training places available)
- New entrants: Complete Level 1 training Year 1 plus TCI, Level 2 and 3 training mix Year 2. Prioritise in first year Level 1 courses if requiring CWDC Standards. Commence and complete NVQ3 within 3 Years (subject to availability of training places available). New entrants, who can evidence previous or relevant Training and Development experience, may be able to offset this against some Mandatory Training requirements. This should be discussed with new entrants as part of initial and subsequent assessment prior to approval.
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- Maintain a detailed Personal Development Portfolio, evidencing continuing development of high level fostering skills and competencies
- Consider/ participate in delivery of new carer preparation and training in partnership with Fostering Staff
- Support and assist the Fostering Service in promoting a positive fostering profile, including involvement in foster carer recruitment initiatives

Practice requirements ensuring that children achieve the best possible outcomes from their care with foster carers: Be Healthy; Stay Safe; Enjoy and Achieve; Making a Positive Contribution; Achieve Economic Well Being

Be Healthy

Level 4 (in addition to Levels 1, 2 and 3)

- Achieve sustained high level work with specialist health services for children young people, including direct work with the child / young person in placement
- Supervise Contact arrangements and provide detailed analysis and assessment of contact arrangements inside and outside the foster home
- Recording and Reporting of a high quality and detail that can inform the development of child care planning

Stay Safe

Level 4 (in addition to Levels 1, 2 and 3)

- Provide commitment to specialised placements of children / young people with the most complex needs eg: Parent / Child; Assessment; Remand; Permanence; Children with a disability; Children / Young People having experienced significant disruption; Single placements in the household; Children / Young people who might otherwise require a residential placement
- Provision of Emergency placements (inc Out of Hours) and those required at short notice
- Management of persistently challenging and anti-social behaviours of children / young people placed

Enjoy and Achieve

Level 4 (in addition to Levels 1, 2 and 3)

- High level of input (verbal and written) to the range of required tasks involved in encouraging children / young people to enjoy and achieve
- Demonstrate a high level of knowledge and understanding of educational and child development issues

Make a Positive Contribution

Level 4 (in addition to Levels 1, 2 and 3)

- Identify own training and development needs and keep up date and informed about child development issues applying this knowledge to your work
- Ability to provide comprehensive assessments of children's needs
- In consultation with your supervising fostering officer and child's social worker, taking a high level of responsibility for identifying and using support services available for the child / young person and to develop own knowledge and understanding of these services

Achieve Economic Well Being

Level 4 (in addition to Levels 1,2 and 3)

- Actively support and encourage young people to engage in further education / training / employment opportunities
 - Play a pro-active role, in close liaison with other professionals in supporting a young person's transition to new experiences and adult life
 - Encourage and support young people (where age appropriate) to access work experience / part time work and promote their knowledge, confidence and understanding of work related issues eg compiling CV's / application forms
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