

THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS, COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT & SPORTS
SOCIAL AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT
SOCIAL SERVICES DIVISION

Foster Care Guidelines



1.0: BACKGROUND

1.1: What is fostering

- Fostering is about caring for a child or children of whom you are not the biological parent.
- When you foster, you agree to look after a child on behalf of the Social Services, from a few days to several years. **You have to be trained and placed on the foster register.**
- The time in foster care depends on how soon a child can safely be reunited with his family. If this is not possible, then it depends on how soon a permanent placement can be made.
- Becoming a permanent foster carer means the child remains with you until they reach adulthood, but you are still caring for them on behalf of Social Services.
- The difference between fostering and adoption is when you adopt a child, you become the child's legal parent and the child remains with you on a permanent basis.
- The Children Act 1982 Section 28(1) makes provision for foster care.

1.2: Types of Foster Care

- Emergency foster care
- Short term foster care
- Long term foster
- Permanent foster care etc....

1.3: **Who can become foster carers?**

- Foster carers can come from all kinds of different backgrounds. The only specific barrier is to those with certain types of criminal record.
- The most important thing is that you care about children, have parenting skills and that you can work with the Social Services.

1.4: **Why children need fostering?**

- Children need to be fostered when their families are unable to look after them.
- They have often been abused, neglected or abandoned by their parents or guardians. Sometimes there is also a temporary breakdown of family relationship and parents can ask the Social Services to look after a child.

1.5: **Procedures**

- Social Services request written applications from prospective foster parents.
- Social Worker then visits the applicant at home and gathers information.
- Social Worker compiles a report which should include:
 - The means of livelihood of the applicant.
 - The health of the applicant and that of the other members of the applicant's household.
 - The character of the applicant and that of the other members of the family.
 - Whether the applicant, or any members of the applicant's household, has been the subject of any complaint or investigation for child abuse.

- Police record.
 - The condition of the home and the physical environment of the home of the applicant.
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- After completing the report, the case file is forwarded to the Director Social Services.
 - Should the applicant be rejected, he is informed by means of a letter. Should the applicant be accepted, he is requested to attend a training session before placement on the foster care register.
 - The child is visited daily during the first week of fostering, once a week the following month and thereafter at such regular intervals as the Director may consider necessary.
 - The foster parents are not allowed to take the child out of the country without the permission of the Social Services.
 - Progress reports are submitted at least once a month for the first six months.
 - Placement will be reviewed every three months. The Social Services reserve the right to remove the child from the foster home and the foster parent from the register if they no longer meet the criteria.