

## **‘Looking after somebody else’s child’**

**A policy to promote and support the needs of children living with family and friends (connected) carers, regardless of their legal status.**

**Children and Family Services, Children’s Social Care  
Responsible Managers: Sam MacDonald and Sue Hammersley**

Strategic Managers Children’s Social Care

**Date: January 2017**

## **Table of Contents**

Introduction	3
Background to the policy	3
Who this policy applies to	3
What is Family and Friends Care?	4
Private Arrangements with Family and Friends Carers	5
Statement of principles underpinning this policy	6
Aims and Objectives	6
Public arrangements for Children who are in the care of the local authority	7
Our Approach	7
The Legal Framework	7
Assessment and Approval	7
Emergency Assessment and Temporary approval as a Foster Carer under Regulation 24	8
Planned Assessment as a Foster Carer under Fostering service Regulations	8
Supporting Contact	9
On-going Support	9
Training and Development of the Family and Friends Foster Carer	10
Financial Support	10
Permanence	10
Legal Fees	10
Accommodation	11
Education and Health	11
Complaints by Family and Friends Foster Carers	12
Appendix 1	13

## **Introduction**

The Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities, Family and Friend Care published in 2011 makes it a requirement for each local authority with responsibility for children's services to publish a policy setting out its approach towards promoting and supporting the needs of children living with family and friends carers, whether or not they are children in care.

Family and friends carers have said that they are often uncertain as to what help is available and how to access services. This policy will help family and friends carers to understand the type of arrangements they are undertaking, the duties and responsibilities involved in these care arrangements, the types of services available and where to go for further information.

## **Background to the policy**

Placements with family and friends carers come about because relatives or friends offer to care for the children in agreement with parents or arrangements are sometimes initiated by the local authority because of child protection or welfare concerns. A variety of family and friends arrangements exist therefore, with or without the knowledge of the local authority and under a variety of legal arrangements.

Evidence from research is generally supportive of family and friends care as a viable option for children who cannot live at home with their parents. Much of the research highlights the high levels of commitment demonstrated by family and friends carers, their strong bonds with the children, the pleasure they find in the children themselves and the satisfaction they derive from caring.

## **Who this policy applies to**

This policy relates to all situations where a child/young person needs to live away from their family of origin and arrangements are being considered or have been made for him or her to be cared for by family and friends.

This policy is relevant to:

- Lead Members for Children's Services in Stoke-on-Trent
- Directors of Children's Services
- Managers of services for children in need and children in care services
- Social workers and other social care staff working with children in need and children in care
- Stoke-on-Trent City Council's relevant partners
- Other providers of services to children in need and children in care including private and voluntary sector providers
- Family and friends carers
- Children/young people living with family and friends carers and their parents.

The policy explains how Stoke-on-Trent City Council Children and Family Services, Children's Social Care and its partner agencies exercise their duties and responsibilities to children and young people living in these types of arrangements.

The policy is issued in accordance with the Statutory Guidance for Family and Friends, Department of Education 2011, and also has regard to the statutory framework including:

- The Children Act 1989
- The Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations 2011

- Replacement Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations on Private Fostering, DfE 2005
- Fostering Services Regulations 2011
- National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services 2011
- Special Guardianship Guidance DfE 2005
- Equality Act 2010
- Special Guardianship (Amendment) Regulations 2016

Due regard has been given to any relevant case law at the time of writing.

For the purposes of this policy the definition of a family and friends carer is:

‘A relative, friend or other person with a prior connection with somebody else’s child who is caring for that child full time. An individual who is a ‘connected person’ to a child who is, either in care or on the edge of entering care, may also be a family and friend carer. A child who is cared for by a family and friends carer may or may not be a child who is in the care of the local authority.’

## **What is Family and Friends Care?**

A ‘family and friends carer’ refers to a relative, friend or other person known to the child or young person who is caring for that child full time.

Children and young people are described as living in family and friends care when they are:

- in an informal arrangement with a close relative - defined as grandparents, aunts and uncles, siblings and step parents)
- in an informal arrangement with other family members or friends which last for a period of less than 28 days
- in a private fostering arrangement, if not a close relative
- a looked after child placed by the local authority with family or friends approved as foster carers
- under a Residence Order or Special Guardianship Order

There are a number of reasons why children and young people may be in family and friends care arrangements. Some examples include children and young people:

- who have been assessed as being unable to live with parents to safeguard their welfare
- whose family is going through a crisis
- whose parent(s) is(are) unable to care for them because of ill health, alcohol, drug or mental health issues
- living with friends to continue their schooling when parents move away for employment or education
- with families overseas
- living with host families while attending a language school or undergoing medical treatment.

Family and friends care encompasses a range of private and public arrangements provided by relatives or friends on a temporary or permanent basis, dependent on the child’s circumstances. Private arrangements can be made informally by parents for the care of their children with their family and friends, or more formally via the use of private law proceedings. Public arrangements can be made via public law proceedings or accommodation under the Children Act 1989.

When there is a crisis or difficult circumstances arise in the family, family and friends often rally round to make sure the children are well looked after and often make arrangements between themselves to look after children until the crisis or difficulty has passed. Parents or those with parental responsibility have the authority to make such arrangements.

In the case of a looked after child the local authority may have placed the child with family and friends approved as foster carers for that child. Regulation 24 of the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010 allows a child to be placed with a connected person for up to 16 (sixteen) weeks or while the carer is being assessed as an approved foster carer.

## **Private Arrangements with Family and Friends Carers**

Stoke-on-Trent City Council recognises that most private/informal arrangements work well to meet the needs of the child and that with the provision of support at the earliest opportunity there will be no requirement for council intervention.

Stoke-on-Trent City Council will only assess informal/private family and friends care arrangements when it is necessary to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child, or where the council is obliged to meet the requirements of private fostering regulations. We will endeavour to support these arrangements within the context of constrained resources.

Stoke-on-Trent City Council supports the view that no child should have to become a child in care, in order to access support when cared for by family or a friend. Where it is safe to do so, arrangements made by the parents for a child to live with, or continue to live with, a relative or friend on a private/informal basis as a child in need will be rigorously explored and supported, before consideration is given to placing a child into public care.

Where, in the child's best interests, a private arrangement by the parents is facilitated by the council, as a safe alternative to public care, the child will be subject to a child in need plan or, where appropriate, a child protection plan. This will ensure the coordinated provision of support to meet the child's specific needs, that the arrangements are still in the best interests of the child, and that the child's need for permanence is being met. Whilst gathering information for the Child and Family Assessment and where it is anticipated that social work involvement will continue, parents will be asked to identify a family member or friend who they would like their child to live with if things within the home became too difficult to manage. This enables a discussion to take place as to the relationship that child has with the adults identified and how such an arrangement would be supported.

Families have to be able to make an informed choice about the support they offer one another, and not commit to a child, only to find it unrealistic. Social workers need to be clear and understand what it is they are asking a family to do and what support is required for them to do it before that family member takes on the responsibility of caring for the child. It may be possible to offer short term support to prevent the child entering the care system whilst further assessments to look at permanent arrangements are completed. Parents and carers will be advised to seek advice about entitlement to benefits. It may be possible to offer some limited financial support under Section 17. This could be a one off payment, a payment for specific items, or more regular payments over a period of time. These payments will be monitored and reviewed regularly.

In all cases, it is essential that the parents and the family and friends carers have a clear understanding of the status of the arrangements i.e. this is a private arrangement made by the parents supported by Stoke-on-Trent City Council and that the child is not a child in care. Parents and carers, the child, the social worker and other services will need to be clear about the level of support that will be provided. Please see details at Appendix 1.

## **Statement of principles underpinning this policy**

Children have the right to be brought up by their own families, so far as this is consistent with their welfare. Intervention by the local authority, against the will of the parent or child, should be avoided where possible and when required should be proportionate to what is reasonably needed to safeguard the welfare of the child.

Stoke-on-Trent City Council recognises the important contribution family and friends make in providing care for children who, for a number of reasons, cannot remain with their family of origin. In these situations, we support the principle of placing children with family and friends carers as first choice, where it is safe to do so and is in the best interests of the child.

If children and young people have to live apart from their family of origin, both they and their parents should be given adequate information to help them to consider alternatives and contribute to the making of an informed choice about the appropriate forms of care. Parents should continue to play as full a part in their lives as possible, consistent with the child's best interests and welfare.

Parents and family and friends carers require information and support at different stages of the child's life. These needs may arise regardless of their legal status and not everyone's needs are the same; some need extra support during difficult or uncertain times in their own lives whilst others may need more intensive help over a longer period of time. Children who live with family and friends need a range of services that support children and families according to their individual and changing needs.

In our practice, support to children living with family and friends carers is underpinned by the principles that a child's welfare is paramount, and respect should be given to individual, cultural, family and community diversity. It is our belief that children and families should be active participants in all aspects of our work and we strive to work in partnership with professionals, children, parents and extended family.

## **Aims and Objectives**

The objectives of this policy are:

- To ensure that children who have to live apart from their family of origin have a secure, stable and loving family to support them through childhood and beyond.
- To ensure that the needs of children and young people in Stoke-on-Trent who are unable to live with their parents are understood and strategies, policies, and services are developed with the needs of these children in mind.
- To seek to provide family and friends carers with support to ensure that children do not become, or remain longer than needed, accommodated by the local authority under section 20(1) or S31 of the Children Act 1989.
- To increase the likelihood and success of family and friend placements when children and young people cannot live with their parents.

In order to achieve this we will:

Promote permanence for children by seeking to enable those children who cannot live with their parents to remain with their extended family or friends, in conditions that provide for their emotional and physical needs and are legally appropriate.

Work in collaboration with local partner agencies to promote and support the needs of children living with family and friends carers, whether or not they are a child in care.

Consult with and listen to the views of children and young people, family and friends carers and parents as appropriate when drawing up policies. Consultation will include children and adults with disabilities, using appropriate communication methods.

## **Public Arrangements for Children who are in the care of the local authority**

Public arrangements are defined as the placement of a child with their family/relatives and friends where that child is in the care of the local authority. Children enter the care of the local authority when their birth parents or someone else who has parental responsibility are unable to provide on-going care in either a temporary or permanent capacity. Children can either be in care as a result of a voluntary agreement by their parents or as a result of a court order.

Our aim is to ensure that family and friends' carers who are approved as foster carers receive the support they need to meet the needs of the specific children they are caring for.

## **Our Approach**

Where a child is a 'child in care' and where in their best interests it is the most appropriate placement, Stoke-on-Trent City Council will give preference to a member of the family, or friend (connected persons) as the placement of choice for the child.

Stoke-on-Trent City Council will therefore take a pro-active approach in identifying and considering a member of the family or friend (connected person), at each stage of the decision-making process, during any legal proceedings or assessment, and as part of the Public Law Outline process in relation to the child in care.

Many children benefit from placements with family and friends. However not all relatives are able to safeguard and promote a child's welfare and their parenting capacity should be rigorously assessed before being put forward for approval as a local authority foster carer.

## **The Legal Framework**

To enable relatives, friends or other persons connected to the child to care for a child who is in care, they must be approved as foster carers under the 2011 Fostering Service Regulations or temporarily approved under Regulation 24/25 2010 Care Planning Placement and Case Review Regulations and then subsequently approved under the 2011 Fostering Service Regulations. The regulations cover temporary/emergency, short term, and long term approvals.

Accountability for the placement resides with Stoke-on-Trent City Council as the placing authority.

## **Assessment and Approval**

Whilst nobody has the right to be a foster carer, Standard 13 of the National minimum Standards for Fostering Services 2011 requires that people, who express an interest in becoming foster carers, are treated fairly, without prejudice and with respect.

The Standard also requires that prospective foster carers should be considered in terms of their capacity to look after children in a safe and responsible way that meets their developmental needs.

In all circumstances, where the proposed carer is the most appropriate placement and where

it meets the child's needs as identified in the child's care plan, the carer will be assessed and approved as a foster carer before the child is placed.

## **Emergency Assessment and Temporary Approval as a Foster Carer under Regulation 24**

If the child has to be placed with a relative, friend or connected person in an emergency and it is not possible to carry out a full assessment, the carer can be temporarily approved for 16 weeks (or in exceptional specified circumstances 24 weeks) provided Stoke-on-Trent City Council has:

- ascertained key information about the proposed carers and members of their household which does not preclude the placement, before the placement or if not possible, immediately afterwards (Regulation 24(2) of the Care Planning, Placement and Care Review Regulations (2010)). This is called an Assessment of Suitability.
- made arrangements, where required, to carry out a full fostering assessment under the Fostering /Service Regulations 2011 and taking into account the Fostering Service National Minimum standards 2011

Children will only be placed in an emergency with a connected person where it is in the child's best interests and where the child has to enter care and be placed that day, and where there has been insufficient time to complete a full assessment under Fostering Service Regulations 2011.

The assessment for this temporary approval will be carried out jointly by the child's social worker and an assessing social worker from the Fostering Service. This temporary approval only lasts for up to 16 weeks and early consideration must be given to arranging a full fostering assessment if required within specified timescales.

Where the full assessment is not completed within 16 weeks (or in exceptional cases 24 weeks if an extension has been applied for) from the date of temporary approval, or the outcome of the assessment is negative, then the placement cannot continue under fostering regulations. If the placement is in the child's best interests but the applicants do not comply with fostering standards consideration would be given, as to whether the placement could continue under a different legal framework, such as a Residence or Special Guardianship Order. Such orders may have different financial implications.

The connected carers will be consulted as part of the process and unless in an emergency, would, where possible, be given the opportunity of seeking their own legal advice prior to the child being removed from their care.

## **Planned Assessment as a Foster Carer under Fostering Service Regulations**

Where possible, placements should be planned to enable a thorough and full assessment of the proposed carer under Fostering Service Regulations.

In some circumstances, the local authority may carry out an assessment of suitability of the proposed carers in order to ascertain whether they will be able to meet the child's assessed needs and can proceed for a full assessment as foster carers under Fostering Service Regulations.

In Stoke-on-Trent, the assessing social worker from the Fostering Service, in partnership with the child's social worker, will undertake a full Fostering assessment. The purpose of this fuller assessment is to ensure that, with reference to the child's care plan and permanence



plan, the proposed carer has the capacity to meet the specific child's needs in a safe and responsible way for the duration of the proposed placement whether this is short or long term. As part of this assessment, the proposed carer must undergo and satisfy certain specified statutory checks and references before approval can be recommended.

The competency-based assessment allows the assessor to focus on the specific needs of the child or children concerned whilst assessing the carer's skills and qualities against the required standards (National Minimum Fostering Standards, standard 30, 2011). The assessment will balance the experiences and strengths of the carer against any aspects which might make them less suitable. The needs of the child will be kept central as the process of the assessment will also be to match the child to the carer.

On completion of the full assessment the carer will be considered for approval by Stoke-on-Trent City Council's Fostering Panel in relation to the specific child or children they are connected to. The panel will make a recommendation to the Agency Decision Maker.

Carers have recourse to seek review of the initial decision either directly to the Agency Decision Maker or to the Independent Reviewing Mechanism within 28 days.

Carers may wish to consider funding their own legal advice should they wish to challenge the decisions made.

## **Supporting Contact**

It is usual that most children in care living with members of their extended family or friends will be in contact with one or both of their parents and with other relatives. Such contact is generally a positive experience in that it helps the child to maintain a sense of identity and belonging.

Stoke-on-Trent City Council has a responsibility to promote contact for children in care with their parents, relatives or anyone connected to the child unless it is not reasonably practicable or consistent with their welfare. An application would need to be made to the court in the event that the local authority refuses contact between a child and parent for a period of more than 7 days.

Contact will be carefully managed, monitored and supported for children in care who are placed with family and friends carers and any need for additional support identified at the child's review or during the foster carer's supervision sessions and Annual Foster Carer Review. In some circumstances it will be necessary for contact to be facilitated and supervised by the local authority. Those arrangements would be considered at regular 'looked after child reviews' and care planning meetings.

## **On-going Support**

Throughout the assessment process whether for temporary approval or approval under Fostering Service Regulations, family and friends foster carers with children in placement will be supported by a named allocated supervising social worker; and the child will be supported by the child's social worker.

The need for any on-going support or support services, especially in relation to managing contact for children will also be identified in the assessment and addressed in the foster carers' subsequent supervisions sessions and annual reviews chaired by an Independent Reviewing Officer.

The child's social worker is responsible for the child's care plan and the allocated supervising

social worker is responsible for supervising the carer. It is the responsibility of all professionals involved for ensuring that the carer exercises delegated authority within the overall framework of the care plan and the placement plan and that the carer demonstrates that they are meeting the child's needs as set out in the plans.

## **Training and Development of Family and Friends Foster Carers**

All family and friends foster carers are entitled to the same level of training and support as unrelated foster carers including the payment of relevant fostering allowances.

All family and friend foster carers will be supported by a named allocated supervising social worker who will be responsible for the foster carer's support, supervision, training and development.

All carers are issued with a Foster Care Agreement which they are expected to sign and comply with. This agreement details the expectation of the carer to meet Fostering Service Regulations and Fostering National Minimum Standards. It also sets out the level and type of support they can expect from Stoke-on-Trent City Council Fostering Services.

Stoke-on-Trent City Council will ensure that family and friend foster carers have access to Skills to Foster pre-approval training, relevant post approval training, together with support in order to achieve the Children's workforce Development Council's Training, Support and Development Standards within 12 months of approval (CWDCTSD).

## **Financial Support**

Parents will always be expected to make financial arrangements with relatives or friends they arrange to care for their children.

Connected people are considered to be foster carers for the Local Authority and as such will receive a fostering allowance for each child placed in their care. The allowance is the same for all foster carers whether they be connected or general carers. Additionally in line with our recruited foster carers, all family and friend carers will receive birthday, holiday and festival allowances for the child. Initial clothing allowance and provision of essential equipment may be available at the discretion of the Principal Manager of the Fostering Service.

## **Permanence**

At any stage of the assessment process, where it is considered in the child's best interests and will promote their welfare and secure permanency, consideration will be given to supporting the carers to apply for an appropriate legal order giving them parental responsibility through a residence order, special guardianship order or Adoption order. The child's care plan will be reviewed through the care planning process to ensure that the child does not remain in care for longer than is needed.

If the child is not to return home, Stoke-on-Trent City Council will consider whether the child's needs can best be met by permanent placement with the connected person as a special guardian, an adopter, under a residence order or as a long-term foster carer.

## **Legal Fees**

Stoke-on-Trent City Council will consider the payment of the legal costs of carers to apply for a residence or special guardianship order where it supports the application and where not doing so would lead to the children remaining in the care of the local authority unnecessarily.

In the event that family members and the local authority are in agreement to the placement under such an order consideration will also be given as to whether the social worker supporting the family with applying for an order will suffice.

## **Accommodation**

It is important that all homes comfortably accommodate all who live there and are expected to be warm, adequately furnished, decorated and maintained to a good standard of cleanliness and hygiene. The home and immediate environment must be free of avoidable hazards that might expose a child to risk of injury or harm and contain safety barriers and equipment appropriate to the child's age, development and level of ability.

The Assessment of Suitability must clearly state the appropriate sleeping arrangements for each child. Each child must have their own bed/cot and accommodation arrangements must reflect the child's assessed need for privacy and space or for any specific need resulting from a disability.

It is acknowledged by the local authority that family and friends carers may need support with accommodation as their home may not be of sufficient capacity to suddenly take on the care of a child or a sibling group. Stoke-on-Trent City Council will work in partnership with the Housing Authority and Registered Providers to ensure that family and friend carers who are being assessed for approval are not rejected solely on the grounds of inadequate housing. When family and friends carers own their own home, requests for support with accommodation will be dealt with on a case by case basis and any requests for financial support will be made at Permanency Panel.

Any agreements to provide financial support with accommodation must be provided in writing.

Family and friends carers living in social housing will be given appropriate priority to move to suitable accommodation if this will prevent the need for a child to be moved to an unrelated foster carer.

Where it is necessary for the Special Guardian to have financial support in order care for the child, the local authority will consider this by undertaking an assessment of the Special Guardian's circumstances including financial income and expenditure. This may be in the form of an allowance or in very exceptional circumstances a one off payment. Generally the local authority will not provide a one off payment where an allowance is being provided.

Where an allowance is being provided the circumstances under which that allowance continues will be determined by the needs of the child and the circumstances of the Special Guardian on an annual basis. The local authority must be clear that the allowance needs to continue in order for the child to remain with the Special Guardian.

The Special Guardian will be supported to ensure that they are receiving all universal benefits which are available. It is expected that the parents contribute to the financial support of their child whilst they are subject to a Special Guardianship Order.

## **Education and Health**

Family and friends carers may take on a caring role in an emergency or at a stage in their lives when they are not aware of local support services for children and families. They will be given information to assist them in their caring role and about what resources are available in their local area such as early years provision, colleges, health services, leisure and youth services. They will also be advised of specialist services for children with special educational

or mental health needs such as CAMHS.

## **Complaints by Family and Friends Foster Carers**

All foster carers for children in care are encouraged to discuss any complaint or dissatisfaction about the service with their supervising social worker so that the complaint can be resolved informally. However, if the matter cannot be resolved in this way the formal complaints procedure can be used.

**Appendix 1: Caring for someone else’s child options (Source: Family and Friends Care: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities 2011)**

	Private Fostering	Family care (informal)	Family and friends foster care	Unrelated foster care	Residence Order	Special Guardianship Order (SGO)	Adoption
Route into the caring arrangement	<p>This is a private arrangement whereby the child is being cared for for 28 days or more (or the intention is that the arrangement will last for 28 days or more) by anyone who does not have parental responsibility, and who is not a close relative.</p> <p>Relative means grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt (by full blood, half blood or by marriage or civil partnership) or a step parent.</p> <p>The child is not a looked after child.</p>	<p>The relative has chosen to take care of the child but does not have parental responsibility, and the arrangement was not made by the local authority.</p> <p>The child is not a looked after child.</p> <p>Relative may perceive the parents to be unable to care for the child;</p> <p>or the parents may be dead or otherwise not available (e.g. in prison);</p> <p>or there may be an arrangement between relatives due to difficult family circumstances.</p>	<p>The child has been placed with the relative or friend by the local authority, because the person who had been caring for the child was deemed not to be providing suitable care.</p> <p>The child is a looked after child and so the local authority must approve the relative or friend as a local authority foster carer.</p> <p>The child may be accommodated voluntarily with the agreement of the parents or may be subject to a care order.</p>	<p>The child is a looked after child being accommodated by the local authority under section 20 Children Act 1989 or because the child is subject to a care order; but has been placed with a foster carer by the local authority.</p> <p>(Alternatively, the local authority may choose to place a child into residential care where this is considered to best meet the child’s needs.</p>	<p>The child may be at risk of becoming ‘looked after’ and a friend or relative applies for an order, or</p> <p>The child may have been ‘looked after’ and their foster carer or other relative/friend applies for an order.</p> <p>In either circumstance, application can be made without the support of the parents or the local authority. Relatives may apply for an order after the child has lived with them for one year.</p> <p>Or, there can be benign reasons e.g. after parents’ death and in line with a prior agreement between the birth parents and the carer.</p>	<p>Looked after children: the LA may decide that the child should be placed for adoption. They can only do so with the consent of the birth parent or under a placement order made by a court.</p> <p>An approved foster carer can apply for an adoption order after a year of caring for the child.</p> <p>Other approved carers could apply for an adoption order if the child has lived with them for a period of three years.</p>	
Parental responsibility	Remains with birth parents.	Remains with birth parents but the person who carers for the child may do what is reasonable to safeguard or promote the child’s welfare.	Remains with birth parents if child accommodated under section 20 CA, or if the child is subject to a care order or emergency protection order the local authority will have parental responsibility and determines the extent to which it may be exercised by others.		Shared by parents and holder of residence order.	PR shared with parents and anyone else with parental responsibility for the child. The special guardian may exercise parental responsibility to the exclusion of all others with PR, Apart from another special guardian.	Transfers to adopters and relationship with birth parents is severed.

	Private Fostering	Family care (informal)	Family and friends foster care	Unrelated foster care	Residence Order	Special Guardianship Order (SGO)	Adoption
Approval basis	The arrangement is assessed by LA, but the carer is not 'approved' as a local authority foster carer is. The arrangement may be prohibited if assessed by the local authority as unsuitable.	None	Approved as local authority foster carers in accordance with Fostering Service Regulations. (If child is looked after, carers <b>must</b> be approved as foster carers even if close relative.)		Appointed by court following application.	Appointed by court following application from the applicant. LA must investigate the matter and prepare a report for the court dealing with the suitability of the applicant to be a special guardian.	Adoption agency assesses and approves prospective adopters, court makes order regarding specific child. If the child is not looked after then notice of intention to adopt must be given to the LA who then carry out an assessment / report for the court.
Duration	Subject to discretion of person with PR and readiness of private foster carer.	Subject to discretion of person with PR.	So long as placement remains in line with child's care plan, as determined by LA.		Age 18.	Age 18 unless varied or discharged by the court before the child reaches 18 years.	Permanent lifelong relationship.
Placement supervision	It is not a placement, but there are statutory visits to child by social worker (minimum 6 weekly in first year, then 12 weekly).	None	Statutory: visits to child by social worker and supervision of foster carers by supervising social worker.			None	When child is placed for adoption by the LA, the placement is supervised and there are statutory reviews. Once the adoption order is made, none.
Review of placement	It is not a placement, but the LA may do formal reviews in addition to ongoing assessments during visits.	None	Statutory reviews of child's care plan (minimum 6 monthly) and annual reviews of local authority foster carers' approval.		None	None	See above

	Private Fostering	Family care (informal)	Family and friends foster care	Unrelated foster care	Residence Order	Special Guardianship Order (SGO)	Adoption
Support services	<p>Provision of advice and support as determined necessary by the LA, which may assess the child as a child in need, with a child in need plan, and provide services/ support for child/ family under section 17 of the Children Act 1989.</p>	<p>No entitlement but the LA may assess the child as a child in need, with a child in need plan, and provide services/ support for child/ family under section 17 of the Children Act 1989.</p>	<p>Support to meet child's needs including health plan and personal education plan.</p> <p>Training and practical support to foster carers in accordance with the Fostering Services Regulations, NMS and CWDV standards.</p> <p>Young person may be entitled to leaving care support services.</p>		<p>No entitlement.</p> <p>(But LA has discretion to provide services/ support for child/ family under section 17 of the CA)</p>	<p>If child was looked after prior to making the SGO, LA must assess for need for special guardianship support services. LA has discretion whether to provide support.</p> <p>Young person may be entitled to leaving care support services if was a looked after child prior to making of the SGO.</p>	<p>Entitlement to assessment for adoption support services, which may be provided at discretion of LA in accordance with Regulations and NMS.</p>
Financial support - entitlement	<p>Can claim child benefit and child tax credit if not being paid to parent.</p> <p>Financial responsibility to maintain the child remains with holders of PR.</p>	<p>Can claim child benefit and child tax credit if not being paid to parent.</p> <p>Financial responsibility to maintain the child remains with holders of PR.</p> <p>Guardians Allowance payable if both parents have died, or the only surviving parent cannot be found or serving 2 years or more prison sentence.</p>	<p>Child benefit and child tax credit not payable.</p> <p>Weekly allowance to meet the costs of caring for the child. This should meet at least the national minimum rate set by DfE.</p> <p>The Manchester City Council judgment ruled that allowances must be the same for all foster carers, whether or not family and friends.</p>		<p>Can claim child benefit and child tax credit if not being paid to parent.</p>	<p>Can claim child benefit and child tax credit if not being paid to parent.</p>	<p>Can claim child benefit and child tax credit if not being paid to parent.</p> <p>Entitlement to assessment for financial support (part of adoption support) if child looked after prior to order.</p>

	Private Fostering	Family care (informal)	Family and friends foster care	Unrelated foster care	Residence Order	Special Guardianship Order (SGO)	Adoption
Financial support - discretionary	LA has discretion to make one-off or regular payments under section 17 Children Act.	LA has discretion to make one-off or regular payments under section 17 Children Act.	<p>Some fostering providers pay their foster carers a fee to recognise carers' skill, experience and commitment.</p> <p>The Manchester City Council judgment (which requires allowances to be paid on the same basis regardless of the relationship of the carer to the child) did not consider fees. However, Statutory Guidance for Fostering Services requires that any policy in relation to the payment of fees must be applied to all foster carers who meet the criteria in the same way and must not discriminate on the grounds of a pre-existing relationship with the child.</p>		LA has discretion to pay residence order allowance - usually if child was previously fostered by the carers, or exceptionally if making residence order prevents child becoming looked after. Any allowance reviewed annually.	<p>Entitled to an assessment for financial support under the Special Guardianship Regulations 2005 if child looked after prior to order and meets the criteria in the regulations.</p> <p>Subject to assessment as above and for former foster carers can include an element of remuneration.</p> <p>Regular or one-off payments.</p> <p>Any allowances reviewed annually.</p>	Subject to assessment, one off payments or regular adoption allowance may be paid.