

FOSTERING SERVICES: NATIONAL MINIMUM STANDARDS 2011

CONDENSED

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NMS 1	The child's wishes and feelings and the views of those significant to them
NMS 2	Promoting a positive identity, potential and valuing diversity through individualised care
NMS 3	Promoting positive behaviour and relationships
NMS 4	Safeguarding Children
NMS 5	Children Missing from Care
NMS 6	Promoting good health and wellbeing
NMS 7	Leisure activities
NMS 8	Promoting educational attainment
NMS 9	Promoting and supporting contact
NMS 10	Providing a suitable physical environment for the foster child
NMS 11	Preparation for a placement
NMS 12	Promoting independence and moves to adulthood and leaving care
NMS 13	Recruiting and assessing foster carers who can meet the needs of looked after children
NMS 14	Fostering panels and the fostering service's decision-maker
NMS 15	Matching the child with a placement that meets their assessed needs
NMS 16	Statement of purpose and children's guide
NMS 17	Fitness to provide or manage the administration of a fostering service
NMS 18	Financial viability and changes affecting business continuity
NMS 19	Suitability to work with children
NMS 20	Learning and development of foster carers
NMS 21	Supervision and support of foster carers
NMS 22	Handling allegations and suspicions of harm
NMS 23	Learning, development and qualifications of staff
NMS 24	Staff support and supervision
NMS 25	Managing effectively and efficiently and monitoring the service
NMS 26	Records
NMS 27	Fitness of premises for use as fostering service
NMS 28	Payment to carers
NMS 29	Notification of Significant Events
NMS 30	Family and friends as foster carers
NMS 31	Placement Plan and Review

FOSTERING SERVICES: NATIONAL MINIMUM STANDARDS 2011 – CONDENSED

NMS 1 The child's wishes and feelings and the views of those significant to them

- *Children know their views/wishes/feelings are tic in all aspects of their care; are helped to understand why these may not always be acted upon; and know how to obtain support and make a complaint.*
- *Views of significant others are gathered and tic.*

1.1	Children's views/wishes/feelings are acted upon unless detrimental to them or others.	
1.2	Children understand how their views have been tic and, when not acted upon, why not.	
1.3	Children communicate views on all aspects of their care/support.	
1.4	Views of child/family/SW/IRO on the child's care are sought regularly (as appropriate).	
1.5	Children have access to independent advice/support and know their rights to advocacy.	
1.6	Children can raise issues with support and without fear, receive prompt feedback and be kept informed of progress.	
1.7	Wishes/feelings/views of children and of significant others are tic in monitoring carers and developing the service.	

NMS 2 Promoting a positive identity, potential and valuing diversity through individualised care

- *Children have a positive self view, emotional resilience and knowledge/understanding of their background.*

2.1	Children are provided with personalised care that meets their needs and promotes their individual identity.	
2.2	Carers are supported to promote social/emotional development, emotional resilience and positive self-esteem.	
2.3	Carers meet children's individual needs as per placement plan.	
2.4	Children exercise choice in food and are able to prepare meals/snacks within family parameters.	
2.5*	Children exercise choice/independence re clothes and personal requisites within family parameters.	
2.6	Children develop skills and emotional resilience in preparation for independent living.	
2.7*	Children receive a personal allowance appropriate to their age and understanding and consistent with their placement plan.	
*	<i>N.B. These substandards do not apply to short break placements.</i>	

NMS 3 Promoting positive behaviour and relationships

- *Children enjoy sound relationships with foster family, interact positively and behave appropriately.*

3.1	Carers have high expectations of all their foster children.	
3.2	Carers provide an environment/culture that promotes/models/supports positive behaviour.	
3.3	Children are able to develop/practise skills to build/maintain positive relationships, be assertive and resolve conflicts positively.	
3.4	Children are encouraged to take responsibility for their behaviour, appropriate to their age/abilities.	
3.5	Carers respect a child's privacy/confidentiality (as good parents).	
3.6	Carers have positive strategies for supporting children over discrimination/bullying.	
3.7	Carers receive support to manage their responses/feelings, particularly to challenging behaviour (and are helped to understand contributory factors).	
3.8	All carers receive training in positive care/control of children. Service has a written policy which is distributed to all involved in a placement.	
3.9	Each carer is aware of all necessary information available to aid the understanding, management and support of a child.	
3.10	Service's approach minimises the need for police involvement and avoids unnecessary criminalising.	

NMS 4 Safeguarding Children		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children feel and are safe, understand how to protect themselves and are protected from significant harm, including neglect/abuse/accident. 		
4.1	Children's safety/welfare is promoted in all fostering placements; children are protected from abuse and other forms of significant harm.	
4.2	Carers actively safeguard/promote the welfare of foster children.	
4.3	Carers make positive relationships with children, generate openness/trust and are alert to signs/symptoms of their being at risk.	
4.4	Carers encourage children to take normal risks and advise on keeping themselves safe elsewhere / on the internet / using social media.	
4.5	Service implements a proportionate approach to any risk assessment.	
4.6	Carers are trained in safer care practice / skills to care for abused children / issues affecting disabled children.	
4.7	Service works effectively with other agencies concerned with child protection.	
NMS 5 Children Missing from Care		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children rarely go missing and if they do, they return quickly. Missing children are protected as far as possible and responded to positively on their return. 		
5.1	Care and support minimises the risk of going missing and of harm if the child does.	
5.2	Carers know/implement the policy of the service / responsible authority.	
5.3	Carers know and comply with limits to measures preventing a child from leaving without permission.	
5.4	Children who are AWOL but whose whereabouts are known (or suspected) are protected in line with the service's written procedure.	
5.5	Service/carers take appropriate action to find missing children, working alongside the police where appropriate.	
5.6	If whereabouts are unknown (=missing), service's procedures are compatible with local MFH protocols.	
5.7	Children placed out of area: Service manager follows the local MFH protocol.	
5.8	Children are helped to understand dangers/risks of going AWOL and advised whom to contact if considering running away	
5.9	If a child goes missing and there are welfare concerns, reasons/solutions should be explored in a meeting between the child and responsible authority.	
5.10	Service to keep written records of carers' actions / circumstances of return / reasons given / action taken. Info' shared with parents (if appropriate).	
NMS 6 Promoting good health and wellbeing		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children live in a healthy environment: physical/emotional/psychological health is promoted and they may access necessary health care services. 		
6.1	Children's physical/emotional/social development needs are promoted.	
6.2	Children understand their health needs / how to maintain a healthy lifestyle / can make informed decisions about their own health.	
6.3	Children are encouraged to participate in a range of positive activities promoting physical/emotional health.	
6.4	Children have prompt access to doctors / other health professionals, including specialist services.	
6.5	Children's health is promoted as per placement plan. Carers are clear about delegated authority, including medical consent.	
6.6	Children's wishes/feelings are taken into account re their health care (according to their understanding) and carers advocate on their behalf.	
6.7	Carers receive sufficient training on health / hygiene / first aid, with emphasis on health promotion and communicable diseases.	
6.8	Carers receive guidance/training re looking after children with complex health needs.	
6.9	Medicines in the foster home are stored safely with restricted access.	
6.10	Carers are trained in managing/administering medication; medication is used only as prescribed; a responsible child may keep/take own medication.	
6.11	Carers keep a written record of all medication / treatment / first aid given.	
6.12	Any physical adaptations/equipment needed to care for a child are provided to foster carers.	

NMS 7 Leisure activities		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children are able to enjoy their interests, develop confidence in their skills and are supported/encouraged to engage in leisure activities. Children are able to make a positive contribution to the foster home and their wider community. 	
7.1	Children develop emotional/intellectual/social/creative/physical skills via stimulating foster home and school-based/out-of-school activities.	
7.2	Children pursue individual interests/hobbies and participate in a range of activities, including leisure activities/trips.	
7.3	Carers understand the child's placement plan and the extent of their delegated authority, e.g. re education / activities / overnight stays / holidays / haircuts.	
7.4	Carers are supported to exercise delegated authority, without having to seek consent unnecessarily.	
7.5	Children engage in activities a reasonable parent would permit after making a risk assessment (subject to the placement plan).	
7.6	Children are encouraged/enabled to make/sustain friendships, which may involve reciprocal arrangements to visit friends' homes.	
7.7	Children can stay overnight; holiday with friends or friends/relatives of carers; go on school trips (subject to the care plan). CRB checks are not mandatory.	
NMS 8 Promoting educational attainment		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The education/achievement of children is actively promoted as valuable in itself and as part of their preparation for adulthood. Children are supported to achieve their educational potential. 	
8.1	Children – pre-school and older – have a foster home which promotes a learning environment and supports their development.	
8.2	Children have access to a range of educational resources and opportunities beyond the school day to engage in activities promoting learning.	
8.3	Children are supported to attend school / alternative provision regularly.	
8.4	Children are helped by carers to achieve educational/training goals. Carers are supported to work with the education provider and maximise success.	
8.5	Service has, and fully implements, a written education policy promoting/valuing education and carers understand this.	
8.6	Carers maintain regular contact with the child's education setting, attending parents' meetings and advocating for the child as appropriate.	
8.7	Carers work with schools etc. to support education / advocate re any problems. Carers have up-to-date info re progress/attendance.	
NMS 9 Promoting and supporting contact		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where appropriate, children have constructive contact with parents/grandparents/(half-)siblings/wider family friends/significant others. 	
9.1*	Children are supported/encouraged to maintain/develop family contacts/friendships (subject to care plan / court order).	
9.2*	Carers are given practical help – financial/emotional – to support appropriate contact.	
9.3*	Emergency restrictions are only made to protect the child from significant risk to safety/welfare (inform the responsible authority within 24 hours).	
9.4*	Ongoing communication restrictions on the child are agreed with the responsible authority, tic child's wishes/feelings, and are to be reviewed regularly.	
9.5*	Service feeds back to the responsible authority any significant reactions a child has to contact/visits.	
9.6*	When placing a child, the service works with the responsible authority re support needed for contact, particularly if distance is involved.	
9.7*	Carers understand the extent of their delegated authority re contact.	
*	<i>The above standards are not required for short breaks. For children in short breaks, the foster carer must know how to contact parents and maintain such contact as has been agreed in the short break care plan.</i>	
NMS 10 Providing a suitable physical environment for the foster child		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children live in foster homes which provide adequate space, to a suitable standard. The child enjoys access to a range of activities which promote his/her development. 	
10.1	Foster home comfortably accommodates all who live there, with suitable aids/adaptations (properly fitted) for a disabled child.	

10.2	Foster home is warm / adequately furnished and decorated / has good standard of cleanliness and hygiene. Outdoor spaces are safe/secure/well-maintained.	
10.3	Carers are trained in health and safety issues and have guidelines on responsibilities. Avoidable hazards (for a family home) are removed.	
10.4	Carers understand service's policy re safety for children in the foster home and in vehicles. Policy is regularly reviewed in line with latest guidance.	
10.5	Foster home is inspected annually, without appointment, by the service to ensure it still meets the needs of foster children.	
10.6	Children over three should have their own bedroom. Sharing has to be agreed, tic pertinent factors, and the decision-making process recorded in writing.	
NMS 11 Preparation for a placement		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Children are welcomed into the foster home and leave in a planned and sensitive manner which makes them feel loved and valued.</i> • <i>Children feel part of the family. They are not treated differently to the foster carer's own children living in the household. The child's needs are met and they benefit from a stable placement.</i> 	
11.1	The service has and implements introductory procedures which help children understand what to expect from living in the foster home.	
11.2	Children are carefully matched to a foster placement and carers have full information about the child (<i>see NMS 3.9</i>).	
11.3	Unless in an emergency, children are given advance information and should visit and talk with carers prior to a decision being made.	
11.4	Children have free access to household facilities, consistent with reasonable arrangements in a family home. Carers explain rules/expectations.	
11.5	Children leaving are helped to understand why. Children are supported during the transition to new placement / independent living / returning home.	
11.6	Carers are supported to maintain links with children moving on (consistent with care plan).	
NMS 12 Promoting independence and moves to adulthood and leaving care		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Children are prepared for, and supported into, adulthood so that they can reach their potential and achieve economic wellbeing.</i> 	
12.1*	Children are supported to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Establish positive/appropriate social/sexual relationships; b. Develop positive self-esteem / emotional resilience; c. Prepare for work or further/higher education; d. Prepare for moving into their own accommodation; e. Develop practical skills (shopping, buying, cooking/keeping food, washing clothes, personal self-care, taking responsibility for personal healthcare); f. Develop financial capability/knowledge/skills; g. Know about entitlements to financial/other support after leaving care, including benefits and support from social care services. 	
12.2*	Carers contribute to each child's care/pathway plan, in collaboration with the child /social worker / personal adviser.	
12.3*	Service ensures comprehensive arrangements for preparing/supporting transition to independence. Carers receive training and support.	
12.4*	Service has policy / practical arrangements for young people remaining with foster carers post-18, e.g. if not ready for independence.	
*	<i>The above standards are not required for short breaks.</i>	
NMS 13 Recruiting and assessing foster carers who can meet the needs of looked after children		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The fostering service recruits, assesses and supports a range of foster carers to meet the needs of children they provide care for and is proactive in assessing current and future needs of children.</i> 	
13.1	Service implements an effective strategy to ensure sufficient carers for current and predicted demands (including short breaks).	
13.2	Prospective carers are treated fairly, provided with timely/relevant information and kept informed re progress if they apply.	
13.3	Prospective carers are prepared for the task in a way which addresses likely issues and competencies/strengths they have or need to develop.	

13.4	The assessment process is set out clearly to prospective carers, including: a. Qualities/skills/aptitudes being sought/achieved; b. Standards to be applied in the assessment; c. Stages/content of the selection process and, where possible, timescales; d. Information to be given to applicants.	
13.5	Checks are carried out (as per Reg 26) and prospective carers understand the reasons for identity checks, relationship status and health checks, personal references and enquiries about them, in addition to enhanced CRB checks on all adult members of the household.	
13.6	Prospective carers are considered re their capacity to care in a safe and responsible way that meets the child's development needs.	
13.7	The written report for the fostering panel is accurate, up-to-date and evidence-based, i.e. fit for the panel to make an objective approval decision.	
13.8	Reviews of the carers' approval are sufficiently thorough for the service to be satisfied about the carers' ongoing suitability to foster.	
13.9	Areas of concern / need for additional support are identified and addressed between reviews, rather than waiting for a review.	
NMS 14 Fostering panels and the fostering service's decision-maker		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The fostering panel and decision-maker make timely, quality and appropriate recommendations/decisions in line with the overriding objective to promote the welfare of children in foster care.</i> 	
14.1	Service implements written policies/procedures re the central list (of suitable members) and constitution of fostering panels.	
14.2	Panels provide quality assurance feedback to the service on the quality of reports presented.	
14.3	All necessary information is provided to panel members at least five working days in advance of the meeting.	
14.4	The panel makes its recommendation within eight months of receipt of the prospective carer's application to be assessed.	
14.5	Carers and prospective carers may attend (with a supporter) and be heard at all panel meetings where their approval is being discussed.	
14.6	Panels have access to medical expertise and legal advice, as required.	
14.7	The chair ensures written panel minutes are accurate, cover key issues and views expressed, and record the reasons for the panel's recommendation.	
14.8	The composition of the central list should permit the constitution of panels able to make competent recommendations to the service.	
14.9	The service's decision-maker tic all the information available, including recommendations, and makes a decision within seven days of receipt.	
14.10	The carer / prospective carer is informed orally of the decision-maker's decision within two days: written confirmation within five working days.	
NMS 15 Matching the child with a placement that meets their assessed needs		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The responsible authority has information/support from the fostering service which it needs to facilitate an appropriate match between the carer and child, capable of meeting the child's needs and consistent with the wishes and feelings of the child, so maximising the likelihood of a stable placement.</i> 	
15.1	A match is suggested after considering the child's assessed needs and likely impact on household members. Additional support may be felt necessary.	
15.2	The carer is provided with comprehensive written information about the child and available support. Any queries re safe caring need to be explored.	
15.3	A child is not removed from a foster carer willing to continue caring for the child unless it is in their best interests and, preferably, managed in a planned way.	
NMS 16 Statement of purpose and children's guide		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Children, their parents, foster carers, staff and the responsible authority / placing authority are clear about the aims and objectives of the fostering service and what services and facilities it provides.</i> <i>The fostering service's operation meets the aims and objectives in the Statement of Purpose.</i> 	
16.1	Service has a statement of purpose for carers / staff / children / responsible authority / anyone with PR; and reflects policies/procedures/guidance.	

16.2	Aims/objectives are child-focused and show how the service will meet outcomes for children.	
16.3	At the point of placement, subject to the child's age/understanding, the service ensures that the child has the Children's Guide and that foster carer explains it.	
16.4	Children's Guide: Summary of fostering service's aims; how to find out rights and contact IRO / Children's Rights Director / Ofsted / independent advocate.	
[16.5]	[blank]	
16.6	Where a child requires it, the Children's Guide is available in alternative formats, e.g. Makaton / pictures / recording / translated into another language.	
NMS 17 Fitness to provide or manage the administration of a fostering service		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Fostering service is provided and managed by those who are suitable to work with children and have appropriate skills, experience and qualifications to deliver an efficient and effective service.</i> 	
17.1	<p>People involved in carrying on and managing the fostering service:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Have good knowledge/experience of law and practice re looked after children; Have business/management skills to manage the work efficiently and effectively; Have financial expertise to ensure the fostering service is run on a sound financial basis and in a professional manner. 	
17.2	<p>The registered manager has:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A recognised social work qualification or professional qualification relevant to working with children (at least Level 4 – Level 5 from now on); A qualification in management (at least Level 4 – Level 5 from now on); At least two years' experience relevant to fostering within last five years; At least one years' experience supervising/managing professional staff. 	
17.3	Registered managers without the management qualification must enrol within 6 months and obtain a management qualification within 3 years of appointment.	
17.4	Responsibilities/duties of manager and to whom accountable must be understood and changes notified in writing.	
17.5	Manager exercises effective leadership so that the service is organised/managed/staffed to best meet needs of each foster child and carers.	
NMS 18 Financial viability and changes affecting business continuity		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The fostering service is financially sound.</i> <i>Where a service is to close or substantially change, there is proper planning to make the transition for children / foster carers / staff as smooth as possible.</i> 	
18.1	Qualified accountant certifies independent fostering agency's annual accounts and viability to fulfil Statement of Purpose for at least 12 months.	
18.2	Registered provider has a written development plan, reviewed annually, for service's future: planned changes in operation/resources and consolidation.	
18.3	Where service cannot adequately/consistently comply with regs/NMS: Need to implement plan to rectify situation or close down service.	
18.4	Provider to notify Ofsted and authorities of closure / substantial change to service affecting children; and work with authorities to ensure smooth transitions.	
18.5	Administrators/receivers must operate service in best interests of placed children and foster carers in accordance with regs/NMS.	
NMS 19 Suitability to work with children		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Careful selection of staff, fostering households, volunteers and the central list of persons considered suitable to be members of a fostering panel. Monitoring of such people to help prevent unsuitable people from having the opportunity to harm children.</i> 	
19.1	All people working in/for the service (including the central list) are interviewed and references checked. Written references verified by phone.	
19.2	Service evidences good recruitment practice, following statutory requirements and guidance re carers/staff/panel members. This includes CRB checks.	
19.3	<p>Service has record of recruitment/suitability checks on carers/workers (including volunteers) for the service, including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Identity checks; 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. CRB, including level of disclosure and unique reference number; c. Checks to confirm qualifications required / considered relevant; d. At least two references, preferably one from current employer; where possible, each referee to give opinion on suitability to work with children; e. Checks to confirm right to work in UK; f. Where person has lived outside UK, further checks as appropriate where CRB disclosure is insufficient. 	
19.4	Record to show check dates and by whom. CRB to be kept securely and destroyed by secure means when no longer needed.	
19.5	Effective system needed for recruitment decisions and criteria for disqualification, e.g. criminal convictions or concerns declared/discovered during process.	
19.6	Whistle-blowing policy known to all: Duty to report circumstances within fostering service likely to harm safety/rights/welfare of any foster child.	
NMS 20 Learning and development of foster carers		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foster carers receive the training and development they need to carry out their role effectively. • A clear framework of training and development is in place and this is used as the basis for assessing foster carers' performance and identifying their training and development needs. 	
20.1	All new carers receive an induction.	
20.2	Every carer is supported to complete CWDC training for mainstream carers (alternative training for short break and F&F carers is optional).	
20.3	Carers are able to evidence CWDC within 12 months of approval (within 18 months for F&F). Households may use same evidence workbook.	
20.4	Carers maintain ongoing training/development portfolio, demonstrating how they are meeting the skills required of them.	
20.5	Carers' PDPs set out how they will be supported re ongoing training/development appropriate to their needs/experience.	
20.6	Foster carer reviews include appraisal of performance and training/development needs. Reviews tic views of each child currently placed.	
20.7	Service is clear with carers about level of support available to them and how to access it.	
20.8	Support/training is made available to carers (including those 'hard to reach') to help them meet the specific needs of children they care for.	
20.9	Safer caring training is provided for all fostering household members (including young people). Principles to be applied in ways to meet individual needs.	
20.10	All training conforms to equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practice and is organised to encourage/facilitate attendance by carers.	
20.11	Where carers move to a new fostering service, training/development info' is given to the new provider on request and portfolio goes with the carer.	
NMS 21 Supervision and support of foster carers		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foster carers receive the support and supervision they need in order to care properly for children placed with them. 	
21.1	Service supports carers to meet children's needs, tic children's wishes/feelings, promoting individual care and safety /health / enjoyment / education / preparation for the future.	
21.2	Service ensures carers understand nature/level of support it provides.	
21.3	There is an effective out-of-hours advice / support service for carers.	
21.4	Peer support, foster care associations and/or self-help groups for carers are encouraged/supported.	
21.5	Carers are provided with breaks from caring, as appropriate, tic needs of any children placed.	
21.6	All carers have access to social work/professional support, information and advice; to assistance dealing with services; and to support for own children.	
21.7	Role of SSW is clear to worker and carer.	
21.8	Each approved carer is supervised by a named, appropriately qualified social worker. Meetings include at least one unannounced visit a year. The purpose of supervision visits is to ensure the carer is meeting the child's needs, tic the child's wishes/feelings; to offer support; and to use a framework to assess performance and develop competencies/skills. The frequency of meetings for short break carers should be proportionate to the amount of care provided.	

	Carers' files include records of supervisory meetings.	
21.9	SSW ensures that carers are informed in writing of all regs/standards and service policies/guidance – and accept, understand and comply with these.	
21.10	On approval, carers are given info' covering policies, procedures, guidance, financial/legal/insurance info'. This info' is updated regularly.	
21.11	Current/prospective carers are able to make complaints. Records are kept and reviewed regularly to identify scope for improving practice.	
21.12	There is a good system of communication between SSWs and children's social workers, an understanding of the SW's role and effective working together.	
NMS 22 Handling allegations and suspicions of harm		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allegations and suspicions of harm are handled in a way that provides effective protection and support for children and the person making the allegation, and at the same time supports the person who is the subject of the allegation. 	
22.1	<p>All carers/ staff/volunteers know what to do if they receive an allegation or have suspicions that a person may have:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Behaved in a way that has, or may have, harmed a child; Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; Behaved towards a child in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children. <p>Service ensures that the required actions are taken or have been taken in any relevant situation of which it is aware.</p>	
22.2	Service's procedure – known to carers/staff/volunteers/children – conforms to government guidance/requirements, including duty to inform statutory bodies.	
22.3	Service's child protection procedures are made available to carers/staff/volunteers/children. Any comments on these to be tic by the service.	
22.4	Service's child protection procedures are submitted to LSCB and the LADO and should be consistent with local policies and procedures.	
22.5	Service has a designated senior manager responsible for managing allegations (responsible for liaising with the LADO and feedback to subject).	
22.6	All allegations against workers with children or fostering household members are reported by the service to the LADO.	
22.7	Summary of any allegation – and its resolution – against a member of fostering household / staff is kept on that person's confidential file until retirement age (or ten years if longer). Person to be given copy once investigation has been concluded.	
22.8	Foster carer review asap following investigation. There is a policy outlining grounds for deregistration and this is available to carers.	
22.9	Investigations are handled quickly to protect the child and support the subject. Service follows framework set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children.	
22.10	Service distinguishes between an investigation into allegations of harm and discussions over standards of care (which should be treated separately).	
22.11	Written guidance is available for carers/staff re support during an investigation, including payment of allowance and any fee until resolved.	
22.12	<p>During an investigation, service offers independent support to subject and fostering household in order to provide:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Information/advice about the process; Emotional support; If needed, mediation between the carer and the service and/or advocacy (including at meetings and panel hearings). 	
NMS 23 Learning, development and qualifications of staff		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children and foster carers receive a service from staff, volunteers and panel members and decision-makers who have the competence to meet their needs. 	
23.1	There is a good quality learning/development programme for staff/volunteers: induction, post-qualifying and in-service training.	
23.2	Learning/development programme is evaluated at least annually and updated where necessary.	
23.3	New staff/volunteers undertake CWDC induction standards within seven working days of starting and complete within six months.	
23.4	All SWs and other specialists are professionally qualified/registered, with understanding and appropriate training for work with children/families/carers.	
23.5	Assessment/appraisal of staff involved in fostering tic identified skills for particular roles in identifying individuals' learning/development needs.	
23.6	Staff assessing prospective carers are social workers, have experience of foster care and family placement work and are trained in assessment, otherwise	

	assessments are carried out under the supervision of an appropriately experienced social worker (who takes responsibility for the assessment).	
23.7	Unqualified staff/volunteers carry out social work functions under the direct supervision of experienced social workers (who are accountable for their work).	
23.8	Persons joining the central list are provided with an opportunity to observe a fostering panel meeting.	
23.9	Each person on the central list is given induction training, completed within ten weeks of joining the list.	
23.10	Each person on the central list is given the opportunity of attending a joint training day with the service's staff.	
23.11	Each person on the central list has access to appropriate training/skills development and is kept abreast of relevant legislation/guidance changes.	
23.12	The service's decision-maker is a senior person within the service or a trustee/director, who is a SW with at least 3 years post-qualifying experience in childcare social work and has knowledge of childcare law and practice.	
NMS 24 Staff support and supervision		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Staff and volunteers are supported and guided to fulfil their roles and provide a high quality service to children.</i> 	
24.1	Employer is fair and competent, with sound employment practices and good support for all staff/volunteers.	
24.2	All staff/volunteers and the registered person are properly managed/supported and understand to whom they are accountable.	
24.3	Suitable arrangements exist for professional supervision of the agency's registered person or manager of a local authority fostering service.	
24.4	Staff have access to support/advice and are provided with regular supervision by appropriately qualified/experienced staff.	
24.5	Written record is kept by service detailing time/date/length of each supervision held for each member of staff, signed by supervisor and supervisee.	
24.6	All staff have performance individually and formally appraised at least annually, tic any views of children the service is providing for.	
24.7	Staff/volunteers are able to access specialist advice – including legal advice – to provide a comprehensive service for children.	
NMS 25 Managing effectively and efficiently and monitoring the service		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The fostering service is managed ethically, effectively and efficiently, delivering a service which meets the needs of its users.</i> 	
25.1	Clear/effective procedures for monitoring/controlling activities: financial viability, serious incidents, allegations/complaints and quality of service.	
25.2	Manager monitors all records to ensure policy compliance, identify specific concerns and patterns/trends. Immediate action is taken to address issues raised.	
25.3	Management ensures all work and fostering activity is consistent with 2011 Regs/NMS and policies/procedures.	
25.4	Managers/staff/volunteers/carers are clear about roles/responsibilities. Level of delegation/responsibility of manager and accountability is clearly defined.	
25.5	Clear arrangements to identify person in charge in absence of local authority fostering service manager (or registered manager).	
25.6	Registered person ensures Ofsted reports are available to staff/carers/foster children/parents; and, on request, to actual/potential placing authorities.	
25.7	<p>The executive side of the local authority (or independent provider's counterparts):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Receive written reports on management/outcomes/finance every 3 months. Monitor management/outcomes in order to be satisfied that the service is effective and achieving good outcomes for children. Satisfy themselves as to compliance with registration conditions. 	
25.8	Registered person addresses issues of concern identified by, or raised with, him/her.	
25.9	<p>Staff/volunteers/carers have a copy of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Policies/practices re grievances and disciplinary matters. Details of services offered. Equal opportunities policy. Health and safety procedures. 	
25.10	Information is provided to commissioners of services as part of tendering, including:	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Charges for each of its services. b. Statements of payments to foster carers – fees and allowances to be separated. c. Any amounts paid for other services, e.g. health and education. 	
25.11	Registered person has provided a written policy and procedural guidelines re representations/complaints consistent with law and relevant statutory guidance.	
25.12	Service has facilities to work with children with physical/sensory/learning/communication/language impairments, i.e. appropriate formats/help, including arrangements for reading/translating/Makaton/pictures/recordings and for explanation where people cannot understand a document.	
NMS 26 Records		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Records are clear, stored securely and contribute to an understanding of the child's life.</i> 	
26.1	Service has and implements a written policy clarifying purpose/format/content of info' on service's files, child's files and carers' files.	
26.2	Staff/volunteers/panel members/fostering households understand nature of records and follow policy for keeping/retaining files, confidentiality and access. System is in place to monitor quality/adequacy of record-keeping and to take action when needed.	
26.3	Children/parents understand nature of records maintained and how to access them.	
26.4	Info' re each child is kept confidential: only shared with those with legitimate/current need to know and restricted to what they need to know.	
26.5	Entries/decisions/reasons are legible/clear/non-stigmatising; distinguish between fact/opinion/third party info'; and are signed and dated.	
26.6	Info' re the child is recorded clearly, conducive to access by the child now or in the future. Children are encouraged to read their files (subject to confidentiality and third party considerations), correct errors and add personal statements.	
26.7	Carer understands his/her important role in encouraging the child to reflect on/understand history and to keep memorabilia (including photos) of time in placement. Service makes this role clear and ensures carers can, and help children to, record significant life events.	
26.8	Agency placements: Agency works with responsible authority re effective integration of info' held on respective files, providing copies on written request.	
26.9	Carer seeking to transfer: New provider seeks info' re carer from previous provider, who complies with written request within one month of receipt.	
NMS 27 Fitness of premises for use as fostering service		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The premises and administrative systems are suitable to enable the service to meet its Statement of Purpose objectives.</i> 	
27.1	There are efficient/robust administrative systems, including IT and communication systems. Premises have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Facilities for the secure retention of records. b. Appropriate measures to safeguard IT systems. c. An appropriate security system. 	
27.2	Premises/contents are insured (or there are alternative prompt methods of replacing lost items).	
27.3	Provider has a Business Continuity Plan – which staff understand and can access – including both provision of premises and safeguarding/back up of records.	
NMS 28 Payment to carers		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Payments to foster carers are fair and paid in a timely way.</i> • <i>Foster carers are clear about the service's payment structures and the payments due to them.</i> 	
28.1	Each carer receives at least the national minimum allowance plus necessary agreed expenses for care/education and reasonable leisure interests of the child, including insurance/holidays/birthdays/school trips/religious festivals etc. – to cover the full cost of caring for each child placed.	
28.2	Payments of allowances/fees to made promptly at the agreed time. Carers are given a statement of payment at the end of each tax year.	
28.3	Allowances/fees are reviewed annually and the service consults with carers in advance of any changes.	

28.4	Service advises carers of financial/other support available where child remains after age of 18 or where they care for/provide a home for a child and parent(s).	
28.5	Clear written policy on payments/criteria/allowances/fees. To include policy during a break in placement or where subject to an allegation.	
28.6	Written policy/payments are provided annually to carers and service commissioners. Carer is informed of level of financial support before child is placed.	
28.7	Criteria for fees/allowances are applied equally, irrespective of whether the carer is related to the child or whether the placement is short- or long-term.	
28.8	Service providers are clear about what equipment is being loaned/given to carers.	
28.9	Children eligible for disability benefits: Carers apply and regular recorded discussions are held on how benefits are being spent in the child's best interests.	
NMS 29 Notification of Significant Events		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All significant events relating to the health and protection of children fostered by the service are notified by the registered person to the appropriate authorities. 	
29.1	Registered person has a system to notify within 24 hours – including at weekends – persons/authorities of significant events as per Reg 36.	
29.2	Written record is kept of details of action taken and the outcome of any action/investigation following a notifiable event.	
29.3	Registered person has a system for notifying responsible authorities of a child's need for a mental health assessment under the Mental Health Act 1983.	
29.4	Following a notifiable incident under Reg 36, the registered person contacts the responsible authority re any further action necessary.	
NMS 30 Family and friends as foster carers		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> F&F foster carers receive the support they require to meet the needs of children placed with them. 	
30.1	Policies/practices: Needs/circumstances of F&F carers are tic when determining the service's policies/practices.	
30.2	Statement of Purpose includes the services/facilities provided to F&F carers.	
30.3	Approval of relative/friend/other connected person: Decision-maker is to tic needs/wishes/feelings of the child and carer's capacity to meet these.	
30.4	Support: The service works with the wider children's services/other departments and agencies (e.g. housing) to mitigate limitations to caring capacity.	
30.5	Assessing suitability as F&F carer: Need to tic likely term / child's age / child's wishes, feelings and concerns / capacity of wider family to contribute to caring.	
30.6	Assessment process: Potential F& F carers given info' including criteria used, how particular issues will be addressed and any support offered during process.	
30.7	Info': F&F are asked about existing knowledge of child's behaviour/background and any concerns; and provided with info' held by the service.	
30.8	Role change: Child's intro' tic fact that child may know carer well but role is changing, so need to explain this to the child and support carer in managing this.	
30.9	Contact: Service tic views of carers/parents/child – preferably pre-placement – and puts in place appropriate supports to help manage contact.	
30.10	Financial/other support to carers: Objective criteria for this, so no discrimination against F&F carers, who may need some services delivered differently.	
30.11	Training: F&F carers have access to training available to other carers but also to training re particular needs/circumstances of F&F carers.	
30.12	Support groups: F&F carers have access to support groups that meet their particular needs.	
30.13	Supervising social workers: To be trained in the particular needs/circumstances of F&F carers.	
30.14	Temporary approval (Reg 24*): If child is to remain, full assessment is to be completed asap and always within the statutory timeframe as per regulations.	
	<p><i>*Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010</i></p> <p><i>N.B. Where family and friends are approved as foster carers, the other standards apply as they do for other foster carers.</i></p>	
NMS 31 Placement Plan and Review		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children are cared for in line with their Placement Plan / Short Break Care Plan. The fostering service takes action to chase up outstanding reviews or visits from the responsible authority, contributes to those reviews and assists the child to contribute to their reviews. 	
31.1	Formulation of placement plan: Service supports carers to play an active role in agreeing contents of this plan, in conjunction with the responsible authority.	

31.2	Distribution of placement plan: Carers are given a copy of this plan as soon as the responsible authority provides it and any delay is followed up by the service.	
31.3	Review of care plan: Service supports carers in contributing effectively to review of the care plan, which includes the placement plan.	
31.4	Child's input to reviews: Service supports carer to assist child to put forward views/wishes/feelings and helps ensure these are fully tic by responsible authority.	
31.5	Care plan/changes: Service supports carers in explaining the plan and any changes to the child.	
31.6	Requesting stat reviews/visits: Service asks responsible authority if these are overdue/needed (e.g. due to past or anticipated significant change(s) to care plan).	
31.7	Reviews: Service and carers contribute effectively to placement plan review and statutory review of care plan.	
31.8	Independent advocate: Children are assisted to secure an independent advocate to support them in conveying their views/wishes/feelings to statutory reviews.	