

Training & Development 2009-2010

**Please find enclosed the
updated 2009-2010 Training
& Development information**

**To be placed in the Training &
Development section of your
folder**



Training & Development 2009-10



Content

| | |
|-----------|--|
| 1 | Introduction |
| 2 | Key Developments |
| 3 | Children's Workforce Development Council |
| 4 | Training & Development Opportunities |
| | ◇ Induction Training |
| | ◇ Training to be Completed by all Carers |
| | ◇ Foster Carer Development |
| | ◇ Joint Training with Social Workers |
| | ◇ Qualification Based Training |
| 5 | Specialist Fostering Schemes |
| 6 | Other Training & Development Opportunities |
| | ◇ Foster Parent College |
| | ◇ Resource Library |
| | ◇ Support Groups |
| | ◇ Social Care Loan Scheme |
| | ◇ Kent Foster Care Association |
| 7 | Foster Carer Competency Assessment Framework / Payment for Skills |
| 8 | Foster Carer Folder / Portfolio |
| 9 | Personal Development Plans |
| 10 | Learning Logs |
| 11 | Applying for Training |
| 12 | Attendance at Training |
| 13 | Non Attendance at Training |
| 14 | Your Feedback |
| | |

Appendices

| Appendix | Details |
|--------------------|---|
| 1 | Training Steering Group Membership |
| 2 | Training Flowchart |
| 3 | Website Guidance |
| 4 | Course Flyers |
| 5 | Application Process for Joint Training with Social Workers |
| 6 a & b | Resource Library |
| 7 | Support Group Dates |
| 8 | Foster Carer Competency Assessment Framework |
| 9 | Portfolio Guidance |
| 10 | Personal Development Plan |
| 11 | Learning Log |
| 12 | Training Application Form |
| 13 | Training Administrators Contact Details |
| 14 | Venues & Maps |
| 15 | Childcare Claim Form |
| 16 | Course Re-Action Form |

1) Introduction

Welcome to the latest edition of the Foster Carer Training and Development folder. This section provides you with details of the training and development opportunities available to you and includes information on some of the key developments upon which the training foster carer training and development strategy is based. It also includes information on the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) Training, Support and Development Standards for Foster Care.

The Foster Care Training Plan has been reviewed by the Training Steering Group, whose membership includes foster carer representatives, fostering team managers/practice supervisors and county training leads (**Appendix 1**). The training and development opportunities include:

- **Pre-approval**
- **Induction**
- **Training for ALL Carers**
- **Foster Carer Development** (including qualification based training)

See Training Flowchart (see Appendix 2)

The training and development opportunities for new and experienced carers and are linked to the CWDC Training, Support and Development Standards for Foster Care, the Foster Carer Competency Assessment Framework and Payment for Skills.

Since April 2008 the updated **Fostering Manual** has been available on-line and can be accessed by www.kenttrustweb.org.uk. We will continue to support foster carers in developing their ICT skills over the coming year. A step by step guide to accessing the fostering website including the Fostering Manual, Training and Development folder and the Foster Carers Newsletter can be found in (**Appendix 3**)

Please take the opportunity to read through the folder and update yourself of the changes that have been made.

The Training Steering Group has agreed some changes to the training and development opportunities available to carers and these include:

- Further introductory e-safety workshops for carers and the development of more specific workshops which are more practically based.
- Record Keeping has now been extended to a full day.
- Safer Care training will continue to be available for all new carers and there will be further training available on safer care for more experienced carers. There will also be specific safeguarding workshops available to all carers.
- Helping your Child with Education and Learning will continue to be delivered by the LAC education advisors in conjunction with the fostering education assistants and the library service. Specific topics on, for example, exclusions will be covered in Support Groups across the county.
- “Self harm” workshops will be available and there will also be workshops planned on the Integrated Children’s System (ICS) by the local fostering team.
- There is also the opportunity to attend some specific health related training including healthy eating, mental health awareness and sexual health. Further information can be found from your fostering worker or by contacting sue.douglas@kent.gov.uk.

2) Key Developments

The central role that foster carers play in achieving positive outcomes for the children and young people they look after has been recognised both locally and nationally. The "Options for Excellence" (DfES/DH October 2006) review of the social care workforce highlighted the important contribution that foster carers make, identifying foster carers as a professional group with specific skills and knowledge needs who are an essential part of the wider children's workforce. The foster carer training and development opportunities available to you are to support you in developing your "continuous professional competence" as a Kent County Council foster carer and provide high quality care in a family setting for the children and young people you look after.

In 2007, the government published a White Paper called **Care Matters (Time for Change)**, which sets out their vision for promoting better outcomes for children and young people in and leaving care. One of the core proposals in Care Matters is the expectation that every local authority should develop a **pledge** for its children and young people in care. The pledge is seen as a central part of the overall strategy for improving corporate parenting and it has been widely welcomed, particularly by children and young people.

In developing our pledge we have consulted with our Looked After Children and Care Leavers, who have produced two DVDs outlining their views of what they would want to see in our pledge. We have listened to this and also used the messages in Care Matters, along with the findings from a review of practice and services for Looked After Children and Care Leavers provided by Children, Families and Education (CFE) and its partners. This has enabled us to develop a pledge, which establishes CFE at the forefront of best practice. The pledge is in two parts (one for KCC Looked After Children (LAC) and one for LAC placed in Kent by other local authorities) and makes a range of commitments focussing on 6 key areas:

- **A Sense Of Belonging**
- **An Adult Who Is Always There For You While You Are In Care**
- **A Good Education**
- **Good Memories For The Future**
- **Getting Ready For Being An Adult**
- **Championing Your Needs And Interests.**

A key aim of the pledge is to inform Looked After Children and Care Leavers what they can expect from KCC and encourage best practice and the means by which better outcomes can be promoted for them. Further details on the pledge can be found at www.kent.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/846CA9A8-F232-42BB-8C02-ADBE72BD55A5/14462/Pledge_Kent.pdf

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is the overarching framework for the rights of children and young people to participation, protection and provision of services to fulfil their potential. The Convention informs the training and development opportunities available to foster carers.

The Commission for Social Care Inspection (Children's Rights Director) Regulations 2004 set out the legal tasks of the **Children's Rights Director of England**. These tasks include finding out the views of children and young people in foster care about the service they receive. Their report, *Being Fostered: A National Survey of the Views of Foster Children, Foster Carers and Birth Parents about Foster Care* (June 2005) says that the ideal foster carer, according to children, is "**friendly, kind, cheerful, fun, caring – and easy to talk to**".

Every Child Matters: Change for Children is a national programme to improve the well being of all children and young people. The programme aims to achieve five outcomes:

- **Be Healthy**
- **Stay Safe**
- **Enjoy And Achieve**
- **Make A Positive Contribution**
- **Achieve Economic Well-Being**

In Kent, two additional outcomes have been identified as local priorities:

- *Supporting Looked After Children*
- *Supporting Children And Young People With Learning Difficulties And Disabilities*

Every Parent Matters (15 March 2007, DfES) highlights the important role of parents in improving their child's life chances and includes a number of areas where foster carers can help looked after children to achieve. These include being role models, helping with homework and promoting reading. Promoting education and health of Looked after Children courses have been included in the training for **all** foster carers.

*There has also been the introduction of the **Integrated Children's System (ICS)** and the way information is gathered, recorded and stored on the children*

and young people we work with including the introduction of new forms or "exemplars".

The Kent Children and Young Peoples Plan 2008-11 sets the direction for the Kent Children's Trust for the next three years. **Children's Trusts** are central to Government policy for improving children's services. The policy, developed in **Every Child Matters**, the **Children Act 2004**, and **The Children's Plan** aims to improve outcomes for all children by redesigning services and ensuring active partnership through Children's Trusts. Children's Trusts bring together social care, health, police, education, districts and other services to ensure integrated, child-centered approaches to improve outcomes for children, young people and their families. The **Kent Children's Trust** was established in September 2006 and the 23 **Local Children's Services Partnerships** (LCSP) are now live. The LCSPs play a central role in improving outcomes for local children, young people and families through integrated commissioning and front line delivery. Each LCSP will produce its own Local Children and Young People's Plan and their introduction represents a key milestone in the development of children's trust arrangements in Kent. Further information on the Children's Trust can be found at <http://www.kenttrustweb.org.uk/Children/childrenstrust.cfm>.

3) Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) Training, Support and Development Standards for Foster Care

The Common Core of Skills and Knowledge for the Children's Workforce sets out the basic skills and knowledge needed by people whose work brings them into regular contact with children, young people and families. In September 2006 the Children's Workforce Development Council introduced Induction Standards for all workers in children's social care.

The Training, Support and Development Standards for Foster Care build on the CWDC Induction Standards for staff who work in children's social care and have been adapted to meet the needs of foster carers and to reflect their unique position of looking after children in their own homes and were implemented for Kent County Council foster carers in April 2008.

The Training, Support and Development Standards for Foster Care have been developed by the CWDC to ensure that all foster carers receive relevant induction, training and support, and continuing professional development. **Care Matters: Time for Change** (June 2007) gives a clear commitment to incorporating the CWDC Standards into the planned revision of the National Minimum Standards (NMS) for Fostering Services and it is anticipated that these Standards will become a mandatory requirement when the NMS for Fostering Services are reviewed.

All new foster carers will be expected to complete the Standards within **12** months of their approval. **All existing approved foster carers will be expected to work towards the Standards** with all existing foster carers within the agency having completed by April 2011. **A Successful Completers Certificate** will be achieved on completion of the Standards.

The Standards set out clearly what foster carers should **know, understand and be able to do** and are designed to:

- Equip foster carers with the knowledge and skills needed to provide high quality care for the children and young people they look after.
- Ensure that foster carers are given the necessary help to develop knowledge and skills to carry out their job as foster carers and appropriate opportunities for career development.
- Ensure foster carers are well supported and supervised.
- Successful completion of the Standards demonstrates that a foster carer has the basic information and skills necessary for work as a foster carer.

The seven Standards are:

Standard 1: Understand The Principles And Values Essential For Fostering Children And Young People

Standard 2: Understand Your Role As A Foster Carer

Standard 3: Understand Health And Safety And Healthy Care

Standard 4: Know How To Communicate Effectively

Standard 5: Understand The Development Of Children And Young People

Standard 6: Safeguard Children And Young People (Keep Them Safe From Harm)

Standard 7: Develop Yourself

Further information on the Standards is available from the CWDC at www.cwdcouncil.org.uk and from www.kenttrustweb.org.uk

4) Training and Development Opportunities

The training and development opportunities for foster carers provide a career pathway for carers. They take account of the Children's Workforce Development Council Training, Support and Development Standards for Foster Care and are designed to promote foster carers professional development from pre-approval, induction and on-going development promoting the important role that carers play in meeting the needs of looked after children. The training opportunities are for both new and experienced carers recognizing that experienced carers also need to update their knowledge and skills on a regular basis and the need for continuous professional development. Each course has a course flyer ([see Appendix 4](#)) outlining the aims of the course and learning outcomes.

Foster carers are at the centre of a child or young persons experience of **corporate parenting** and as "professionals" we expect carers to continue their learning and development throughout their fostering career. We have provided training and development opportunities for new and experienced carers across the different types of foster placements that are provided including:

- Emergency Placements
- Short Term
- Long Term
- Respite
- Short Break Scheme For Disabled Children
- Parent & Child
- Therapeutic Re-Parenting Foster Care
- Treatment Foster Care
- Day Care
- Specific Placements

Induction Training

The **induction** training for foster carers offers newly approved carers, and for more experienced carers wishing to refresh their knowledge, a series of courses that provides the opportunity for foster carers to learn more about the fostering task and what it involves. We would expect the “main” carer to have completed the induction training listed below within the first twelve months of approval.

New Carers Induction

Newly approved foster carers will be invited to a **New Carers Induction Session** shortly after approval **which all approved carers will be expected to attend**. This will provide newly approved foster carers with the opportunity to learn more about Kent County Councils Fostering Service, meet members of the Fostering Teams and existing carers, hear about the Kent Foster Carer Association and be introduced to the training and development opportunities available to foster carers in the county. New foster carers will also be offered a **‘Buddy’** by their Fostering Team to support them through the initial months of becoming an approved foster carer. Courses include:

Caring for Other Peoples Children

- ❖ To explore the differences in caring for another person’s child and how this may impact upon carers own families and support networks.
- ❖ To explore the probable impact of separation and loss of the child’s own family upon their development and consequently their behaviour.
- ❖ To consolidate and extend carers understanding of attachment and the likely impact upon the child and promote strategies for welcoming and engaging with the child from the moment of arrival
- ❖ To encourage carers to explore implications for good parenting and promoting positive growth in emotional, behavioural, social aspects of children’s development.
- ❖ To encourage carers confidence in caring well for other peoples children when in public care.

Making Placements Work - and Managing Contact

- ❖ Develop an understanding of the factors that contribute to making placements work particularly in relation to contact with birth parents / family.
- ❖ Understand the role of contact in foster care, and working with parents and birth families
- ❖ Explore models of “good practice” in working with other professionals including care planning and reviews

- ❖ Understand the impact of children's previous experiences upon their current needs when contact takes place.

Safer Care

- ❖ Understand what is meant by safe care and how to put this into practice
- ❖ Explore why children sometimes make false allegations and how carers can help protect themselves from this happening.
- ❖ Understand how carers can support their own children sharing their own home with children who have suffered abuse, neglect and multiple moves and the trauma associated with this.
- ❖ Familiarisation with signs and symptoms of child abuse and impact upon the child
- ❖ Develop strategies for safer care

Valuing Diversity

- ❖ Explore issues relating to power in society and how these impact on us all, particularly foster children including the social model of disability
- ❖ Have a better understanding of the theory, language and terminology used in addressing equalities issues
- ❖ Be more aware of your own thoughts and feelings and how these affect your approach to working with difference
- ❖ Feel more confident in using skills to promote equalities throughout your practice

Foster carers should also complete the training and development opportunities for **ALL** carers as part of their on-going learning and development.

Training to be completed by ALL carers

The Training Steering Group has agreed the following list of courses to be completed by all carers, these include:

- **First Aid**
- **Making The Most Of Supervision**
- **Recording (Now Full Day)**
- **Missing From Care**
- **The Role Of Men In Foster Care**
- **Basic Computer Awareness**
- **e-Safety**
- **Recording, Storing And Administering Medication**
- **Effective Communication To Get The Best Out Of Meetings**
- **Integrated Children System (ICS)**
- **Encouraging / Participation Of Children And Young People**
- **Helping Your Child With Education And Learning - Including Specific Workshops i.e. Personal Education Plans (PEPs), Exclusions**
- **Health And Well-Being For Children**
- **Benefits Training**
- **Safer Care For Experienced Carers**
- **Safeguarding**

Foster Carer Development

Carers wishing to access further training need to have completed the induction training, these include:

- **Sexual Abuse – Working Effectively With Children And Young People**
- **Drugs Awareness (Part I)**
- **Drugs Awareness (Part 2)**
- **Long Term Affects Of Abuse And Neglect (Day 1 And Day 2 Follow Up)**
- **Attachment – An Introduction (Part I)**
- **Child Development And Attachment (Part II)**
- **Secondary Trauma (Part III)**
- **Positive Behaviour Management**
- **Court Skills**
- **Fostering Adolescents**
- **Relationships And Sex Education**
- **Moving To Adoption**
- **Parent And Child**
- **Self Harm**

Joint Training with Social Workers

It has been agreed that foster carers who want to develop more in-depth knowledge about particular topics can apply for some social work courses. Application for this training needs to be part of your **Personal Development Plan** and discussed with your Fostering Social Worker. ([Appendix 5](#))

Qualification Based Training

NVQ Health and Social Care Level 3 (children and young people)

The NVQ programme is a nationally recognised award available to foster carers who have completed initial and pre-qualification based training and demonstrate continuous professional development. The NVQ programme is currently delivered by South Kent College, Folkestone and West Kent College, Tonbridge. Kent County Council will pay your registration and course fees subject to satisfactory completion of the course and continuing approval as a Kent County Council foster carer.

The course does require a commitment from foster carers to regularly attend college, compile a portfolio as well as completing some study in your own time. You can use evidence from your day to day fostering and previous training courses that you have attended to build a portfolio of evidence to complete your award. You will be allocated an **Assessor** who will be there to guide and advise you alongside support from your fostering worker.

The NVQ Level 3 has one intake per year and usually commences in the Autumn Term. The colleges will provide you with an induction programme. It should take no longer than one year to complete the course. Candidates who have previously undertaken the NVQ have found it to be rewarding and to have given them the opportunity to reflect on their practice.

If you are interested in applying to undertake the NVQ Level 3 you should have first completed initial, core and any other relevant training. You must have been fostering with Kent County Council fostering service for a minimum of **two** years (one year if recent continuous service and experience/training with an IFA/other Local Authority of an equivalent level.) The NVQ application **must** form part of your Personal Development Plan and supported by your fostering worker and endorsed by the Team Leader.

Further details and applications will be available at the **"Thinking of Doing an NVQ"** workshop in the summer and will give you an opportunity to hear from foster carers who have already completed the course. Your Fostering Worker should also attend.

NVQ Assessors Award

There may also be opportunities for foster carers who have completed the NVQ Level 3 Health & Social care (children and young people) to apply for the NVQ Assessors award.

For further information please contact your Fostering Worker.

Level 4 Btec Certificate - Working with Traumatized Children

Foster Carers who have completed the NVQ Level 3 and consolidated their learning from this course into their fostering practice may wish to apply for the Level 4 Btec Certificate – Working with Traumatized Children, an online distance learning training programme.

The programme involves a notional 120 hours of study and provides flexibility for students to work on-line. It requires a level of computer literacy and access to a computer.

For further information look out for the **Level 4 Dissemination Workshops** later in the year.

Foundation Degree – Foster Carer Pathway (pilot)

We are also currently involved in the development of a Foundation Degree (foster carer pathway) with Christchurch University Canterbury. This is a part-time course leading to a foundation degree for carers who have completed the Btec level 4. For more information please contact your Fostering worker.

5) Specialist Fostering Schemes

There are a number of specialist fostering schemes that have specific training and support for foster carers. Foster carers who wish to apply for these specialist schemes need to have completed preliminary training or be able to evidence previous learning.

Treatment Foster Care

Treatment Foster Care provides intensive, individualised treatment, support and supervision in a family setting to young people between the ages of 10 to 18 years who are displaying severe levels of challenging/anti-social behaviour. The programme has been adapted from the Oregon Social Learning Model and the Kent scheme is one of 17 schemes nationally. The programme is one of the largest in the country and hopes to move towards being fully accredited by the National team and Oregon by autumn 2009.

The aim is to decrease problem behaviours and increase socially acceptable behaviour so that within an 18 month period, the young person can return to his/her parents, relatives or other suitable arrangement after the Treatment Foster Care Placement.

Foster carers are specially trained to implement a system of Points and Levels and receive 24/7 support.

Short Break Scheme for Disabled Children

The scheme offers disabled children and young people respite in a family setting to enhance their social networks and opportunities, giving their family the vital support they sometimes need to enable them to continue to look after their child at home.

The respite carers become part of a network of dedicated carers who meet together regularly. They are supported by their fostering social worker and given relevant training.

There is specific training offered to carers in this scheme. Please contact your fostering worker for more details.

There is also individual training that is relevant to the child in placement and this is offered by the local Community Paediatric Team.

Therapeutic Re-Parenting Programme

The programme is aimed at meeting the needs of children between the ages of 4 to 13 who have experienced significant trauma, and whose development and ability to form attachments have been significantly effected. They are children whose behaviour has made it hard for families to care for them and who have struggled to be part of a family or be cared for. They may also struggle within the school environment, and all of this can lead to moves and placement breakdowns, that contribute to the trauma and rejection for the child

Carers need to be able to offer a placement to a child for approximately two years where they will be the youngest by a number of years and any other looked after child is very settled and living within the family long term. All members of the family need to be able to cope with a new addition that will need a very safe secure and predictable world and feel that they are the primary focus of the adults. We therefore generally require any other children in the family to be aged 12 years or older, and to demonstrate maturity.

Carers need to be willing to work as part of a multi-agency team. This team will work together, around the child, to gain an in-depth emotional and psychological understanding of them and promote their ability to form a secure attachment. They will then prepare the child to move on to a permanent family via adoption or long-term fostering, or in some circumstances remain with the TRP family long term.

TRP carers are part of monthly network meetings for their child which are facilitated by either a clinical psychologist or psychiatrist. Carers must also attend monthly carers groups that are also facilitated by a clinical psychologist. We ask that both carers make themselves available for the majority of these meetings.

Parent and Child

We also offer Parent and Child placements which provide a comprehensive assessment of the parent and child relationship in a foster placement setting. Foster carers contribute to the assessment alongside other professionals as part of a multi-agency team. They assist with the development of parenting skills and may provide outreach work post placement. Carers will receive specific training on Parent and Child placements and support groups/learning sets are being developed.

6) Other Training and Development Opportunities

There are also a number of other training and development opportunities available including:

Foster Parent College (FPC)

Online training – There are opportunities for carers to complete online training to further develop their skills and knowledge. These short courses can be taken from the comfort and convenience of your own home, at a time that suits you, and explore some of the “parenting” challenges foster carers face. The courses provide an initial exploration of ideas and suggestions on specific topics that should be discussed with your fostering worker and are not seen as replacements for face to face training.

What Are the Courses About?

FPC courses focus on specific behaviour problems, emotional disorders, and parenting strategies. Dramatic vignettes, interviews with parents, and instruction from nationally-known child welfare experts present powerful and effective messages. The courses were developed by Northwest Media in conjunction with Dr. Rick Delaney and other parenting experts. They cover a lot of topics that foster parents have to deal with, these include:

| | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| ADHD/ADD/ODD | Anger Outbursts | Anger Pie |
| Child Abuse & Neglect | Childhood Anxiety Disorders | Children with Autism |
| Eating Disorders | Family Dynamics | Fire-setting |
| Kinship Care | Lying | Positive Parenting I / II / III |
| Reactive Attachment Disorder | Relationships: Strengthening | Communications |
| Safe Parenting | Self-Harm | Sexualized Behaviour |
| Sleep Problems | Stealing | Wetting and Soiling |
| Working with Schools | | |

How Does It Work?

Most courses take about 30-40 minutes to view then you'll complete 20 review questions online. You'll also have unlimited access to the course-related discussion board to ask questions, offer suggestions, or share experiences with other parents. You can print and keep the viewer's guide and Q & A, and many courses have additional handouts. When you finish the course you can print out your Certificate of Completion.

How Do I Get Started?

If you would like to access a course please **discuss this with fostering worker and discuss how this fits in to your Personal Development Plan.** They will need to approve the application form and send this to Training & Development. On receipt of the completed application form you will then receive an email, normally within 5 working days, that tells you how to log onto the website and get started on the course you have selected. **Only one course can be selected at a time.**

What Do I Need To Do After The Course?

After completing the course you will need to complete a **Learning Log** and send this to sue.douglas@kent.gov.uk. **Further Units** can only be applied for once you have discussed your completed Learning Log with your Fostering Worker and given enough time to reflect upon your learning.



Resource Library

There are a variety of Learning Resources available to support the training courses and develop your skills and understanding including books, DVD's / Video's and useful websites. **Some books include** - A Child's Journey Through Placement, Fostering Attachment, Attachment Trauma and Resilience, Working with Anger and Young People, Care Stories.

These are available for loan from the Training and Development section and provide both pre-reading for courses and more detailed research. You can find more details on the Resource Library in **(Appendix 6 a & b)** and for further information please contact (sue.douglas@kent.gov.uk).

Support Groups

Support groups for foster carers are well established across the County and provide a valuable opportunity for foster carers to meet together, share concerns and ideas, and develop their learning. We expect regular attendance at support groups for new and existing foster carers. **Appendix 7** has the details of **Local Support Groups** in your area. For further information please liaise with your local fostering team.

Each newly approved foster carer will be given dates and times of their local support group.

Social Care Loan Scheme (foster care)

The Foster Care Loan Scheme has been established to enable KCC registered Foster Carer's to increase their knowledge and skill, whether for personal development or future career development. The Scheme operates by providing adults with interest free loans for training leading to recognised qualifications or other agreed outcomes. The scheme assists Foster Carers to take courses which are outside those already provided or paid for by Kent County Council as part of its mainstream *Skills for Care* programme.

The Scheme is run by the Individual Learning Company (ILC) working in co-operation with *KCC – Foster Care Unit*. The Scheme is based on the successful Kent Community Learning Fund which has been operating since 1998. Award of a loan is at the discretion of ILC and remain the responsibility of the individual to be repaid. Loan repayments will be used to make further loans.

The Scheme is designed for Foster Carers who wish to develop their knowledge and skills, further own personal development and/or career development. Kent County Council already provides a range of training opportunities for individual Foster Carers which ensures they have the knowledge and skills they require to be successful foster carers. However it is recognised that some individuals wish to develop a deeper understanding of particular issues. This may be based on personal interest or in preparation of future career opportunities. It is not a condition of the loan that the individual remains a Foster Carer; though it is intended that the training undertaken will benefit them in that role.

The Scheme has few formal requirements beyond being open only to KCC registered Foster Carers aged 18 or over. Individuals are free to identify the training they would wish to follow; it is recommended that this is done in discussion with their KCC case worker – who is asked to endorse their application. Individuals must also be able to demonstrate that they will be able to repay the loan in due course.

KCC Fostering Workers have been provided with details of the scheme and sample copies of the Application Form. Interested individuals should then telephone ILC for an initial explanation of the Scheme and discussion about their proposed application. A copy of the Application Form will then be sent for completion. Completed forms should be endorsed by the Foster Carer's worker and returned direct to ILC. The decision to make a loan is entirely at the discretion of ILC. Individuals are responsible for the repayment of their loans though the Scheme can be flexible in agreeing appropriate arrangements according to the circumstance of individual applicants – including, if necessary, a rescheduling of repayments.

For more information, please contact Lynn Joy or Heather Batt on 01622 859755

Kent Foster Care Association – an introduction

Kent Foster Care Association (KFCA) is a voluntary organisation set up and run by foster carers that aims to:

- provide mutual support to foster carers
- promote working partnerships
- represent foster carers as individuals and as a group
- develop awareness, knowledge and skills
- create opportunities for children and young people to meet together

Membership is free and all KCC registered foster carers are automatically members unless they opt out.

KFCA gives foster carers a chance to meet and socialise with others who understand what it is like to foster. It provides opportunities for foster carers to talk safely to colleagues and enables them to meet foster carers from different areas.

KFCA can help foster carers and their families to meet the challenges of fostering. They are a place for mentoring and support where information, tips and ideas are swapped. Above all, foster care associations are a place where you no longer face the challenges alone.

Individual foster families can feel they have little power to change the foster care system. However, when they work together with KFCA and other Foster Care Associations, they can influence policy and effect change. That is why KFCA is affiliated to the Fostering Network.

KFCA can give foster carers and their families the chance to work together to motivate people in charge of fostering policy, practice and budgets to make the changes that are needed.

As a group, foster families have one of the most complete pictures of the current state of fostering. Together they can get their voice heard and make sure that those who can change the system know what the issues are. Working together with KFCA, foster carers and their families can work alongside others to come up with practical solutions.

KFCA encourages foster carers to regularly attend their local support groups. A well-developed support group can act as a channel for communication and representation as well as support. Although a well-developed support group can have almost all the features of a good foster care association, there are limits to what a support group can offer.

KFCA is part of the voluntary sector. It is able to apply for grants in its own right. It can use the support offered to voluntary organisations both locally and

nationally. It can lobby, campaign and join with other voluntary organisations to do this.

Foster carers run KFCA and its voting members are foster carers. It might seem sensible to call these voluntary organisations "foster carers' associations". However, KFCA looks wider than the personal interests of foster carers. It is a way for foster carers to use their immense experience and insight to push up standards for foster care, not just to get their own needs met. The name "Foster Care Association" also recognises the immense advocacy and support role that foster carers have with fostered children and young people.

KFCA is here to advocate for all KCC foster carers; please help us to support you. Visit our website at www.kfca.org.uk for latest news. Use the links on our contact page to share your views with us. Get involved! Together, we make a difference.

Thank you

Mark Pole
Chairman
Kent Foster Care Association
March 2009

7) Foster Carer Competency Assessment Framework / Payment for Skills

The aim of the Foster Carer Competency Assessment Framework (FCAF) is to enable carers to provide “high quality care in a family setting” as set out in the National Standards for Foster Care, 2002, and linked to improving outcomes for Looked After Children.

The competency assessment framework has been aligned to the seven CWDC Standards and mapped across Payments for Skills Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3. Level 1 includes the completion of the CWDC Successful Completers Certificate and further details can be found in **(Appendix 8)**.

Progression through the FCAF and Payment for Skills levels is based on evidence of your work as a foster carer, completion of relevant training and evidence of **practice enhanced through learning**. It is important that you gather evidence of your fostering practice on an on-going basis and contribute fully to supervision and your annual review.

Supervision forms and Annual Review forms have been updated to reflect the FCAF and a Payments Panel established to look at progression.

Meeting the FCAF criteria should be an on-going process and reviewed regularly in supervision.

8) Foster Carer Folder/Portfolio

Each approved foster carer will have their own folder/portfolio which should be used to store evidence of the development of your skills and knowledge using the headings from the seven CWDC Standards. The portfolio should include your Personal Development Plan, copies of your Learning Logs and certificates of attendance alongside any other evidence of your skills i.e. feedback forms.

Appendix 9 provides some guidance on compiling a portfolio.

9) Personal Development Plans (PDP)

Every newly approved foster carer should have a Personal Development Plan **(Appendix 10)** completed as part of their Form F home study assessment and presented to the Fostering Panel. The Personal Development Plan should be completed by **ALL** carers with your fostering worker and reviewed annually highlighting your individual training needs for the next twelve months and how this will be achieved.

An Individual Training Record of training undertaken will also be completed and form part of your Annual Foster Carer Review.

10) Learning Logs

On the completion of each course you will need to complete a Learning Log (**Appendix 11**). The Learning Log is a reflective account of your own learning, and will include how you are applying this to your care of children and young people. While you can add to your Learning Log after the course, the Learning Log should initially be handed in at the end of the training so that a copy can be taken and given to your supervising fostering worker. The Learning Log should be discussed with your supervising fostering social worker at your next supervision meeting (or planned in for discussion) and will go towards developing a portfolio of training completed and evidence of on-going learning and development.

11) Applying for Training

When and where are the courses held?

The training programme has been designed to avoid school holidays and is generally based around school times. Foster carers can apply for training not just within their local area but across the county depending on availability.

How do I apply for a course?

Each approved foster carer will have a **Personal Development Plan** identifying their training and development needs.

You then need to complete your training application form **Appendix 12** and have this endorsed by your Fostering Worker. The application should be returned to your Area Training Administrator **Appendix 13**. This will be photocopied and returned to you for your records.

Please advise your Training Administrator of any dietary/specific needs you may have to ensure you can make the most out of the training.

Training will be held at a variety of venues across the County. Most training is locally based with some others being held in central venues to facilitate participation. A list of the regular venues used can be found in **Appendix 14**. Assistance with childcare costs can be applied for where necessary and agreed with your fostering social worker (**Appendix 15**). Claim forms **must** be returned within **28 days** of completion of the course. Usually ten days before the course date a confirmation letter and directions/map will be sent to you usually by your local Training Administrator.

12) Attendance at Training

You should only attend the training if your place has been confirmed and if you have any queries please check with your Training Administrator.

You should not bring anyone else with you to the course unless they are also booked on the course.

Refreshments and registration will be available fifteen minutes before the course commences.

13) Non-Attendance at training

If you are unable to attend a course that you have applied for it is important that you let your Fostering Team/Training Administrator know as soon as possible. Non-attendance at a course may be stopping another foster carer receiving training that they need and also has financial implications for future foster carer training.

The cost of attending each course will clearly be indicated on the course flyer and payment for non-attendance without informing the team will be followed up and recorded on your Individual Training Record.

Any unplanned non-attendance will be considered as part of your supervision and form part of your Annual Review.

It is important that you **arrive for training on time and are able to stay for the whole session**. Each trainer has been asked to note arrival and departure times and if you are unable to do so then please re-book yourself on another course. Certificates will not be issued for partial attendance.

At the end of each course you need to complete a **Learning Log**, a copy of which will be sent to your Fostering Worker.

After each fully completed course you will receive a **Certificate of Attendance**.

Please retain your Learning Logs and Certificate of Attendance in your Portfolio of training and development.

14) Your Feedback is Important

As part of our on-going evaluation and to respond to any developments both locally and nationally it is important that we undertake a continual evaluation of the training and development opportunities available to carers. At the end of each course you will be given a **Course Reaction Form (Appendix 16)** which should be completed on the day. Course Reaction Forms will be regularly reviewed by the Training Steering Group and will help shape future training.

You can also contact your local **Training Steering Group** representative with any comments or suggestions and / or your fostering worker. The Training Steering Group will continue to meet regularly to evaluate and plan all foster carer training.

We hope that you enjoy attending the training and development opportunities available to you and look forward to working with you.

P. Sodhi

Pritpal Sodhi
Training & Development Manager (Fostering & Adoption)
On behalf of the Training Steering Group.

