



Briefing Paper

Parent and child placements

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1. Introduction

A parent and child placement is a specialist fostering arrangement where a parent and their baby or young child are placed together with a fostering family.

This type of fostering can be enormously rewarding for foster carers who support and mentor new parents, at the same time as ensuring the safety of the child.

1.1 Why do some parents and their children need support from foster carers?

There are a number of reasons why a parent and their baby or child might need support from foster carers. Some young parents haven't had a nurturing upbringing themselves so they don't know how to care for a baby, some may have a learning disability, some may have issues with substance misuse, some may need to be in a safe place, and some won't have any family networks to offer them support.

1.2 Who is the parent?

The parent is usually a female who is pregnant or who has just given birth. However, they also could be a male parent. They are usually young parents, although they can be of any age. If they are under 18, they may also be a looked after child. Sometimes both parents can be in the placement with their baby.

1.3 The role of the foster carer

One way of supporting parents and their children in these situations is for them to be placed with specialist foster carers who can help parents to develop the skills they need to care for their child. Foster carers will also help the parents to overcome traumatic experiences in their own lives and learn what they need to in order for them to live independently.

Foster carers also work with social workers to assess the parent and their baby. The goal is to give the parent and baby the best life chances of moving on together as a viable family unit.

2. Placement types

There are three types of parent and child placements, usually planned placements, limited to four months:

1. Pre-birth placements: to help prepare the parent for the birth of their child.
2. Assessment placements: to assess a parent's ability to care for their child.
3. Parenting support placements: to help support a parent to care for their child or to offer a safe place to live.

2.1 Legal status

There are three possible combinations of legal status for the parent and child, and these have implications for the fostering allowances and other details relating to the placement.

1. A parent who is a looked after child, and their baby who is not a looked after child. (The fostering allowance will cover the parent's placement plus any additional increments plus any additional increments for the child).
2. A parent who is a looked after child and their baby who is also a looked after child. (There will be a fostering allowance for the parent's placement plus any additional increments, plus a fostering allowance for the child's placement plus any additional increments).
3. A parent who is not a looked after child (and could be under or over the age of 18), but their baby is a looked after child and is the responsibility of their parent. (The fostering allowance will be for the child's placement plus any additional increments.) If the parent is over 18, and therefore not a looked after child, and being placed with a foster carer who isn't a relative, consideration will be made for a [When I am Ready](#) placement or an adult placement.

Where neither the child nor the parent is a looked after child, a placement of this type would not normally be considered.

2.2 Increments

There is currently no national guidance for Wales on incremental payments to foster carers, therefore, fostering services will draw upon their own policies to adapt them to parent and child placements. Increments could be awarded to recognise additional activities or responsibilities beyond the basic weekly fostering allowance, and these are then included in the placement agreement.

3. Training and support for foster carers

Parent and child placements are complex and demanding for foster carers. Roles and tasks must be clearly defined, understood, transparent and explicit, so that there is clarity regarding the placement, care and safeguarding.

Foster carers may also require specialist training or support on some of the following issues, which may arise:

- the parent seeking a parent figure
- attachment
- a concealed birth
- teenage pregnancy, child development, drug withdrawal and parenting
- use of social media
- caring for a teenager
- cultural, ethnic, religious, language, gender, sexuality and disability issues.

4. Roles and responsibilities

Following the confirmation of the respective legal status of the parent and child there will then be details setting out the respective responsibilities. Such as:

- the parent's own responsibilities for their behaviour within the foster home and for the care of their child
- the foster carer's responsibilities for the parent
- the foster carer's responsibilities for the child
- responsibilities of the fostering service, social workers and other professionals involved.

4.1 Delegated authority

With the parent holding parental responsibility for their child, the agreed respective roles and arrangements will need to be confirmed in a delegated authority statement, which will set out the decisions that the foster carer can make for the child.

Details of each person or organisation's responsibilities will be set out in the placement agreement. Below are some of the things that will be considered.

4.2 The parent's responsibilities

- Parents will usually be expected to manage the daytime and bedtime routines, to fit in with the routines of the foster home. Usually, the child will sleep in the parent's room, and they will be expected to respond to the baby's needs, unless agreed in advance with the foster carer.
- Parents will often be expected to shop, budget, wash and cook for themselves and their child most of the time. This will help them develop their skills, to prepare them for independent living.
- If the parent has a partner who doesn't live in the foster home, a separate agreement will need to be made about their contact with the parent, their child, and visits to the foster home. A risk assessment will also need to be carried out.

4.3 The foster carer's responsibilities

- The foster carer's priority is the safety and wellbeing of the child, and they will supervise the parent while they care for their child.
- The foster carer may need to accompany the parent to health appointments as well as informal groups, such as baby and toddler groups.
- The foster carer will support the parent to learn to care for their child.
- The foster carer will monitor and assess the parent's care of the child. Usually this will be through a daily record in which they should be open and honest about the parent's strengths and difficulties, with the parent being given the opportunity to comment on them to the foster carer and the social worker. The

daily record and other recording will be used by the local authority in any reports submitted to the court

- The foster carer may also need to support the parent to continue their education.

4.4 The fostering service's responsibilities

- The fostering service may need to provide equipment for the child, such as a cot, car seat and sterilising equipment.
- The foster carer will need support and training suitable to this specialist type of foster care.
- To ensure that the number of placements during the year are limited to enable the foster family to have sufficient 'time out' between placements. This will have implications for allowances and increments between placements.
- The terms of approval will need to be precise regarding other placements at the same time or exclusively parent and child placements.

Additionally, safer caring agreement and risk assessments will need to be carried out. A conflict resolution mechanism might be useful, to agree to help resolve any disagreements between the parent and foster carer.

5. Welfare benefits

The parent should be supported find out if they are eligible for benefits for themselves and their child. They may be required to contribute to some of the costs of the foster home.

The following are useful sources of advice:

- Meic is the helpline service for children and young people up to the age of 25 in Wales. Telephone 080 8802 3456. meiccymru.org/
- Maternity Action maternityaction.org.uk/
- Maternity Allowance. gov.uk/maternity-allowance
- Accessing UK government benefits calculator gov.uk/benefits-calculators
- Citizens Advice: request an appointment for a 'benefits check'.
- Turn2us - viewing the information and calculator at the charity turn2us.org.uk/

6. Moving on, for the parent and child

As parent and child placements are usually limited to four months, a big part of the foster carer's role is to help prepare the parent and their child for what happens next.

The foster carer will often, therefore, help prepare the parent to live independently and to establish connections with their wider family and friends, if appropriate.

Sometimes the child will not stay with their parent and often foster carers help the parents to come to terms with what is going to happen next in their lives.

7. Additional resources

1. Flintshire Council: [10 things you need to know about mother and baby foster placements](#)
2. Bolton Council: [Parent and Baby Policy and Procedures](#):
3. Leeds Council: [Child and Parent Assessment Placement](#)
4. Brighton and Hove Council: [Parent and Baby Placement](#)
There are useful attachments here, including:
 - Information booklet for parents
 - Planning flowchart
 - Parent and baby safe care agreement
 - Recording of assessment
 - Set up meeting
5. Child Psychological Service: [Child and Parent Placements: What Research Tells Us](#)
6. Social Care Online: [Mother and Baby Foster Placements: experiences and issues](#)
7. Kinship Care information: <https://kinship.org.uk/>

8. How The Fostering Network can help

The Fostering Network offers advice, information and support. Our expertise and knowledge are always up-to-date and available through our vital member helplines, publications, training and consultancy.

Advice

[Fosterline Wales](#)

Call us on 0800 316 7664 from 9.30am - 12.30pm Monday to Friday.

If you call outside this time, please leave a message and someone will call you back as soon as possible.

You can email us at:

fosterlinewales@fostering.net

Support and resources

Our website is an essential source of information, while our online community brings together foster carers for peer support and advice. You can login to share your experience and get advice from other foster carers. Our online community is a safe and secure area to discuss foster care matters.

thefosteringnetwork.org.uk

Training and consultancy

Wherever you are in your fostering career, as a foster carer, social worker or manager, The Fostering Network has a range of training designed to meet your development needs.

For more information contact our learning and development manager, Sarah Mobedji at sarah.mobedji@fostering.net.

9. Contact us

If you would like more information, please contact Maria Boffey, Head of Operations on maria.boffey@fostering.net

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