

Step Up Step Down

Family Support Foster Carer

Role Description

Overview

The family support foster carers (FSFCs) mentor their families and offer short breaks for children, offering stability and giving parents time to address their challenges with support. They provide feedback on their involvement with the families during review meetings.

The FSFCs could be experienced foster carers within the service who want to develop their skills and explore a new opportunity within fostering. Alternatively, they can be recruited specifically to this role in SUSD but must gain approval prior to commencing in the role. It is imperative that the FSFCs have the skills and commitment to working with both parents and children as part of the SUSD programme. A role description for the FSFC is included in this pack.

Role and Responsibilities

The key aspects of the role are to

- provide weekly mentoring support for parents who are referred to SUSD. There is maximum caseload of 4 families at any one time.
- support the family to set and review goals, using our Person Centred Planning app.
- provide one planned short break each month for each referred child.
- offer crisis response support to families in the form of phone calls, visits or crisis short breaks.
- attend training provided by The Fostering Network & the Local Authority, enabling the FSFC to provide training and support to families.
- help with family activities, such as outings, family activities, summer schemes and residentials

The Family Support Foster Carer will be required to record details of the support provided, sharing with the supervising social worker as appropriate. During weeks that the FSFC has attend a review or support meeting for a family, they will not be required to complete another mentoring session with that family.

Working with parents and families

Families are referred to Step Up Step Down by their social worker. The scheme is voluntary, and families are empowered to decide whether they want the support. SUSD support has 4 primary aspects:

- mentoring for parents
- short breaks for children
- family activities
- community supports.

SUSD Mentoring Sessions are based upon areas of identified need. These are decided through the referral process and the initial planning meeting and are reviewed every three months throughout the duration of SUSD support. The key areas of support are: Routines, Budgeting, Healthy Living, Mental and Physical Wellbeing, Behaviour Management, Access to supports, Family Relationships, Dealing with Crisis Situations, Play and Stimulation.

The FSFC will also be required to give updates and share progress at review meetings. Information required will be:

- number of parent mentoring sessions since the previous SUSD review (including cancelations), and details of the work covered with the parent;
- number of short breaks since the previous review, and details of activities;
- any and all other support given to the family.

Support for the Family Support Foster Carer

Personal development and self-care is important, as we know that the best supporters are well supported themselves. There are several ways that SUSD will support the FSFCs.

- There will be regular supervision where they can discuss complex cases or raise any issues.
- FSFCs will be encouraged to attend training that will support them in the role, and to take an active role in identifying what this training should be.
- Quarterly carer support sessions are organised to enable the FSFCs & other SUSD team members to meet and learn from each other.
- FSFCs are also encouraged to form informal peer support networks.