

Standard for Foster Care consultation

Background and Frequently Asked Questions

Background

The Scottish Government set up the Foster Care Review to look at a range of potential reforms and provide direction on a number of policy questions. The recommendations of the [Foster Care Review](#) (Centre for Excellence for Looked After Children in Scotland (CELCIS), 2013) included a proposal that:

'The Scottish Government should commission a National Learning and Development Framework for Foster Care. The Framework should include two mandatory courses (at preparatory and induction stages) for new carers and a mandatory programme of continuous skills and knowledge development for experienced carers. The Framework should be accredited, with progress through the stages providing carers with the opportunity to obtain qualifications. The Framework should apply to all fostering agencies operating in Scotland and while it should establish minimum standards in respect to the provision of learning and development.'

The Review thought a nationally coordinated approach for all foster carer training would provide the opportunity for:

- much greater collaboration between fostering agencies
- the reduction of duplication of training
- improved accessibility to learning and support transferable learning.

Benefits of the Standard for Foster Care

Foster carers in Scotland are already highly knowledgeable and skilled in their practice. The Standard will recognise and strengthen those skills and qualities to support the best levels of foster care for children and young people. The Standard is based on a vision of foster carers in Scotland who, having demonstrated their values, knowledge and skills are:

1. competent and confident to work flexibly and in partnership with others, to make sure the children and young people who receive foster care are; Safe, Healthy, Active, Nurtured, Achieving, Respected, Responsible and Included (SHANARRI, Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC))
2. known to have shared and recognised values, skills and knowledge which can promote the best possible outcomes for children and young people in their care

3. knowledgeable about and able to promote the rights of children and young people within the context of current laws, policies and guidance
4. respected and recognised as champions for the children and young people in their care
5. able to positively influence policy and practice at local and national levels
6. recognised (by themselves and others) as a key part of the social service child care sector
7. able to encourage and support new foster carers as they enter their role.

Frequently Asked Questions

Will the Standard be used to develop a qualification and will foster carers need to gain it?

Currently there is no requirement for foster carers to gain a qualification and implementation of the Learning and Development Framework will not introduce compulsory qualifications for foster carers.

After the consultation it would be up to awarding organisations to decide if they want to develop a qualification based on the Standard. That qualification would be non-mandatory.

As a foster carer, how will a new learning and development framework benefit me?

Foster carers already have learning and development opportunities. Implementing a learning and development framework will provide more structured learning. In the case of those foster carers who choose to pursue a qualification this may be used for recognition of prior learning (RPL) and count towards other related qualifications, opening up future job opportunities for those who are interested.

Will foster carer fees be increased as a result of new standard of training?

Local authorities and fostering agencies are responsible for setting levels of fees.

Is there funding available to support implementation of the new Standard?

The Scottish Government is funding the SSSC to carry out work to support the sector to prepare for implementation. Any need for further funding support will have to be agreed.

Will foster carers have to register with the SSSC in future?

There are no plans to register foster carers with the SSSC. The Scottish Government asked us to lead the development of the Standard because of our knowledge and experience of developing similar Standards across the social service sector.

The Standard has 19 elements, will that mean training will be more complex and time consuming?

Every element in the Standard is seen as necessary by the foster carers (and other experts) who developed the Standard.

It is important to point out that all learning and development opportunities, as well as any qualification based on the Standard will integrate elements, for example health and wellbeing and recreation and leisure.

Recognition of prior learning is also important. Evidence from day-to-day experiences you provide could count as credit towards a number of elements.

You should not see the learning linked to the Standard as a step-by-step process where you need to go through each element one at a time.

The development of the Standard started in 2014, does it take on board the most recent developments and thinking about foster care?

Yes. The expert groups creating the Standard have changed and added to it in light of recent developments. This includes the Fatal Accidents and Sudden Deaths Inquiry (2015) into the death of a foster carer as the result of a violent incident. Further details of policies and other issues taken into account appear at section 4 in the full Standard.

What are the next steps to support the sector with implementation of the Standard?

We will publish a report of the results of this consultation. There are plans to develop mapping documents to support agencies to develop programmes for foster carers and guidance materials for assessing foster care practice.