

Standard for Foster Care

Summary of consultation responses

February 2017

Executive summary

The consultation on the draft Standard for Foster Care prompted a wide variety of comments relating to the learning and development of foster carers in Scotland. The consultation ran from 15 May 2016 for 19 weeks. We received a total of 162 responses to the online consultation, 138 from individuals and 24 from organisations. This included 102 responses from foster carers. The issues raised covered two main areas: comments on the content of the draft Standard and issues around implementation.

In terms of the content, we received a range of views but, in the main, respondents were positive and constructive about the draft. You can find full details of the comments made through the consultation in the change log at Annex A at the end of this document.

For the first question, 'Does the new Standard sufficiently describe the knowledge, understanding and skills required of foster carers?'

- 88% of the responses from individuals were yes.
- 71% of the responses from organisations were yes.

The rationale given by respondents who answered no included the following.

- There was a significant part of the foster care story missing particularly the ethos of foster care to provide a safe, nurturing, loving home to children along with qualities such as patience and empathy.
- The language in the document was too academic and confusing.
- Some foster carers would be unable to achieve the learning set out in the draft Standard.

The last two points reflect the academic language used in a technical standard.

Many participants provided examples of 'excellent' carers who would not be inclined to take a qualification or a more demanding level of study (in academic level or time demands) than the training they currently undertake. However, it should be pointed out that there were many aspirational and ambitious foster carers who felt the opposite and said that continuous formal learning, combined with the ability to be loving and nurturing, was key.

On the implementation of the Standard, there was almost universal concern regarding three issues from organisations who responded.

- What would happen to foster carers who failed to meet the Standard?
- How would the development of the Standard link with their organisation's current learning and development processes, systems and materials? Cost implications were mentioned regularly in relation to this.
- Who is going to assess the learning of foster carers? A clear view was put forward that this should not be the supervising social worker due to, mainly, workload pressures. Again, cost implications were prominent.

Acknowledgments

During the consultation the SSSC met many foster carers with differing views about learning and development but the one thing they all had in common was an absolute commitment to the children and young people in their care. Their passion and commitment is a very solid foundation on which to build the sorts of learning and development supports foster carers will need into the future.

We would also like to thank the young people who commented on the Standard via Who Cares? Scotland. Their important views will be shared

with the Scottish Government and hopefully help influence every project looking at aspects of foster care.

Finally we would like to thank all of the organisations and individuals who took time to contribute to the consultation.

Introduction

Following the Foster Care Review, which published its recommendations in December 2013, the Scottish Government asked the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) to take forward the recommendation to create a learning and development framework for foster carers.

On 15 May 2016 we started our consultation, which ultimately lasted 19 weeks, on the draft Standard for Foster Care. The Standard describes the component parts of the new learning and development framework.

There are two parts to this consultation summary. The first summarises the main points raised during the consultation. The second is a **change log (Annex A)** setting out our initial response to the suggestions about the content of the draft Standard. Issues relating to implementation are also in the change log. These are matters for further consideration and discussion between Scottish Government and with key sector bodies.

Consultation methodology

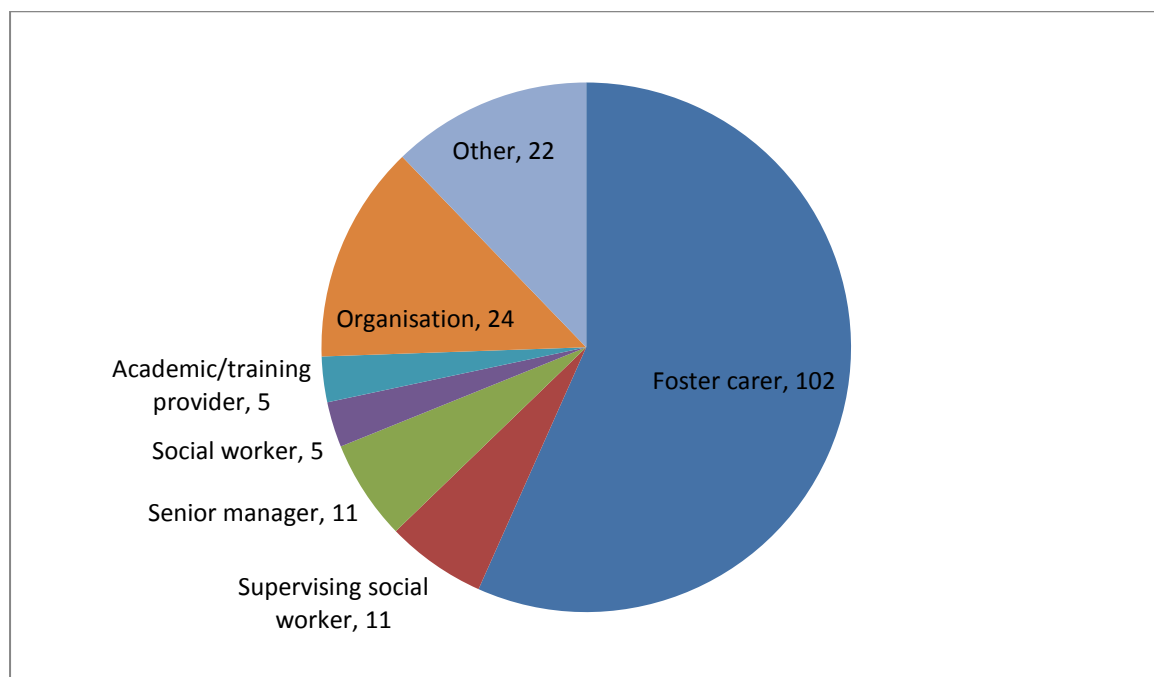
Following development of the Standard for Foster Care the Scottish Government asked the SSSC to consult the sector. The primary method of consultation was an online questionnaire. It asked three substantive questions as follows.

1. Does the new Standard sufficiently reflect the knowledge, understanding and skills required by foster carers?
2. After introduction of the Standard, how long do you think foster carers will need to achieve learning based on the Standard?
3. What supports, for example accessibility (digital learning, evening classes), joint training and the role of the supervising social worker, might be most helpful for foster carers to achieve the necessary knowledge, understanding and skills set out in the Standard?

There were also mandatory equalities questions.

We received 162 responses, 138 from individuals and 24 from organisations. There were 102 responses from foster carers, of which two were on behalf of an organisation. The chart below provides a breakdown of the responses across the various categories.

Categories of responses (total numbers of responses in each category)



SSSC staff also took part in 14 events across the country reaching over 170 people from a range of organisations and roles. Foster carers made up around 45% of this group. The events included three workshops facilitated by the SSSC in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Dundee, and two webinars which reached people in more remote areas, including the Highlands. The other events were locally inspired, hosted by a range of organisations, and run for the specific purpose of discussing the consultation. Venues included Ayr, Cambuslang, Easterhouse, Edinburgh, Dundee, Rosyth, Livingston and Stirling. We also had a number of telephone conversations with foster carers to discuss the proposed developments. Those who contacted the SSSC to discuss the consultation

were encouraged to submit their views through the online questionnaire. As a result there is some overlap in the numbers of online responses and those who attended events.

Many local services also carried out their own discussions; helping to make sure the consultation had considerable reach.

Twenty young people with experience of foster care discussed the draft Standard and gave us their views with support from Who Cares? Scotland.

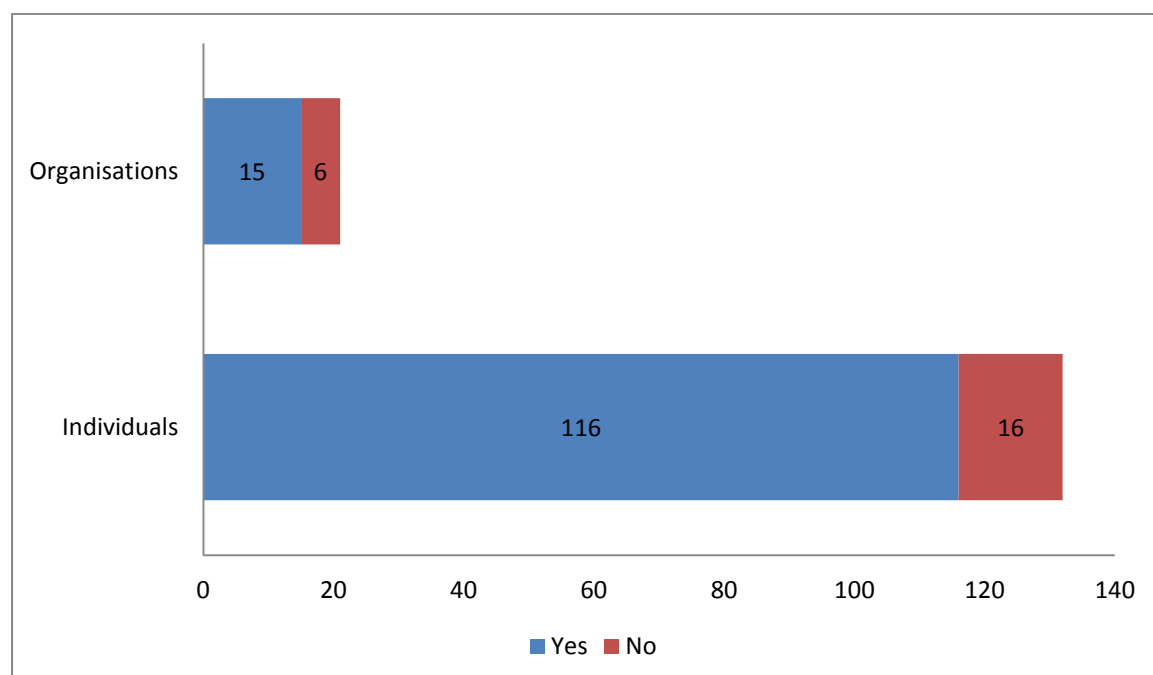
Question 1

The first question contained a Yes/No option. Does the new Standard sufficiently describe the knowledge, understanding and skills required by foster carers?

88% of responses to this question from individuals were yes.

71% of responses to this question from organisations were yes.

Responses from individuals and organisations (total number of responses)



However, no matter how people answered this question, many used the free text box to suggest improvements to the draft Standard.

The spectrum of views

It is clear from the responses to the first question in the online questionnaire (and indeed at the events) that there is no single view regarding the draft Standard. There are many motivated foster carers who are devoted to learning and development. They are convinced of the benefit their studies has on the children and young people in their care; they believe passionately that the 'bar should be raised' and that every foster carer should have the skills and knowledge outlined in the draft Standard. Many said a qualification should be mandatory, but noted this was not proposed.

There is an equally large group of foster carers who do not share this view. While most would say that learning and development is important, they say there are other qualities that are more important, such as being able to demonstrate love, patience and understanding to children and young people in foster care and provide them with a nurturing home and a positive role model. This group said the Standard focuses too much on academic abilities, which may put a lot of prospective carers off and alienate some current carers.

Organisations shared a similar range of views; between aspiration for the future and fear the developments would have an adverse impact on their foster carers and their supply of foster carers. The majority of organisations had significant worries about the practical implications of the Standard (even if they answered yes to the first question). Most of their worries were about resources, which the summary will touch on later.

Content of the draft Standard

There were a number of very helpful and constructive comments aimed at improving the content of the draft Standard, particularly the elements. Frequently raised issues included the need to change the emphasis to draw out the importance of a foster carer understanding 'attachment and trauma', 'transitions' and the crucial nature of all of the 'relationships' carers need to manage. The issue of '24/7 care' was raised as a suggested new element. Where respondents raised concerns about the content of the draft Standard these mostly focused on the language in the document. Respondents tended to agree it was too 'academic', 'confusing', 'not user friendly' and 'repetitive'.

A more detailed list of suggested improvements to the content of the draft Standard can be found in the **change log** at **Annex A**.

Scottish Credit Qualifications Framework level 7

The Standard for Foster Care was designed to identify the common skills, knowledge and understanding required by foster carers and the level of learning we would expect foster carers to ultimately be operating at in the future. The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) helps to ensure consistency of level whatever the subject matter. It has a series of level descriptors that help people develop their learning at the required level. A working group we set up discussed the levels and decided the characteristics of SCQF level 6 was too low and did not sufficiently reflect the level of complexity regarding autonomy, responsibility and decision making carried out by foster carers. SCQF level 7 (which is the level of SVQ 3 and HNC qualifications) was deemed the right level for foster carers who work alone in their home with sometimes unpredictable circumstances and challenges. However, it is important to point out the expectation was that not all foster carers would begin their learning at level 7 – some would need support to move up towards this level – while others may achieve learning at level 7 and move beyond this.

It was mainly organisations, rather than individuals, who commented on the level of the draft Standard. Some organisations said level 7 was too high for many foster carers who lacked academic ability but were still good carers. This contrasted with the views of others who said the foster care function was very complex, with a high level of autonomy and responsibility, and so level 7 was appropriate. People agreed that work would need to go into making sure learning could be delivered in ways that took into account individuals' varied learning styles.

Implementation

There were significant issues raised around the implementation of the draft Standard and most involved the question of resources.

In particular, most respondents raised doubts about the appropriateness of supervising social workers carrying out the assessor role under the proposed model. Most said that supervising social workers do not have the time to take on another role and are not trained assessors.

Representatives from small agencies with only a few staff said they would not have the capacity to assess the learning and development achievement of their foster carers. Most posed questions about where resources would come from for additional staff or for training current staff in how to assess.

During the events, no-one expressed a view that they could accommodate the assessor role in their current structures or resources. People accepted that the burden of assessment is unclear and is an issue that needs further discussion. Respondents accepted that for those who would want to take a qualification, the infrastructure is already in place to assess (eg current SVQ assessors) but also that the vast majority of foster carers would not want to take a qualification. Indeed many respondents said a minority of foster carers take a qualification now and would not expect this figure to rise. Some respondents said they felt that the draft

Standard was aimed more at the minority who would take a qualification, rather than the majority who might not.

One point frequently raised was the impact on part time or respite foster carers who only take children occasionally; they are a crucial part of the foster care function yet most would not want to undertake significant study.

Reflections on the original aims

The original Foster Care Review said that learning should be nationally accredited and transferable. It proposed there should be an opportunity for those who want to progress their learning to achieve a qualification. The terms 'nationally accredited' and 'learning' have been difficult to define in the context of feedback from the consultation and participants' understanding and expectations. Usually for learning to be nationally accredited it needs to be formally developed into programmes by national awarding bodies such as the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA). Processes related to acquiring such learning include assessment against a technical standard. Nationally accredited learning provides consistency and confidence in the learning acquired and builds in quality assurance of learning achieved. This is because SQA sets out clear requirements and obligations regarding teaching, learning and assessment.

A technical standard may be used without such formal structures in place but it would present challenges regarding consistency and quality assurance in content and assessment of learning.

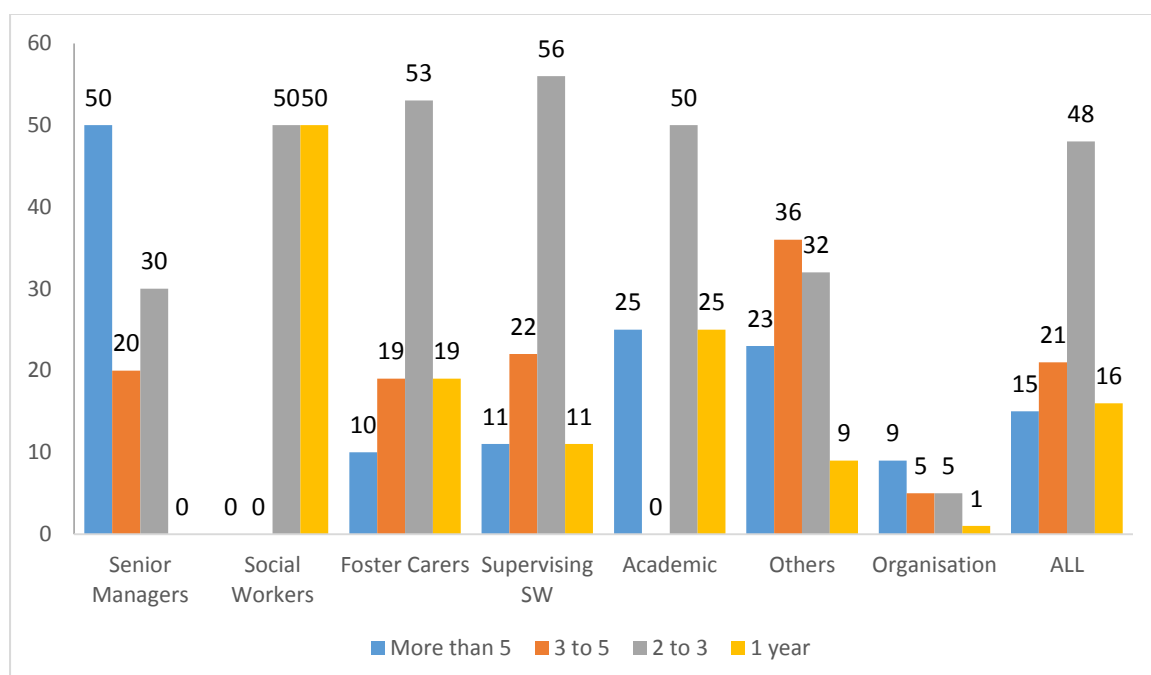
The draft Standard for Foster Care does not describe every bit of learning a foster carer may ever need – for instance it does not describe specialist skills. It instead describes the areas of skill, knowledge and understanding that all foster carers need. The Standard, once agreed, can be used by any organisation such as national bodies like SQA or local learning and development providers.

Question 2

The second consultation question asked: After introduction of the Standard, how long do you think foster carers will need to achieve learning based on the Standard?

The chart below provides a summary of the responses.

How long to achieve the learning (percentages of responses in each category)



Note: the horizontal axis is number of years. The vertical is the percentage of responses in each category.

Senior managers in organisations were mainly of the view that learning would take longer because of resource implications. This included financial resources but also time resources for foster carers. Many managers expressed concern that the key role for foster carers is to provide a loving nurturing home, which can be very intensive. 'Where would foster carers find the time?' was a frequently raised question. Some respondents said there was a dilemma of balancing the needs of releasing foster carers to study against time away from the children they care for. Another issue

raised was a question over the ability of foster carers to step back from learning for a while, to enable them to take time out for study.

Question 3

The third consultation question asked: What supports, for example accessibility, joint training and the role of the supervising social worker, might be most helpful for foster carers to achieve the necessary knowledge, understanding and skills set out in the Standard?

There were extremely varied responses to this question, reflecting the mixed picture of supports and training already in place across Scotland. Common points included:

- the need to avoid increases in paperwork for foster carers
- not all foster carers have a computer or are computer literate
- joint training with the supervising social workers is a model that works and prompts reflective practice
- a 'mixed-bag' of support is required with flexibility in terms of digital learning, day classes and evening classes.

In relation to the equalities questions, a number of people suggested there may be negative implications of this Standard on people because of their age or disability.

Summary and next steps

Content of the draft Standard

In terms of the content of the draft Standard and the elements in it there are a series of helpful and constructive suggestions. This includes introducing more of the ethos of foster care to provide a safe, nurturing, loving home to children and the necessary qualities such as patience and empathy.

There were also very constructive comments aimed at making sure the language is more reader friendly.

There was concern from a small number of organisations that SCQF level 7 was too high, but on balance more people agreed that it was the correct level to aspire to in order reflect the complexity of foster care.

The **change log** at **Annex A** describes how we will incorporate these suggestions into an updated version of the Standard for Foster Care, which we will publish later in 2017.

Areas for consideration for implementation

The consultation raised three particular questions that will need to be considered for the implementation of the Standard.

1. What will happen to foster carers who 'fail' to meet the standard?
2. How does the development of the Standard link with current learning and development processes, systems and materials, and what are the cost implications?
3. Who is going to assess the learning of foster carers?

The change log describes the range of other important areas that arose from the consultation around implementation (marked 'For discussion') and these will all need to be considered by the Scottish Government as work progresses.

We will present the findings of the consultation to Scottish Government colleagues for consideration and discussion regarding future developments.

Change log

This change log focuses mainly on the suggested changes to the content of the draft Standard and provides our proposed actions. However, it also notes issues raised in connection to implementation. We have ranked each issue according to its frequency (the number of times it was mentioned).

Frequency key

In order to help understand the rate of frequency of issues raised we developed the following key.

- Very frequently mentioned = mentioned between 13 and 15 times in the responses to the online questionnaire and very frequently at the face-to-face events (no issue was mentioned more than 15 separate times).
- Frequently mentioned = mentioned between 6 and 12 times and frequently at the events.
- Occasionally mentioned = mentioned between 3 and 5 times in the questionnaire responses and occasionally at the events.
- Rarely mentioned = mentioned between 1 and 2 times in the electronic responses and rarely at the face to face events.

Note: care should be taken to avoid a rigid interpretation of the numbering system used above. In some cases a point was raised once but was the combined view of a number of people. The numbering is useful to give a general feel to the importance of various issues and a general ranking of issues that mattered most, and least, to respondents.

Change log

No.	Summary of suggestion	Who said it and frequency? Organisations or Individuals	Rationale/Action
	Frequently mentioned issues		
1	Document is 'daunting' 'off-putting' 'confusing' 'cumbersome' 'too much repetition' 'academic and not user friendly' suggest re-ordering throughout to ensure most appropriate info for foster carers appears at the start and the start of each section. Would suggest the current introductory section outlining pre-approval, post-approval and CPD be included once and not under each standard as it would make the document much clearer, user friendly and easier to read and follow.	Very frequently mentioned by both respondent types	Make sure the document is as reader friendly as possible. We propose creating a companion document to explain the proposed learning and development framework in simple terms. References will be re-ordered and moved to an Annex, the elements and other sections will be re-ordered as suggested.
2	Document misses the ethos of foster care. The need to provide a safe, nurturing, welcoming normal family home to an often traumatised child or young person. Need to reflect the key attributes eg love, empathy, patience as well as the more academic skills and knowledge too.	Very frequently mentioned by both respondent types including children and young people	Recognise this is a crucial part of foster care and will reflect this in the next draft.
3	There needs to be much more emphasis on	Very	Make sure the wording reflects

	understanding 'attachment' and 'trauma' within the document.	frequently mentioned by both respondent types	feedback with greater emphasis on topics raised.
4	Many carers are not academic but nonetheless deliver excellent outcomes for the children in their care. Many will not want to take a qualification or learning that is advanced. Respite, part time or second carers in the home fall into this category too. And '...where would single carers find the time...'	Very frequently mentioned by both respondent types	For consideration when planning implementation.
5	The assessment of the learning as proposed is going to be resource intensive. Supervising social workers are not trained to be full time assessors and are too busy. Who is going to quality assure the assessors? Big infrastructure costs for local authorities/agencies.	Very frequently mentioned by organisations	For consideration when planning implementation.
Frequently mentioned issues			
6	We are worried about how this links with our current systems, processes and materials. We already provide a good training service, who is going to pay for new materials?	Frequently mentioned by organisations	For consideration when planning implementation.
7	This is a good draft and will help to improve the status of foster care and provide a comprehensive learning and development framework to support foster carers.	Frequently mentioned by both respondent types	We recognise the full spectrum of views have been expressed during this consultation.
8	There needs to be a greater emphasis on 'relationships' in the Standard. This includes	Frequently mentioned by	Review Standard and adjust where required.

	everything from therapeutic parenting to working with other professionals	both respondent types	
9	There should be much clearer cross referencing to the SHANARRI wellbeing indicators (GIRFEC) in the Standard. People are used to this terminology.	Frequently mentioned by organisations and foster carers at the events	Review Standard and adjust where required.
10	What if a foster carer fails the Standard or does not want to progress through advanced learning?	Frequently mentioned by organisations and foster carers at the events	For consideration when planning implementation.
11	The issue of 'transitions' should have a greater prominence including helping children move on.	Frequently mentioned by organisations and some foster carers at the events	Review Standard and adjust where required.
Occasionally mentioned issues			
12	It is suggested that learning can be achieved primarily through digital means...would stress that flexibility in training be offered to meet different learning styles and preferences.	Occasionally mentioned both types of respondent	Review Standard and adjust where required.
13	Needs to be an element of 'self-care' and understanding secondary trauma on the fostering household.	Occasionally mentioned by both types of respondent	Review Standard and adjust where required.

14	Need to emphasise that foster care is '24/7' care.	Occasionally mentioned by both types of respondent	Review Standard and adjust where required.
15	Need to emphasise knowledge of the Children's Hearings system.	Occasionally mentioned by both types of respondent	Review Standard and adjust where required.
16	8.1 and 8.2 Principles and Work-Based Learning be careful when referring to 'work-based' because it is also the foster carer's home. Change all references to 'work-based' to 'practice-based'.	Occasionally mentioned by both types of respondent	Review Standard and adjust where required.
17	Needs to be more emphasis and reference to 'reflective practice' throughout the document.	Occasionally mentioned by both types of organisation	Review Standard and adjust where required.
18	Social workers and other professionals need to fully understand the Standard, once agreed.	Occasionally mentioned by individuals	For consideration when planning implementation.
19	SCQF level 7 is too high, consider level 6.	Occasionally mentioned by organisations	Reasoning set out in covering report.
20	It should be mandatory to have a qualification.	Occasionally mentioned by foster carers	The Scottish Government has made it clear that a qualification will not be mandatory.
	Rarely mentioned issues		
21	Section 2. Vision, Point 4 – don't refer to foster carers as 'champions', it seems tokenistic.	Rarely mentioned by organisations	Review Standard and adjust where required.
22	Foster carers' values and commitment, Point 2.	Rarely	A national register and a specific

	SSSC Codes of Practice don't apply to foster carers. Need a code of practice for foster carers along with a national register.	mentioned by organisations	code of practice for foster carers were not within the scope of the consultation. Any worker can use the SSSC Codes of Practice (CoP) and it is useful for foster carers to know other regulated workers are required to adhere to the CoP.
23	Policy context – these should be re-ordered to start with documents most relevant to foster care. Should start with legislation, standards and then other docs. 'Moving Forward' a key document for foster care should be included.	Rarely mentioned by organisations	Review Standard and adjust where required.
24	6.0 national learning context, 6.3 'we want Scotland to be the best place in the world for them to grow up'. Change 'them' to 'children and young people'.	Rarely mentioned by organisations	Review Standard and adjust where required.
25	7.2 Clarity required in the terminology of 'new' foster carer and those at pre-approval stage – who are prospective foster carers – only after approval are they 'new'. 7.1 Suggest re-ordering this section to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Potential foster carers 2. Professionals who support foster carers as part of their work 3. The children and families of foster carers 4. Children and young people who are experiencing foster care, or who have experienced it, their family and friendship networks 	Rarely mentioned by organisations	Review Standard and adjust where required.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Professionals who have an interest in the learning and development of foster carers 6. Learning providers 7. Individuals involved in designing, approving, validating and accrediting or re-accrediting learning programmes 8. Assessors and others who are working with the Standard and supporting learners 9. Corporate parents 10. Those with a responsibility for the development of policy, including the Scottish Government 		
26	<p>7.2 We suggest clarity on the different stages of approval. At the time of assessment and approval it is implied that a foster carer would have met all the pre-approval standards. Please note that at pre-approval stage it is suggested that prospective foster carers need to be aware of the areas covered by the list of indicators for each element and are able to relate this to future practice with children and young people.</p> <p>Post-approval stage: (when individuals are approved) foster carers need to be knowledgeable about the areas covered by the list of indicators for each element and skilful in applying this to their practice with children and young people.</p>	Rarely mentioned by an organisation	Review Standard and adjust where required.
27	<p>7.3 We would suggest caution with foster carers being asked to consider children who present needs out with their current experience. The Fatal Accident Inquiry refers to this in terms of age</p>	Rarely mentioned by organisations and	Review Standard and adjust where required and for further consideration at implementation.

	range. Our suggestion would be to strengthen this paragraph and make it explicit that foster carers should not be asked to provide a placement for a child until they have received the appropriate support and have demonstrated skills in being able to confidently care for children who present identified needs or carers feel confident that the fostering service can provide them with the necessary and ongoing supports they require to support the placement.	individuals	
28	7.4 Clarity on how the standards apply to children and young people of foster carers as additional support for children and young people sits separate to this Standard. Fostering services must make provision for this group to be supported.	Rarely mentioned by organisations	For consideration when planning implementation.
29	7.5 If the Standard has commonality with teachers, nurses, midwives etc as suggested in the document then the status of foster carers and associated fees will need to be reflective with parity with these sectors.	Rarely mentioned by organisations	Fees were not within the scope of this consultation.
30	8.4. All foster carers 'have many commitments to balance' so alter the wording	Rarely mentioned by organisations	Review Standard and adjust where required.
31	8.6. By mentioning 'registration with the SSSC' it sounds like there is an intention to register foster carers.	Rarely mentioned by organisations	Change the text to clarify that foster carers will not need to register with the SSSC.
32	Elements: We would suggest re-arranging the contents to be in sequence as per below: 1 The rights of children and young people	Rarely mentioned by an	Review Standard and adjust where required.

	2 Ethical framework, values and principles 3 Law, policy and guidance 4 Stages of child development 5 Child and adult protection and safeguarding 6 Building positive relationships 7 Promoting wellbeing and resilience 8 Effective communication 9 Assessment and planning 10 Supporting children and young people with contact 11 Health and wellbeing 12 Educational development and achievement of potential 13 Recreation and leisure 14 Social media and the online technologies 15 Promoting positive behaviours and managing behaviours that challenge 16 Managing conflict and crises 17 Foster carer development 18 Leading and working with others 19 Record keeping and information management	organisation	
33	3. Glossary. Practice. Would suggest the term 'practice' be defined as the foster carers work with children and young people as well as the entire team around the child including birth families, social work, education, health etc.	Rarely mentioned by organisations	Review Standard and adjust where required.
34	It is our view that some of the proposed standards may be a challenge for some individuals to achieve at the pre-approval stage given the knowledge and	Rarely mentioned by organisations	The support people need to achieve the learning is for consideration when planning

	<p>experience required. In particular the following indicator statements may be challenging to achieve pre-approval and will require additional support to be achieved.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The support services available to children and young people who have additional needs, including where these might be found and how to obtain them if needed. • How and where to seek out support in relation to the rights of children and young people and how to recognise when it is needed. <p>3. Law, policy and guidance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How the role (not work) foster carers undertake (rather than do) is governed by law, policy and guidance. • The principle laws, policies and guidance documents relevant to your role as a foster carer, including your ability to name them and explain why they are important and what it means to 'you' as a foster carer. For example, if asked to foster a child 'permanently' an understanding of permanence orders, ancillary provisions and decisions which can be made. • The principle laws, policies and guidance documents relating to equalities, including your 		<p>implementation.</p> <p>Also, review Standard and adjust wording where required.</p>
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	ability to name them and explain why they are important and what they mean to 'you' as a foster carer.		
35	<p>Element 1. The Right of Children...bullet point 6. Change to read: '...take account of and support the child's or young person's religious and cultural needs...'</p> <p>Point 8. There should be something in here about the carer being able to support children's additional needs as well as being able to access help and support.</p>	Rarely mentioned by individuals	Review Standard and adjust where required.
36	E 3, Law. There should be something more specific in here about Children's Hearings and courts.	Rarely mentioned by individuals	Review Standard and adjust where required.
37	<p>E 4. Building positive relationships In the section:</p> <p>'Methods of working with the supervising social worker to ensure you have sufficient knowledge and understanding of the child or young person and their needs before agreeing to a placement.'</p> <p>It should also be noted that carers should be aware of their limitations and have the confidence to decline a placement where they don't feel confident to provide care. Also being aware that information may not always be available, but what is available is shared.</p> <p>We would suggest rewording the section:</p>	Rarely mentioned by organisations and individuals	Review Standard and adjust where required.

	<p>'What parental responsibility means in the context of your future or current foster care role, including how this relates to accommodated or Looked After Children'</p> <p>to 'the children and young people you care for and what it means on a day-to-day basis.'</p> <p>We would strongly suggest inclusion of a statement referring to having an awareness of the potential for allegations to be made and the process to be followed in the event of an allegation. This is an issue that regularly arises in foster care and can have a devastating impact on individuals. Our agency offers support to a number of foster carers experiencing allegations and it is our view that it is critical that an awareness of the potential for allegations is included.</p> <p>Should be more explicit re ensuring that written information concerning the child is obtained and understood (see FAI determination).</p>		
38	Element 5 should mention art, music and play as modes of communication with children.	Rarely mentioned by individuals	Review Standard and adjust where required.
39	<p>Element 6. Assessment and planning</p> <p>In the statement 'Why it might not always be safe, realistic or possible to act on what children and young people have said, how to recognise when this is the case and methods of explaining the</p>	Rarely mentioned by organisations	Review Standard and adjust where required.

	situation to the child or young person.' We would suggest adding 'how to explain to children and young people that you may need to share what they disclose to you.'		
40	<p>E 7. Promoting wellbeing and resilience</p> <p>'Methods you can use to support children and young people when things do not work out.' Within this section, as per above, should also note an awareness of the allegations process and be familiar with guidance for managing allegations against foster carers.</p> <p>Point 5. '...children and young people stretching and testing'. Make clearer.</p>	Rarely mentioned by organisations and individuals	Review Standard and adjust where required.
41	<p>E 8. Stages of child development</p> <p>'The stages of child development (0-21 years).'</p> <p>A 21 year old is not legally a child therefore child development as a title is not perhaps relevant. Would suggest using 'fostered' rather than 'accommodated' in the statement:</p> <p>'The way the disadvantage or discrimination faced by children and young people who are looked after / fostered can impact on aspects of their development and self-esteem and methods you can use to support them.' The impact of trauma and poor attachments on child development needs to be emphasised.</p>	Rarely Mentioned by organisations	Review Standard and adjust where required.
42	<p>E 9. Foster carer development</p> <p>'The learning and support opportunities available to you and how to access them.'</p>		Review Standard and adjust where required.

	Also note the importance and value of supports including peer supports through support groups and buddy systems. Where it refers to the high emotional impact on yourself and your family 'working as a foster carer' should be reworded to 'being' a foster carer.		
43	E 10. Child protection and safeguarding With the extension of age range of young people in foster care to 21 would suggest that this section also include vulnerable adults.	Rarely mentioned by organisations and individuals	Review Standard and adjust where required.
44	E 11. Health and wellbeing 'Methods of working ... wellbeing needs. (such as substance misuse or bed wetting).' <p>All children have specific health and wellbeing needs. Children in the care system will have additional needs and it is important that foster carers understand the range of methods to support children. Our view would be that using examples such as substance misuse and bed wetting is stigmatising and not helpful for the self-esteem of children and young people in care.</p> <p>Also in the health and wellbeing section we feel it is important to include a statement to include diet, food and healthy eating and also the importance of role modelling by foster carers.</p> <p>'Supporting birth families, where required, to</p>	Rarely mentioned by organisations	Review Standard and adjust where required.

	<p>attend appointments.’ Foster carers work as part of a multidisciplinary team around the child and develop and maintain positive relationships with birth families making them aware of opportunities however it is the role of the social worker to enable birth families to attend appointments.</p> <p>‘Good housekeeping practices in the foster care environment (such as safe use of and fire risk awareness)’ We would also include use of equipment which is age appropriate.</p>		
45	<p>E 12. Record keeping and information management</p> <p>‘Records you are required to maintain, relating to your employment status as a foster carer and methods you can use for this.’</p> <p>Please note foster carers are not employees and as such don’t have employment status. Change it.</p> <p>It is essential that this section include: Report writing and the importance of what is recorded – factual, objective etc. Storage of information and adhering to data protection. Taking and using photos, particularly digital images. The consents and permissions required etc. Good financial housekeeping practices in the foster care environment. Awareness of fostering service handbook and</p>	Rarely mentioned by organisations and individuals	Review Standard and adjust where required.

	<p>policies and support in relation to these, eg allowances, registering with HMRC for tax purposes, national insurance liabilities, savings accounts for children and young people, and understanding of benefits and other payments in respect of young people.</p> <p>Awareness of best practice guidance in the event of an allegation.</p>		
46	<p>E 13. Educational development and achievement of potential</p> <p>As with comments in relation to section 11 above, enabling birth families is the role of the social worker. Would suggest rewording to methods you can use to support (rather than 'enable') birth families to contribute to the educational development of children and young people and how to support them in accessing helpful information on child development and education such as parents nights, school shows etc.</p> <p>Should also note the link between foster carers' educational experiences and supporting the aspirations of children and young people.</p>	Rarely mentioned by organisations and individuals	Review Standard and adjust where required.
47	<p>14. Leading and working with others</p> <p>Note this should read the nature of 'the foster care' role rather than 'your future' role.</p> <p>'When it is required to lead and work with others (at the pre-approval stage this will relate to discussion and other activities, at the post-</p>	Rarely mentioned by organisations	Review Standard and adjust where required.

	<p>approval and CPD stages foster care practice will be included.)' We are interested as to why this bracketed section is included as this explanation is not used elsewhere in the document?</p> <p>This section should also include awareness of the various agencies and professionals you will engage with (education, health, social work...) and understanding of their respective roles as well as awareness and understanding of the range of meetings which form the care planning for young people.</p>		
48	<p>15. Promoting positive behaviours and managing behaviours that challenge</p> <p>Within this section we would suggest also including a statement regarding individuals being aware of inappropriate and unacceptable sanctions.</p> <p>We stress that hands on methods of children are not appropriate within foster care. Delete this.</p> <p>However, may want to add 'Methods you can use when the child / young person appears to be in imminent danger'.</p>	Rarely mentioned by organisations and individuals	Review Standard and adjust where required.
49	<p>16. Recreation. Point 2 Could do with examples re babies and infants.</p> <p>This element should also promote purposeful activities, opportunities to socialise, provide a balance between outdoor and indoor activities, and</p>	Rarely mentioned by individuals	Review Standard and adjust where required.

	encouraging a child's personal interests including providing opportunities for choice.		
50	<p>18. Social media and the internet – also include online technologies as broader than the internet, for example gaming.</p> <p>This section should also include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • children not wishing to be contacted by birth family members who make approach to the child/ young person. <p>Foster carers are aware of expectations on their use of social media in relation to fostering and are aware of fostering service's policies in relation to this, eg posting pictures of young people, being online friends with young people/ birth families.</p>	Rarely mentioned by organisations	Review Standard and adjust where required.
51	<p>19. Supporting children and young people with contact</p> <p>Contact does not just apply to visits. We would suggest the title omit 'visits' as contact goes beyond face-to-face interaction.</p> <p>This section should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • awareness of how to raise concerns • carers should be aware of the legal requirements underpinning contact • note the impact of separation as being either positive or negative. 	Rarely mentioned by organisations	Review Standard and adjust where required.
52	Need to include more reference to managing 'sexualised behaviour' 'mental health' 'substance misuse' and alter the wording around 'risk' to be less risk averse.	Rarely mentioned by organisations	Review Standard and adjust where required.