

Social Work Supervision

Description

Supervision of foster carers

<https://sparksfostering.org/wp-content/uploads/speaker/post-510.mp3?cb=1704322471.mp3>

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Fostering assessments are written by qualified social workers. Applicants are given information and advice throughout their assessment, in order to prepare them (as far as possible) for their role as foster carers.

After approval, foster carers have regular supervision with a qualified social worker – the frequency and location of supervision is agreed with the supervising social worker. The first supervisions are most likely to be in person, but over time some supervisions may be carried out online. Supervision of foster carers is mandatory because it's a regulatory requirement. During supervision the foster carer will inform the social worker of any changes to their personal circumstances and (if applicable), of any updates regarding the residents that haven't been shared already. The social worker will also review the files for the foster carer and any residents in the home and will update any missing or required information. The social worker will give professional advice and guidance when it's needed.

Foster carers must make themselves available for supervision visits and any other visits required. If the family has two foster carers, the secondary carer is also expected to attend some of the training and supervision (at the frequency requested by the social worker). Also, foster carers must work with the social workers to ensure that all the required information for their files is updated as soon as possible.

If there are any important updates, foster carers should tell the children's social worker and/or their fostering social worker straight away, and not wait for their supervision visit.

Supervision should also be used to identify any training needs and additional support that the foster carer may need.

If there are residents being looked after, the residents may be spoken with separately during the supervision session. It's important that the fostering (and children's) social workers speak with the children separately so that the children have ample opportunity to discuss their views, opinions and wishes. Foster carers are expected to facilitate these meetings and cannot refuse reasonable requests from social workers to meet with the residents.

Sparks Fostering social workers also call on foster carers periodically and more informally for 'welfare calls' and there will be a minimum of annual unannounced visits – this means that the social worker will come to the fostering home without prior arrangement. Unannounced visits are a statutory (legal) requirement which help Sparks Fostering to ensure that the home conditions and care provided are suitable for the residents being looked after. During the visit the social worker would look around the home, including inside the fridge and kitchen cupboards, and also in all bedrooms. If the residents are at home the social worker would also speak with them.

Additional Resources (Optional)

[Evidence Snapshot – Better Assessments \(NSPCC\)](#)

[Compassionate care and compassion fatigue in CAMHS](#) (podcast by The Association of Child and Adolescent Mental Health). Has some learning which also applied to the fostering sector.

'Disguised compliance involves parents and carers appearing to co-operate with professionals in order to allay concerns and stop professional engagement'. Read more in this [guide about 'disguised compliance' from the NSPCC](#).

[Director's Blog: The best social workers have boundaries](#)

[Motivational interviewing: what it is and how you can use it in social work](#). Podcast by Community Care.

Professional Curiosity (BASW) – Reviews into child deaths repeatedly highlight how professionals were too trusting of abusive parents. But are social workers given the tools to effectively challenge those intent on harming the children in their care? [Read more in the professional social work magazine by BASW](#).

Professional Curiosity Factsheet: Children and young people affected by abuse or neglect rarely tell us so directly – they may be frightened or ashamed, and often they don't realise that their lives are different to anyone else's. This makes it difficult for professionals to identify children who are experiencing or at risk of abuse – to do so we need to be curious about their lives, observant of their behaviour and to really listen to what they are saying to us. Professional curiosity means exploring every possible indicator of abuse or neglect and trying to understand what the life of that child is like on a day to day basis – their routines, thoughts, feelings and relationships with family members. A professional may have the opportunity to identify abuse and neglect even if they come into contact with a family for an unrelated reason. Read more in [this article by Greenwich Safeguarding Children Partnership](#).

[Professional curiosity: This bulletin from Brighton and Hove LSCB](#) on the topic of Professional Curiosity raises awareness of the need for respectful uncertainty, help you spot the signs of when a parent may be using disguised compliance, and let you know where & how to access help & services.

[Use of digital technologies in child and family social work: developing practice.](#) Three open access videos share findings around the increased use of digital technologies in social work and where there are opportunities to develop person-centred practice going forward. By 'Research In Practice'.

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[An Ofsted blog on supervision](#)

[A webinar discussing social work supervision](#)

[Booklet about supervision by Skills for Care](#)

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