



Prospective foster carer report - Form F



Who are we?



Available
as an
eBook

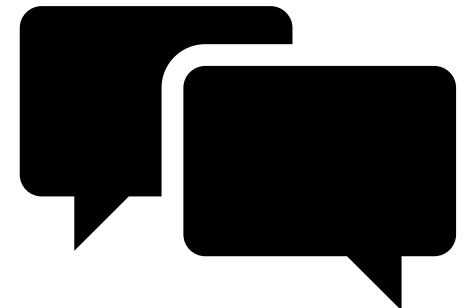
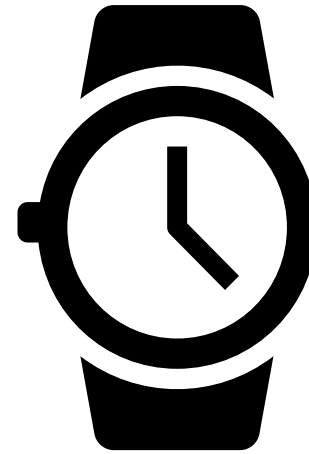
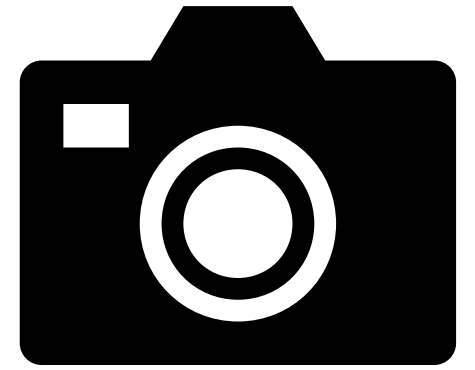


94%
of all local authorities
in England, Wales,
Scotland and Northern
Ireland are members.

Housekeeping

Please make sure you:

- Silence your phone
- Muted your microphone
- No names in chat but make sure name matches registered name
- Session is being recorded – available on website after the last session
- Questions in chat at end – update FAQs



Accessing Form F

- England Core Licence or England Fostering Licence – email sent to your Licence Officer with password protected link to our website
- Not sure if you have a licence – email licences@coram.org.uk
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- Practice issues re Form F – email advice@corambaaf.org.uk



Process of
the review
to revise
Form F

Stage of process	Timeframe	Stats
Working group	Feb 2023 – Feb 2024	Members = 17 Meetings = 9 Including reps from England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Representation – foster carers, care experienced adults, LAs, IFAs, sector stakeholders
Pilot	June – December 2024	Agencies = 12; (LAs = 9); (IFAs = 3) Surgery attendees = 34 Introductory sessions = 2
Feedback	June 2024 – Feb 2025	Feedback surveys x2 (1 for practitioners, 1 for foster carers) Monthly pilot surgeries = 6 (including 1 workshop for practitioners on the need’s of the child sections) Foster Carers Advisory Committee = 16 members Fostering Advisory Committee = 24 members IFP Practice Forum = 13 members (21 May 2024) Fostering Practice Forum = 38 members (28 March 2024)

“The best people to know what it is like to be a foster carer are Foster Carers. Having the input of foster carers in the development of the new Form F template has meant a bigger focus on key areas within fostering, and more importantly what children and young people want from their carers are now included within the form.”

Steven O'Reilly, foster carer & working group member

“Going through this process allowed me to remember why applicants want to care for children and to focus on what is important to know about the family in order to evidence they can. To make a difference we needed to immerse ourselves directly in the assessment process.”

Florence Chiwetu, IFA fostering management expertise, care experienced & working group member

"It was a privilege to play a key role in this vital development in fostering practice. Being part of a process that genuinely values lived experience and works to improve inclusivity across the sector felt both impactful and empowering."

Matt Taylor-Roberts, foster carer, adopter, founder of Proud 2 b Parents and working group member

"I thoroughly enjoyed being part of the working group. It was an opportunity to reflect on and share good practice with colleagues in the field. Playing a part in revising the Form F to assist practitioners in completing robust evidence-based assessments, where fostered children are central to assessment discussion and reporting. I hope that as the new Form F is widely used these development objectives will be achieved and recognised by practitioners, newly approved foster carers and fostering services and agencies."

Kathleen Allen, Independent Social Worker, Form F assessor and working group member



Key messages from research

- Tapping into people's motivations to foster while providing realistic expectations of the challenges and support available may help recruit quality, motivated carers.
- Applicants are not being given sufficient information to support their decision early enough in the approval process, leading to individuals and services investing time and resources when fostering might not be the right fit.
- Having stable, supportive social work staff who are skilled and experienced in all aspects of the fostering role could improve foster carers' experiences of the recruitment process and beyond. Feeling valued and respected and providing accurate information early are considered key in improving the recruitment and approval process.

Recruitment & retention of foster carers – May 2023 – Centre for Evidence and Implementation and The Fostering Network

Underpinning principles

- Assessment needed to be streamlined and duplication removed
- Strengths-based assessment to focus more on potential, examine motivations and capacity
- Essential to add section that explores what a child will need from a foster carer/s
- Trauma-informed practice
- Assessment experience to be improved for applicants
- Practice improvements required – consistency and analysis skills

Form Includes & Additional documents

- Form F (Prospective Foster Carer Report) England (2025)
- Guidance notes and additional resources
- Form F – Example for foster carers (2025)

Additional documents

- Application form (2018)
- Assessment agreement (2018)
- Stage 1 decision sheet (2018)
- Chronology (2018)
- Preparation and training record (2018)
- Parent and child report (2018)
- Permanent fostering report (2018)
- Second opinion report (2018)
- Panel member notes (2018)
- Qualifying determination (2018)
- Fostering applicants weekly schedule (2025)

Form F (Prospective Foster Carer Report) England (2025)

Form F should only be used by registered social workers who have read, understood and are familiar with the accompanying 'Guidance notes and additional resources' document.

Front sheet

Name of applicant/s	
Fostering service reference number	
Social worker's recommendation	
Name of fostering service	
Address	
Name of social worker	
Email	
Telephone	
Name of team manager	
Email	
Telephone	
Date application accepted	
Date assessment completed	
Date assessment updated	

Section A: Part One

Applicant 1

Family name			
Previous name			
First name/s			
Other "known by" names			
Date of birth		Age	
Place of birth			

Applicant 2

Family name			
Previous name			
First name/s			
Other "known by" names			
Date of birth		Age	
Place of birth			

Home address

Address	
Length of time at this address	

Identity

	Applicant 1	Applicant 2
Gender (self-defined)		
Sexual orientation		
Ethnicity		
Ethnic heritage		

Front Sheet and
Section A: Part 1-
Identity

Section A: Part 1

Identity cont.

Partnerships

Children under 18 and other adults

Linguistic heritage and language/s spoken at home		
Religion – practising/non practising/lived/official		
Disability or neurodiversity		
Nationality (and immigration status if appropriate)		

Partnership or relationship status

Analyse the impact of this on fostering in Section B Part One, Q2.

	Applicant 1	Applicant 2
Is the applicant married, in a civil partnership or living with a partner?		
If the applicant does not live with their partner, do they consistently spend significant time in the other person's home and vice versa?		
What is the family relationship between applicants, if applicable?		
Specify relationship length (months/years)		

Children under 18 living in the household

Family name	First name/s	Gender	Date of birth	Age	Relationship to applicant/s

Other adults living in the household

Including adult children living between the foster home and elsewhere, e.g. at university but returning home for the holidays.

Family name	First name/s	Gender	Date of birth	Age	Relationship to applicant/s

Children (under 18) from a current or previous partnership living elsewhere

Family name	First name/s	Gender	Date of birth	Age	Relationship to applicant/s

Adult children living elsewhere

Family name	First name/s	Gender	Date of birth	Age	Relationship to applicant/s

Applications or assessments to be a foster carer, kinship carer, adopter or child-minder

Has the applicant previously applied or been assessed to become a foster carer, kinship carer, adopter or child-minder?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
If yes, give details of the date, name and address of the agency/service, type of application and outcome.	
Has any member of the household previously applied or been assessed to become a foster carer, kinship carer, adopter or child-minder?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
If yes, give details of the date, name and address of the agency/service, type of application and outcome.	
Has the applicant previously been an approved foster carer?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
If yes, give the name and address of the fostering service, the date a reference was requested, the date any reference was received, and any further relevant details.	
Provide reasons for termination of approval, or information on why the applicant is no longer approved by	

Section A: Checks

Enhanced DBS checks (applicants and adult household members)

Name	Date check completed	Date assessor seen certificate
Give details of any information arising from enhanced DBS checks.		
Outline any other disclosures from applicants, including driving-related incidents (e.g. convictions, points, bans). Give details of information shared.		

Health

Applicant 1

Name of applicant	
Name of General Practitioner	
Name of GP practice or independent practice	
Date of GP medical report	
Name of fostering service medical adviser	
Medical adviser/medical professional summary. (Include implications for fostering. What can be done to support the applicant?)	

Applicant 2

Name of applicant	
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Name of General Practitioner	
Name of GP practice or independent practice	
Date of GP medical report	
Name of fostering service medical adviser	
Medical adviser/medical professional summary. (Include implications for fostering. What can be done to support the applicant?)	

Home local authority check

Name of home local authority	
Date of residence in this local authority	
Name of referee and role	
Date check completed	
Give details of any information raised and how this has been addressed	

Previous local authority checks – for the past 10 years

If the applicant has raised children, check all relevant local authorities lived in.			
Name of local authority	Dates resident in this local authority	Date check completed	Name of local authority contact and role
Give details of any information raised and how this has been addressed			

Section A: Checks

Section A: references Verification of documents Court proceedings

Section A: References

Personal references

Applicant 1

Minimum of two references per applicant needed, including at least one non-family member for each.

	Name	Address	Relationship to applicants/s	Number of years known	Date interviewed
Referee One					
Referee Two					
Referee Three					
Referee Four					

Applicant 2

Minimum of two references per applicant needed, including at least one non-family member for each.

	Name	Address	Relationship to applicants/s	Number of years known	Date interviewed
Referee One					
Referee Two					
Referee Three					
Referee Four					

Date when all the Stage 1 information was received

Section A: Part One contains all the information required to complete Stage 1 of the fostering assessment. If a decision is made not to proceed to Stage 2, the fostering service may wish to use the CoramBAAF Stage 1 Decision Sheet (Fostering). This decision must be made within 10 days of receiving all the Stage 1 information.

Section A: Part Two

Verification of documents

	Applicant 1	Applicant 2
Date birth and/or adoption certificate seen		
Date passport or other certification of nationality seen		
Date driving licence seen (if applicable)		
National Insurance number and date seen		
If the applicants are married to each other or have registered a civil partnership, date certificate seen		

Court proceedings

Has the applicant been involved in any family court proceedings (including ongoing and pending) or in any proceedings about children and/or family?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
If yes, give details, including the date, name of court, type of order made and the names of the children concerned	
Has the applicant been involved in any non-family related court proceedings (including ongoing and pending)?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
If yes, give details, including the date, name of court, type of order made and the names of the children concerned	

Current employment or volunteering

Explore this further in section B part One, Q11 and analyse the impact of this on fostering in the relevant analysis sections.

	Applicant 1	Applicant 2
Current employment or		

Previous employment
Household finance
Pets

volunteering (if any)		
Name of current employer/organisation		
Current hours of work		
Any planned changes to hours of work		
Date reference was completed		
Give details of strengths highlighted, as well as any issues raised and how these have been addressed. Include applicant reflections on what they have learned from these experiences.		

Previous employment or volunteering involving children or vulnerable adults

Explore this further in section B part One, Q11 and analyse the impact of this on fostering in the relevant analysis sections.

Applicant 1

Name of employer or organisation	Dates employed	Date of any completed reference
Give details if any checks were not sought or not received. Give details of any information raised and how this has been addressed.		

Applicant 2

Name of employer or organisation	Dates employed	Date of any completed reference

Give details if any checks were not sought or not received. Give details of any information raised and how this has been addressed.

Household finance

Has a financial statement/assessment form been completed?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Provide details of the applicant's income and expenditure, including details of all debt.	
Describe how this has been verified. (Analyse the impact of this on fostering in Section B Part One, Q14)	

Pets and animals

Has a pet questionnaire or checklist been completed?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Provide brief details of any animals in the household, including species, number and age. Describe the relevance of the animals in relation to fostering.	
Would the applicant be happy to look after a child who wants to bring their pet with them?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Any additional details to note?	
Would the applicant be open to bringing a new pet into their home in the future?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Any additional details to note?	

Section B: Part One - Motivations

Section B: Part One

About the applicant/s

Applicants are not to write this section themselves. This section should be written in the third person. Direct quotes from the applicant/s can be included where appropriate. (See guidance for more details.)

This section is strengths-based; we will focus on where you are in your life now and what made you decide to foster. This section helps us to see what you are bringing to the role and where we can support you. Being honest about all your motivations, strengths, limitations and worries is valuable for us to be able to genuinely support you.

We need to know about you and your family. How do you celebrate achievements, successes, holidays, festivals and birthdays? What do you do to help yourself feel better when you have had a difficult time? How are visitors welcomed and accommodated in your home, and how would you help a child fit in with this? How would a child know your home is child friendly? What would you do to help a child fit into your family? How do you demonstrate empathy?

This section provides us with the information we need to see whether you have the suitability and capacity to be a foster carer at this point in your life.

1) Tell us about your motivations and reasons for applying now. What do you imagine the impact of fostering would be on your family? If you are a parent, tell us about that.

2) Tell us about yourself – in your own words, describe your strengths, passions, likes and hopes. Tell us about anything in life you find challenging, either now or in the past. Tell us about all elements of your own identity.

Analysis: 1 and 2 – consider the information above in relation to its impact on the applicant's ability to foster.

3) Tell us about your current relationship, or if not currently in a relationship, tell us about that.

4) Tell us about how you live – what goes on in a typical week for you? (Working patterns, meals, routines, how you relax, busy times and quieter times.)

5) Tell us about everyone living in your home, including those who live there intermittently, e.g. at university or working away from home.

Analysis: 3, 4 and 5 – Consider the information above in relation to its impact on the applicant's ability to foster.

6) Family history and childhood – describe your background, current family relationships and dynamics. (Refer to the applicant's completed genogram.)

7) Adult life experiences – describe important events in your adult life, including significant changes and losses. Tell us about how these experiences have helped you manage stress and develop resilience.

8) Tell us about your previous significant relationships.

Section B: part One Cont...

9) Tell us about members of your family not living in your home, including children living elsewhere.

Analysis: 6, 7, 8 and 9 – Consider the information above in relation to its impact on the applicant's ability to foster.

10) Education – tell us about your experiences at school/college/university/vocational training.

11) Regular commitments and employment history – tell us about your paid and unpaid employment, volunteering and caring responsibilities, both current and previous. Expand on any roles relating to children and young people.

12) Social health – tell us about your social networks: neighbours, friends, community groups, extended family, faith-associated groups, interests, hobbies, or other connections.

13) Tell us about relevant training or fostering preparation activities you have completed and your further training and development needs.

Analysis: 10, 11, 12 and 13 – Consider the information above in relation to its impact on the applicant's ability to foster.

14) Household finances – tell us about how you organise income and outgoings. For example, mortgage/rent, bills, holidays, savings and any repayments/debt. (See Section A Part Two, Household finance.)

Analysis: 14 – Consider the information above in relation to its impact on the applicant's ability to foster.

Overall analysis – Consider all of the information above and summarise key strengths and key areas for further support/development.

Section B: Part Two - What does the child need?

The following statements are designed to understand how the applicant/s will provide trauma-informed care and therapeutic parenting.

This section provides an opportunity to explore and understand the things that any child you have the privilege to care for will need from you, your family, your networks and your home.

Identity and relationships

1. I need all aspects of my identity to be understood, respected and celebrated so that I can feel proud of who I am.
2. I need to have my memories respected, recognised and kept alive; to include family, friends, carers and those important to me.
3. I need you to support me to keep connected to past, present and future relationships and to be creative in how we do this.
4. I need to be able to see my brothers and sisters. I need to see my friends and other children who are important to me.
5. I need you to learn and respect my specific needs. The way I think, feel and do may not be the same as you, but it is who I am and it matters to me.
6. I need you to accept my family. They are part of my identity so, if you can, I need you to build positive relationships with them.
7. I need you to help me learn about my life story.

Analysis – Consider the information above in relation to its impact on the applicant's ability to foster.

Advocacy and empowerment

8. I need you to empower/help/support me to make my own voice heard. If I need you to, advocate on my behalf so that my voice is heard.
9. I need you to challenge discrimination and prejudice in any circumstances and to promote equality, diversity and inclusion.
10. If I have a disability, am neurodivergent or have additional needs, I need you to challenge or advocate on my behalf to ensure I get the support I need.
11. I need encouragement to reach my full potential.
12. I need you to work as part of a team to ensure my needs are met.

13. I need you to take an interest in what happens to me at school/college. I need you to work with staff to access support for me.
14. I might need support to access independent advocacy/specialist advice from a lawyer.
15. I need you to recognise the challenges I may face because I am not living with my family.

Analysis – Consider the information above in relation to its impact on the applicant's ability to foster.

Being part of a foster family

16. I need to feel safe in your home.
17. I need to be kept safe when you are caring for me, wherever we are.
18. I need to feel welcome in your home and for you to help me feel included and accepted.
19. I need to be treated as an individual and be offered the same opportunities and experiences as other children in the home.
20. I need you to help me feel accepted as part of your network of family and friends.
21. I need you to teach me life skills and help me become more independent.
22. I want to be able to attend activities outside of school like my friends do.
23. I need to play, have fun and experience joy.
24. I need to feel included in decisions about me, and where I live.
25. When I am the right age, I need help to safely connect online and access the internet.

Analysis – Consider the information above in relation to its impact on the applicant's ability to foster.

Strengthening and building resilience

26. I need support in all areas of my wellbeing.
27. I need you to understand and accept that I will need help to manage my emotions and behaviours.
28. I need you to notice and understand my strengths as well as my needs.

Section B: Part Two – What does the child need?

What does the child need cont?

29. I want to keep and repair relationships. I might need extra help doing this.
30. I need you to regularly access training and attend support groups. I need you to learn, grow and develop to meet my changing needs.
31. I need you to respond to me with sensitivity, curiosity and acceptance.
32. If you choose to foster me long term, I need you to know that this means I will always be a part of your family and I will need your support throughout my life.
33. If you choose to foster me short term, I need you to support me with my transition to another home, saying goodbye and staying in touch.
34. I need you to access help from other foster carers and support networks, to look after yourself and take care of yourself.
35. I need you to support me with experiences and feelings of loss and bereavement.
36. I need you to support me with managing changes; I may need extra help doing this.

Analysis – Consider the information above in relation to its impact on the applicant's ability to foster.

Supporting information
Other checks
Summary and recommendation
Applicants observations

Section C: Supporting information

References

Item	Attached	If yes, provide names	Applicant has seen references
Personal references	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Household member references	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Former partner references	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Employer references	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Previous employer references	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
School, nursery, health visitor references	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

Other checks and materials

Item	Attached	Notes or comments
Family tree or genogram	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Ecomap	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Chronology	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Weekly schedule/planning grid	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Home safety checklist	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Financial assessment form	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Dog/pet checklist	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Fostering Family Protective Care Plan	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Child's Protective Care Plan	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Foster Carer Plan in case of Allegation	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Preparation training record	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Second opinion visit	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	

Section E: Summary and recommendation

Timescales – when did the assessment start, how long did it take? Comment on any pauses in the assessment.

Brief summary – this section draws on the information, evidence gathering, discussions, observations, hypothesising, analysis and the elements that have led you to reach your conclusion. Focus on both strengths and areas of development.

Recommendation

Matching considerations and areas to prioritise in a support plan

Name of social worker completing the report	
Signature of social worker	
Date	
Name of team manager responsible for the report	
Signature of team manager	
Date	

The applicant/s observations on the report

Name of applicant/s	
I/We have received the report on the following date:	

Guidance



coramBAAF
adoption • fostering • kinship

Form F (Prospective Foster Carer Report) England

Guidance notes and
additional resources

Published 2025

corambaaf.org.uk

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London
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Anti-racist and anti-discriminatory practice

What makes good analysis?

Legal compliance

A fostering assessment starts at the point when the fostering service begins to gather Stage 1 information following receipt of the application to foster – the statutory guidance states that: ‘Once an applicant has contacted the fostering service to which they are applying, the fostering service should seek the information required by regulation 26(1A) as soon as possible’. Many fostering services undertake Stages 1 and 2 in parallel, rather than waiting for all of the Stage 1 information before commencing Stage 2. There is no set timescale for completion of Stage 1 or Stage 2; the expectation in National Minimum Standards is that the entire assessment is completed and a recommendation reached within eight months. Prospective foster carers need to be informed about Stages 1 and 2 of the assessment process, specifically that there is a legal requirement to complete Stage 1 of an assessment and if this cannot be completed, the assessment cannot progress to the panel.

Anti-racist and anti-discriminatory practice

The social work profession is guided by its values and principles of anti-racist and anti-oppressive practice. This means that social workers are uniquely placed to lead the way, advocating for equality in our society.
(Social Work England, 2025, Equality, diversity [and inclusion action plans](#))

Social Work [professional standards](#) (Social Work England, 2019) state:

As a social worker, I will not abuse, neglect, discriminate, exploit or harm anyone, or condone this by others.

It is essential, as social workers, we continue to reflect on our own biases, values and attitudes and consider how these influence our professional practice. It is important that we use individual and group supervision to reflect on both the way we work with families and on the assessment information we gather, before making recommendations that can have life changing impact for the children and families we support.

Form F is underpinned by the principles of anti-racist and anti-discriminatory practice. It is essential that, assessing social workers, continually develop awareness of biases, beliefs and attitudes and consider how these can influence professional practice when assessing prospective foster carers.

Social work assessments are read by the people they are written about and by a panel of people. This assessment should be read by the prospective foster carers, and there is space for their comments.

It is therefore critical that language is caring, simple and understandable. Avoid jargon, acronyms or professional terminology that the people being written about may not understand, as this can exclude, disempower or reinforce power imbalances.

Sensitive information should be collected and recorded in ways that are appropriate, trauma-informed and anti-racist. Avoid focusing on deficits or using stigmatising language that reinforces stereotypes, erases identities or causes harm. Descriptions should be respectful, person-centred, and free from assumptions or biases. This covers information relating to ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, complex health needs, justice involvement, religion, and other aspects of identity. Be aware of how these areas intersect, as this can increase harm or marginalisation.

We appreciate differences in preferred terms around racially minoritised ethnic groups and acknowledge the need to avoid homogenising lived experiences (Cane, 2023). It will be appropriate to bear in mind the importance of using terms that children and families favour. Prioritise self-identification by asking children and families at the outset what terms they prefer or identify with. Be respectful of their choices, recognising that preferred terminology may reflect personal identity, culture and history. This applies to all aspects of identity.

Perhaps you saw the screen in front of you as the final destination. It was not; your words, written about, but without me, would not remain hidden forever.

Rebekah Pierre - [An Open Letter to the Social Worker Who Wrote My Case Files, 2022, BASW](#)

Recording, storing and sharing information

Have confidence to share information – trust your instincts and act on your training, experience and risk assessment skills. [Seek guidance](#) if in doubt.

Department for Education (2024)

It is important to know how the information recorded on Form F is stored on the relevant case management system. Information from Form F will be pulled through to other forms, processes and used for internal and Ofsted reporting purposes. With this in mind, it is vital that information is recorded accurately.

The foster carer profile will need to be completed and viewed as a separate document. Foster carers should be supported to complete their own child-friendly and/or young person-friendly foster family profile, which can be shared with the child or young person prior to moving in. These are often referred to as different documents, included as part of a welcome pack.

What makes good analysis?

Definitions

It is essential to understand the difference between narrative description and analysis.

- **Assessment:** collecting, analysing and recording information about people, their circumstances, and the context of their lives in order to reach an understanding of their situation and to inform decisions.
- **Risk assessment:** weighing up potential benefits as well as potential harms or losses. Taking risks involves deciding the potential benefits of a proposed act outweigh the potential drawbacks.
- **Analysis:** the examination of an issue, problem, topic or situation that goes beyond describing it and includes (one or more of) theories, thoughts, opinions and judgements.
(*Oxford Dictionary of Social Work and Social Care, 2018*)

The following guidance provides one case study under each of the four statement categories: Identity and relationships; Advocacy and empowerment; Being part of a foster family; Strengthening and building resilience. These can be used by the assessing social worker to consider the types of experiences and possible needs of a child. We have included case studies as tools that can be used by assessing social workers to bring to life some of the issues and complexities being explored in this section. The case studies are designed to facilitate a discussion, allowing the applicant/s to respond to and explore the individual needs of the child. There are no set right answers here, so long as the assessing social worker is confident the applicant/s have shown sufficient consideration of a child in care's needs and demonstrated an ability and willingness to meet them.

These case studies are examples and do not have to be used. The assessing social worker can use their discretion to adapt or replace these with alternative case studies and to inform their analysis of the applicant/s capacity to care for a child, as well as where they may require additional training or support.

Identity and relationships – introduction

Identity can mean different things to different people. It might be about who you hang out with, what music you listen to, where you live or what ethnicity you are. Simply put – your identity is “who you are”.

The Children's Society (2025)

For applicants less confident in this area, it helps to start by asking how they describe all the parts of their own identity. The assessor can reveal origins, elements and characteristics of their own identity to open up the conversation. Once the applicant has a solid understanding of their own identity, the assessor can progress to discuss how they might support the elements of identity for a child.

The assessor should explore resources that will help the applicant/s increase their understanding of identity, e.g. TED talks, recent publications, social media platforms and websites. The assessor should check the content and sources and discuss with the applicant/s which resources they will read/view/listen to. Once completed, the assessor should ensure there is time for a reflective discussion.

There will be experiences that are familiar to the child which promote their cultural background and help them understand who they are so that they are able to gain a better sense of themselves. Foster carers need to expand their knowledge and be open to experiencing different cultures. For example, a foster carer may need to source ingredients, recipes and advice for cooking a meal that reflects the cultural heritage of the child they are caring for. It might be the case that a child has dietary restrictions or preferences relating to cultural or religious beliefs. The applicants could explore with the assessing social worker how they would celebrate different cultural festivals and holidays with a child.

Identity and relationships – child statements

The following sections are numbered to correspond with the numbered statements on the form.

- 1. I need all aspects of my identity to be understood, respected and celebrated so that I can feel proud of who I am.**

It is crucial that the assessing social worker allows for all aspects of the applicant/s identity to be discussed and understood including their ethnicity, ethnic heritage, culture, language, religion, gender and sexual orientation. This discussion should evolve so that the applicant/s can envisage how they will be able to respond to and promote the unique elements of a child's identity.

Applicants need to see that there is a strong link between understanding identity and how this relates to maintaining familial relationships.

Below are some suggested questions that the assessing social worker can ask the applicant/s if a child's race, religion or culture is different to that of the applicant/s:

- How will the child's faith needs be met on a daily basis?
- If a child wanted to go to church/temple/mosque/synagogue/temple with a carer who did not practice the same religious belief, would they be able to meet these needs?
- If a child did not want to go to church/mosque/synagogue/temple with a carer, is there an option for them to remain at home or do something different with someone else within the family or network?
- How would they accommodate specific dietary needs? Would they cook Halal prepared meat or vegetarian dishes?
- Can they describe when they have respected or celebrated an occasion that was not part of their own culture? How did it feel, what did they learn about themselves?
- Can they describe when they have experienced or witnessed discrimination? (Racism, LGBT+ phobia, ableism, misogyny etc.) What did they do? How did it make them feel? Have they ever called out discriminatory behaviour? Would they do something differently next time? Are there people or places they feel comfortable going to in their community to get support, advice, or connection?
- Have they had conversations with children/young people about healthy relationships, consent and contraception (age-appropriate and culturally sensitive)? Can they share how this felt?
- How will they care for a Black child or young person whose ethnic origin is either African, Caribbean or mixed race with African or Caribbean Heritage? They will need specific skin and hair care – do they know where to get support with this?

If an applicant is unclear about micro-aggressions and biases, the assessing social worker can share an appropriate video link. (See tools section at end of guidance for ideas).

2. I need to have my memories respected, recognised and kept alive; to include family, friends, carers and those important to me.

Even if the child doesn't ask, it is essential that the adults caring for them keep their memories alive. This may involve gathering and looking at photos, videos and other objects. There are many ways in which memories are formed, and foster carers should be creative in how these are cultivated and looked after. They are also required to be the safe keepers of these memories.

This will depend on where the applicants are in their journey, exploring experiences they have had of supporting children who are not their own.

Supporting carers to understand that the child's previous life is not lost or forgotten about is crucial. It is important that applicants are equipped to support a child to maintain strong connectivity to their

Identity and relationships

Case studies

6. I need you to accept my family. They are part of my identity so, if you can, I need you to build positive relationships with them.

Maintaining relationships with family members is key for the child to make sense of who they are, where they come from, and their identity, especially in respect of ethnicity, culture, language, religion, likes and dislikes. Promoting, maintaining and affording time to keep these relationships active requires specific skills from foster carers. The safety of the child is always paramount and has to be central when making plans to spend time with family members. In some instances, it will not be within the foster carer's gift to maintain a relationship with an individual family member. In these cases, the child will need to understand why, in age-appropriate language.

7. I need you to help me learn about my life story.

Applicants will need to understand the importance of life story work and that a child's life story needs to be added to irrespective of the length of time they are living with foster carers. Assessing social workers must explain what life story work actually is, and the many different forms it can take. These records are precious and need to be kept safe, so they are not lost or damaged. Equally, children benefit from being able to interact with their life story materials.

CASE STUDY – Hamza is aged 7.

Hamza's mother is White British and his father is Algerian. He has two older siblings (aged 14 and 16) who live with their grandparents. He came into care due to issues with his mother's poor mental health and his father's repeated absences from their home. Hamza does not understand why he cannot stay with his parents or live with his grandparents. Hamza has trouble sleeping as he has nightmares. He is a little behind his peers with his reading and writing. Hamza has a healthy appetite and would eat ice-cream every day if he could. Hamza mostly enjoys school but gets upset when he thinks teachers think he doesn't try. He has heard some children call him names but does have a best friend who he likes to play football with every break time. Hamza enjoys watching his older brothers play football. He plays cricket at a school club and he loves to dance.

Questions/themes for assessing social worker to explore with applicant

- What aspects of his identity need to be understood and respected?
- How can Hamza's family identity be celebrated?
- How will you ensure memories of his family are visible/ accessible if he is no longer going to see them as much?
- How will you keep him connected to his past, present and future relationships? Think about his siblings.
- How will you help him see his family and friends?
- How will you learn about his specific needs?
- You have been upset about how he cannot live with his grandparents. How will you show him you accept them and maintain positive relationships with them?
- How will you help him learn about his life story?

CASE STUDY - Kenise is 15 years old.

Kenise's mother is Black Jamaican and her father is White British. Kenise is in foster care as both her parents have substance misuse issues. She has experienced severe neglect for most of her life and has low self-confidence. At times she can be very anxious in new situations or around new people. Kenise has dyslexia, processing information and concentrating for long periods of time can be tough for her.

School has mainly been a place where she feels she can be herself and has benefited from extra support in some of her lessons. Kenise talks to her form tutor when her mental health is compromised. Kenise is often described as shy, although her form tutor has noticed her chatting with two students recently who are vocal about social issues. More recently Kenise has been wondering about her gender identity. She has connected with people online who are also exploring their gender identity.

Questions/ themes for assessing social worker to explore with applicant

- What type of services/ support might be helpful for her?
- Who will you connect with in school?
- Is school the best place for emotional support/ talking therapy to be provided?
- When will it be the right time to for Kenise to use her own voice and when will be the right time to advocate for her?
- How will you ensure school continue to meet her learning needs?
- How can you help her to reach her full potential?

Being part of a foster family - introduction

When a child moves in with a foster family they will experience a range of emotions including fear, confusion, excitement, sadness, loss, relief, worry and curiosity. Foster carers will need to try and predict what the child might experience and what they might be able to do to support them. The assessing worker should explain that this is not about suppressing emotions but instead walking in the child's shoes and anticipating what adjustments might help them to feel welcomed, accepted, safe and understood.

Each and every child needs to feel and hear that they are loved and wanted to enable them to thrive. They need consistent loving relationships, overflowing with warmth, hugs, reassurance and praise.

Protective Care is how we support children to feel safe whilst they are learning that most adults, including foster carers, will love and protect them. Protective care is about making changes for everyone in the fostering household to help the child to build an understanding of everyone's behaviour and feels safe in their new environment. It is also about protecting children whilst they learn new norms and overcome trauma. Protective Care recommends the creation of three plans Fostering Family Protective Care Plan, Child's Protective Care Plan, Foster Carer Plan in case of Allegation. These replace the Safer Caring Plan. (The Fostering Network, 2025).

Being part of a foster family – child statements

The following sections are numbered to correspond with the numbered statements on the form.

Case studies continued

The assessing social worker could use this statement to contemplate with applicant/s that they might need to gain permission to take a child to an activity outside of school or on holiday as an alternative example. Children in care should be able to join activities outside of school with friends and also try out new experiences, however, this is not always straightforward for a foster carer to plan and set up so it is helpful to discuss this here.

23. I need to play, have fun and experience joy.

All children should have opportunities for play, fun and the chance to experience joy. Foster carers need to build these elements into the child's life as frequently as they can. For applicants who have not parented / cared for children they could think about each of the children in the case studies and how they would support or make opportunities for joy, fun and playing.

24. I need to feel included in decisions about me, and where I live.

Foster carers, alongside the child's social worker, have to ensure (wherever appropriate) that the child/young person feels included and informed about decisions being made about them. This applies to where a child is living and might require foster carers to advocate on behalf of the child's views.

25. When I am the right age, I need help to safely connect online and access the internet.

Foster carers need to be informed about the benefits and serious risks of accessing the online world. A significant amount of socialising for young people is via digital social media platforms and apps. Foster carers need to be knowledgeable on supporting a child/young person to have age-appropriate access to the digital world and to safely connect with people online. This can feel daunting for applicants so it might be helpful to share that fostering services should provide training for foster carers in this area. This statement allows for applicant/s to share their views on children and young people having access to online and digital content.

CASE STUDY - Sophie is aged 10.

Sophie has a diagnosis of autism and attends a school for children with autism and other special needs. Her parents had a baby two years ago and felt they could not manage her behaviours at home. Sophie feels rejected by her parents. This is the fourth foster family Sophie has lived with in the last 18 months. She tends to attach strongly to new people, sharing information about herself and her family. She is most happy when she can be with her friends at the weekly band practice at school and the local drama club she goes to where she loves being around the older kids. Sophie can be impulsive and will wander off from the environment when she sees something that interests her. On a number of occasions she has run away from a situation she finds stressful or frightening. Sophie likes to know her routine and transitions, including getting in the car to go to school, sometimes unsettles her.

Questions/ themes for assessing social worker to explore with applicant

- How will you keep Sophie safe inside and outside the home?
- How will you make Sophie feel welcome, included and accepted?
- As Sophie has her own different needs how will you treat her as individual and make sure she has the opportunity to do things her peers experience?
- How will you introduce Sophie to your family and friends and help her feel accepted by them?
- What skills do you think Sophie would need to learn to help build her independence?
- How will you make sure Sophie takes part in activities and can play and have fun safely?
- How will you keep Sophie safe online?

35. I need you to support me with experiences and feelings of loss and bereavement.

Children in care experience loss and many of them experience bereavement as well. The assessing social worker should have a conversation with the applicants about their experiences of loss and bereavement, including how they managed these feelings themselves and for members of their family. Following on from this discussion, it is important for applicants to consider how they will help a child with these complex and distressing emotions.

36. I need you to support me with managing changes; I may need extra help doing this.

Help with managing changes and transitions and responding to situations in a timely manner is a significant skill. Children in care often find transitions confusing, scary or unsettling. For example, transporting a child via car and bus journeys can often be more stressful and potentially emotionally activating compared to non-care-experienced peers. Applicants can reflect on how they can support the children in the case studies with the various transition points they have and will continue to experience. They could draw on their own transition experiences and examples where they have helped others with transitions, such as moving home, changing school or job.

CASE STUDY – Mason is 6 years old.

Mason was removed from his parents eight weeks ago due to domestic violence he witnessed his father seriously physically harming his mother. Due to the trauma he has experienced Mason has loud outbursts most days, these can present as his being very sad, angry or both. His heightened state can last up to 30 minutes, then he feels tired and sometimes embarrassed afterwards. This affects how he interacts with his peers in school. Mason sometimes falls asleep in school. He responds well to routine in school and at home. He beams when given praise. Mason adores animals, especially cats, rabbits and guinea pigs. Mason is a natural at creating, often choosing arts and crafts activities. Mason does not like being left for any length of time to do an activity on his own. He constantly seeks out company.

Questions/ themes for assessing social worker to explore with applicant

- What challenges do you think Mason will need support with?
- What ideas do you have to help Mason when he can't control his strong emotions?
- How would you give Mason positive encouragement?
- How would you support him inside and outside of school to get along with his friends and build relationships with them?
- What training do you think would help you to meet his needs now and if Mason was to stay long term what other training might be useful as he grows?
- How will you provide Mason with the confidence that you are there for him, so he knows he is part of your life?
- How could you support Mason with a transition to another foster home or back to his family if he is only with you short term?
- As a foster carer you need support, where will you go for this?
- How can you support Mason's experience of loss?
- Mason needs extra help to manage change. What support could you give to him to help with any changes? (This could be moving school, a new social worker or changes to his family time).

Tools and Resources

Tools and resources

The following are examples of tools and resources used by assessing social workers. This is not an exhaustive list - these are given as suggested viewing, reading or further research for applicants. Assessing social workers and fostering services will use many other tools and resources that are effective for supporting assessments of prospective foster carers.

What makes life good for children in care?

[10,000 Voices: The views of children in care on their well-being report](#) (CoramVoice)

Understanding the emotional impact of abuse, neglect and trauma

[PACE – A Therapeutic Approach](#) (Help Children Live Better Lives)

[Inside Out: Guessing the feelings](#) (YouTube video)

[Children's social care questionnaires 2024](#) (Ofsted, GOV.UK)

Digital safety

[Online safety – Keeping children safe online](#) (NSPCC)

[Navigating online life with children and young people](#) (CoramBAAF)

Protective characteristics

Understanding discrimination

[Social Graces: A practical tool to address inequality](#) (BASW)

[Understanding Unconscious Bias](#) (The Royal Society)

[What are microaggressions and how to call them out](#) (The Royal College of Nursing)

Anti-racist practice

[Our Hair Care, Our Skin Care](#) (Black Care Experience)

[We Are Not The Same - Africa and The Caribbean](#) (Black Care Experience)

[This Book is Anti-racist](#) (Jewell T and Durand A, 2020)

[Understanding the lived experiences of black Asian and minority ethnic children and families](#) (Research in Practice)

[Anti-racist Ally](#) (Williams S, 2020)

LGBTQ+

[The recruitment, assessment, support and supervision of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender foster carers](#) (Rees Centre)

[New Family Social](#)

Proud 2 b Parents

[The Anti-Racist Social Worker in Practice](#) (Edited by Nimal Jude, Tanya Moore and Glory Simango, 2025)

Neurodiversity and disability

[Disability, disparity and demand: Analysis of the numbers and experiences of children in care and care leavers with a disability or long-term health condition](#) (Coram)

[Meeting the needs of neurodivergent children and young people](#) (CoramBAAF)

[The Challenges that social care services face in relation to looked after children with neurodevelopmental disorders](#) (Heady N, Watkins A, John A, & Hutchings H, 2022)

Key points

- The form has been piloted across 12 organisations – feedback from assessing social workers, applicants and panels have been positive. With a particular welcome towards the new ‘what does a child need section?’
- The revision has been a collective effort – foster carers, care experienced adults, assessing social workers, panel members and other key stakeholders
- It will take time to embed in practice and for confidence to increase
- Access fostering practice forum meetings and training for support
- Contact our advice line for specific queries
- Please provide feedback

Next steps

- Training:

[Fostering assessments \(Form F\) - best practices | CoramBAAF](#)

For more information, email training@corambaaf.org.uk

- New Undertaking guide – will be published this year
- Form F (Northern Ireland) – task and finish group set up
- Form F (Wales) pilot – second meeting with working group - June
- Form F (Scotland) pilot – work commencing September
- Fostering practice forum –
[Fostering Practice Forum | CoramBAAF](#)

Thank you for joining



Evaluation and certificate

To fill in our evaluation form scan the QR code or use the link in the chat. The link will also be in your attendee pack.

Once you have completed your evaluation form you will receive your certificate.

Presentation materials including reading lists, slides and video links are shared post event

Thank you from CoramBAAF



We hope to see you again soon!



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