

Manual:	Foster Carers Handbook; Fostering Services Procedure
Title:	Conflict of Interest (Foster Carers) (FCH/034)
Last Reviewed:	24/02/2015
Next Review Due:	24/02/2018

INTRODUCTION

A conflict of interest can arise if a foster carer, or a relative, is involved with any other fostering agency, either local authority or private, or if a foster carer takes any additional work after they have been approved as a foster carer, unless the intention to do so was known about during the assessment and included in the report presented to Fostering Panel for approval.

A foster carer cannot be approved by any other Fostering Agency unless the approval as a foster carer for Durham County Council has been terminated (Fostering Services (Eng.) Regulations 2011 (27.1)).

Examples of other situations that can arise are:

- If a foster carer or a relative is, or intends to become, involved in the management committee/board of an independent fostering agency
- If a foster carer or a relative is considering submitting to tender to contract to do work or supply goods to the County Council
- If a foster carer is, or becomes, the trustee of a charity.

ACTIONS

During the course of the assessment, and after approval, foster carers must advise the Fostering Social Worker of any existing/potential additional work or existing/potential conflict of interests.

Before taking on any work or business which may relate to carer's tasks or duties the foster carer must:

1. Discuss any potential conflict of interest issues with the Fostering Social Worker and identify any possible areas of conflict and, if possible, agree any necessary safeguards or arrangements which could be put in place to eliminate such conflicts.
2. If the volume of additional work to be undertaken or other aspects of it appear incompatible with the foster carer, then the Fostering Social Worker will consult with their Fostering Team Manager and Senior Manager, where appropriate, to decide on how to proceed.
3. The Fostering Social Worker will give the Conflict of Interest form to the foster carer to complete – see link. This form should be completed and returned to the Fostering Social Worker who will discuss with their Fostering Team Manager.
4. The Conflict of Interest Form, outlining clearly the proposed project/work and the details of the safeguards that have been agreed will be sent to the Strategic Manager (Looked After Children and Permanence) for consideration, together with the views of the Fostering Social Worker and Team Manager.
5. The Fostering Social Worker will inform the foster carer of the Strategic Manager's decision.
6. A copy of the Conflict of Interest Form and any response will be kept on the foster carer's file.

NOTE: The confidentiality of information received by the foster carer must be respected and never used for personal or financial gain. The foster carer must not make improper use of the position and role as a foster carer e.g. to pursue personal financial gain. The foster carer must not expect any child/young person placed with them to assist with any outside business interests of the foster carer.

RELATED FORMS

Conflict of Interest Form - CCE4 (available in Code of Conduct Policy)