

# North London Fostering Consortium Parent and Child Fostering Scheme CRITERIA FOR INITIAL REFERRALS

## Criteria for placements for assessment

- One parent (not couples).
- Normally, babies and toddlers up to 2 years old. For babies, ideally they should be referred 4 weeks before the birth so that a pre-birth assessment can be completed, including viability for parent and child fostering. For children up to 2, there should be a Single Assessment, incorporating a viability assessment for parent and child fostering.
- Placements can be booked and held if required e.g. for Court proceedings. If a placement is booked, it will be put "On Hold", so that it cannot be used for any other placement. The foster carer will be paid the retainer from the point that the placement is booked, and the placing borough will be charged the retainer from that point.
- Planned placements where a pre-placement planning meeting can be held to identify placement objectives and potential risks. Referrals for emergency placements will be considered, but may not be accepted, if there is no risk assessment information available. There must be an adequate Risk Assessment before a referral to the Scheme is accepted. If an emergency placement is accepted, up to 2 weeks may be added to the placement duration, to allow for up to 2 weeks planning to take place before the 12 week assessment commences.
- Although the Scheme is geared for assessment placements of 12-16 weeks duration, a longer placement can be requested and agreed by all parties.
- It is anticipated that the children will be on ICO's or on Section 20 of the Children Act.
- No additional children in the family to join the placement
- No serious mental health or drug/alcohol problem for the parent or their partner, if visits are intended
- No history of physical or sexual assault or serious allegations
- No placements requiring 24-hour supervision of the parent
- The level of supervision required of the carer is likely to reduce as the placement progresses and must be clarified at the Placement Planning Meeting. The parent is in agreement with the idea of family placement
- Parent is known well enough by Social Care to inform a risk assessment.
- Adequate exit strategy, for a placement intended to last for 12 - 16 weeks. Placements can be extended with the agreement of all parties.

- Child's social worker is able to commit to the level of involvement required (as listed on the document about roles and responsibilities)
- The placing Local Authority will be responsible for ensuring that a proper transfer process takes place should a change of SW or SSW be required. Such changes to be kept to a minimum.

**Referral Process:**

1. Each Local Authority will have its own internal process whereby senior managers must give approval to any parent and child placement. This approval must be secured before any referral process can begin.
2. Parent and Child Fostering referral form, or viability assessment and Adult Risk Assessment completed; signposting to relevant additional assessments previously undertaken and chronology information
3. Decision from Fostering Manager or Scheme Social Worker about what can be offered by the Scheme and timescale
4. CRB / emergency local police checks undertaken in respect of all parents 16+ years prior to placement. If these cannot be obtained in the timescale available, then the risk assessment must be informed by all available information.
5. Pre-Placement Planning Meeting to be held prior to placement.

12.3.16