

Renewal of Approval Foster Care Assessments



Queensland
Foster and
Kinship Care

Content

- ▶ Background of Renewals
- ▶ Purpose of Renewals
- ▶ What Renewals Should Not Be Used For
- ▶ Process of Applying to Renew
- ▶ What Checks need to be Carried Out
- ▶ Who Should Complete Assessments
- ▶ Assessment Process
- ▶ Addressing Standards of Care and Harm Reports in the Context of Renewals
- ▶ Recommendations
- ▶ Outcome and Ongoing Supports



Background of Renewals

- ▶ Prior to the Child Protection Act 1999, there were no legislative requirements for carers to undergo renewals.
- ▶ However, the then Department of Families did make reference in their Manual of Practice and Procedures to 'Care Provider Reviews' which were to take place annually. Given there was no statutory authority to ensure the reviews occurred, it would appear that reviews were very rarely carried out.

Crime & Misconduct Commission & Impact on Renewals

- ▶ Whilst the Child Protection Act 1999 clearly outlined requirements regarding Renewals of Carers, the Crime and Misconduct Commission (CMC) report into Foster Care in 2003 revealed that the then Department of Families had no centralised system in place that kept accurate records on Carers, children placed with them or approval status. Therefore, there was no formalised system to detect when Carers were due for renewal - unfortunately this led to many Carers going years without any carer status.

CMC & Impact on Renewals Cont...

- ▶ An audit completed on all Carer records during the CMC revealed that there were 1485 approved foster and relative carers, however, according to Department of Family records, 616 of these Foster Carers did not have a placement.
- ▶ Given concern around the lack of placements options at the time of the CMC, it was believed that these numbers were not in fact accurate, rather records were not being kept up to date.

CMC & Impact on Renewals Cont...

Based on this audit and concern around inaccurate data, including re-approval status of many Carers, the CMC made the following recommendations:

Recommendation 7.6

That a central registry be set up containing details of all Carers, children currently in their care, and their availability for further placements. The registry should flag when carers are due for re-approval, whether they have been denied their initial approval or re-approval, and whether they have been, or applied to be, a Carer in another State. Also, it should be possible for staff to search the registry by region, so that they can easily obtain an up-to-date list of Carers and Placements in their area.

CMC & Impact on Renewals Cont...

Recommendation 7.7

That an audit of all current carers be conducted to obtain up-to-date data and determine their availability for placements.

These recommendations were implemented under the ICMS that Child Safety uses. Furthermore, the stringent licensing now imposed on all non government-Foster and Kinship Care Services and the Regulation of Care ensures an enhanced regulated foster care system where foster and kinship carers should be reapproved in the legislative timeframes.

Legislation overtime- Renewals

- ▶ With the introduction of the *Child Protection Act 1999*, renewals became a legal requirement for all Foster and Kinship Carers.
- ▶ Legislation stated that Carers would receive an initial approval for one year and would then need to be reapproved.
- ▶ 1999 - CP Act stated that initial certificates of approval would be for 1 year and renewal of approval would occur at 2 year intervals after this.
- ▶ 2022 - In October 2022 amendments to the Child Protection Act were made with requirements for the Initial renewal being one year and then subsequent renewals at 3 year intervals.

Recent reviews

QFCC completed a review into the Foster and Kinship care system following the death of Tiahleigh Palmer at the hands of her foster carer. QFCC's findings were handed down in a report in July 2017 making 42 recommendations all of which Child Safety accepted. The following related to Renewal of approvals for foster and kinship carers

- ▶ Referee and Medical clearance from applicants GP to be mandatory
- ▶ Clear guidelines to be developed about when further discretionary information should be gathered
- ▶ Interviews with children in the placement and discussions with CSOs and relevant community visitors to be included in renewal assessments and where relevant, interviews with previous children in placement, discussions with previous CSO's, discussions with previous agencies, discussions with schools/early childhood centers and an assessment of the carer's ability to meet and adhere to the standards of care

Amendments to procedures

- ▶ Following consultation with the Queensland Family and Child Commission and Queensland Foster and Kinship Care and subsequent approval by the Director-General, GP medical checks and referee reports are now back to being **discretionary elements** for all carer assessments.
- ▶ Updates have been made to the [Child Safety Practice Manual](#) and associated carer application and assessment [forms and guidelines](#) to be consistent with this change in requirements. The new requirement takes effect immediately.
- ▶ All approved carers will continue to update any health matters via the *Health and Wellbeing Questionnaire* during assessments and via the *Change and Carer Circumstance* form at all other times.
- ▶ As carers will still complete the *Health and Wellbeing Questionnaire*, it is important for assessors to discuss this document with carers as part of any assessment. When CSSC managers consider a carer application, as the decision maker, they may identify a basis for requesting further discretionary information and as such may request medical checks and referee reports. CSSC Managers will only seek discretionary checks where there is an identified need. These checks will be undertaken with the consent of the carer applicant/s.

Practice Paper:

Assessment of Foster Carer Applicants

September 2005



Renewal:

A Foster Carer will initially be approved for a 12-month period. After this period, the department will invite the Carer to apply for Renewal of Approval and Carers wishing to continue must respond with an application. An assessment of suitability similar to the original assessment is then undertaken.

The Form 3B:

Carer Applicant Assessment Recommendation Form - Renewal of Approval Only will be completed by the worker and the Form 4: Approval Decision is again completed by the Child Safety Service Centre Manager. The major difference in this phase is the focus on placement experiences and how the Carer has demonstrated an ability to care for children and meet the requirements of the relevant sections of the Child Protection Act 1999.

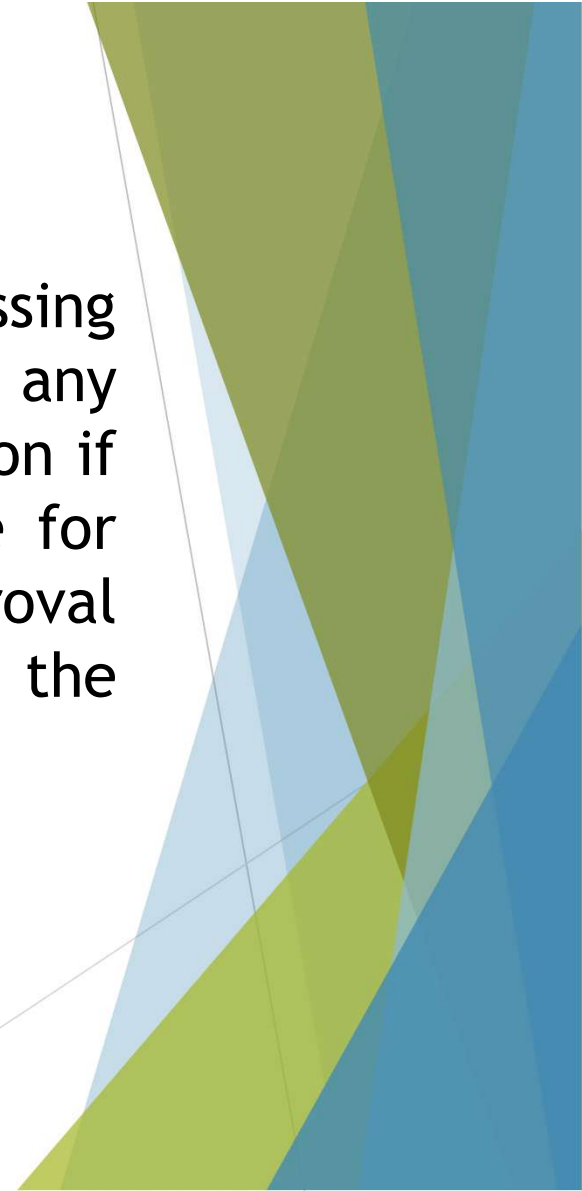
Purpose of Renewals

Brainstorm - what is the purpose of a Renewal for Foster and Kinship Carers ?



Purpose of Renewal

The Renewal of Approval is the process of assessing the **continued suitability** of the applicant and any adult household members, taking into consideration if the applicant/s have met the Standards of Care for children placed with them during their approval period and their continued commitment to meet the legislative & policy suitability requirements.



What Renewals Are Not For

- ▶ Renewal of Approvals should never be used as a tool to address issues with a Foster or Kinship Carer for the first time.
- ▶ Renewals are a summary of approval period for a Carer and any issues that are raised and discussed in the course of the assessment should have already been discussed throughout the approval period with the Carer.



What Renewals Are Not For Cont...

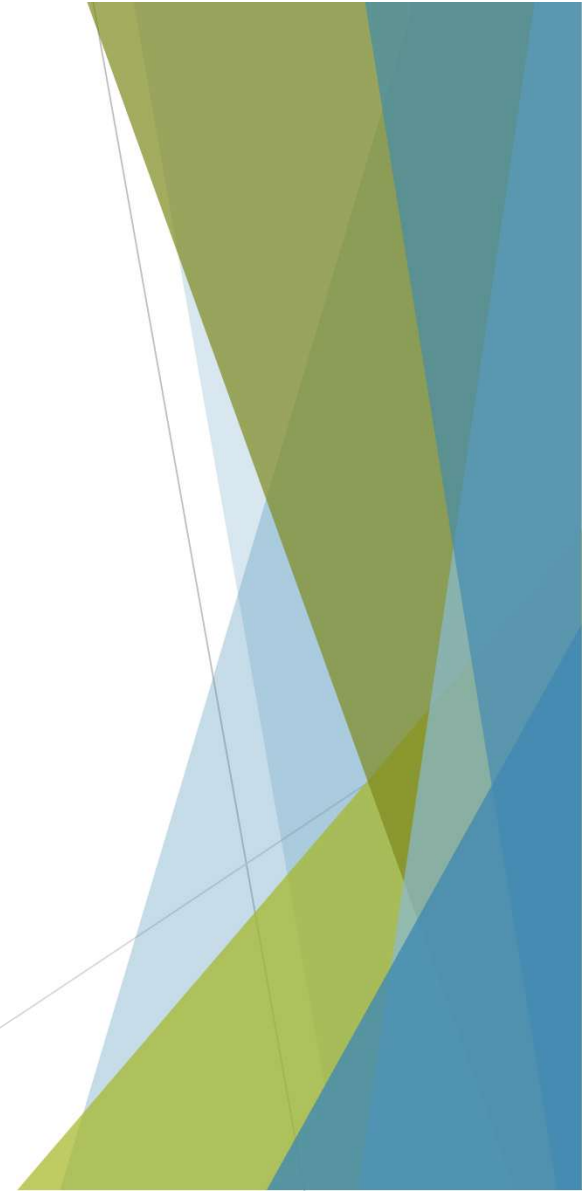
- ▶ If during the approval period, Child Safety has concerns around a Carer's suitability, they should initiate a 'Suitability Review'.
- ▶ This is very different to a Renewal and focuses on issues that Child Safety have in relation to the ongoing suitability of the Carer and their ability to meet the Statement of Standards for children in care.
- ▶ A suitability review can inform a proposal to cancel or a subsequent renewal of approval.

Renewal

- ▶ Legislated process
- ▶ Planned
- ▶ Set template
- ▶ Opportunity to reflect on the past 1-3 year approval period
- ▶ Re-Approval decision required

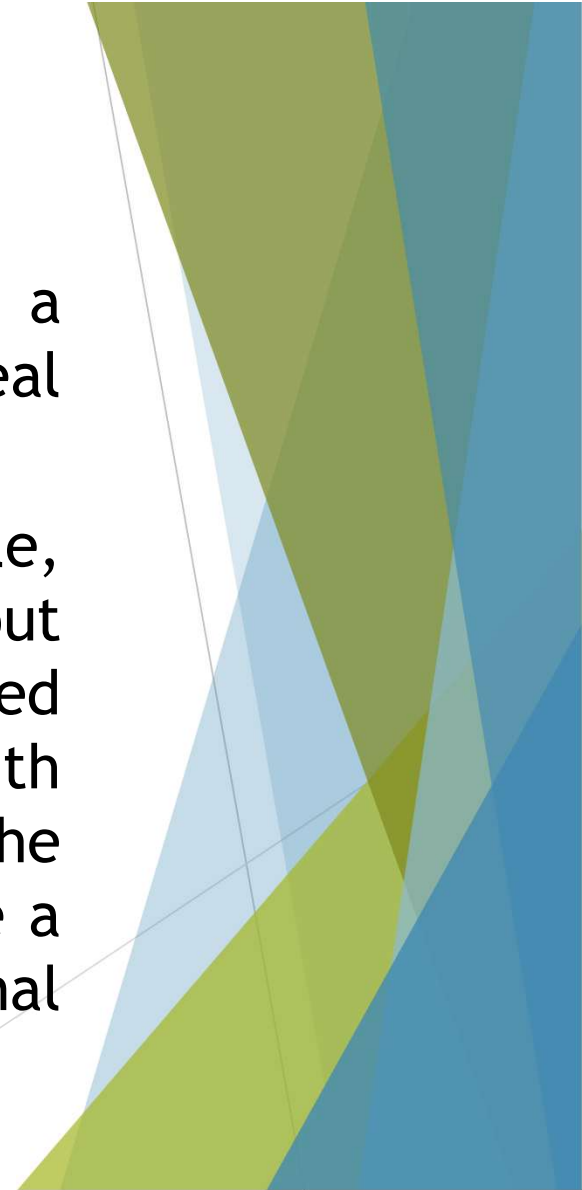
Suitability

- ▶ Not legislated
- ▶ Can be initiated at any time
- ▶ Linked to continued suitability
- ▶ No set template
- ▶ Usually has Terms of Reference attached and specific areas to assess



Renewal - vs - Suitability

- ▶ If a manager makes a decision not to renew - a decision letter will be provided with appeal rights.
- ▶ If a Suitability Review finds a Carer not suitable, the manager must make a decision about whether to cancel their certificate. The proposed cancellation must be provided to the Carer, with 28 days in which to respond, and then the manager must consider the response and make a final decision. Appeal rights apply once the final decision is made.



Process of Applying for Renewal

The Practice Manual reads

Invite an application for renewal of approval

- ▶ Regardless of whether the assessment process will be undertaken by a CSO or an external assessor, the PSU is responsible for inviting a foster or kinship carer to renew their certificate of approval.
- ▶ The PSU will monitor foster and kinship care services' responsibility to commence the renewal assessment process 3 months prior to the expiry of the carer's certificate of approval. Foster and kinship carer service providers will support carers commence their renewal assessment by providing the carer with:
- ▶ the [Application for renewal of approval—Form 3B](#) (APA renewal)
- ▶ the [Addendum for additional household members—Form 3C](#) (used when an applicant has more than 2 household members)
- ▶ the [Carer applicant health and wellbeing questionnaire](#).

Ensuring application is properly made

The Child Safety representative receiving the application forms will check if the application is 'properly made' by confirming that:

- ▶ the APA renewal form, correctly completed, signed and dated by the applicant and each household member
- ▶ the applicants current blue card or exemption card number is included in the APA form, as well as that of all adult household members
- ▶ new adult household members are identified, and their blue card or exemption card number is provided, or if they do not hold a current card, the online account number from Blue Card Services, as provided to them through the Blue Card Registration process, is included.
- ▶ a completed Carer applicant health and wellbeing questionnaire has been completed and provided.

Once properly made

Section 143 (2) CP Act states:

- ▶ If an application is properly made for Renewal of Authority, the authority is taken to continue to have affect from the day that it would have ended, apart from this sub-section, until the application is decided. (If an application is lodged, the Carers authority continues until an outcome of the renewal is decided).



What If an Application Is Not Lodged In Time ?

- ▶ The simple answer to this is that the Carer no longer has Carer status and will need to go through an Initial Carer Application again in order to comply with legislation and become an Approved Carer again.
- ▶ If the Carer has children in placement they will need to be Provisionally Approved until such time as their Initial Approval is decided, within the timeframes set down for Provisional Approvals.
- ▶ There are no legal loop holes, which is why it is vital that everyone plays their part in ensuring that legislation is followed in the first instance.



Everyone's Responsibility

Whilst Child Safety have the responsibility to ensure the Renewal Application form is sent to an existing Carer (either directly or through foster and kinship care agency), there are also responsibilities for the Carer

The Statement of Commitment states a carer's responsibility is ...

- to actively participate in the approval and re-approval process and the development of both the Foster Carer Agreement, as well as the Placement Agreement and Case Plan for any child in their care.

What Checks Are Completed ?



Central
Screening Unit
(CSU)

- Decision Point

Blue Card

- Decision point (not necessarily aligning with carer assessment renewal)

Assessment

- Decision point

CSU checks....

- ▶ Once an Application for Renewal is lodged, the Central Screening Unit will ensure that the Carer's Blue Card is up to date.
- ▶ CSU will complete child protection and personal history checks.
- ▶ Child Safety can also elect at any time during the period of approval or when approval is due to undertake Criminal, Domestic Violence and Traffic History checks.

This is a decision point - CSU can make a decision that a carer is not suitable to progress to the next stage of their carer assessment renewal process.



Blue Cards

- ▶ Blue Cards are required to be reviewed every three years - therefore the Blue Card process of renewal may not align with a Foster or Kinship Care renewal.
- ▶ Blue Card Services will send card holders a reminder to renew their Blue Card 10 weeks before their card expiry date. Approved carers and adult household members are required to lodge an application at least 30 days prior to the expiry date of the Blue Card.
- ▶ Carers and Child Safety are responsible to advise Blue Card Services of any change to their circumstances relating to changes to Child Protection history. Carers must disclose any substantiated outcome of harm to Blue Card Services by law within 7 days of receiving the outcome.
- ▶ Changes to criminal history will also be provided to Blue Card Services by Queensland Police.

It is a requirement for any carer to hold a positive Blue Card notice in Queensland to be a carer. If a Blue Card is cancelled for an approved carer, the carer's status must be cancelled or suspended pending possible appeals.

This is a decision point - Blue Card Services could make a decision to cancel or not renew a Blue Card based on Child Protection and/or Criminal checks.



Blue Cards - Assessable information

Blue Card Services being by checking the [National Reference System](#) (NRS) to see if another state or territory has issued an adverse working with children decision against you, which may exclude an applicant from holding a blue card.

Next step is to review assessable information which includes

- ▶ any charges or convictions for offences in Australia, even if no conviction was recorded (including spent convictions, pending and non-conviction charges)
- ▶ certain orders, reporting obligations, or applications under the [Child Protection \(Offender Reporting and Offender Prohibition Order\) Act 2004](#) or [Dangerous Prisoners \(Sexual Offenders\) Act 2003](#)
- ▶ court-issued disqualification orders that prohibit a person from applying for or holding a blue card
- ▶ disciplinary information from certain organisations (including about teachers, childcare licensees, foster carers and disability workers)
- ▶ domestic violence information, (including domestic violence orders whether temporary or final, police protection notices and police protection directions)
- ▶ adverse interstate working with children check information
- ▶ police investigative information relating to allegations of serious child-related sexual offences, even if no charges were laid
- ▶ other information that may indicate a risk to children, including information people must disclose when they apply for a blue card, such as child protection information).

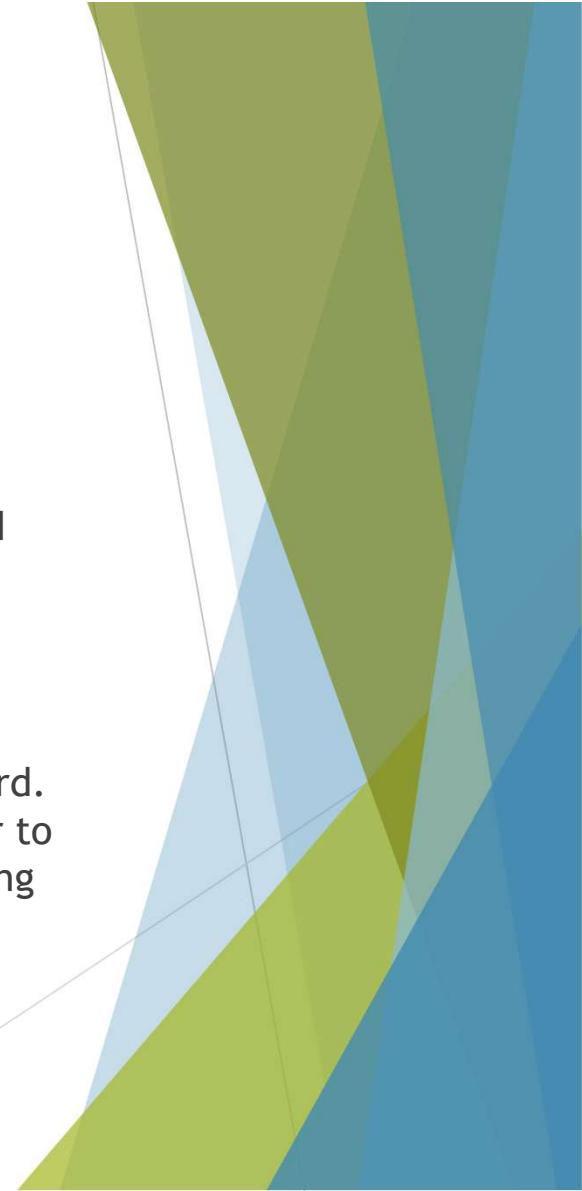


No card - no start

From 31st August 2020 - the 'No card, no start' legislation was introduced (Working with Children's Act). This resulted from the review into the Bluecard system as a result of the death of Tiahleigh Palmer

What this means

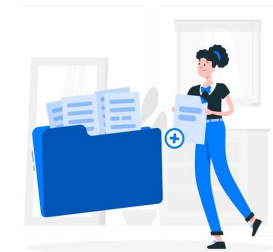
No adult household member can be living in the carer home, without a bluecard. The only exception to this is a Y/P that was already living in family home prior to 18th birthday and they have lodged an application for a bluecard prior to turning 18.



Assessment

Core requirements

- ▶ Assessment interviews with the applicant and household members
- ▶ Interviews or information from other sources relevant to assessment
- ▶ Household Safety study
- ▶ Health and Wellbeing Questionnaire
- ▶ Interview of child in the care arrangement
- ▶ Information provided by CSO
- ▶ Outcome of Standard of Care Reviews or Harm reports
- ▶ Participation in mandatory training



The assessment process provides the final decision point for renewal of approval. Referee and GP reports are no longer core requirements.

Who Should Complete an Assessment ?

In the majority of cases it is best that the person who has been supporting the Carer complete the assessment for the following reasons:

1. Already established relationship.
2. Assessor has a true understanding of the family, dynamics, support needs, strengths and areas for growth through their support and observation of the Carer during the approval period.



Who Should Complete Assessment ?

Cont...

3. Carer files do not always capture a full story of a Carer family - therefore whilst an external assessor may have access to a file, they will not have an intimate knowledge of the Carer family and could miss crucial information.
4. If an external assessor is undertaking the re-approval then it is their responsibility to engage with the Support Worker and CSO to gather information about the Carers history from the last approval period.
5. Assessor who has supported the Carer would be better placed to interview children in care or natural children in the home as they would more than likely have an established relationship.

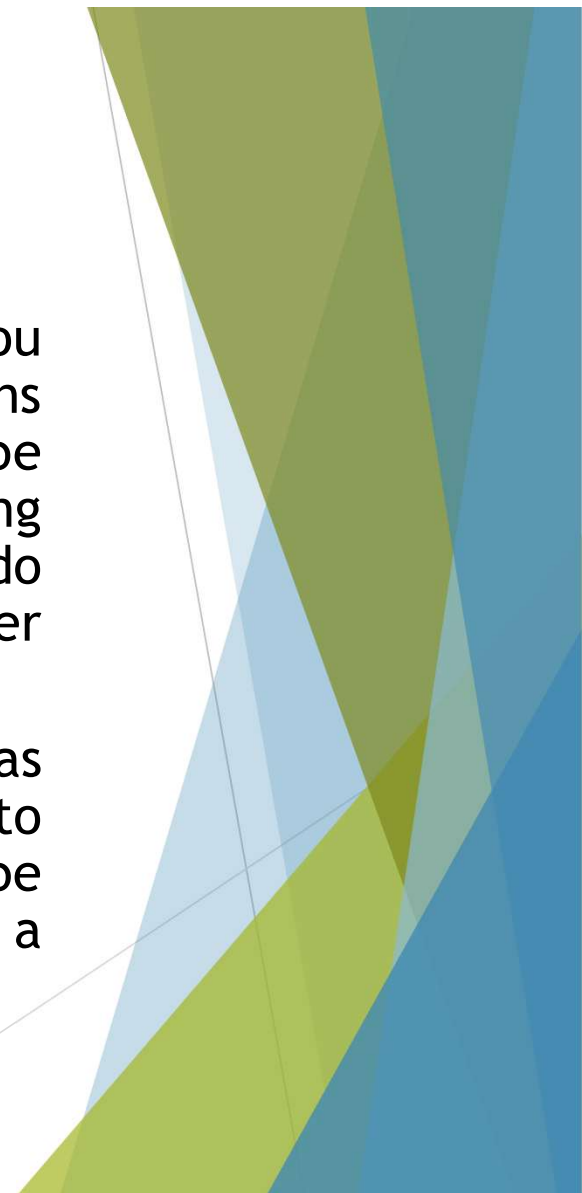


Who Should Complete Assessment ?

Cont...

- ▶ If a decision is made to engage an external assessor, you need to ask yourself why. If it is due to concerns regarding the Carer, then this may not always be appropriate. A Support Worker has a role of monitoring and challenging and they should feel comfortable to do this in a way that will not destroy a relationship, rather build a mutually respectful relationship.

In most cases this is part of a support workers role and as stated earlier in the presentation, this is not the time to be raising any new concerns, so anything that needs to be challenged as part of the assessment should not be a surprise to the Carer anyway.



Foster and Kinship Renewals

Activity

- ▶ Brainstorm - What information will you need in order to complete a Renewal on a Foster or Kinship Carer ?



Information Needed to assess a Foster or Kinship Carer

1. Demonstrated ability to meet Statement of Standards through:
 - ⦿ Interview Resource - Statement of Standard;
 - ⦿ Observations throughout the approval period;
 - ⦿ Review of Carer file;
 - ⦿ Interview/discussion with Foster child/ren;
 - ⦿ Interview with CSO's.

Information Needed to assess a Foster or Kinship Carer Cont...

2. Information about what training the Carer has undertaken during the approval period and learning's from training:
 - ⦿ Certificates held on file;
 - ⦿ Discussions with Carer about learning's;
 - ⦿ Observations if assessor has been to or facilitated particular training.
 - ⦿ Requirement now under Child Safe Standards (7)

Information Needed to assess a Foster or Kinship Carer Cont...

3. Outcomes of any Standard of Care Reviews or Harm reports which, have been responded to for the preceding one or two years through:
 - ⦿ Discussions with carers;
 - ⦿ Review of Carer file;
 - ⦿ Discussions with Senior Practitioner and/or CSO involved in matter.

Information Needed to assess a Foster or Kinship Carer Cont...

4. Outcomes of personal history checks if applicable and if applicable, household members through:
 - ⦿ Speaking with PSU to find out whether this has been something that has been sought, if so, why?

Information Needed to assess a Foster or Kinship Carer Cont...

5. Information from additional sources for example an updated Carer Applicant Health and Wellbeing Questionnaire or Household Safety Check.



Additionally for Kinship Carers

- ▶ Assessor must bring their mind to the Kinship Carer's ability to continue to meet the needs of the children currently in their care by considering the child's case plan and determining whether the applicant is facilitating the agreed case plan goal and outcomes while remembering the child is more than likely a family member.



Re-Approval Assessment

Whilst the re-approval document only calls for comments where there has been changes/issues or concerns in the approval period, you must bring your mind to the following:

- ▶ **What does your local CSSC Manager like to see in re-approval Assessment - some would like evidence of capacity in each section with examples of how Carer has met the standards of care and they also want to hear about the positive things that have occurred, not only making comments when there are issues.**

Activity

In pairs - discuss some changes that may occur for a Carer that may be positive or a change that could effect their caring capacity.



Examples

Motivation

Carer has a more realistic view of fostering now and is motivated to expand the ages of ???

Relationships

Carer's children have now grown up and moved out of the home.

Health and Wellbeing

Carer's diabetes is now well controlled.



Assessment Domains...



Top Tips for Assessment Domains

- ▶ Remember to engage with carer through a discussion style where you can
- ▶ Always ensure that you read the carers initial assessment if this is the first time you are completing an assessment on them and then read the most recent renewal of approval
- ▶ View process of renewal as a reflection process for carer.
- ▶ Bring to the discussions positive examples that have been observed during the approval period from the Foster and Kinship Care Service and CSSC as to how carers have met competency areas and Statement of Standards.
- ▶ Know the names of children carer has provided care for during the approval period and how long they were with carer for. Reflect on these placements - remember the positives even if the placement was an unplanned end.

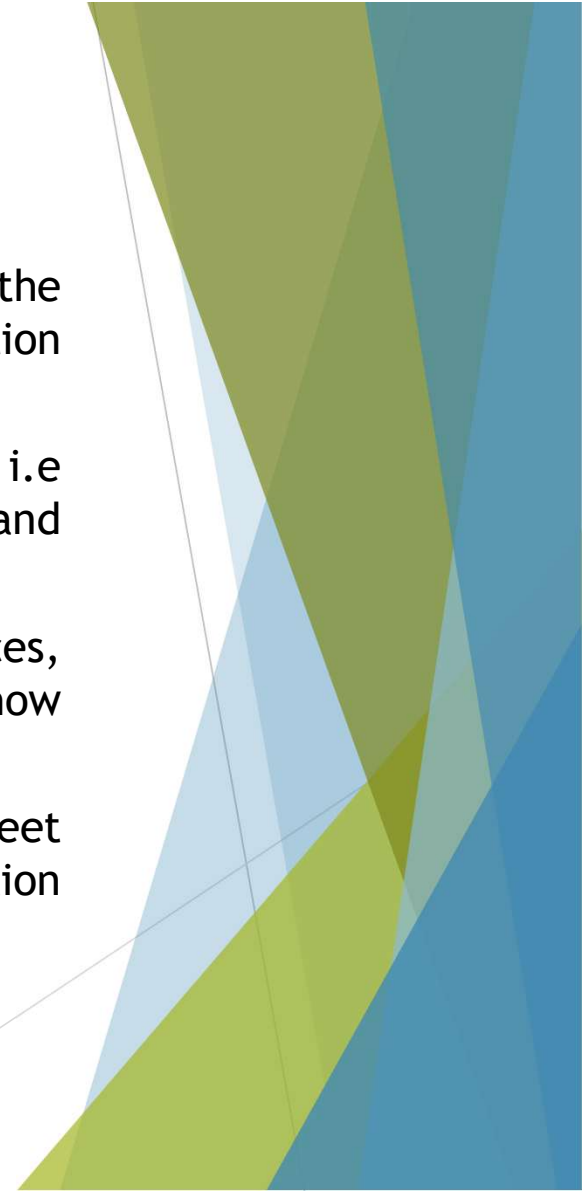
Most of all, come prepared, know the carer household if you are an external assessor by completing a file review and treat experience with respect.

Motivation

- ▶ Explore whether the experience of fostering has impacted on the carer's motivation to continue caring and if their motivation continues to be positive.
- ▶ Explore some of the challenges associated with fostering i.e reunification, view of birth families, types of placements and continued views of the entire carer family.

Policy requirement (1) Ability to identify personal experiences, backgrounds, current family dynamics and lifestyle and reflect on how these are relevant to caring for a child.

Statement of Standards - has the carer/s demonstrated ability to meet the child's dignity and rights, cultural and ethnic needs and connection to family and other significant relationships.

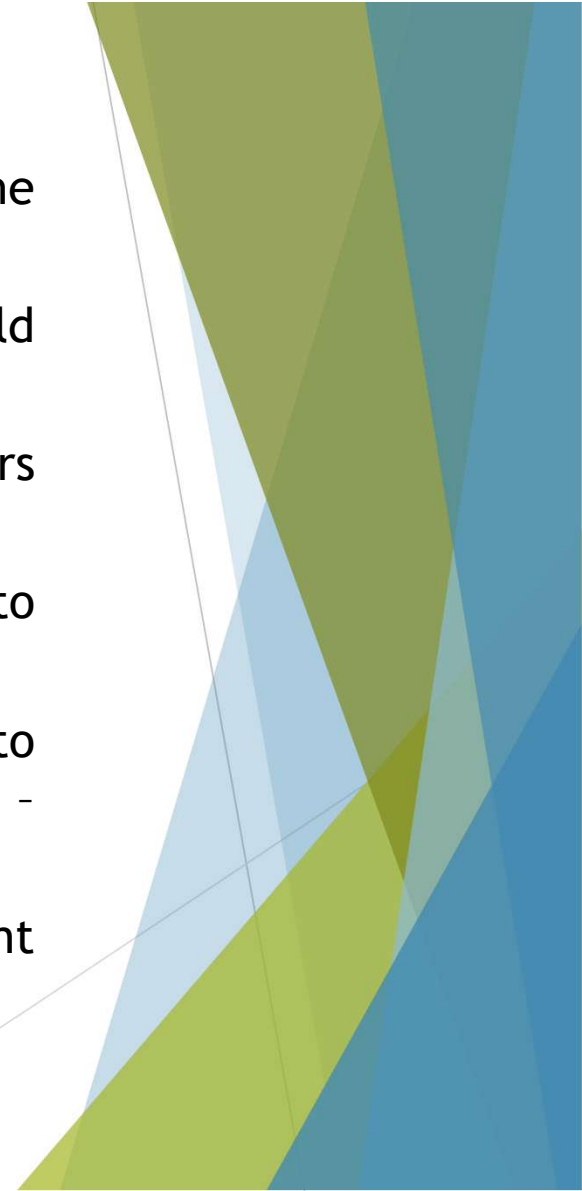


Household members

- ▶ Explore how the experience of fostering has impacted on the household members.
- ▶ Explore how conflict has been managed with household members as a result of fostering.
- ▶ Explore how carer/s have helped other household members adapt to the fostering role.
- ▶ Explore challenges and positives that fostering has brought into the carer household.
- ▶ Interview household members (where appropriate taking into consideration age and understanding) of their experiences - what do they view as positives and negatives.

Policy link - Ability to provide a safe and stable living environment that is free from harm and risk of harm.

Statement of Standards - link to dignity and rights.



Social Assessment - Family Structure

- ▶ Explore if there have been any changes to family structure and if so the impact that any change has had on the ability for the carer to provide quality care (remember - change can also be positive).
- ▶ Changes in family structure can be household members needing to take on increased responsibility, it could be that an adult son/daughter has moved out or moved back in. Changes to employment status could impact on the family structure in respect to roles and responsibilities.

Policy - Ability to identify personal experiences, background, current family dynamics and lifestyle and reflect on how these are relevant to caring for a child in care.

Statement of Standards - (b) (e) (f) (h) (i) (j) (k).

Social Assessment - Social Supports

- ▶ During the approval period, has there been a change to social support network - providing care could have had an impact on the support they receive outside of their family (could be positive or negative impact). Use eco-map tool to map current social supports and compare this to last approval period, this can be a good visual tool for assessor and carer household and provide insight into how carer views formal supports
- ▶ What has been the impact of any change.
- ▶ How have carers engaged with formal supports during approval period i.e. care team supports.

Policy - Ability to identify personal experiences, background, current family dynamics and lifestyle and reflect on how these are relevant to caring for a child in care.

Statement of Standards - (b) (e) (f) (h) (i) (j) (k).

Social Assessment - Time

- ▶ Has there been a change in circumstance that has impacted on the carer household's time availability - how has this impacted on placement stability and ability for carer household to meet the many requirements that come with caring for children in family based care.
- ▶ Consider using time pie resource for current period and compare this to previous assessment, this will help identify any changes and how this has been managed.
- ▶ How has the time required in providing family based care impacted on time with other household members (spousal and biological children relationships) how has this been managed.

Policy - Ability to identify personal experiences, background, current family dynamics and lifestyle and reflect on how these are relevant to caring for a child in care.

Statement of Standards - (b) (e) (f) (h) (i) (j) (k).

Social assessment - financial

- ▶ Has there been any changes in the carer households financial situation that has effected their ability to provide quality care i.e. loss of employment.
- ▶ What has been observations of workers during the approval period of the carers meeting the financial burden of providing care.

Statement of Standards link:

- (b) The child's needs for physical care will be met, including adequate food, clothing and shelter.
- (e) The child's material needs relating to his or her schooling, physical and mental stimulation, recreation and general living will be met.
- (h) The child will receive dental, medical and therapeutic services necessary to meet his or her needs.
- (i) The child will be given the opportunity to participate in positive social and recreational activities appropriate to his or her developmental level and age.

Relationships - Present Spousal

- ▶ If this is the first renewal of approval, explore how the realities of fostering has impacted on spousal relationship, review initial assessment and explore if actual impact is consistent with how carers thought fostering would impact.
- ▶ Explore any changes to spousal relationship, remember change does not need to be associated with negative outcomes, it could be that spousal partner has become more helpful and hands on in parenting role.
- ▶ Explore strategies carers are putting in place to maintain positive spousal relationship in the face of parenting in a Statutory system.

Policy - Ability to identify personal experiences, background, current family dynamics and lifestyle and reflect on how these are relevant to caring for a child in care.

Statement of Standards (a) (c) (g) (j).



Relationships - parental relationships with children (including adult children not living in household)

- ▶ If first renewal, explore actual impact of fostering on relationships with children and review initial assessment to see if this is consistent with what carers thought would be the case.
- ▶ Explore how children have input into the fostering journey and describe any changes to relationship dynamics in the family between children (including adult not living in the home) and carers.
- ▶ Explore how carers may have managed any potential changes in relationships.
- ▶ Children should also be interviewed in this section to explore the above from their point of view, i.e. how they may perceive relationships have changed, how they have been made to feel part of the fostering journey and how any changes in relationships have been managed by the carer household.

Health and wellbeing

- ▶ Explore any changes to health and wellbeing over the one or two year approval period.
- ▶ If carer/s have diagnosis of any health related matter in previous assessments, explore whether there has been any change/progression or improvement of diagnosis and identify any potential impact on fostering.
- ▶ Ensure all immunisations are up to date in carer household and have discussion with carers about how they have maintained immunisation schedule for children in their care.
- ▶ Ensure Health and wellbeing and observations are used as assessment in this domain.
- ▶ Ensure observation is used to support assessment

Policy link - Ability to provide a safe and stable living environment that is free from harm and risk of harm.

Statement of Standard - the child will receive dental, medial and therapeutic services necessary to meet his or her need.

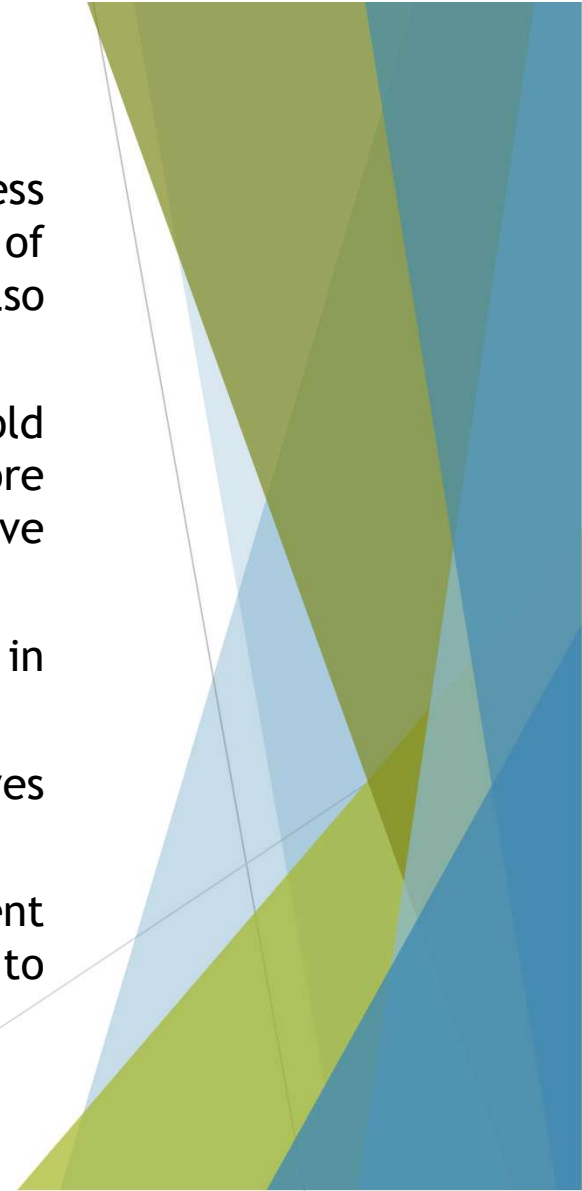
The child will receive emotional care that allows him or her to experience being cared about and valued and that contributes to the child's positive self regard.

Stress Management

- ▶ Explore how carer/s has demonstrated their management of stress related to fostering during the approval period. Draw on examples of stressful periods that relate to both caring for a foster child, but also the stress that comes with caring for a child in a Statutory system.
- ▶ Recognise that on top of stress relating to fostering, carer household will have every day stress that all families in society face. Explore whether there has been stress factors outside of fostering that have impacted on the household and how this has been managed.
- ▶ Explore with the carer strategies that the carer household has put in place to manage stress levels for the whole carer household.
- ▶ Ensure interview with CSO, children in care and carer themselves informs this subject.

Policy - Ability to identify personal experiences, background, current family dynamics and lifestyle and reflect on how these are relevant to caring for a child in care.

Statement of Standards - (a) (c) (g).



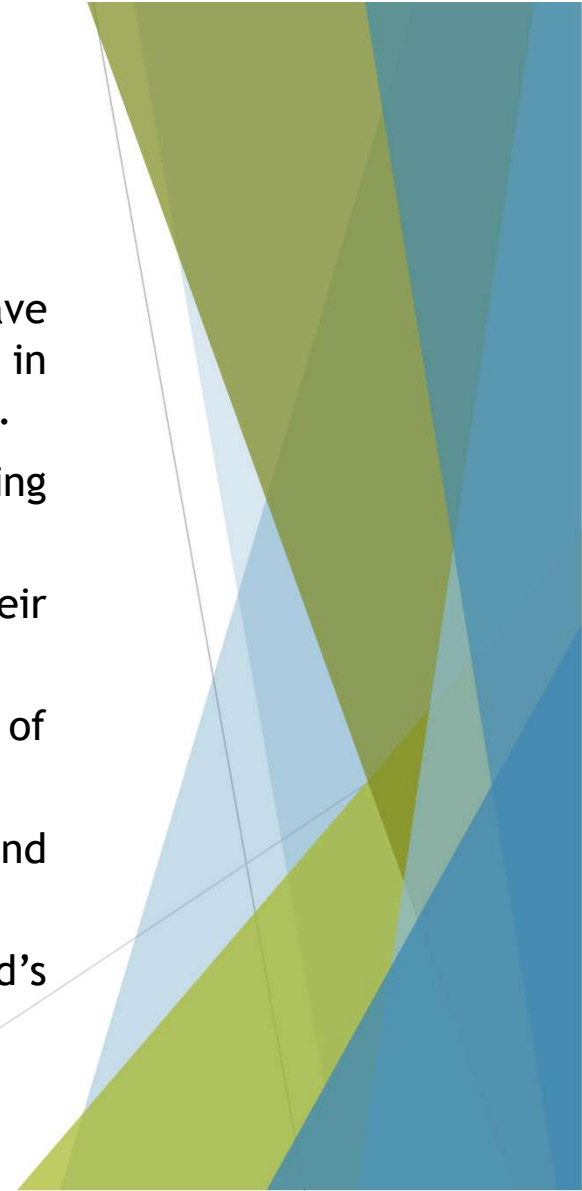
Capacity to provide quality care - Parenting style

- ▶ If first renewal, explore whether there has been any changes they have identified in their own parenting style compared to how they described in their initial i.e. have they become more flexible or more routine driven.
- ▶ Explore what aspects of parenting they have found most challenging during this approval period and what has been most effective.
- ▶ Explore how carer/s feel a child in their care would describe their parenting and relationship with them.
- ▶ Explore how they have managed potential new developmental stages of children they have not parented before.

Policy Link - Ability to provide a safe environment that is free from harm and risk of harm.

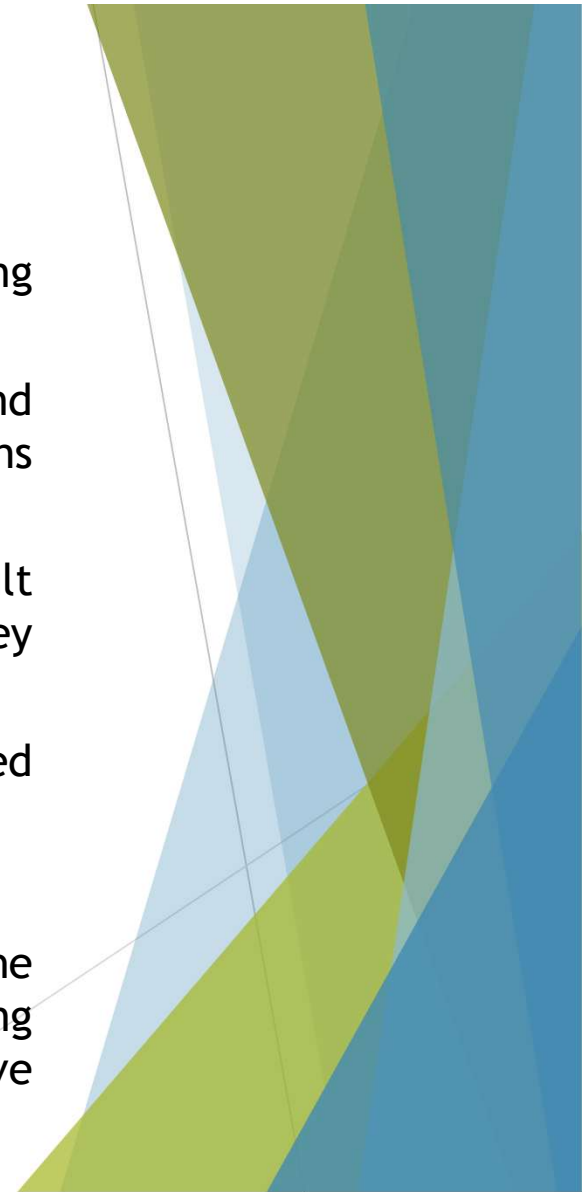
Ability to providing a nurturing environment that contributes to a child's positive self regard.

Statement of Standards - All of them !!



Providing care to children and young people in family based care

- ▶ Explore (especially if first renewal) the experience of parenting children that are not your own - how has this been different.
- ▶ Explore knowledge development in the area of trauma based care and how the experience of harm impacts on a child or young persons behaviours, draw on examples from carers.
- ▶ Explore times with carers they have found management of difficult behaviours and what has been the outcome of this - explore how they may deal with this differently in the future (align this to FCA).
- ▶ Explore confidentiality and privacy and how carer/s have managed this for children and young people in their care.
- ▶ Explore how carer/s have managed relationships with birth family.
- ▶ Draw on examples from carers as to how they have meet the Statement of Standards. If fostering support worker undertaking assessment, share some of your observations as to how you have observed the carer/s meeting the Statement of Standards.



Continued...

- ▶ Ensure that evidence is gathered from a range of sources including, the carer/s themselves, interviews with biological children and foster children, interviews with CSO/s and Fostering and Kinship Care Case officer/s.
- ▶ Provide carers with Statement of Standards resource when inviting them to reapply to be carer/s and ask them to consider jotting down examples in advance of interview/discussions for renewal of how they have meet the Statement of Standards.

Top Tip

When exploring the Parenting section as part of a renewal, ensure you reflect with the carer on what the next approval period is likely to bring in terms of developmental stages for children and young people and what impact this may have on their parenting style

- ▶ Have they parented this age before
- ▶ What are likely to be some of the challenges
- ▶ How can the foster and kinship care agency support learning and development in this area and how can this be incorporated into their foster care agreement for carers

For example if a carer has a 10 year old as their eldest and this is a long term placement, in three years they will have a teenager, are they prepared for the different parenting strategies they will need to draw on and do the understand the developmental milestones of a teenager i.e. risk taking behaviour.



Cultural awareness

- ▶ Explore whether carer/s have cared for any child from a different culture to their own during the approval period, if so explore with carer what they did on a day to day basis to meet the cultural needs of the child.
- ▶ Explore whether carers have sought out additional cultural development.
- ▶ Explore carers understanding of the provisions in the Child Protection Act as they relate to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and what this means in practice.
- ▶ What impact has carer observed on a child they have cared for when they do integrate culture into their world.
- ▶ What has been some of the challenges of connecting a child to their culture and how have the carer/s attempted to overcome these challenges.
- ▶ Ensure you gather evidence from interviews with carer/CSO/s, foster child/ren, fostering and kinship care support officer and include observations if able.

Statement of Standard link (a) (b) (d) (i) (j).

Household Safety

- ▶ Determine if the carer has maintained an appropriate standard of household safety.
- ▶ Explore areas of Household Safety that relate to sun safety, SIDs and water safety to ensure that carer has most up to date information relating to all areas in terms of law and recommendations and that these are being adhered to - DO NOT just assume carer has up to date information.
- ▶ Complete an updated Household safety check to reflect all of the above and submit this as part of the renewal of approval process.
- ▶ Ensure observations are drawn on to support competency in this section - not just during the interview, but through the entire approval period.

Ability to work as part of a team

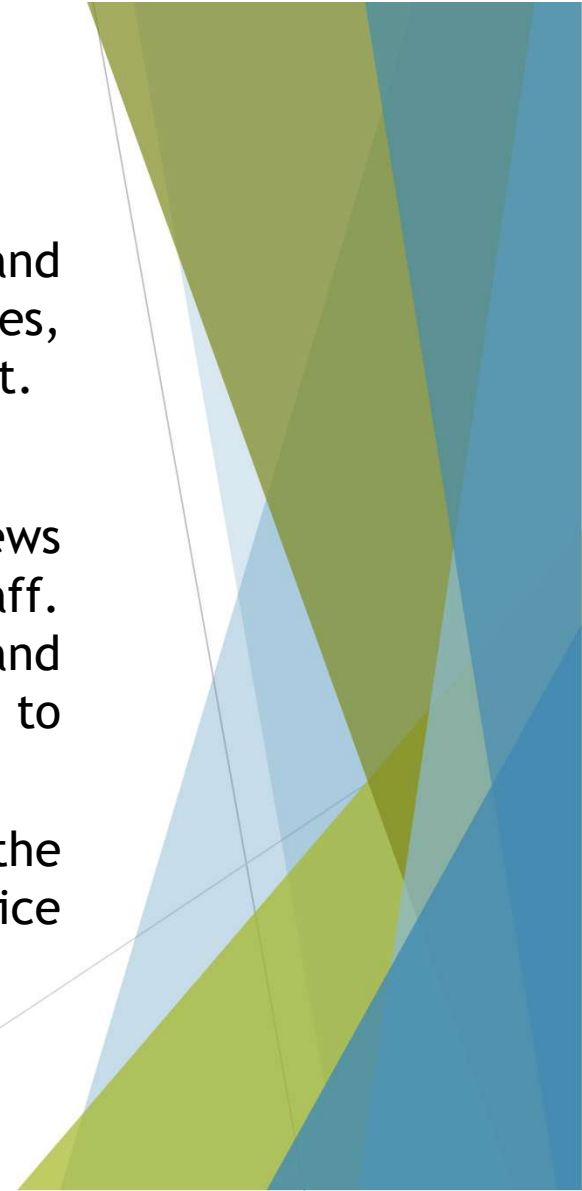
- ▶ Assess the demonstrated ability of the carer to work as part of a team. Provide details of how, during the approval period the carer has:
 1. Participated in case reviews;
 2. Actively supported the case plans for children and young people in care;
 3. Supported a child or young person in their care to participate in decision making;
 4. Advocated appropriately for the needs of child/ren and young people.
- ▶ Explore challenges that carer/s have faced parenting in a statutory system and ways in which they have overcome challenges.
- ▶ Explore examples of how carer/s have resolved conflict with care team members (could include CSSC, school, health, NDIS etc).

Continued...

- ▶ Explore carers understanding of Statement of Commitment and whether they have used this document to help navigate roles, rights and responsibilities of those the care team environment.
- ▶ Explore carer/s view and relationships with birth families.
- ▶ Ensure evidence is gathered from sources including interviews with carer/s, CSSC staff and Foster and Kinship care staff. Other interviews sources such as Community Visitor, Queensland education and/or health staff may also be able to add value to this section.

Policy link - Ability to work as part of a team that including the child, their family, the department and other relevant service providers.

Statement of Standards (a) (d) (e) (f) (h) (j) (k).



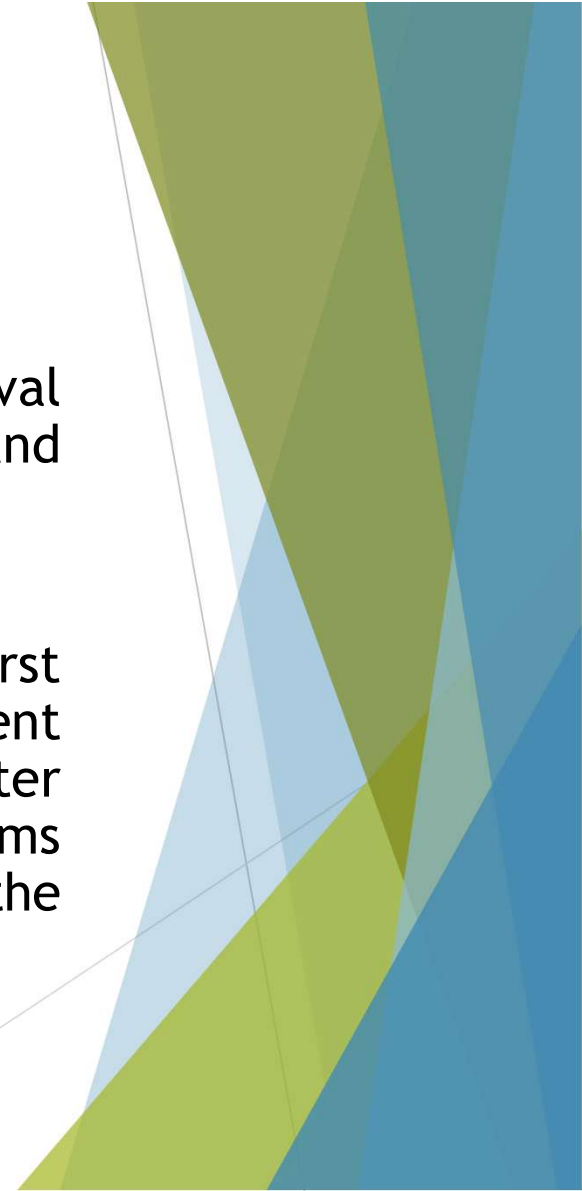
Training Requirements

Standard Training

Foster Carers who are engaging in their first re-approval must have completed Hope and Healing and Modules 5 and 6.

Advanced Training

There is no longer mandatory training after a carer's first year of providing care. However learning and development should form part of a Foster Care agreement for a foster carer and be part of discussions for kinship carers in terms of identifying needs through routine home visits from the Foster and Kinship Care agency.



Training Requirements Cont...

- ▶ Where the partner of a Foster Carer is genuinely unable to participate in standard training due to the nature and location of their employment, for example, those employed by the Defence Forces or mining industry and working interstate or overseas, both Foster Carers may be granted Renewal of Approval, with the condition (recorded on the certificate of approval) that the applicable partner completes standard training when their circumstances change.

In exceptional circumstances, the CSSC Manager may approve an extension of up to 6 months for the completion of standard training, or if necessary, waive the requirement entirely.

Statement of Standards

- ▶ The ability for a Carer to meet the Statement of Standards makes up an important part of your assessment, as it is very much the benchmark that Child Safety has set in terms of the level of care expected for children in the custody and guardianship of the Chief Executive.
- ▶ Demonstrated capacity is a crucial element of your assessment.

Activity

- ▶ Just on your own, think about some of the Carers either on your caseload, or who you have come into contact with.
- ▶ Write down some of the ways they have met the Statement of Standards for children in their care. Think back to your observations and discussions with them to assist you with this. What sections of the report would you evidence these in?
- ▶ Be prepared to share to the wider group.



Top Tip

- ▶ During your monthly home visits to the carers home, take a copy of the Statement of Standard Resource and fill it in together by reflecting on recent examples of how the Standards have been met.
- ▶ Leave a copy with the carer at times to fill out
- ▶ Fill out independently of the carer to capture what you have also observed - the carer will feel valued
- ▶ File these in the carers folder that is easily accessible to reflect on when coming back to complete the Renewal of Approval



Principles of the Child Protection Act

- ▶ As with the Statement of Standards, assessors must be satisfied that carers are committed to meeting the Principles of the Child Protection Act in order to recommend renewal of approval
- ▶ The Principles of the Child Protection Act when properly understood can form the basis for conversations to assist carers to understand decision making and can be a tool for carers to use in the advocacy and support of children and young people.
- ▶ Principles were enhanced as of 21st May 2023 in the Child Protection Act - Section 5A through to 5H outline the Principles referred to Renewal of approval assessment documents



Activity

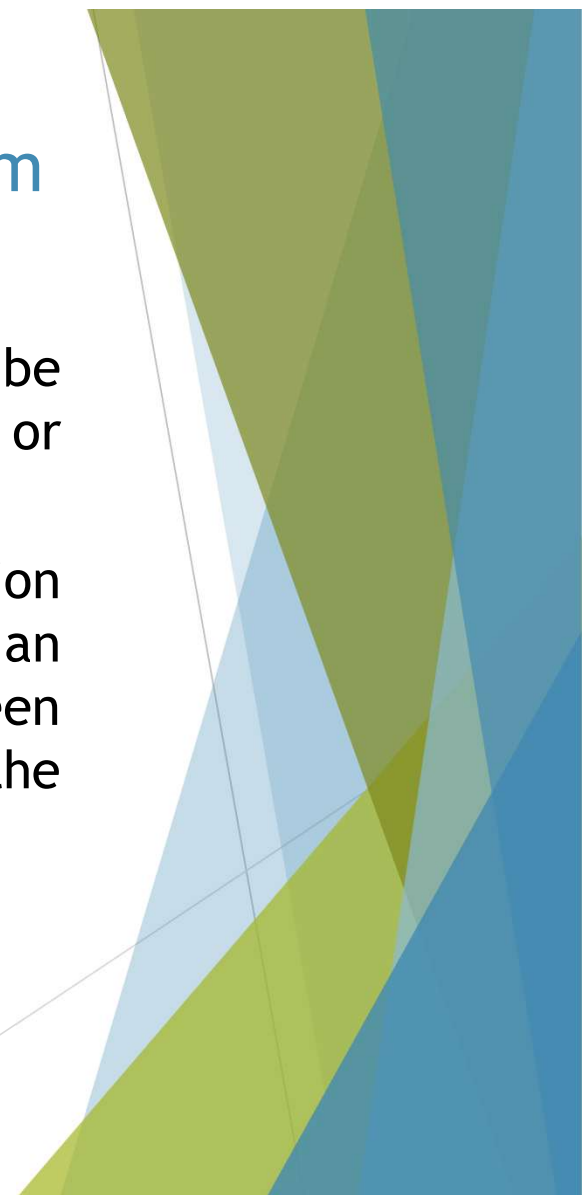
- ▶ In pairs you will review a Principle of the Child Protection Act that will be provided to you by the trainer
- ▶ Discuss what evidence you would be seeking to support a carer's commitment to the Principles provided
- ▶ Be prepared to share to wider group



Addressing Standard or Care Reviews or Harm Reports in the Context of a Re-Approval

Firstly, it must be noted that a re-approval CANNOT be completed if there is a current Standard of Care Review or Harm Report unresolved in relation to a Carer.

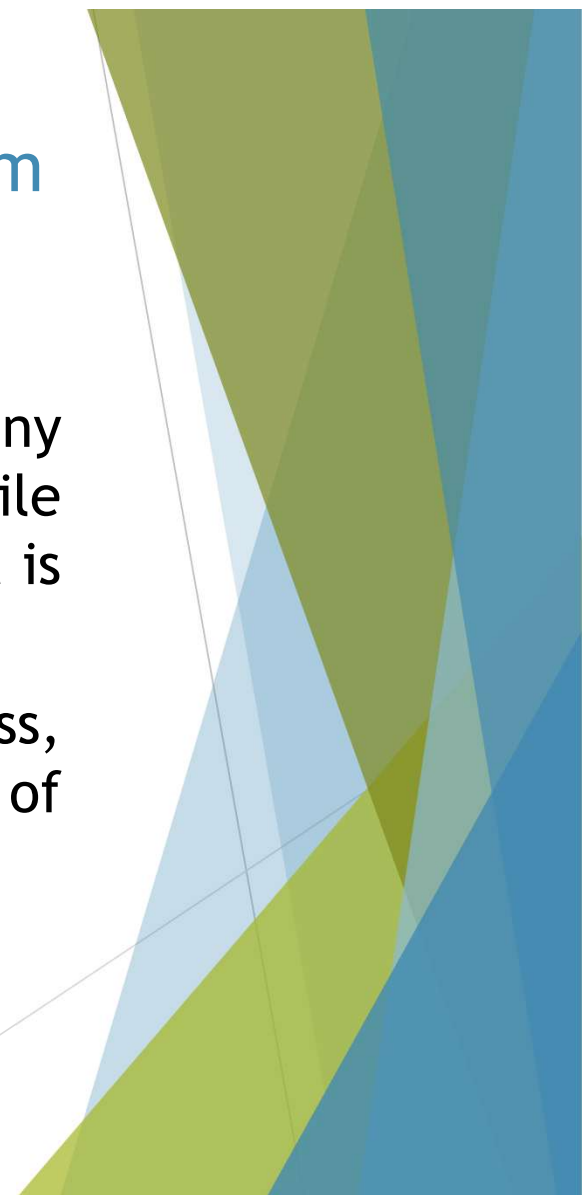
Whilst it is important that the Carer sign their application for renewal within the mandatory timeframes, an assessment should not progress until an outcome has been reached. The outcome could have a major influence on the assessment process and outcome.



Addressing Standard or Care Reviews or Harm Reports in the Context of a Re-Approval Cont...

As an assessor, it is not your role to reach any conclusion as to whether the outcome recorded on file for the Carer is right or not. The outcome is what it is and your role is to:

- ▶ Discuss with the Carer how they found the process, how this has impacted on them in terms of relationships/ confidence and sense of self.



Addressing Standard or Care Reviews or Harm Reports in the Context of a Re-Approval Cont...

- ▶ Discuss some of the events that may have led to the SOCR or Harm Report and what has now been put in place to prevent re-occurrences.
- ▶ Discuss understanding of impact on child/ren in their care.
- ▶ Do not re-investigate and assess - this is not your role.



Recommendation

- ▶ Once you have completed your draft and made a recommendation, the Practice Manual reads that you must provide a draft copy to the Carer prior to it going to the CSSC.
- ▶ The Carer must be advised that they can write an addendum if they do not agree with aspects of the report. This addendum will be attached to the final assessment and will be provided to the CSSC Manager.

Recommendation Cont...

- ▶ As with initial approvals, in order to recommend approval, you must be satisfied that the Carer has met all of the requirements. This being:
 1. The applicant is a suitable person (whether Kinship or Foster) and all members of the household are suitable persons to associate on a daily basis with the child/ren.
 2. The applicant and each adult member of the applicants household have current positive prescribed notices for Blue Cards.

Recommendation Cont...

3. The Carer is able to meet the Standards of Care as set out in the Statement of Standards.
4. The Carer is able to help in appropriate ways towards achieving plans for the child's protection.
5. The Carer does not pose a risk to the child's safety.
6. The Carer is able and willing to protect a child from harm.
7. The Carer understands and is committed to the principles for administering the Act.
8. The Carer has completed any training reasonably required by Chief Executive to ensure the person is able to properly provide the care.

Additionally for Kinship Carers

The recommendation must take into account the following additional requirements for Kinship Carers:

That the child is kin to the applicant, the Child Protection Act defines Kin as

- (a) A member of the child's family group who is a person of significance to the child
- (b) If the child is an Aboriginal child - a person who under Aboriginal tradition, is regarded as kin of the child
- (c) If the child is a Torres Strait Islander child - a person who under Island custom is regarded as kin of the child

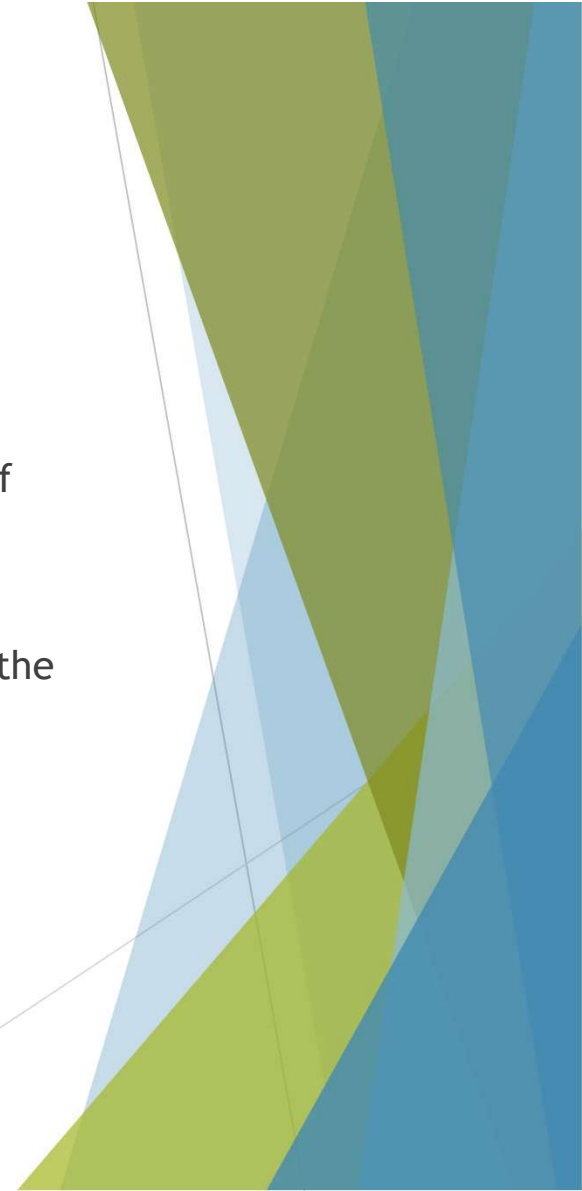
.

Continued.....

(d) Another person -

(i) who is recognized by the child or the child's family group as a person of significant to the child and

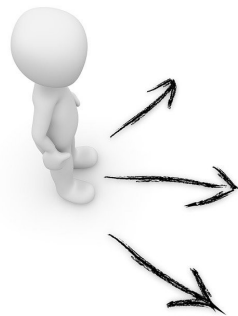
(ii) if the child is an Aboriginal or Torres Strait islander child - with whom the child has a cultural connection with



Outcome - Timeframes

Where possible, the renewal decision should be made within three months of the date the application was 'properly made'.

If an application for renewal is unlikely to be decided within three months and more time is required, ensure the applicant is advised of the delay and the reasons for the delay.



Outcome & Ongoing Supports

- ▶ Once the Manager makes the final decision, they must provide the Carer with a letter of Renewal and the Certificate of Approval.
- ▶ Foster carer renewals must be 1(initial renewal) or 3 years (subsequent renewals) from date of sign off.
- ▶ Kinship carer renewals will be up to (1 initial renewal) and up to 3 years (subsequent renewal) from date of sign off
- ▶ Foster Carers should at this point have their Foster Care Agreement reviewed to reflect the outcome and support needs identified in the Renewal.

Non-recommendation

- ▶ If your recommendation is for non-renewal and the CSSC makes the decision not to renew, the Central Screening Unit must advise Blue Card Services under Section 148 A of the Child Protection Act that the carer's application for approval has been refused.
- ▶ Blue Card Services will likely request further information from Child Safety to assess the carers ongoing suitability to hold a blue card, this information will be considered 'assessable information'
- ▶ A carer has the right to review any decision to not renew their approval through QCAT and any decision to cancel Bluecard through QCAT

Summary

- ▶ Re-approvals are an important and necessary process in ensuring the ongoing quality of care being provided to children and young people in the Child Protection System.
- ▶ Whilst they do not need to be a complicated process, it is important to capture all relevant information and provide a summary to the Manager so that they are able to make an informed decision as to renewal.
- ▶ Remember this is not the time to address new concerns - this is a review !!



Head Office (Inala)

Phone: 07 3256 6166

Email: admin@qfkc.com.au

NB: This training is a Queensland Foster and Kinship Care tool.

Policies and Procedures do change over time.

All efforts are made to provide accurate information at time of training.