

Training Policy for Foster Parents

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1. Introduction

This policy sets out the commitment, practice and review to learning and development within ISP. It has been developed in conjunction with the National Minimum Standards for Foster Care and the Training, Support & Development Standards Framework. It sets out the expectations in relation to the agency and foster parents in relation to all aspects of learning and development.

2. Statement of Intention

Whilst fostering is often highly rewarding, it can also be complex and challenging. The challenges of care are both diverse and extensive, often requiring a significant developmental journey for child and foster parents. The foundations of high quality professional foster care are built upon dedicated, committed and passionate people who receive rigorous and robust support and training.

We believe that foster parents must be enabled to access learning and development opportunities throughout their fostering career. The landscape of childcare is changing all the time and new thinking, research and practice developments are constantly becoming available. Our service is committed to reflect this in the training programme and ensure it becomes fluid and dynamic to capture these opportunities.

We are dedicated to delivering a comprehensive suite of training that equips foster parents with the skills, knowledge and confidence important in supporting and engaging often very bewildered and vulnerable children and young people. As an organisation, we recognise the developmental nature of fostering and variety of learning styles.

Our core aims are to:

- Offer continuous professional development through training events that are credible, relevant and that connect directly with the fostering task.
- Keep our foster parents updated in relation to legislative and policy changes, new guidance and best practice developments.
- Differentiate the training to reflect diversity, levels of ability, learning styles and experience.
- Make training accessible and available in different formats, including face-to-face, online learning and additional reading.
- Provide our foster parents with an individual continuous professional development plan that aligns to their developing fostering career.
- Offer opportunities for individual, shared and group learning in environments that are educational, empowering and value past experience.

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3. Learning, Development and Support

Foster parents must be enabled to access learning and development opportunities throughout their fostering career. This will ensure that they have the skills and knowledge that are needed and allow for their development and growth in practice. This is recognised as an essential ingredient of parenting, supporting and assisting the children and young people placed at ISP.

In England, the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services states that all carers maintain a Training Portfolio (NMS 20.4). ISP will maintain an individual training record for foster parents on Charms and 'Learnative', and foster parents are advised to keep their own portfolio of training to include copies of their certificates which can be downloaded from Charms or 'Learnative'. This will serve as a record of Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

There is an expectation that foster parents will:

- Be prepared to develop their skills throughout their fostering career;
- Attend relevant training;
- Take up training opportunities offered;
- Let ISP know if they are unable to attend training events by contacting the training coordinator or regional administrator who arranged the training event. The earlier the notice can be provided the better as it helps with planning and delivery, and ensures that spaces can be offered to foster parents on a waiting list.

I. Additional support

ISP is committed to assisting foster parents who have difficulties with language or literacy or who may equate expectations in training to fragile educational experiences. ISP will discuss and offer a range of ways that can assist foster parents in the successful achievement of learning and development opportunities. This may include peer mentoring, group sessions based on language/ability, and use of recording devices.

II. Differentiation of learning

In understanding that our foster parent base reflects a diversity of experience, ability and learning style, we aim to provide training that meets these challenges. Training will include a variety of ways to share learning including face-to-face classroom-based, experiential workshops, online learning options, peer mentoring, individual consultations and group workshops.

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The training will involve a range of teaching methods, including presentations, discussions, group exercises, case studies, scenarios, crafted role play and experiential exercises. This acknowledges different learning styles (auditory, visual, tactile and kinaesthetic) within the target audience.

III. E-Learning and virtual training opportunities

In addition to face-to-face training, we offer some courses with e-learning options, and virtual training using the Microsoft Teams platform. These can be accessed via our 'Learnative' website.

'Learnative' is managed by the Learning & Development Team.

E-Learning and virtual training opportunities facilitate foster parents to undertake training in a more flexible way, from home, and can be an effective way of including secondary foster parent in our training opportunities.

IV. Accreditation of prior learning (APL)

This is a process that enables carers to receive recognition for courses attended and certificates and awards they have already achieved in the 3 years prior to approval at Panel.

APL takes into account:

- Organised prior learning, where the learning has been assessed and where certificates are awarded on completion;
- Courses where attendance certificates are provided or attendance is noted on a formal continuing professional development record issued by a recognised organisation (e.g. local authority, NHS).

Following approval, foster parents should inform their supervising social worker of any APL that they would like to be considered and certificates or other evidence should be submitted to the Learning and Development Team for verification. If approved, these will be added to the individual training record.

4. The Learning & Development Programme

The ISP Learning & Development Programme includes a City & Guilds Assured Therapeutic Pathway of training events, whilst also covering the standard mandatory training courses and a range of additional courses relating to key aspects of the fostering role.

In addition to the Learning & Development programme, regional centres may organise additional training events in accordance with local need and in response to current issues and trends.

Some of the training will be delivered by the Learning and Development Team or by ISP staff members with specialist knowledge and an area of interest. Other topics will be commissioned externally from individuals and organisations with expertise, knowledge and working experience in their chosen fields.

i. Mandatory Training for all approved foster parents

There are 8 mandatory training courses that must be completed by all approved foster parents (including secondary foster parents). These courses should be completed as soon as possible (and within the first year of fostering) and a range of ways are offered to achieve this, including e-learning options wherever possible.

Subject	Refresh cycle/notes	Method
Equality, Diversity & Inclusion	Then choose an additional course annually from the 'EDI' catalogue of courses as a refresher	Virtual and e-Learning
Behaviour Management (PRICE)	Refreshed 3 yearly	Face-to-face TBC
Safer care & allegations	Refreshed 3 yearly	Virtual and e-Learning
Safeguarding	Introductory session ALL on approval	e-Learning only now
	One and done, then choose an additional course annually from the 'safeguarding' catalogue of courses as a refresher	Various options and will consider face-to-face for some
Health & Safety	One-off completion on approval and if directed by SSW	e-Learning for all
First Aid	Refreshed 3 yearly Anyone brand new to complete the F2F offer, then refresher can be supported online	Face-to-face e-Learning
Medication in the Foster Home	One off or directed by SSW	Virtual e-learning
Recording and Reporting	One-off or directed by SSW	Virtual e-learning

ii. The Therapeutic Pathway

As a therapeutic fostering provider, it is important that our training offer reflects our commitment to develop our foster parents' skills in understanding and responding therapeutically to children and young people. In addition, we consider self-awareness,

reflective practice, multi-disciplinary team working and the relationship with the young person to be key features of therapeutic care. Our therapeutic training pathway has achieved City & Guilds Assured status, which is a nationally recognised quality benchmark.

Our Therapeutic Pathway of training ensures that all foster parents, from the point of application, receive the training and support that they need to support them in this important relationship.

The developmental nature of the Therapeutic Pathway offers our foster parents an opportunity to develop their skills and knowledge over the course of their fostering career, and apply their skills and knowledge to their practice in a supported way.

The Therapeutic Pathway comprises 2 stages, in addition to pre-approval training:

- Stage 1 (skills-based and knowledge-based modules)
- Stage 2 (Integration and application modules)

The stages are roughly aligned to our general foster parent progression route from 'core', to 'main' and 'senior' grade, but there is flexibility to respond to the foster parent's individual developmental needs and any prior knowledge and experience.

ISP staff also receive the Therapeutic Pathway training to ensure that the team around the child is familiar with, and working to the ISP therapeutic model of care, with shared language, concepts and strategies.

Some of the courses in the Therapeutic Pathway are mandatory, depending on role (see page 7-8).

iii. The Learning & Development Programme, including Therapeutic Pathway

Therapeutic Pathway	
<p>Pre-approval Introduction <i>To be completed as part of Skills to Foster</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction to reflective practice (video presentation and discussion) Fostering therapeutic relationships – overview of core initial training pathway and introduction to key concepts Read “Therapeutic Parenting in a Nutshell” (Sarah Naish) and/or “Parenting a Child with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties” (Dan Hughes) and discuss <p style="color: red; font-weight: bold; margin-top: 10px;">This stage is mandatory for all applicants to foster.</p>
<p>Stage 1a <i>(Mandatory modules)</i> <i>To be completed as part of ‘Core Grade’ training requirements (unless evidenced by prior learning or experience)</i></p>	<p>Fostering Therapeutic Relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Module 1 – Reflective Practice Module 2 - Communication Module 3 – Self-Evaluation <p>The Carers’ Toolbox Programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Module 1 – Foundation: Trauma Module 2 – Foundation: Empathy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This stage is mandatory for all main foster parents, who are expected to attend the face-to-face training sessions. This stage is also mandatory for secondary foster parents approved after 1 Sept 2022, and recommended for all other secondary foster parents. Online training options will be available for secondary foster parents who cannot attend face-to-face training. Completion of these courses is part of the requirement for progression to Main Grade. Foster parents who have achieved a university-accredited Certificate in Therapeutic Fostering may be able to evidence APL (accreditation of prior learning), to be agreed by their manager.
<p>Stage 1b <i>(Additional Knowledge modules)</i></p>	<p>The Carers’ Toolbox Programme continued</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Module 3 – Attachment-needing Module 4 – Dissociation

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<p><i>To be completed as part of 'Main Grade' training requirements (unless evidenced by prior learning or experience).</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Module 5 – The Red Mist – anger • Module 6 – Control • Module 7 –Difficult sibling relationships • Module 8 – High-energy child: hyperactivity • Module 9 – Lying and allegations • Module 10 – Sexualised behavior • Module 11 – Self-harm • Module 12 – Turbulent teenage years • Module 13 – Consolidation workshop <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When foster parents have completed all Stage 1 courses, they will receive a certificate from City & Guilds in addition to ISP's training certificates. • To progress to senior grade, main foster parents must complete all Stage 1 courses. • Stage 1b courses are recommended for secondary foster parents, particularly where they are relevant to the care of specific children and young people in the home. • Foster parents who have achieved a university-accredited Certificate in Therapeutic Fostering may be able to evidence APL (accreditation of prior learning), to be agreed by their manager.
<p>Stage 2 <i>Application and integration</i> <i>To be completed as part of 'Senior Grade' training requirements</i></p>	<p>There are 5 aspects to Stage 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attachment Play workshop 1 – Play and You • Attachment Play workshop 2 – Attachment Play • Attachment Play workshop 3 – Play in Practice • Case Study Discussion Groups • Mentoring/'Giving Back' <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To maintain Senior Grade status, foster parents are expected to continue their training and complete the Stage 2 training and development. • When foster parents have completed Stage 2, they will receive a certificate from City & Guilds in addition to ISP's training certificates.

ISP Learning & Development Programme, including Therapeutic Pathway

**Pre-approval training (*Skills to Foster*)
Face-to-Face or virtual**

Core elements	Therapeutic pathway Pre-Approval (Introduction)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Safeguarding• Equality, Diversity & Inclusion• The law• Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction to reflective practice (video presentation and discussion)• Fostering therapeutic relationships – overview of core initial training pathway and introduction to key concepts• Read and discuss “Therapeutic Parenting in a Nutshell” (Sarah Naish) and/or “Parenting a Child with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties” (Dan Hughes)

**Pre-Panel training
Online**

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ‘Prevent’

Mandatory Courses (mandatory for all approved foster parents)	
To be completed within the first year of fostering	
	Refresher cycle/notes
Equality, Diversity & Inclusion	Complete once, then choose an additional course annually from the 'EDI' catalogue of courses as a refresher
Behaviour Management (PRICE)	Refreshed 3 yearly
Safer Care & Allegations	Refreshed 3 yearly Recommend to be first completed within 3 months of approval
Safeguarding <i>N.B. Also mandatory for Accredited Carers</i>	Introductory session ALL on approval To be completed before approval (or as soon as possible thereafter), and before children are placed Then choose an additional course annually from the 'safeguarding' catalogue of courses as a refresher
Health & Safety	One-off or refresh as directed by SSW
First Aid	Refreshed 3 yearly Online course to be completed before approval (or as soon as possible thereafter) and before children are placed Face to face course for main carer when available
Medication in the Foster Home	One off or refresh as directed by SSW
Recording and Reporting	One off or refresh as directed by SSW Recommend to be completed within 3 months of approval
Safeguarding Adults - Mandatory for Parent & Child/Staying Put placements (ordinarily Main Grade or above)	One off or refresh as directed by SSW
Parent & Child Placements - Mandatory for Parent & Child placements (ordinarily Main Grade or above)	None
The Positive Role for Men who Foster - Mandatory for male foster parents at Main Grade (or earlier)	None

Core Training

Mandatory courses and Therapeutic Pathway Stage 1a (mandatory modules) to be completed to move to Main Grade. Foster Parents will not ordinarily progress to Main Grade until they have been fostering for 2 years.

<p>Mandatory courses Face-to-Face, virtual and e-learning options</p>	<p>Therapeutic Pathway Stage 1a (mandatory modules) Face-to-Face in centres for main foster parents, with online options for secondary foster parents Each session followed by an ALS</p>	<p>Additional courses available (to be completed at any grade, in accordance with the PDP) Face-to-Face and virtual options</p>
<p>The following courses are mandatory for <i>all approved foster parents</i> and should be completed as soon as possible, and within the first year of fostering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding (also to be completed by Accredited Carers) • Safer Care & Allegations • Equality & Diversity • First Aid • PRICE • Health & Safety • Medication in the Foster Home • Recording & Reporting <p>In addition, the following courses are compulsory for the main foster parent before progressing to Main Grade:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Sexual Exploitation • Managing Disclosures • Health of Looked After Children • Helping Children Succeed at School 	<p>The following courses are mandatory for <i>all main foster parents, and secondary foster parents approved after 1 Sept 2022</i>. They are recommended for all other secondary foster parents:</p> <p>Fostering Therapeutic Relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Module 1 - Reflective Practice • Module 2 – Communication • Module 3 – Self Evaluation <p>The Carers’ Toolbox Programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Module 1 – Foundation: Trauma • Module 2 – Foundation: Empathy 	<p>ISP courses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaving Care (ISP) • Internet & Mobile Safety (ISP) • Education of Looked After Children • Promoting Sexual Health (ISP) • Smoking, Drugs and Alcohol (ISP) • Staying Put (ISP) • Life Skills Development (ISP) • Safe Social Networking (ISP) • Parental Controls (ISP) • Internet Security (ISP) <p>There are also a wide range of CPD courses available on Learnative from the L&D Team.</p>

Main Grade Training

Mandatory refreshers, Therapeutic Pathway Stage 1b and at least 4 additional courses to be completed to move to Senior Grade.

In addition, foster parents who wish to progress to Senior Grade must complete a case study or have achieved NVQ3/QCF 3 in Health & Social Care, and have the support of their Registered Manager. Foster parents will not ordinarily progress to Senior Grade until they have been fostering for 4 years.

Mandatory courses Face-to-Face and virtual options	Therapeutic Pathway Stage 1b (The Carers' Toolbox Programme) Face to Face in centres Each session followed by an ALS (reflective group)	Additional courses available (to be completed at any grade, in accordance with the PDP)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent and Child Placements (mandatory for a parent-and-child placement) • Safeguarding Adults (mandatory for Parent & Child/Staying Put placements) • The Positive Role for Men who Foster (mandatory for male foster parents) • Refreshers of mandatory courses in line with schedules (PRICE, Safer Care & Allegations, Safeguarding, First Aid) 	<p>The Carers' Toolbox Programme continued</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modules 3-12 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attachment-Seeking • Dissociation • Anger • Control • Difficult Sibling Relationships • Hyperactivity • Lying & Allegations • Sexualised Behaviour • Self-Harm • Turbulent Teenage Years • Module 13 – Consolidation workshop <p>A City & Guilds Certificate will be issued upon completion of all Stage 1 modules.</p>	<p>ISP courses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaving Care (ISP) • Internet & Mobile Safety (ISP) • Education of Looked After Children • Promoting Sexual Health (ISP) • Smoking, Drugs and Alcohol (ISP) • Staying Put (ISP) • Life Skills Development (ISP) • Safe Social Networking (ISP) • Parental Controls (ISP) • Internet Security (ISP) <p>There are also a wide range of CPD courses available on Learnative from the L&D Team.</p>

Senior Grade training – continuation of the Therapeutic Pathway

At Senior Grade status, foster parents must complete mandatory training refreshers and are expected to attend courses from the Stage 2 therapeutic pathway and at least 3 additional courses each year.

Mandatory courses Face-to-Face and virtual options	Therapeutic Pathway Face-to-Face in centres wherever possible	Additional courses (to be completed at any grade, in accordance with the PDP) Face-to-Face and virtual options
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refreshers of mandatory courses in line with schedules (PRICE, Safer Care & Allegations, Safeguarding, First Aid) 	<p>Stage 2 – Application & Integration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attachment Play workshop 1 – Play and You • Attachment Play workshop 2 – Attachment Play • Attachment Play workshop 3 – Play in Practice • Case Study Discussion Groups • Mentoring/'Giving Back' <p>A City & Guilds Certificate will be issued upon completion of all Stage 2 modules.</p>	<p>ISP courses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaving Care (ISP) • Internet & Mobile Safety (ISP) • Education of Looked After Children • Promoting Sexual Health (ISP) • Smoking, Drugs and Alcohol (ISP) • Staying Put (ISP) • Life Skills Development (ISP) • Safe Social Networking (ISP) • Parental Controls (ISP) • Internet Security (ISP) <p>There are also a wide range of CPD courses available on Learnative from the L&D Team.</p>

iv. Pre-Approval Training

All applicants (including where there is a second applicant) undertake the ISP Skills to Foster preparation training programme.

The programme is delivered prior to the commencement of the fostering assessment (BAAF Form F). The assessment will consider the impact of the preparation training and any other additional learning gained through the assessment process and identify areas for skills and knowledge development. This informs the creation of the personal development plan (PDP) and priority training needs post-approval.

The Skills to Foster course includes preparatory training in safeguarding, equality and diversity, education and the law. It also provides the initial training in the Therapeutic Pathway.

Applicants are also required to complete the following e-learning courses prior to attending Panel:

- Safeguarding Level 1
- Child Sexual Exploitation Level 1
- Home Office PREVENT training

v. Post-Approval Training

Induction is undertaken by the supervising social worker and/or fostering advisor, within 1 week of approval. The Training Support & Development Standards (TSDS) workbook is introduced and initial planning for completion is started. This is incorporated into a Personal Development Plan (PDP) that includes identification and completion of core training.

All newly approved foster parents for ISP are required to complete the 'core' training programmes before progression to 'main grade'. This comprises:

- 8 mandatory training courses (mandatory for all approved foster parents)
- Therapeutic Pathway Stage 1a (see page 7-8)

In addition, the main foster parent must complete three additional courses:

- The Health of Looked After Children
- Helping Children Succeed at School
- Managing Disclosures

This training is mapped to the Training, Support & Development Standards (TSDS) and the Fostering Services National Minimum Standards (NMS). At the end of the first twelve months it is a requirement that the TSDS is completed.

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A common question asked is, “Can I only undertake core training?” our policy response is no; this is a minimum expectation and we welcome additional attendance at other training events. We would ask that the PDP prioritises the core training but if there is space and capacity to do more, we are happy for this expectation to be exceeded.

It is anticipated that progression from ‘core’ to ‘main’ grade will take 2 years. Foster parents will complete the Therapeutic Pathway Stage 1a (5 mandatory modules), some refreshers of mandatory training, and additional courses as required by their individual needs and PDP.

Progression to ‘senior’ grade is not automatic, and requires the support and recommendation of the Registered Manager, completion of ‘Main Grade’ training and in addition the completion of a Case Study exercise. Foster parents can obtain information and advice about this progression from their supervising social worker and fostering advisor.

5. Training, Support & Development Standards (TSDS)

The TSDS forms part of a foster parent’s induction to the role. They provide a national minimum benchmark that sets out what foster parents should know, understand and be able to do within the first 12 months after being approved. All independent fostering providers and local authorities supporting foster parents throughout the UK have a duty to ensure that the TSDS are implemented and to ensure that foster parents have access to pre-approval training, induction and ongoing professional development.

Foster parents can expect to receive help and advice in planning their evidence and completing the workbook by their supervising social worker and/or fostering advisor. Where there is a joint application, foster parents have a choice to complete the workbook together and includes the evidence of both the primary foster parent and the role of the secondary foster parent, or individual workbooks. ISP will assist families in deciding the best option for their circumstances.

6. Training for Secondary Foster Parents

Where both partners in a household are approved foster parents, the expectation is that the secondary foster parent completes a number of mandatory training programmes:

- Safeguarding
- Safer Care & Allegations
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
- First Aid
- Behaviour Management (PRICE)
- Health & Safety
- Medication in the Foster Home (online version)
- Recording & Reporting (online version)

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In addition, 5 courses within Stage 1 of the Therapeutic Pathway (3 ‘skills’ modules, and the first two ‘knowledge’ modules) are mandatory for secondary foster parents. Online versions of these mandatory courses will be available from summer 2024. See pages 7-8 for details of the Therapeutic Pathway.

We have made this commitment in accordance with guidance and best practice and in recognising the important support role secondary foster parents take in the lives and welfare of the children placed. Our commitment is to invest in core elements of learning for both parts of the carer partnership.

We acknowledge that secondary foster parents typically have limited time available for training due to work commitments. We will look to provide weekend and evening training opportunities within the training calendar, as well as online training options and alternative methods such as directed reading, supervision and group forums. It is expected that secondary foster parents remain up-to-date with refresher training requirements.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

Foster Parent role	SSW and Team Manager role	L & D Team role
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use reflective supervision to share fostering experiences and consider learning needs (NMS 21) • Attend learning & development activities to meet identified needs (NMS20) • Reflect on the impact of training with SW in supervision, and update the PDP (NMS20.6) • Maintain a Training Portfolio (NMS20.4) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete a Personal Development Plan with each foster parent • Use reflective supervision to explore & identify carers learning & development needs • Discuss the impact of training with the foster parent in reflective supervision, and update the PDP • Participate in training courses; workshops etc. to support the CPD of carers & staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formulate the Training Plan to reflect needs identified • Distribute the Training Programme to all carers • Provide training in a variety of formats to include face-to-face, virtual training and e-learning opportunities • Collate evaluation data and disseminate for use in future planning

i. Review of progress

This will be discussed as part of the supervision agenda, creating an opportunity to discuss progress, undertake planning and look at whether there is a need for additional support. The first annual fostering review will establish whether foster parents have attended required training and if not, look at the reasons why and make recommendations for remedial action. The Fostering Panel will also consider compliance with agency policy and expectations when considering continued terms of approval.

Each individual training record (on Charms and 'Learnative') will track achievement in the first 12 months and beyond, and detail certification.

ii. Non-completion of training

As an agency, and in maintaining the highest standards of training for our valued foster parents, we will always strive to assist in the completion of training within set timescales. We accept that there may be circumstances in which a minority of foster parents will need longer to complete the TSDS and core training, e.g. if:

- They experience exceptional and unexpected personal circumstances such as bereavement, ill-health or personal crisis;
- They have difficulties with language and literacy skills;
- They have had a significant period of time without a child in placement;
- There are complex placement issues such as disruption or allegation.

In accordance with best practice, we will seek to establish a reasonable timeframe for completion. This will involve checking if circumstances can be resolved by looking at different approaches. A proportionate, reasonable and common-sense approach will always be taken.

8. Annual Learning and Development (Training) Strategy

ISP will deliver a comprehensive training programme for all foster parents, staff members and managers to reflect the National Minimum Standards and legislative, policy and best-practice frameworks. A training needs analysis will be undertaken each year to inform the programme for the coming year.

The training needs analysis will:

- Provide an understanding of completed development and learning outcomes;
- Identify further learning and development needs for the organisation, management, staff team and foster parents;

- Capture changing and evolving learning and development requirements against a fluid childcare landscape;
- Provide an opportunity for consultation with foster parents, staff teams and managers in determining learning and training goals:
- Determine the different training needs within the organisation;
- Provide evaluation to inform and support the differentiation of learning styles;
- Provide an evidence-based rationale for the chosen learning and development strategy within the organisation.

9. The Training Calendar

A training calendar will be sent periodically to all foster parents by email. A hard copy can be made available by the Learning & Development Team on request. All managers and supervising social workers will receive a copy. The training calendar is also available on 'Learnative'.

In recognition of the childcare demands on foster parents, training will not normally take place during school holidays, and training is ordinarily scheduled between 10am and 2:30pm. There will occasionally be courses that require a greater number of learning hours, and where this is the case, there will be advanced warning to allow for planning.

In acknowledgement of the working and personal commitments of foster parents, especially where there is a secondary foster parent, the training programme will look to include weekend and evening training opportunities, as well as online learning options. These will be detailed as such within the training calendar.

I. Booking training

After the release of the training calendar, it is recommended that the next supervision is used to discuss and identify training needs, aspirations and areas of interest for the coming period. This will reflect any outstanding core training, required refresher updates, gaps in learning resulting from placement challenges, development of specialisms, and recommendations from the foster parent's annual review and/or Panel. This provides an opportunity to review and update the Personal Development Plan (PDP) for the foster parents for the next year and is used to review progress.

Foster parents can book their own training through the 'Learnative' platform. Additional training offered at a local level will be booked with the regional administrator.

Text and/or email reminders are sent by the training coordinator or regional administrator to the foster parents that they are booked to attend the course.

Virtual training links are sent by the training coordinator or regional administrator to the foster parents that are booked to attend the course.

II. Course cancellations

Non-attendance by foster parents can be very costly and detract from an opportunity for someone else to benefit. It is an expectation that foster parents, if they are unable to attend a course, notify the training coordinator or their regional administrator as soon as possible. The training coordinator or regional administrator will enter this on the register of the course and on the individual training record detailing the reason. If there is a reserve list, they will notify the next person on it and offer a place.

In the first instance, cancellations will be notified to the supervising social worker. This will then be explored through supervision and remedial action taken if needed.

There will be occasions when the organisation will have to take the decision to cancel courses due to unforeseen circumstances. This will always be a last resort and in doing so the Learning & Development Team will provide as full notice as possible, offer a clear rationale and identify a replacement date as soon as possible.

10. Evaluation of Training

The true success of any learning and development strategy can only be judged through consistent review and evaluation. Every course will have a brief description of the content, learning objectives and evaluation. The TSD Standards covered will be linked.

At the conclusion of each course, foster parents will be asked to give feedback and to share their comments on the relevance, learning gained, quality of information and delivery. These will be collated by the Learning & Development Team for consideration and used in future planning and commissioning.

The feedback from our foster parents, children and young people, and staff members is afforded great value and priority as it is the barometer of whether the learning strategy for the organisation is getting it right. There will be other opportunities to gain direct feedback through supervision, group forums and organisational newsletter and by directly contacting the Learning & Development Team.

The training policy is a central component of the commitment of ISP to aspire to be a reflective and self-evaluating organisation.

11. Training Records and Certification

The training coordinator or regional administrator is responsible for the register of attendance at training. They will use the register to update individual training records on Charms and 'Learnative'.

If a foster parent was booked to attend, but did not do so, the training coordinator or regional administrator will notify the supervising social worker so they can discuss the reason for non-attendance with the foster parent in supervision, and secure a new booking.

Certificates are generated on Charms or 'Learnative' and can be downloaded by foster parents for their personal training records.

A monthly report of all courses and register of attendance is emailed by the training coordinator to the Learning & Development Team and circulated at a local level, as part of quality assurance compliance.

12. Additional Resources and Information

In supporting learning and development, ISP have made a variety of learning resources available to support the training courses and develop foster parents' skills and understanding. These will include books, articles, DVDs and useful websites. Some examples include:

- A child's journey through placement (V. Fahlberg)
- Therapeutic Parenting in a Nutshell (S. Naish)
- Fostering Attachments (B. Cairns)
- Attachment, Trauma and Resilience (K & B Cairns)
- Working with Anger and Young People (N. Luxmoore)
- Life Story Work – A practical guide to helping children understand their past (T. Ryan/R. Walker)
- Helping children to improve their communication skills (D. Plummer)