

Foster Carer Resignation & Exit Interview Process

Operational from: December 2025

Version Number: 2

Agreed by: Fostering Management Group

Responsible Service Area/Team: Suffolk Fostering Service

Review date: September 2027

Document Summary

This practice guidance is provided to ensure consistency in the processes surrounding resignations of (mainstream) foster carers and subsequent Exit Interviews, as applicable.

It is designed for:

- Foster carers
- Practitioners and managers in the Fostering Service.

It covers the circumstances under which a foster carer may resign, including where the service initiates termination of approval.

There is an overview of the exit interview process including for foster carers who may be transferring to another fostering provider.

The full termination of approval process is described in the *Fostering Panel Practice Guide* that can be located in the Good Practice Guide – Fostering Panel folder.

We will on request produce this policy, or particular parts of it, into other languages and formats, in order that everyone can use and comment upon its content

Version Control

Version	Reason for revision and summary of changes needed	Date
V.1.2	Added: Medium by which an Exit Interview may be conducted and that foster carers may bring a friend, advocate, SFCA member, or union representative for support. Changes to references to CSWs and PMs – replaced with Team Manager (TM) in anticipation of the new service structure (to be in place in September 2026).	May 2026
V2	Added process for Qualifying Determination Letter if no resignation in writing; added updated Guidance document in Appendix – SA agreement given Sept	Aug 2026

Reasons for ending a Foster Carer Approval

The approval of foster carers may come to an end for a variety of reasons, including:

- **Voluntary Resignation:** Carers may choose to step down—either temporarily or permanently—due to changes in personal circumstances. Some foster carers choose to retire after many years of service and an Exit Interview can be an opportunity to celebrate their valuable contribution as well as to learn from their varied experiences, over time.
- **Transfer to Another Agency:** Some carers may seek approval through an alternative fostering provider. (see below)
- **Service-Initiated Termination:** The service may seek to terminate a carers' approval following unresolved concerns about the standard of care provided or as a result of an allegation. In such cases, a formal review will be initiated and considered at Panel, with the Panel Agency Decision Maker (ADM) making the final decision. Where termination is agreed, a qualifying determination will be issued and the carers have the opportunity for a second Panel hearing or to take their case to IRM.
- **Resignation During Investigation:** A carer may opt to resign while investigations are ongoing; however, the service may still seek Panel consideration regarding the termination, including as a learning exercise.

See **Appendix 1** – *Guidance on bringing a case to Panel where the carers have resigned before their approval could be amended or terminated.*

Process for Foster Carers Retiring or Resigning

1. **Giving Notice:** As per Fostering Regulation 28 (13) foster carers including kinship carers may submit a formal notice of resignation in writing that takes effect automatically after 28 days regardless of whether the foster carer withdraws their notice.

Where a foster carer states their intention to resign verbally, the service requires this in writing also. Email is acceptable but, where it is a fostering couple, it must clearly indicate that both carers are resigning if that is the case.

If a written resignation is not forthcoming, the relevant social worker or team manager will send a letter to the foster carer(s) using Royal Mail 'signed for' delivery asking the carers to respond with their resignation within 7 working days.

If they still do not respond, a qualifying determination (QD) letter must be sent by the Fostering Service Manager as Agency Decision Maker, setting out the intention to terminate their approval and asking them to respond within 28 days. If no further representation is made, the carer(s)' approval will be terminated and a final ADM letter will be sent to them confirming this.

2. **Next Steps Discussion:** The Supervising Social Worker (SSW) will meet with the foster carers to discuss the resignation process, including completion of the termination of approval form. The exit interview process will also be explained so that an informed decision can be made on whether they would like to take part.
3. **Exit Interviews:** These are offered to all resigning carers and participation is encouraged, although some may choose to decline. Some carers may feel a formal Exit interview is unnecessary but may still wish to provide feedback for the service through other means; this will always be welcomed.

Where an exit interview is agreed, the carer(s) will be informed that a Fostering Team Manager (TM) will be in touch to arrange this at a mutually convenient time.

The meeting will usually be conducted online via MS Teams but, if it is the carer(s)' preference, can be undertaken in person at a suitable location chosen by the carer e.g. in their home or at the nearest accessible SCC building.

The carer(s) will also be advised that they may ask a friend, advocate, Suffolk Foster Carers Association (SFCA) member, or union representative to be present for support if they wish. If this is the case, the foster carer will need to advise the SSW who this will be and provide the best contact details for them i.e. for sharing the relevant invitation.

Notification

The Supervising Social Worker completes the termination of approval paperwork, including the section referring to an Exit Interview. This is then reassigned to the relevant Team Manager (TM) for review and sign-off.

Where the carers have indicated they would like an Exit Interview, the authorising TM will request that a TM colleague from the Fostering Support Team or the Recruitment, Assessment and Matching (RAM) Team complete this on behalf of the service.

In some instances, the Professional Adviser for Fostering or a Head of Service from CYPS may be asked to conduct the interview i.e. where there may otherwise be a conflict of interest or senior management involvement is deemed helpful.

Interview and Finalisation

The assigned TM contacts the foster carers to undertake the interview and complete the Foster Carers Exit Interview Form on LCS 'Forms'. This is then assigned to the Fostering Service Manager (SM) for their review and final approval.

Process for Foster Carers Transferring to Another Agency

When a foster carer expresses an intention to transfer to another fostering provider, the following steps should be taken:

1. **Initial Discussion:** The SSW speaks with the carer to understand the reasons behind the proposed transfer and explore any concerns.

2. **Retention Efforts:** The carer should be encouraged to reconsider the move and remain with Suffolk. The TM is informed, and a discussion is held with the SM to assess whether a revised offer or support package might incentivize the carer to stay.
3. **Form completion and Sign-off:** If the foster carer continues to wish to transfer, they should not give formal resignation until they have the ADM decision from the receiving agency. Once the approval decision is made, the carer must resign in writing. In Suffolk, the fostering service may waive the full 28 days so the carers can commence fostering with their new agency.

At this point, the SSW completes the termination of approval paperwork and reassigns it to the relevant TM for review and sign-off.

4. **Interview & Finalisation:** An Exit Interview should still be offered to the transferring carers, and this may take place either within their notice period or may fall outside that timeframe. If the carers do wish to provide feedback via a formal interview, the same process applies as for all foster carers.

Learning from Exit Interviews

All completed Exit Interviews receive Fostering Service Manager oversight. They will share themes emerging from the interviews with fostering managers at the monthly meeting. A bi-annual report that further highlights key learning points and any practice improvements needed, is produced by the SM and shared with managers, fostering service staff and the Suffolk Foster Carers Association.

Where matters arise from the exit interview, that pertain to other services, the SM for Fostering will liaise with the relevant SM or Head of Service for that other service area to ensure the feedback is shared and can be addressed.

If, during an Exit Interview, a carer discloses information that requires immediate action e.g. of a safeguarding nature, the SM will be alerted to this so the necessary steps can be taken, promptly.

Appendix 1

GUIDANCE for bringing a case to Panel where the carers have resigned before their approval could be amended or terminated V1.1



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