



## **Post Approval Learning and Development Framework for Foster Carers**

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **1. Is the learning and development framework a mandatory requirement?**

The Learning and Development Framework has been agreed and endorsed by the All Wales Heads of Childrens Services.

The framework has been designed to align to regulations 41 (2, 3 and 4) of The Local Authority Fostering Services (Wales) Regulations 2018.

It should be used to its full potential. It provides a platform to ensure that foster carers receive opportunities for learning, training, advice, support and development to enable them to provide care and support to children in line with individual care and support plans.

The framework supports services in meeting their regulatory requirements to ensure that suitable arrangements are in place for the support, training, information, and oversight of foster carers. All foster carers should be afforded access to continuing learning and development to support them in their role in achieving the best possible outcomes for children and young people.

### **2. Is the learning and development framework for all foster carers?**

Yes, the framework is for all approved foster carers, mainstream and connected persons.

Every local authority is using the framework and should offer a wide range of learning and development opportunities to all approved foster carers.

The link to the framework can be found here:

[LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK](#)

[FFRAMWAITH DYSGU A DATBLYGU](#)

### **3. Do all foster carers within the same household need to complete and evidence their learning & development?**

When foster carers are assessed and approved, the regulations apply to each foster carer as an individual. Therefore, all foster carers need to meet the learning and development requirements and evidence continued learning and development thereafter.

The framework ensures that all foster carers are afforded the same opportunities to learn and develop.

Each foster carer will have an individual personal learning record and development plan (PLR&DP). These can be completed electronically or manually.

Support networks, significant adults and children are able to make use of the L&D framework and should be encouraged to do so. The use of the PLR&DP to record this learning can be agreed at a local level.

**4. Is there a national set requirement for how much learning and development should be completed?**

Across Wales, most local authorities have agreed a minimum requirement of 15 hours' learning and development per foster carer per year. In some areas the expectations are higher and local authorities will make their requirements clear.

Minimum requirements are there to be met or exceeded. Different tasks within fostering may require higher levels of learning and development, for example, newly-approved foster carers or those undertaking specific roles in caring for children looked after.

**5. What happens if the minimum requirements for learning and development are not met?**

Every local authority will have its own policies and procedures to follow to enable foster carers to meet the minimum requirements.

Learning and development must form a part of every foster carer's annual review process which includes referral to fostering panel where necessary.

The level of flexibility afforded by the new framework ensures that every foster carer will be able to meet the minimum requirements.

**6. Is the learning and development framework connected to continued approval as a foster carer?**

Yes, learning and development undertaken will inform decisions that are made in respect of continuing approval. It may also affect other factors such as foster carer payments, as engaging in and evidencing learning and development may form part of local authorities' eligibility criteria.

Each LA should ensure that they have an annual review process in place which supports the expectations as set out within the L&D framework.

## **7. Will completing the new framework be more time consuming?**

The new framework is designed around flexible learning and development opportunities, delivered in a range of accessible formats which are not necessarily classroom based.

The framework enables foster carers to meet the requirements around individual needs and commitments.

The PLR&DP allows foster carers to record all forms of learning and development including watching documentaries, listening to podcasts, attending webinars, reading etc.

It may be useful for foster carers to remember to take a copy of their PLR&DP to any classroom-based courses for completion at the time.

## **8. Can all learning and development be undertaken 'informally' without the need for classroom-based learning?**

Individual LAs will determine which courses should be completed as classroom-based learning. For example, some courses such as first aid require attendees to undertake practical tasks and for assessment of skills to take place.

LAs will determine how frequently some aspects of learning and development need to be renewed, to maintain up-to-date skills and knowledge.

## **9. Who completes the Person Learning Record & Development Plan?**

Each record belongs to an individual foster carer who is responsible for completing it.

Supervising workers will discuss the record of learning and development at each supervision session to evidence and sign off the learning record. It is a working document which can be updated to reflect and agree new learning needs at any point. Other professionals, as members of the team around the child, may also identify relevant learning and development requirements for foster carers to support in meeting the needs of the child.

Supervising workers and foster carers can identify and agree which learning requirements have been met from the learning activities undertaken. The L&D framework identifies a wide variety of learning outcomes and should be referred to for guidance.

Supervision records and personal learning records & development plans should reflect the same information.

**10. Why does the Personal Learning Record & Development Plan need to be completed?**

The PLR&DP provides a new way to record all of the learning and development foster carers have undertaken in one document. It is a tool to initiate discussion at every supervision session in relation to what has been learnt and what difference this will make to individual fostering practice. It will also help to plan future learning and development needs.

**11. How does the All Wales Induction Framework for Health and Social Care (AWIFHSC) link with the NFF Learning and Development Framework?**

The Learning and Development Framework is specifically designed for foster carers and aligns with their role and expectations.

The All Wales Induction Framework has been developed for all newly approved social care workers and it puts in place a robust induction programme. Foster Carers are included as part of the social care workforce and therefore the AWIFHSC programme can be access and completed. It is not currently a mandatory requirement for foster carers, however it is recognised as best practice for foster carers to complete the AWIFHSC.

The L&D Framework has been designed to reflect the key principles of the All Wales Induction Framework for Health and Social Care (AWIFHSC) and these are cross referenced within the L&D framework. The AWIFHSC forms a starting point for the revised qualification framework (QCF) and for those foster carers wishing to complete further qualifications they commence with completion of the AWIFHSC.

Local authorities will encourage all newly-approved carers to complete the AWIFHSC to support them in their new role and receive a robust, structured induction. The NFF L&D framework contains further information about the AWIFHSC and how they link together.

**12. What difference will the learning and development framework make?**

Foster carers look after some of the most vulnerable children in society, often in complex and challenging circumstances. The framework supports a personalised approach to learning and development, based on the needs of the child in placement and the needs of the foster carer. It is designed to support and improve quality and consistency of care to be provided to all children looked after.