Positive Futures Caring Together

Trainer Guide

Module 2

Policies and procedures in foster care
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Information for Trainers - Module 2

Unit of competency

Modules 1, 2 and 3 have been developed in accordance with the national unit of competency Work within a relevant legal and ethical framework (CHCCS400A) and Indentify and respond to children and young people at risk (CHCCHILD401A). Module 2 maps specifically to the following elements in these units:

CHCCS400A   Work within a relevant legal and ethical framework
Element 2:   Follow identified policies and practices

CHCCHILD401A   Indentify and respond to children and young people at risk
Element 1:   Implement work practices which support the protection of children and young people

The unit of competency including performance criteria, range statement and evidence guide can be found at www.ntis.gov.au or if you do a search on Google using the unit code, e.g.CHCCS400A it will take you to the unit of competence.

Learning Outcomes

At the conclusion of this module, participants will be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the policies and procedures underpinning foster care in the ACT.

- Work within these policies and procedures in their role as a foster carer.

- Demonstrate a child-centred approach in their role as a foster carer.

- Seek appropriate support and clarification of these policies and procedures in relation to their impact on the role of a foster carer.

Assessment Tasks

- Reflection sheet (Assessment workbook or on-line facility)
- In-class participation (relating to Activities 2.4, 2.6, 2.7)
- Encouraging participation of children and young people assessment task (Assessment workbook)

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Recommended Reading

Essential

- Learner Guide Module 2
- Chapters 12, 13, 14 and 25 of the *Children and Young People Act* 2008
- Roles and Responsibilities of the Care Team in providing Out of Home Care Services in the ACT May 2008
- OCYFS, *Case Management Framework*, November 2006 (available from the Foster Care Training Coordinator DHCS)

Desirable

- Up to date policies and procedures of Care and Protection Services are available from the Foster Care Training Coordinator DHCS.

- More information about the Looking After Children Project (LAC) project can be found at: www.lacproject.org

- More information about facilitating the participation of children and young people can be found at the NSW Commissioner for Children: www.kids.nsw.gov.au

Osborn, A and Bromfield, L, *Participation of children and young people in care in decisions affecting their lives,* National Child Protection Clearinghouse, Research Brief, No. 6, 2007. http://www.aifs.gov.au/nch/pubs/brief/rb6/rb6.html

Qld Dept of Child Safety, *Family Contact for children and young people in out of home care,* Practice Paper, September 2005 http://www.childsafety.qld.gov.au/practice-manual/documents/prac-paper-familycontact.pdf

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Delivery Schedule Module 2

Training Time required: 3 hours
Break: 30 minutes
Total session time   3 and a half hours

Module 2 Policies and procedures in foster care				
Trainer		**Section**	**Time**	**Slides**
	2.1	• Introduction and welcome • Overview of Module 2 • Assessment task for Module 2 • What are policies and procedures?	**10 mins**	1-2 3-4 5-6
	2.2	How Care and Protection Services become involved.	**10 mins**	7-9
	2.3	How does a child or young person enter foster care?	**30 mins**	10-11
	2.4	How are court orders made?	**15 mins**	12
		Dinner Break	**30 mins**	
	2.5	How the placement is managed • Case management • Care plans • LAC care plans and other LAC documents. • Developing and reviewing care plans • Roles and responsibilities	(50 mins) **5 mins** **10 mins** **10 mins** **15 mins** **10 mins**	 13 14 -16 17 18-20 21
	2.6	Contact – A vital part of the plan	**15 mins**	22-23
	2.7	Participation of children and young people	**20 mins**	24
	2.8	Information sharing and confidentiality ▪ Privacy for foster carers	**15 mins**	25 -30 31
	2.9	Summary and Close ▪ Summarise key learning ▪ Clarify assessment tasks ▪ Evaluation	**10 mins**	32

(This template can be photocopied and used by trainers)

Materials and equipment required

- Data projector
- Laptop
- Learner guides
- St Lukes Strength Cards
- *Children and Young People Act 2008*
- *Quick Contacts* handout
- LAC Resources to show participants
- LAC Handouts for participants
- Roles and Responsibilities handouts
- Post it posters (stick on butcher's paper)
- Whiteboard
- Whiteboard markers
- In class participation checklist
- Participant evaluation sheets
- Trainer feedback sheet
- Attendance sheet
- Name tags
- Food/hospitality

Recommended room set-up

It is recommended that the room be set up in a "horse shoe" shape with tables to allow participants to write in their Learner Guides.

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Module 2 – Session Plan	
(10 mins)	**2.1 Introduction**
Input	Welcome participants back to the training.
Icebreaker	*"Choose one 'strengths in teams' card (St Luke's resources) that you think is important to bring to the care team".* *Ask participants to share this with the group.*
Discussion	*Are there any thoughts, reflections or questions from the last session?*
	In Module 1 you learned how the laws and UN Convention assist you to understand the duty of care owed to children and young people by members of the care team.
PPT	**PPT 2** Using the "circles" on page 10 of Module 1 explains that this module will talk about policies and procedures that are often underpinned by laws.
Input	From your pre-reading of Module 2 you will have seen how the policies of the OCYFS (and your agency) aim to put into practice the laws that we discussed last session.
	Overview of Module 2
PPT	**PPT 3** Learning outcomes **PPT 4** Outline of session
	What are policies and procedures?
PPT	**PPT 5** What are policies and procedures **PPT 6** OCYFS policies and procedures
Input	We will be talking primarily about the policies of the OCYFS and Care and Protection Services. Your agency will also have a set of policies that are consistent with the OCYFS policies, which provide further guidance for agency staff and foster carers in providing care for children and young people.

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Trainer Notes

2.1 Introduction

Aim of section

The aim of this section is to re-orientate participants to the training program by providing them with an opportunity to review key learning from the last module and to make the links between Module 1 and Module 2 using the 'circle' diagram. This section provides an overview of Module 2 and some key definitions before proceeding with the module.

Background information – context of foster care

A simple, practical definition of policy and procedures is provided to participants at the outset to help 'demystify' these concepts.

It is important for foster carers to know that the OCYFS and Care and Protection Services have comprehensive policies and procedures, underpinned by laws that must be followed by members of the care team. This module focuses on the policies and procedures of the OCYFS, and participants should be encouraged to ask their agency worker for a copy of the foster care agency policies and procedures as well. These agency policies will provide further details about how the agency operates and the requirements of carers when providing day-to-day care of children and young people in foster care.

Foster carers are not expected to have a detailed knowledge of these policies. However, it is important for foster carers to be able to understand why decisions are made and the processes that should be followed when a child or young person enters foster care so that they can operate as an 'equal' member of the care team. Having a broad understanding of policies and procedures will assist foster carers to "ask the right questions" and to make good judgements and decisions.

It is important to emphasise that policy and procedure documents are "living" documents that change as legislation and best practice change. Advise participants that it is wise to check that policies and procedures are up to date.

Reference to Learner Guide and Assessment Workbook

Trainers can refer to the Assessment Workbook Part 1 and **briefly** talk through the assessment tasks for Module 2. Inform participants that the task will be explained in more detail at the end of the session.

Facilitation options

The use of PowerPoint slides will help to keep this section brief. Any questions relating to the assessment tasks from either Module 1 or Module 2 should be dealt with in the break as there is a great deal of content to get through in this module.

(10 mins)	**2.2 How Care and Protection Services become involved with children and their families.**
Input	Before we start talking about the policies and procedures that guide our work it is helpful to understand how a child or young person and their family comes to the attention of Care and Protection Services and how Care and Protection Services might work with that family.
Learner Guide	**Continuum of care – supporting families** All families need support at some stage of the life cycle. For example, when we have our first baby, when our child starts school, when they enter adolescence etc.
PPT	**PPT 7** Child protection in context
Input	Explain the continuum of care for children and young people and their families. Point out where Care and Protection Services (CPS) might become involved on that continuum. A child or young person may come to the attention of CPS as a result of a report from a community member or professional person. We will be talking more about this in Modules 4 and 5. *Ask participants where foster care falls on this continuum*
Handout	*Quick Contacts* –This handout illustrates the sort of services that CPS may use to support families.
PPT	**PPT 8** How Care and Protection Services become involved with families
PPT	**PPT 9** Remember these Principles of the Act
Input	The reason why CPS provides support and assistance to families and children can be linked back to these Principles in the Act.
Input	*Suggested summary of key points:* ▪ All families need support while some families need more support than others. ▪ There are often a range of interventions that occur prior to the decision to place a child or young person in care that aim to support families care for and protect their child or young person.

Trainer Notes

2.2 How care and protection services become involved with children and their families.

Aim of section

The aim of this section is to give a brief overview of the role of Care and Protection Services by providing an explanation of the context in which they become involved with children, young people and their families and the role that they play in supporting families. This section aims to counter the commonly held belief that the most common intervention performed by child welfare agencies is the removal of children.

Background information – context of foster care

The diagram on page 5 of the Learner Guide provides a visual representation of where Care and Protection Services and foster care may be needed in the life of a child, young person and their family. For example, Care and Protection Services are more likely to intervene at the last three points on the continuum, namely families at risk of maltreatment, where child maltreatment occurs and where families require intensive protection services.

This explanation of the role of prevention, support and interventionist approaches can be linked back to the Principles of the *Children and Young People Act 2008,* where the 'best interest' of the child is balanced against a range of other Principles. By referring back to some of these Principles it can be demonstrated how these Principles influence decisions about how and when to intervene.

Another important point that can be made here is that the aim of providing support at the early points on the continuum is to prevent further, more serious problems developing for families and children.

Reference to Learner Guide

Trainers can refer to pages 4-5 of the Learner Guide for further information and explanation about the continuum of care.

Facilitation options

The use of Power Point slides provides a structure for this section and will help trainers to keep this section brief. Trainers can facilitate some discussion throughout this section and finish by summarising the key points. Participants will be learning more about how reports of child abuse and neglect are made by professionals and members of the community in Modules 4 and 5.

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(30 mins)	**2.3 How does a child or young person enter foster care?**
Input	There are four ways that a child or young person may come into foster care. We are going to look at each of these in detail using the children's stories.
PPT	**PPT 10** How children and young people come into foster care
Activity	a) In 4 small groups, each group is to take **one** of the children, and record their responses on butcher's paper. *(Prior to the session write each of the child's questions on a piece of butcher's paper so that each small group is clear about what they are required to do)*
	b) Before feeding back, ask groups to read out the child's story.
	Respite Care – Sam (story page 7) What is respite care? Why was respite care organised for Sam?
	Voluntary Care Agreement – Carley (story page 10) What is a voluntary care agreement? Why did Carley need a VCA?
	Emergency Action – Amy (story page 11) What is emergency action? Why was emergency action taken for Amy?
	Care and protection order – Sean (story page 14) What is a care and protection order? What provisions are usually included in a care and protection order when a child is placed in foster care? Why did Sean need a care and protection order?
Learner Guide	*Refer to Resource 7, page 44 for Sample Court Order.*
PPT	**PPT 11** Remember these Principles of the Act
Input	*Suggested summary of key points:* ▪ Children and young people can come into foster care in a number of ways ▪ Understanding how this happens will help you to decide what type of care you wish to provide and what is required for each.

Trainer Notes

2.3 How does a child or young person enter foster care?

Aim of section

The aim of this section is to give an overview and explanation of the different ways children and young people enter foster care and the reasons why Care and Protection Services intervene in a variety of situations.

Background information – context of foster care

The children's stories are used to illustrate how the circumstances of each child led to them entering foster care and provides a further opportunity for participants to "get to know" the children that will be discussed throughout the training. An understanding of the range of intervention options open to Care and Protection Services will assist foster carers to identify the types of care they may choose to provide and the legal and policy guidelines underpinning each type of intervention.

Facilitation options

Option 1

The preferred facilitation method for this section requires 4 small groups, each to take one of the children and answer the questions in the session plan. Responses can be recorded on butcher's paper and fed back to the large group. This method requires careful time management.

It is suggested to allow 5 mins for the introduction, 10 minutes for small group work and 15 minutes for feedback. To save time, it is recommended that trainers have butchers paper prepared with the questions written on each for each pathway into care.

Option 2

An alternate option would be to have this discussion as a large group. Trainers can facilitate discussion by asking participants to respond to the questions in the session plan. This method is based on the assumption that participants have read the learner guide prior to the session. It may also be more appropriate when the group is small. Record responses on butcher's paper

Both these facilitation options require careful time management within the allotted time of 30 minutes.

Reference to Learner Guide

Trainers can refer to pages 7-14 for the children's stories and explanations of the different pathways into foster care.

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(15 mins)	**2.4 How are Court Orders made?**
Input	As a foster carer you may be involved either directly or indirectly in care proceedings. They can often be complex, lengthy and unsettling for all involved.
	Understanding how the court works will assist you to support a child or young person through this process.
	It's important to note that foster carers usually need to apply to the Court if they believe they should be part of the proceedings.
Learner Guide	Trainers can refer participants to page 15 of Learner Guide for information on who is involved in court proceedings.
	Court Processes
PPT	**PPT 12** Definition of Case Management Conference (CMC) and Court Hearing.
Learner Guide	From your prior reading you will have some understanding of the steps involved in the court proceedings using Sean's experience as an illustration. (Trainers can refer participants o pages 16 and 17 of the Learner Guide).
Learner Guide	**Briefly** talk through points on page 18 of Learner Guide in relation to why this process can take a long time.
Activity	Using large group discussion, complete the Activity on page 19 of the Learner Guide.
	What could you do as a foster carer to support Sean through this process?
	How might you manage your own frustration and feelings about the process?

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Trainer Notes

2.4 How are Court Orders made?

Aim of section

This section aims to give a brief overview of the different types of court processes and the steps that occur in court proceedings so that participants will feel more informed and prepared for the process when they commence their role as a foster carer.

Background information – context of foster care

Court proceedings can be lengthy and complex, often resulting in anxiety, confusion and frustration for children and young people and their foster carers. Knowledge about how the court system operates, including Case Management Conferences and Court Hearings, and the reasons why the process may take a long time, will assist foster carers to support a child or young person through the process and to manage their own feelings of frustration with the process.

It is important to note that there has been some debate about whether foster carers are considered to be party to the proceedings in court. Section 704 of the *Children and Young People Act 2008* states that only those people with parental responsibility are seen as 'party to the proceedings' in the Children's Court and describes who these people are. Given that a foster carer is authorised by the Director-General to exercise parental responsibility (that is, acting on behalf of the Director-General) for a child or young person, foster carers are not automatically considered to be a 'party to the proceedings'. They would therefore need to apply to the court to become a party to the proceedings. Page 15 of the Learner Guide outlines how a foster carer might make this application.

Facilitation options

The Power Point slides provide brief definitions of the two types of court processes, namely Case Management Conferences (CMC) and Court Hearings. Trainers can refer to examples of Sean's court order and court process to assist in the explanation of key processes. The purpose of the Activity on page 19 of the Learner Guide is to relate the information presented directly to the foster care role.

Expected responses from Activity

i) Talk, listen, provide information, ask if he has questions, have fun, distraction, help Sean to have a say in the process ii) Talk to worker, look after self, self care strategies such as relaxation, social activities, seek information, ask questions etc.

Reference to Learner Guide

Trainers can refer to pages 16-19 of the Learner Guide for information about the court processes and a description of Sean's court proceedings. A sample court order for Sean can be found at Resource 7 on page 44 of the Learner Guide.

(5 Mins)	**2.5 How the placement is managed**
	The case management method
Input	You will remember from Module 1 that we talked about the role of the care team that works together to provide care for children and young people in foster care.
	The method used by the OCYFS to coordinate the work of the team is called Case Management. This allows all parts of the team to communicate with each other and to come up with a clearly defined plan of action for the child or young person that is agreed to by the team.
PPT	**PPT 13** How the Placement is Managed
Input	*Suggested summary of key points:*
	■ The primary principle underpinning Case Management Framework is "child centred practice" – the child's or young person's views and best interest are the focal point in all conversation, planning, aims, and reviews.
	■ This process does not continue in a linear way. The steps are often repeated according to what is happening for the child for example, assessment may take place regularly and lead to changes in goals and strategies.
	■ The process should be responsive to the needs of each child or young person.
	■ This may occur when there are changes in the child or young person's circumstances or changes in their growth and development.
Learner Guide	You can read more about the case management process on pages 19-21 of your Learner Guide.

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2.5 How the placement is managed

Aim of section

The aim of this section is to give a broad overview of the OCYFS case management approach to working with children and young people in out of home care and provide "signposts" for participants to the key processes and procedures in the management of a foster care placement.

Background information – context of foster care

Case management is a process that is not unique to the OCYFS and child protection. It is a model used in many human services organisations to provide an effective and efficient service to clients, based on individual needs.

The OCYFS case management model is underpinned by a partnership approach that involves government working with children, young people, parents, families, carers and other services to promote the child's best interests. It is a model that aims to 'streamline' the work of the care team so that the needs of children and young people in foster care are met and specific outcomes achieved. Knowledge of this process and the 'language' used by workers will help foster carers to actively participate in the process where appropriate.

Facilitation Options

This section should be kept very brief and aims to give a broad overview of the case management process. Details about specific policies and procedures involved in the process such as the development and review of care plans will be discussed in later sections of this Module.

Reference to Learner Guide

Trainers can refer to **pages 19 – 21** for more information about the OCYFS Case Management Framework. Resource 8 and 9 provide more information about the principles underpinning this framework.

It would be useful for trainers to read the OCYFS *Case Management Framework*, November 2006, and the *Child Protection: Case Management Policy and Procedure*, which is available from the Foster Care Training Coordinator.

(10 mins)	**Planning (Care Plans)**
Input	Case management and the processes of assessment, planning, implementing and reviewing aim to provide 'stability' for a child or young person in foster care. When a child or young person comes into foster care it is a requirement that a ***care plan*** be developed.
PPT	**PPT 14** What are care plans?
Input	Having input to the care plan and doing what is required in the care plan, is part of being a good team member Care plans aim to achieve stable and permanent living arrangements for a child or young person and can include a variety of outcomes. ***It does not necessarily mean staying in foster care permanently.***
PPT	**PPT 15** Possible outcomes of care plans
Input	All placements whether they are the result of a court order or not, require a care plan. There are two types of care planning that occur for children and young people in foster care.
PPT	**PPT16** Types of care plans
Learner Guide	***Turn to Resource 10*** on page 48 to see Sean's care plan. You can see that the plan has many components including the arrangements for parental responsibility, contact, financial arrangements, and requirements of birth parents for restoration may be written into the plan. ***Turn to Resource 11*** on page 56 for Sean's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Plan. You can see that it documents strategies for keeping Sean connected to his kinship networks and the broader Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. ***This plan will be reviewed on an annual basis or as the needs of the child or young person changes.***

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Trainer Notes

Planning (Care Plans)

Aim of section

The aim of this section is to begin to "unpack" the case management model by explaining the policies and procedures underpinning the planning phase of the case management. The focus of this section is on the different types of care plans required by the *Children and Young People Act 2008* including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural plans, as well as the care plans developed using the Looking after Children (LAC) case management documentation.

Background information – context of foster care

Care plans are an important tool used in case management. There are two types of care planning processes namely, the care plan required by the *Children and Young People Act 2008* (Sections 445-447) when a matter is brought before the court and the LAC care plan. It is important to emphasise that according to the Act, the Children's Court may not make a care and protection order unless a care plan documenting the Director-General's proposals in relation to the child or young person is submitted to the court. Similarly, the Act requires that an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Plan be developed for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in care. These plans aim to preserve and enhance the identity of the child or young person as an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person.

Care plans aim to ensure that everyone in the care team is clear about the objectives of the foster care placement and how the team will achieve these objectives. The care plan is reviewed and changed in response to the changing needs and circumstances of children and young people.

Care planning is a process not just a task. It provides an opportunity for children and young people to have a say in what is happening to them and provides them with some certainty as to what is happening in their life for the defined period of the care plan.

Facilitation options

The different types of care plans are briefly presented using a combination of Power Point slides and the sample care plans in Resources 10 and 11. The sample care plan and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural plan are an effective "hands on" way of demonstrating what a care plan looks like and what it aims to achieve. This section provides a "snapshot" of some of the key tools and processes and should be kept **brief**. Trainers can encourage participants to read and revisit the information in the Learner Guide when they begin to care for a child or young person.

Reference to Learner Guide

Trainers can refer to pages 22-23 and Resources 10 and 11 of the Learner Guide for more information on care plans.

(15 mins)	**Important LAC Documents**
Input	It is important to know what documents to expect to receive when a child is placed with you. Knowing this will also help you know what questions to ask and why.
LAC handouts	• Distribute LAC handouts and LAC Resources. Talk through the flowchart. • This flowchart provides an overview of the LAC documents that you can expect to receive when a child or young person is first placed with you. • You may refer to the sample set of LAC documents (LAC Resources) that has been completed for Sean. This will allow participants to see what each form looks like and the type of information included on each form. *(The sample set of LAC documents are not meant to be handouts and trainers should collect them after the session).* These sample sets may confuse participants remain mindful that you are **only providing and 'orientation'** on LAC. • You **will not** receive the LAC documents all bound together like the sample documents. They will come at the time in the placement as indicated in the flowchart.
PPT *Input*	**PPT 17 Looking after Children (LAC) Care Plans** The Court care plan defines the broad objectives of the care plan and the LAC plan fills in the fine details. Where there is no court order as is sometimes the case with respite care only the LAC care plan is needed. Where a court order is involved, a child or young person will need a Court Care Plan **and** a LAC care plan. For a VCA there is no requirement in the Act for a care plan, however good practice would be that there should be a care plan outlining the goal and length of time of the placement. **The LAC care plan is the last document in the LAC Resources**.

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Important LAC documents

Background information – context of foster care

It is important to highlight the role of the LAC care plans and the LAC documentation as an internationally recognised best practice tool for managing a child or young person's placement in out of home care in the ACT. The LAC documentation aims to provide more detailed information about how the court care plan is to be implemented.

The LAC documents also provide useful information about the child or young person such as their health/medical, educational, social and emotional needs, their likes and dislikes etc.

Facilitation Options

Key points about the Looking after Children Project (LAC) are briefly presented using a combination of Power Point slides, the LAC Handout and the LAC Resources. This is an effective way of demonstrating what the LAC documents look like, the type of information included in the documents, and what they aim to achieve.

The LAC Resources developed for Sean are available for participants to view or borrow between sessions. Be mindful that these sample documents may confuse the pre service cares and that you are **presenting an 'orientation' of LAC**.

A copy of the flowchart, LAC information for carers and a set of consultation papers are given as handouts for participants to keep.

Again, it is important for trainers to keep this section brief by providing an 'orientation' to the LAC documentation rather than becoming distracted by the detail in the documents. The aim is to familiarise participants with the documentation so that they know what to expect to receive when a child or young person is placed with them and to understand why the care team uses these documents.

Reference to Learner Guide and LAC Resources

Trainers can refer to pages 23-24 of the Learner Guide, the LAC Resources and LAC Handout to facilitate this section. The LAC flowchart in the LAC Resources and the **table on page 24** (Planned Start and Unplanned Start) of the Learner Guides are particularly helpful for trainers **to stay focused** on giving a broad overview of the LAC documents that foster carers can expect to receive when a child or young person is placed with them.

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(15 mins)	**Developing and reviewing care plans**
Input	An important part of the case management process is to monitor and review the progress of the strategies put in place to meet the needs of the child or young person in your care.
Input	**Monitoring and reviewing care plans** The forum that is used to review a child or young person's care plan is called a 'Review of Arrangements" meeting. Discuss: ▪ Care planning is a process not just a "set and forget" task ▪ Children and young people's needs change as do the circumstances of foster carers ▪ Reviews are a very important part of care planning that need to occur regularly
PPT	**PPT 18** Present overview of Reviews of Arrangements
Learner Guide	Pages 25 -26 provide you with more information about these review meetings and what you can expect from these meetings.
Input	Another key review process when a child or young person is in care for more than 6 months is **Annual Reviews**. These reviews aim to record the progress of the goals in the care plan, see whether they need to be changed and to provide a record of that child or young person's time in foster care.
PPT	**PPT 19** Annual Reviews **PPT 20** Other planning processes
Input	There are a number of times during a child or young person's time in foster care where other planning processes are required.
Learner Guide	Refer participants to pages 27-30 of the Learner Guide for more information about transition planning and planning for leaving foster care.
Input	You will learn more about these plans in Module 10 when we will be discussing the variety of placement outcomes for Sean, Amy, Sam and Carley. *Suggested summary of key points* ▪ Foster carers have an important role to play in many of the processes involved in foster care. ▪ Includes providing input into meetings and reports about the needs of the child or young person. ▪ Supporting a child or young person through the processes. ▪ Supporting the child or young person to express their wishes and concerns.

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Trainer Notes

Developing and reviewing care plans

Aim of section

The aim of this section is to "unpack" the 'implementation and coordination' and 'monitoring and review' phases of the case management model by giving an overview of the key policies and procedures involved in these phases.

Background information – context of foster care

This section gives a brief overview of the purpose and function of the key formal mechanisms for reviewing a child or young person's progress in foster care including Reviews of Arrangements meetings and Annual Reviews (Section 495). Informing participants about these processes and making the link with the Case Management Framework will allow them to understand and participate in the process, support children and young people to express their views and wishes, and to ask the right questions of agency and care and protection workers.

Facilitation options

The purpose and function of Reviews of Arrangements and Annual reviews are presented briefly using Power Point slides. Again, it is important for trainers to stay focussed on the broad overview of these processes rather then the fine details. The emphasis should be on how these processes impact on foster carers and children and young people.

Participants should be encouraged to refer to the Learner Guide once they have a child or young person placed with them and to ask questions of their workers once these processes become relevant to them.

Reference to Learner Guide

Trainers can refer to pages 25 – 30 of the Learner Guide for more information about review processes, transition planning and planning for leaving care.

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(5 mins)	**Roles and Responsibilities**
Input	You can see that all these processes require effective teamwork.
PPT	**PPT 21** Working Together
Input	Let's look briefly at the roles and responsibilities of the key members of the care team who are involved in the planning and review processes.
Learner Guide	Refer briefly to the roles and responsibilities on page 30 of the Learner Guide.
Input (Handout)	This is a document called "*Roles and responsibilities of the care team in providing out of home care services in the ACT*".
	It outlines the roles and responsibilities of key members of the care team including:
	▪ Care and Protection Services ▪ Foster care agency ▪ Foster carers.
	If you are ever unsure about the roles and responsibilities of members of the care team you should always ask your agency worker.

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Roles and Responsibilities

Aim of section

The aim of this section is to reiterate and emphasise the importance off effective teamwork when providing care for children and young people, and to provide a brief explanation of the roles and responsibilities of key members of the care team.

Background information – context of foster care

As discussed in Module 1, it is evident that effective teamwork involves a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of all the team members. Understanding who does what and why helps the team to communicate more effectively and to work collaboratively so that the needs of children and young people are met.

It is important to emphasise that the best interest of the child or young person is always the primary focus of the work of the care team. It is also important to reiterate that good communication and building good working relationships with key members of the care team leads to better outcomes for children and young people.

The document, *Roles and Responsibilities of the Care Team in providing out of home care services in the ACT, has* been developed by the OCYFS and the Out of Home Care agencies. This document is the result of many months of discussion and consultation and aims to provide clear guidelines in relation to the roles and responsibilities of key members of the care team.

It is important to emphasise the need for foster carers to always check with their agency worker or care and protection worker if they are unsure about any aspect of their role as there may be situations where roles and responsibilities may overlap or become blurred.

Facilitation options

The PowerPoint slide summaries some key elements of teamwork that pull together key learning from Modules 1 and 2. The final point on the slide leads in to a very brief summary of roles and responsibilities of key members of the care team and an opportunity to inform participants about the document *Roles and Responsibilities of the Care Team in providing out of home care services in the ACT.*

Reference to Learner Guide

Trainers can refer to pages 30-31 of the Learner Guide for more information on the roles and responsibilities of key members of the care team. It would also be useful for trainers to familiarise themselves with the document *Roles and Responsibilities of the Care Team in providing out of home care services in the ACT* available for the Foster Care Training Coordinator.

(15 mins)	**2.6 Contact – A vital part of the plan**
Input	So far we have focussed on some of the key processes involved in managing the foster care placement of a child or young person.
	There are 3 more areas of the law and policy that are vital in the management of a child or young person's placement. They are:
	Contact with birth families and significant others ***Participation*** in these processes ***Privacy*** and confidentiality. ***(Write these on butcher's paper)***
PPT	**PPT 22** The importance of contact
Activity	**With the person next to you**, discuss the questions in the Activity on page 32 of the Learner Guide
	"Imagine the people you are closest to…" *"Who might be some of the people that a child or young person would want to maintain contact with?"* *"How might this contact take place?"*
	Facilitate feedback of responses to large group.
PPT	**PPT 23** Foster carers should always know
Learner Guide	There are a number of issues that may arise around contact between a child or young person in your care and their birth family that you may need to prepare yourself for.
	Briefly read through the issues that may arise in relation to contact on **page 34** of Learner Guide.
	Refer participants to **Resource 12 on pg 74** for more on contact.
Input	*Suggested summary of key points*
	- Contact is a Principle of the *Children and Young People Act 2008* and needs to be supported provided it is in the 'best interest' of the child. - Needs to be part of the care plan and managed appropriately. - We will be talking more about managing the issues that may arise in relation to contact in other modules.

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2.6 Contact – A vital part of the plan

Aim of section

The aim of this section is to highlight contact as a vital issue that needs to be planned for and monitored throughout the case management process.

Background information – context of foster care

The importance of contact is articulated as a Principle underpinning the *Children and Young People Act 2008* (Section 350(i) (c). The basis for this Principle is that every child or young person has a right to keep links with their families. The focus of contact is always to strengthen and preserve relationships and to maintain a sense of identity for the child or young person.

The *Children and Young People Act 2008* requires Care and Protection Services and the Court to make every effort to maintain important relationships for a child or young person provided it is in the child or young person's best interest. If contact with birth families and significant others is considered to be in the best interest of the child or young person, contact becomes a vital part of court orders and care plans.

Facilitation options

Asking questions and facilitating group discussion is the key facilitation method used in this section. This first question in the Activity is designed to allow participants to put themselves in the "shoes" of children and young people in care and imagine their life without contact with significant people in their lives. Responses to the activity need not be shared with the group if participants choose not to.

The remaining questions aim to encourage participants to think about the range of people in the life of a child or young person with whom they might want to maintain contact and how the people around them can support them to do this.

Expected responses from activities

(i) Sad, angry, desperate, isolated, alone, frightened etc.

(ii) Mum, dad, stepfather, stepmother, aunts, uncles, grandparents, siblings, cousins and friends.

(iii) Phone calls, letter writing, e-mail, text messaging etc. These are particularly important if the person they want to contact is not living locally.

Reference Learner Guide

Trainers can refer to pages 31-34 for more information about contact, how contact may impact on foster carers and some quotes from young people in care about their experiences of contact.

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(20 mins)	**2.7 Participation of children and young people**
Input	Like contact, the issue of children and young people participating in all the processes that we have talked about so far is a very important part of caring for a child or young person in foster care. You may remember that the right to participate is a fundamental human right enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and is reflected in the Principles of the *Children and Young People Act 2008.*
PPT	**PPT 24** Participation of Children and Young People
Discussion	*"What are some of the benefits of participation for a child or young person?"*
Input	A child or young person may be daunted and overwhelmed by the prospect of participating in decision-making processes and forums such as Reviews of Arrangements. It is important that we try and make these processes as "child and youth friendly" as possible.
LAC Handout	For example, the LAC Project has developed a consultation paper that aims to assist foster carers and workers to encourage the input of a child or young person in planning and decision-making processes. You will be using some of the questions from this consultation paper in your assessment task for this module.
Activity	Let's have a look at how we might encourage Sean to participate in his second Review of Arrangements meeting. Turn to the Activity on page 36 of the Learner Guide. *a) Read through scenario* *b) "What could you do to encourage and assist Sean to express his views, wishes and concerns so that they are taken into account in the meeting?"*
Input	*Suggested summary of key points* · Participation of children and young people is a requirement of the *Children and Young People Act 2008.* Building good relationships with children and young people helps to facilitate their participation.

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2.7 Participation of children and young people

Aim of section

The aim of this section is to highlight the importance of participation by children and young people in decisions that are made about them throughout the course of their placement. This section also provides another opportunity to make the link between the way we work with children and young people and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the *Children and Young People Act 2008* and child-centred practice.

Background information – context of foster care

Recent research has highlighted the importance and value of including the views of children and young people in care. According to Delfabbro, Barber, and Bentham (2002), ensuring that decisions are made in line with children's wishes results in children being more cooperative in placement and obtaining more preferable placement options. Being heard can enhance children's and young people's self-esteem and feeling of empowerment. The children and young people in the study by Mason and Gibson (2004) also reported that having some power to be heard in their interactions with others is imperative to getting their needs met. Further information and a summary of key research can be found in the paper by Osborn and Bromfield, listed in the recommended reading at the beginning of this trainer guide.

Facilitation options

This section primarily uses group discussion to highlight and emphasise the legal basis for participation, the benefits of participation to children and young people and the role that foster carers can play in supporting a child or young person in their care to participate.

The story of Sean is used here to provide a focus for discussion around how foster carers can encourage and support a child or young person to express their views, wishes and concerns in decision-making and review processes. The aim of this discussion is to encourage participants to think of different ways that Sean may like to have his views heard other than attending the meeting as well as thinking about what they might say to Sean to encourage him to express himself.

Expected responses from Activity

Possible responses to the Activity include talking to Sean about the process, offering to speak at the meeting on his behalf, asking Sean to write down his views and wishes, drawings, videos, audiotapes etc.

Reference to Learner Guide

Trainers can refer to pages 35-37 of the Learner Guide for more information about participation of children and young people.

(15 mins)	**2.8 Information sharing & confidentiality**
Input	One of the things that help children and young people participate in the processes that we have just talked about is their ability to feel confident that what they tell you about themselves and their life is treated with respect and only shared with those people that "need to know".
PPT	**PPT 25** Overview of information sharing and confidentiality **PPT 26** What this means for foster carers **PPT 27** 'Sensitive information'
Discussion	*What sort of information might be included in a care and protection report?*
PPT	**PPT 28** Sharing 'sensitive' information within the care team
Learner Guide	**Refer to page 40** of Learner Guide for examples of safety and well being information. **Sharing information with people outside the care team** Foster carers and kinship cares **may** also become members of the **Declared Care Team** and may share safety and well being information with each other, when it is in the best interest of the child/young person to do so; this information is protected and may be sensitive.
PPT	**PPT 29** Deciding whether someone needs to know *What sort of information might you need to share with someone outside the care team and why?*
Discussion	**PPT 30** Keeping and recording information **Remind participants that this is part of their assessment task for Module 2.**
PPT *Input*	**PPT 31** Privacy for foster carers *Suggested summary of key points:* ▪ It is important that a child or young person's story is safeguarded as far as possible by treating their story respectfully and ethically. ▪ The laws and policies provide you with guidance as to when and with whom you can share certain information about a child or young person. ▪ More detailed scenarios relating to sharing information will be covered in Module 3.

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2.8 Information sharing & confidentiality

Aim of section

The aim of this section is to highlight the importance of preserving the privacy and confidentiality of children and young people throughout the case management process in relation to personal details about their lives. The laws relating to information sharing and confidentiality are important legal requirements for all members of the care team. This section aims to give a brief overview of what these requirements mean for foster carers in their day to day care of a child or young person.

Background information – context of foster care

Children and young people in care are particularly vulnerable in terms of people knowing personal details about them and their life. A child or young person may experience a number of foster care placements and changes in agency and care and protection workers. They may also have a range of other people involved in their life such as teachers, counsellors, doctors, therapists, lawyers and court officials. It is therefore vitally important that a child or young person's story is safeguarded as far as possible by treating their story respectfully and ethically.

Information sharing as set out in the *Children and Young People Act 2008* provides guidelines for sharing information in the best interests of children and young people. Information about children young people and their families is defined in the *Children and Young People Act 2008* as "protected" information. Anyone who receives "protected" information including foster carers are considered to be "information holders" under the Act. This means 'information holders' cannot record or divulge information about a child or young person 'recklessly', and are only able to share the information with people who are involved in the support of that child or young person on a 'need to know' basis.

The Act also defines certain information as being 'sensitive' as well as 'protected'. There are greater restrictions around who can receive and share this information. Members of the declared care team are able to share safety and wellbeing information with each other. This information may be either 'sensitive' or 'protected'. It is important for foster carers to know what type of information they are able to share and with whom.

Privacy for foster carers – trainers can talk to this slide and refer participants to page 42 of Learner Guides for more information.

Facilitation options

Given that this section is presented at the end of the session it is recommended that trainers keep this section brief using the key points on the Power Point slides.

Reference to Learner Guide

It is important for trainers to be familiar with Chapter 25 of the *Children and Young People Act 2008.* Trainers can refer to pages 37-42 of the Learner Guide and the Privacy Principles at Resource 13, page 75, for more guidance in relation to the legal requirements for information sharing and confidentiality.

(10 mins)	**2.9 Close**
Discussion	**PPT 32** *What are some key things that you have learned from this session about being a foster carer?"*
	Link learning from this module to Module 3. Explain that we will be talking about how our knowledge of laws and policies help us to make 'ethical' judgements and decisions when we are caring for children and young people.
Assessment Workbook	Remind participants about the assessment tasks:
	▪ Refer participants to instructions for completing reflection sheets before completing this task.
	▪ Talk through the written assessment task on participation of children and young people.
	▪ Encourage participants to complete each task as they work through the modules.
Input	Handout evaluation sheets for this module.
	Thank them for their participation and confirm details of next module.

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2.9 Close

Aim of this section

The aim of this section is to summarise the key messages from the module and to provide further explanation and clarification of the assessment tasks for Module 2.

Background information – context of foster care

It is helpful for participants to leave the training session with some key take home messages, a clear understanding of the requirements of the assessment tasks, and to have a brief overview of what will follow in the next Module.

Participants are encouraged to complete the reflection sheets before they leave the training session while their thoughts and feelings about what they have learned is uppermost in their minds. However, many participants will choose to complete the reflection sheets at home.

In order to gain feedback about the training and contribute to the continuous improvement of the program it is important for all participants to complete an evaluation form. Again, many participants will choose to complete this at home and return it at the following training session.

Facilitation options

Trainers can ask participants to report one or two key things that they learned from the training session. This method will encourage participants to reflect on their own learning and will provide feedback for the trainers as to whether the key messages from the module have been well communicated.

It is important to get at least one response from every participant.

An alternative method would be to read through the 'take home messages' from the Learner Guide at the end of the module.

Reference to Learner Guide

Trainers can refer to page 43 of the Learner Guide for a summary of take home messages. Trainers can refer to the Assessment Workbook Part 1 to talk through the assessment tasks, particularly the written task on 'Participation of children and young people'.