

9.6 General Foster Carer Review Process

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Policy

[Foster Care Partnership Policy 2012](#)

[Foster Carer Support at Difficult Times Policy](#)

[Policy - Management of Swimming Pools and Other Bodies of Water for Foster Carers 2012](#)

Purpose

To inform child protection workers about the foster carer review process for general foster carers.

Legislative Authority

[Children and Community Services Act 2004 - Section 79 Power of the CEO to arrange placement](#)

[Children and Community Services Act 2004 - Section 82 Payment for care under a placement arrangement](#)

[Children and Community Services Regulations 2006 - Regulation 4 Approval of carers](#)

Standards

[Better Care, Better Services - Standards for Children and Young People in Protection and Care](#)

Practice Requirements

- A general foster carer review meeting must occur (at a minimum) once every 12 months using the 11 month planning cycle, which is aligned with the care planning process for children in the Chief Executive Officer's (CEO's) care.
- The review meeting is to be undertaken using the Signs of Safety to clarify what's working well, what are we worried about, and what needs to happen (Form 565 – General Foster Carer Review).
- The foster carer must have a current Working with Children Card (WWC Card) or have lodged an application for renewal that is pending.
- If the foster carer has a spouse or de-facto partner who has moved into the house, the spouse or de-facto partner must be screened and assessed as a carer, and will require a WWC Card.
- Any new adults that have moved into the foster carer's home must complete a Form 395 - Record Check Consent.
- All adult household members must have a WWC Check unless it is established that they will not be helping to look after the child in care or undertake activities with them.
- The district director must approve each general foster carer review.
- The Screening Unit must be notified if the Department is aware of any person having been charged with, or convicted of, a [Class 1 or 2 offence](#) under the Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004, or any other offence that the Department assesses as inappropriate for them to carry out child-related work. The Screening Unit must then notify the WWC Unit. While this is a general provision, it must also be observed in casework practice with foster carers or department employees, including any charges or convictions relating to abuse in care.
- If a foster carer has been issued with an interim negative notice or negative notice under the Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004, the process for revocation of the foster carer's approval must commence. For information on this process, refer to Chapter 9: Revocation of a Foster Carer's Approval.

Process Map

Not applicable

Procedures

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[Foster carer exit interviews](#)**Procedure - 9.6 General Foster Carer Review Process****Introduction**

Providing support to foster carers should be part of an ongoing process, through regular visits with the carer and de-briefing. The foster carer review meeting is an additional annual event, with information gathered from visits or other contact with the foster carer throughout the year contributing to the review process.

The foster carer review meeting should be a two way process between the foster carer and senior child protection worker, placement services (SCPWPS) or child protection worker (where applicable).

Information on the review of relative or significant other carers can be found in Chapter 9: Placement of a Child in the Care of the CEO with a Relative or Significant Other.

[top](#)**Screening**

A WWC check is required for foster carers and any other person who is carrying out "child-related work", for example the child's tutor. If the foster carer has a spouse or de-facto partner residing in the home, they will need to be screened and assessed as a carer, and will require a WWC Card. Details of the screening process are outlined in Chapter 2: Record Checks and the Working with Children Card.

Other adult household members

If the SCPWPS or child protection worker is made aware that the foster carer has a spouse or de-facto partner who has moved into the home, the spouse or de-facto partner must be screened and assessed as a carer, and will require a WWC Card. Refer also to the procedure 'Reassessment of a general foster carer'.

Any new adults that have moved into the foster carer's home must complete a Form 395 - Record Check Consent.

Under the WWC Act, any person whose usual duties of work involves, or is likely to involve, contact with a child in a placement arrangement made by the CEO under the Children and Community Services Act 2004 must have a WWC Check. Therefore, any new adult household members will require a WWC Check unless it is established that they will not be helping to look after the child in care or undertake activities with them.

It is important that the child protection worker and SCPWPS monitor any practical safety concerns throughout the year.

[top](#)**The 11 month planning cycle**

A general foster carer review meeting must be completed, at a minimum, at least once every 12 months. To assist forward planning and to complete reviews within the required timeframe, districts must implement a rolling 11 month planning cycle. This cycle is designed to support a sustainable and systematic approach to carer reviews.

To help with management and tracking of the foster carer review process, staff can use the following related resource document: 11 Month Care Planning Guide.

[top](#)**Foster carer participation**

Teamwork and support to the foster carer and their family are essential to the foster placement. This includes supporting the foster carer to participate formally as a team member in assessment, planning and review of the child, and to participate in other child centred decision making that occurs outside of the Department's formal planning and review processes.

The foster carer review process provides an opportunity for the foster carer and their family to give feedback on what providing care has been like for them, what has gone well, what challenges have been encountered, what needs to happen, and to comment on the adequacy of the support received. Learning and development needs may also be identified.

The SCPWPS should discuss the format of the review meeting with the foster carer before the meeting date.

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Preparing for the review meeting

Before each review meeting, the SCPWPS should check the foster carer's file including previous assessments and reviews, and records regarding each placement. Any previous individual foster carer learning plans should also be considered.

The SCPWPS and child protection worker should meet to discuss the file records and information gathered by workers during the course of the year from routine contacts with the foster carer and de-briefing so these can be assessed and contribute to the review meeting.

The SCPWPS will advise the child protection worker and consult with the team leader in relation to any previously identified or potential issues.

In preparation for the review meeting, the SCPWPS should refer to the related resources:

- Guide to preparing for a foster carer review meeting
- Form 565 – General Foster Carer Review
- Form 715 - Practical Checklist for Carer Applicants.

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Practical considerations

Most general foster carer review meetings will take about one hour. The meeting should be at a time convenient for the foster carer and cause minimum disruption to their daily routine. Ideally, the meeting should be carried out at the foster carer's home and involve all relevant members of the household.

Where this is not possible, the meeting can be undertaken in a private room at the district office for confidentiality. The atmosphere should be as informal as possible.

The SCPWPS should contact the foster carer to confirm the day and time that the review meeting will be conducted, including the location.

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Purpose and format of the review meeting

The review meeting should be a discussion of what is working well, what the Department and the foster carer might be worried about, and what needs to happen including the learning plan.

The meeting is the opportunity for the foster carer and SCPWPS to take stock and look ahead to developing the partnership and learning. Most importantly, this is the foster carer's time to reflect and have the space to raise questions and concerns but also to highlight achievements.

The meeting may include identification of changes the foster carer may wish to make, for example, participating in particular learning. It may also include changes for department workers in the care team, such as how they are meeting their responsibilities under the [Foster Care Partnership Practice Framework](#).

The carer competencies should be discussed with the foster carer using the prompts outlined in the Form 565 – General Foster Carer Review.

The review meeting formally affirms that the foster carer is maintaining their competencies as a carer. It is not however a reassessment of their competencies. If there are concerns about whether the foster carer is meeting all the competencies, these should be raised when they arise; refer to Chapter 9: Revocation of a Foster Carer's Approval.

Review meetings also provide the opportunity for the foster carer to change his or her care status, such as care type and the number and/or age of children they are able to care for.

SCPWPS (or child protection worker where relevant) should use Form 565 - General Foster Carer Review (available in related resources) to provide a summary of the discussion with the foster carer.

The outcomes from the meeting should be linked to the foster carer's learning plans.

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Approval by the district director

Form 565 – General Foster Carer Review must be signed by the foster carer, child protection worker, SCPWPS, Aboriginal practice leader (as applicable) and team leader placement services or team leader children in care (as applicable). It is then provided to the district director for approval and signature.

A copy of Form 565 – General Foster Carer Review should be provided to the foster carer once approved, and the original scanned and placed on the foster carer's file in Objective.

Relevant details must be recorded in the 'Approve and Manage Carer' component in Assist. Refer to the Assist User Guide – Review and Annual Review of a Carer Registration (see related resources).

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Reassessment of a general foster carer (currently under review)

Reassessment of a foster carer may be undertaken when:

- there have been repeated unresolved standard of care concerns in relation to the foster carer and the outcome of the carer investigation was unsubstantiated but concerns remain
- an allegation concerning the standard of care has been substantiated
- a number of less serious standard of care concerns arise
- there is a change in the foster carer's primary relationship – new partner, separation from a partner or death of a partner
- the foster carer's situation has changed significantly, which impacts on their ability to provide safe and appropriate care – this may include the death of a relative or close friend
- the foster carer returns to caring after being unavailable for over six months.

The extent of the assessment is determined by the situation that led to the reassessment being required.

The district or program (Respite Program or Home for Life) managing the foster carer is responsible for the reassessment. The assessment must determine whether the foster carer continues to meet all the competencies, and the district director must approve this.

If the foster carer has withdrawn

If a person has withdrawn from being a general foster carer and the Department is seeking to place a child in care with them, they cannot be reassessed. The person will need to be assessed according to the general foster carer assessment process, refer to Chapter 9: General Foster Carer Assessment.

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Recording any issues of concern

SCPWPS, child protection workers and others involved in addressing issues of concern with a foster carer must record the following:

- any concerns the Department raises with the foster carer
- whether the foster carer was given the opportunity to respond to those concerns
- the foster carer's response
- the Department's conclusion in relation to the issue.

When the Department proposes to revoke a foster carer's approval on the basis of a concern it relies on these records. For further information, refer to Chapter 9: Revocation of a Foster Carer's Approval.

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Foster carer exit interviews

If a foster carer plans to take a break or cease fostering they should, wherever possible, be given the opportunity to complete an exit interview.

The exit interview provides an opportunity for the foster carer to discuss their experience as a carer, identify what worked well and advise the Department of their reasons for ceasing fostering.

SCPWPS must record when a foster carer chooses to cease fostering in Assist. Refer to the Assist User Guide – Withdraw a Carer's Approval.

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