

Joint Fostering Panel

An Applicant's Guide

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This Guide is brought to you by:

- Bracknell Forest Borough Council
- The Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead
- familyplacement.com

www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/fostering
www.rbwm.gov.uk
www.familyplacement.com



Joint Foster Panel – Applicant's Guide

What is a Foster Panel?

Panels were created to meet the requirements of the Fostering Service Regulations 2002.

Under these regulations, all fostering service providers have to set up a Panel to consider and make recommendations relating to applications from prospective foster carers.

What does the Foster Panel do?

The Panel reviews the information and evidence in the report your supervising social worker writes for you when you apply to become a foster carer.

The Panel then makes a decision whether or not to recommend you as a foster carer to your fostering agency.

Why "Joint" Panel?

The panel is a "Joint" Panel because it acts on behalf of three fostering service providers:

- Bracknell Forest Borough Council
- Windsor & Maidenhead Borough Council
- Familyplacement.com

Before Panel

Copies of relevant reports and other documents to do with your application are forwarded to the Panel members so that they can read them before the Panel meeting. Members

may request further information at this stage if they need any clarification.

Can you attend Panel?

Yes.

You and your social worker will receive an invitation from the Chairperson.

The panel likes you to be as fully involved as possible and welcomes the opportunity to meet you. Many applicants find it useful to attend panel to answer any questions that arise and to fill in any gaps straight away.

What happens at Panel?

You and your social worker will be invited to attend Panel.

If you decide to attend, the Chairperson will meet with you on your own before you meet the full Panel to join in the discussion.

The Panel will ask you questions and you will have an opportunity to ask questions of your own.

Your social worker will then take you to a waiting room and will rejoin the Panel to hear final discussions.

When a conclusion has been reached, the Chairperson will leave the meeting to join you and tell you of the Panel's recommendation.

After Panel

A copy of the Panel minutes is forwarded with the panel's recommendation to a senior manager at the fostering agency which dealt with your application.

This senior manager is referred to as the *Agency Decision Maker*. It is that person who will make the final decision as to whether you become approved as a foster carer.

You will be sent written confirmation of the agency's decision.

What happens if you are not approved?

You can write to the *Agency Decision Maker* within 28 days to make an appeal and have your application reviewed. Your social worker will explain the appeals procedure to you.

Once additional questions have been asked and other points clarified, your report is returned to Panel for a revised recommendation.

If you are not approved after resubmitting your report for a second time, we cannot take your application further.

Who's on the Panel?

The Panel is made up of:

- Panel Chairperson and Vice Chairperson
- Local councillors
- Director of Independent Fostering Agency

- Social work representatives
- 4 independent people

The Panel Chairperson is an independent social work consultant with many years’ experience of fostering and adoption.

To help familiarise you with the Panel, pictures of panel members have been printed on a separate sheet to accompany this booklet. Note that from time-to-time sitting members may change.

Accessibility

This document can be made available in large print, Braille, audio or in electronic format from your fostering agency. Copies in alternative languages may also be obtained.

Your Views

We would like to make sure that we give you the information that you need, in the way that you need it. We would therefore like to hear your views and comments on both the content and format of this document. It is easy to contact us and there are a number of ways in which you can get in touch with us, see below.

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To find out more about service standards and inspection, contact our Inspection body:

Ofsted, Royal Exchange Buildings, St. Ann’s Square,
Manchester, M2 7LA

Tel: 08456 404045

Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

To find out more about national policy issues about children and young people, contact:

Office of the Children’s Commissioner
1 London Bridge, LONDON, SE1 9BG

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Your Questions and Notes

