



Foster for Derbyshire

Attending the Fostering Panel



The Fostering Panel

Welcome to the Derbyshire County Council Fostering Panel. This booklet will give you all the information you need to know about the panel and what to expect when you attend.

The fostering panel is committed to making the process of preparing and assessing prospective foster carers open and transparent.

Panels are held regularly and it's an essential part of the process that all prospective foster carers attend a panel.

Any exceptions will be at the discretion of the relevant service manager and the fostering panel chair.

You'll also have the chance to give us feedback about the process of attending the panel. This will help us make the process as easy and beneficial as possible.

We hope that this booklet will give you all the information you need to know about attending a fostering panel. If you have any questions please speak to your assessing social worker. We look forward to welcoming you into Derbyshire County Council's fostering team.

“All our children have potential...”

The role and function of the fostering panel

The Fostering Panel has five main functions:

1. To consider applications from prospective carers and recommend whether or not the applicant is suitable to foster.
2. To carry out your first review after you have been approved to become a foster carer.
3. To review approved foster carers in some circumstances.
4. To make recommendations regarding the continued suitability of carers who have been the subject of allegations of improper conduct.
5. To consider any special items regarding fostering matters.

The role of the Fostering Panel is to make recommendations and those recommendations have to be confirmed by the relevant agency decision maker.

The Fostering Panel in Derbyshire is made up of both professional and independent members as set out in the Fostering Service Regulations 2011.



The Fostering Panel

The panel is made up of the following roles:

Chair

Vice Chair

Social Worker

Independent members

County Councillor

A foster carer from another local authority

There is also a professional advisor to the panel who is a non-voting member

All the fostering panel members have extensive knowledge or experience of the fostering process or have knowledge of the issues of children in care.

It's their job to make sure that all approved foster carers have the skills, knowledge and experience necessary to provide safe, happy homes to children in Derbyshire.



What will happen when you attend fostering panel for approval?

- Your assessing social worker will have discussed with you a suitable time for you to attend the panel.
- If you are making a joint application, we would like both of you to attend and if you have children, it is possible for them to attend as well.
- If you are a single applicant, you can bring someone to support you through the process.
- Your social worker and other relevant professionals will go into the fostering panel first so that panel members can identify which areas they would like to discuss with you. Your worker may also be asked questions about your application at this stage.
- You will then be told which questions the panel would like to ask you. You'll have time to discuss these with your assessing social worker before you go in.
- Your worker will then accompany you to the panel. You'll be welcomed and then the panel will ask their questions to you. The panel will welcome any questions you have.

- You will be asked to retire to the waiting room while the panel discuss your application.
- Once a decision has been made the chair will give you their recommendation immediately.
- The recommendation will be passed to the agency decision maker for ratification within seven days. You'll then receive written confirmation of the decision.



Unhappy with the panel's decision?

If you are not happy with the decision you can appeal. Your assessing social worker will give you information about the Independent Review Mechanism, an independent body where you can appeal the decision.

Confidentially

During your fostering assessment your social worker will have put together a report called a Form F and this will also be presented to the fostering panel.

Although you will have had the chance to contribute to, read and sign your Form F before the presentation to the Fostering Panel you will not have seen any confidential third party information such as your referees' reports.

Information contained in these reports is confidential and will not be shared unless the third party gives written permission to do so.

It may be that your application is rejected on the basis of third-party information but we would not be able to share this with you, unless permission has been granted.

However, if there are concerns in general about your application, your worker will have identified these areas before you attend the panel.

We hope that you find attending panel a helpful exercise which makes you feel fully involved in the approval process.

Your feedback is important.
We will provide you with a feedback form after your fostering panel meeting.



"All our children have potential..."

Notes



Call Derbyshire for free
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derbyshire.gov.uk/adoptionandfostering