

NAFP practice group (open session/check-ins) 14 august 2026

Meeting participants debated documentation standards and training reforms while exploring new technologies for efficiency and professional development.

Consultation on quality standards (England)

A participant shared their ongoing work developing materials to help families understand government quality and development standards, noting that the summer holiday period made the consultation timing particularly difficult. They explained that they adapted official government documents to make the language more accessible for foster parents after discussing the matter with other members.

A participant raised the question of how other IFAs are handling the consultation, specifically whether they are encouraging foster parents to respond directly or if they are gathering responses for a joint submission. Another member expressed reservations about the process, noting that it may be perceived as an administrative requirement and suggesting the policy results may already be established.

The NAFP Foster Carer Forum, which comprises a diverse range of carers, has been lobbying MPs and providing input, and they are working to ensure Ofsted hears these voices during upcoming inspection framework consultations.

Recording standards/daily logs

Participants discussed the perception that government standards might lower the requirement for daily logs, a move some members argued against, citing the importance of daily recording for new children. It was noted that many IFAs are already operating above minimum standards by capturing the child's journey, which may lead to confusion regarding the actual impact of the proposed changes.

A participant emphasised that there is a distinct skill to writing meaningful logs and capturing a child's life journey. They stressed that the quality of these records is critical because children often return to access them as adults to understand their personal history. They further advocated for using children's names rather than initials to maintain dignity and highlighted that logs are essential for justifying care decisions, such as explaining unexplained bruising during investigations.

A member reported that a colleague working as a social work assistant confirmed that approximately 90% of their time is spent retrieving and redacting records for young adults returning to view their childhood files. The member suggested that sharing this reality with foster carers could help illustrate why thorough, sensitive documentation is a long-term necessity.

Participants discussed the ongoing tension regarding the perception of fostering as a profession versus the reluctance of some carers to complete mandatory recording tasks. A member emphasised that fostering is a job with essential tasks, and failing to document properly can leave carers vulnerable during investigations or court proceedings.

They suggested that gathering and presenting quotes from young people about the value of their logs could be a powerful tool for influencing policy. Another colleague

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added that training with a care-experienced individual highlighted the need for careful language, such as avoiding terms like "placement" and ensuring comments are not judgmental.

The group discussed the necessity of using respectful, child-centered language in all documentation. A participant shared their experience with foster carers who struggle to phase their logs in a child-centered way, noting that using simple and specific language helps ensure children can understand their history when reading the files later.

Artificial intelligence

A member proposed allowing foster carers to use voice-to-text dictation to lower the barrier to maintaining logs. Another colleague noted that some care management platforms already support this functionality. A participant warned that direct dictation can sound overly emotional, and carers must proofread their work to avoid errors that might occur with automated speech-to-text tools.

Participants discussed the role of AI in assisting carers who may struggle to write logs, suggesting it could help structure bullet points into coherent narratives. A member emphasised that technological evolution is inevitable, and agencies must find ways to adapt and use tools like AI to improve service rather than ignoring the change.

A member questioned the group on their organisational policies regarding AI, noting their fostering service uses productivity software which maintains data security within their own system. Another participant mentioned using a specialised documentation tool for records, while a colleague noted that relying on specific case management systems limits options, whereas broader AI tools can help bridge these gaps.

A participant described efforts to fundamentally rewire their organisation's workflow using AI to reduce computer time and increase face-to-face time with families. They proposed using AI platforms to automatically format supervisions, track actions, and identify training needs, rather than just using it for basic writing tasks.

Members discussed the potential of using AI "agents" to automate tasks, such as checking diaries, cross-referencing actions from previous meetings, and preparing agendas for upcoming supervisions. A participant acknowledged that mapping out these processes requires significant work to establish clear, manageable workflows that the technology can execute.

A participant expressed interest in AI but noted they would not know where to start in creating "agents" without guidance. A member stressed the importance of having an organisational solution in place so that staff do not use unsecure, external AI tools independently.

Training and resources

A participant suggested hosting online training events with care-experienced speakers to share costs and benefits across agencies. The group discussed the high

cost of some professional trainers and the value of sharing recommendations for reliable, lived-experience speakers.

A participant highlighted that individuals can post their training services or resources on the NAFP website listing page, and encouraged sharing recommendations for trainers within their informal networks and group chats.

A participant recently took over the training department and expressed concerns regarding the current focus on statutory training, which they feel does not always align with the practical needs of foster parents. They noted that mandatory training, such as the "missing from care" course, can be burdensome for foster parents who are already overwhelmed with caregiving responsibilities. There is also a concern regarding the sheer volume of training, which can sometimes occur three days a week, hindering foster carers from having necessary personal time.

A participant is advocating for a move away from a compliance-heavy culture toward a more bespoke and meaningful training model. The objective is to determine if training topics add genuine value rather than just fulfilling a certification requirement. They emphasised leveraging existing expertise within the organisation, such as incorporating people with care experience into supervision groups to make those meetings more engaging rather than solely relying on formal training sessions.

A participant is currently working on a new training framework to provide a clear pathway for foster parents from the moment of inquiry. Additionally, they intend to overhaul Personal Development Plans (PDPs) to make them more personal and dynamic, rather than just an administrative task for fostering supervisors. A potential strategy discussed involves allocating a budget to each foster parent at the start of the year, enabling them to take accountability for their professional development and meet the specific needs of the children in their care.

Regarding wider organisational resources, a participant updated the group that NAFP is working on a long-term project to rewrite foster care induction. A member suggested that training and development should be a future focus session for the group to allow for broader contributions and expertise sharing. The group reached a consensus that this would be a valuable and useful topic to revisit in a future meeting.

Participants shared their dissatisfaction with certain existing training platforms, specifically criticising some digital hubs for being impersonal, lacking interaction, and failing to provide meaningful educational value. The group agreed that many online training programs are ineffective and do not justify the cost or the time required.

A participant introduced a specific parenting academy as a potential resource after learning about them through a previous Friday forum. They noted that the founders are foster parents who have developed a platform featuring approximately 50 courses focused on therapeutic parenting. They agreed to share the link to this resource with the group in the chat.

Training development future session: the group suggested a future session dedicated to discussing foster care training, development, and induction processes.