

NAFP practice group (open session/check-ins) 28 August 2026

Discussions covered unannounced visit policies and external legal correspondence alongside operational updates on fostering assessment standards.

- **Unannounced visits and foster carer bedrooms:** An attendee raised a query regarding whether fostering services should check a foster carer's bedroom during unannounced visits, noting that one foster carer was adamant it should not happen and threatened to leave. Another attendee shared that their fostering service conducts two unannounced visits a year and requires access to every room for safety reasons, mentioning a past case where they withdrew approval when a foster carer refused access to an adult daughter's room. An attendee noted that they conduct two or three unannounced visits and check every room on at least one occasion, excluding lofts due to spiders. An attendee stated that they compromise by having the allocated supervising social worker check all rooms to build a better relationship, though they acknowledged it is difficult with adult children who were adopted or under special guardianship.
- **Enforcing bedroom checks and policy implementation:** One attendee noted that checking every room should start right from the initial visit and suggested including explicit expectations in foster care agreements. Another attendee stated that their fostering service added this requirement to their induction and foster care agreements so that foster carers sign to acknowledge that everywhere in the house, shed, and garage is subject to unannounced visits, which eliminated issues. The first attendee shared plans to release a new policy, template, and guide for foster carers to make expectations clear from the outset. A third attendee suggested using quarterly meetings with the foster care network to revisit expectations and unpack dissenting views.
- **National Association of Professional Foster Carers (NAPFC) letter and foster carer worker status:** An attendee raised concerns about a letter received by many fostering services from NAPFC. A speaker explained that foster carers currently have neither employee nor worker status (limb b), meaning new employment legislation, subject to different advice from government, does not currently affect them. An attendee noted that their fostering service did not receive the letter but asserted that fostering services should not promote specific trade unions,. The speaker added that while individual foster carers are free to join unions, their lack of worker status means it does not change their relationship with the fostering service.
- **Foster carer approval categories:** An attendee asked whether fostering services should continue using detailed approval categories (short-term, long-term, bridging, emergency, respite) or a blanket approval, noting that their fostering service's ADM discussed whether short-term and long-term approvals already encapsulate respite and emergency. Another attendee stated that their fostering service keeps approvals as simple as possible, with short-term covering most arrangements. A staff member shared that for the past 12 years, their fostering service has used a blanket "fit to foster" approval status backed by a robust matching process, and Ofsted has never raised objections, though a new ADM is now pushing for more specificity. A third attendee noted that they prefer specific approvals, especially for emergencies,

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considering them requiring more experienced foster carers. A fourth attendee expressed a desire to move toward a "fit to foster" model.

- **Preparing for new Ofsted frameworks and standards:** A speaker noted that England is rewriting its fostering standards and Ofsted framework, creating a period of uncertainty for upcoming inspections. A staff member shared that their fostering service has already begun dissecting the draft standards and actively gathering evidence by allocating tasks to staff members, emphasising the need to prepare early rather than panicking close to an inspection. An attendee agreed, recalling how their old fostering service maintained organised folders for participation and recruitment to avoid panic during inspections. NAFPP representatives are closely involved in the standards and Ofsted consultation work and will provide updates once finalised.
- **Social worker role in gathering evidence and child voice:** An attendee asked how to help foster carers record evidence of child voice in logs and supervision. A staff member argued that gathering this evidence is the role of the supervising social worker through curiosity and discussion rather than putting the onus on the foster carer. Another attendee added that supervision documents can be structured to link sections directly to training, support and development standards, helping to capture evidence for annual reviews.
- **Feedback on the new Form F assessment document:** An attendee shared that they reviewed and restructured the new CoramBAAF Form F assessment document to better address equality and diversity, and improve guidance for less experienced assessors. An attendee noted that while the new form is more child-focused and includes diversity sections, it results in longer assessments. The attendee agreed that being specific about how assessors present evidence and analysis is important.
- **Therapeutic parenting frameworks and quality standards:** An attendee mentioned they devised their own assessment form based on therapeutic parenting and understanding trauma. A staff member discussed the evolution of therapeutic training, noting that while they initially trained everyone in various therapies, they now focus on practical tools and skills from models like ddp and pace. The attendee stated that pace is their go-to approach. The attendee and a speaker agreed that the new quality standards largely reflect good practices that fostering services are already implementing. The staff member emphasised that fostering services must be able to thoroughly evidence these outcomes to achieve an outstanding rating.