

Mercy Community does not make any guarantees, warranties or representations as to the currency, fitness for purpose, accuracy, reliability, completeness or compliance with any law, regulations or other governmental requirements, in respect of any of documents it provides. None of the information contained in any documents provided by Mercy Community constitutes any form of legal, financial or other professional advice. Mercy Community accepts no legal liability for the accuracy, reliability, currency or completeness of any documents or information it provides, and the receiving party should seek appropriate independent professional advice before using such material or making any decisions based on it.

Service Stream	Families and Young People Services	Category	Foster and Kinship Care
-----------------------	------------------------------------	-----------------	-------------------------

Purpose

- The welfare and best interests of children and young people residing in foster and kinship care is paramount.
- Children and young people need to be cared for within a healthy family environment that is characterised by 'positive-parenting-practices', including: structure and routine; reasonable rules, expectations and age-appropriate limits; guidance, support and encouragement; positive reinforcement; with fair, consistent, and reasonable discipline, and demonstrating tolerance for normal and/or symptomatic behaviour.
- Continuity in the lives of children and young people in foster and kinship care is critical for psychosocial wellbeing. All efforts are taken to maintain continuity of relationships with family, friends, schools and communities that the child/young person has previous links to.
- A safe and positive environment – the foster/kinship care home provides a safe, healthy and nurturing environment for the child or young person, in compliance with the 'Statement of Standards', *Child Protection Act 1999 (Qld)*.
- Safe caring – each child or young person in foster/kinship care is free from physical, sexual, emotional abuse, neglect, or exploitation whilst in a foster care placement.

Scope

This procedure applies to all employees, volunteers, and contractors engaged within Foster and Kinship Care (FKC) programs across Mercy Community (MC) Families and Young People Services (FYPS).

This procedure relates to general FKC placements, Intensive Intervention Placement Support (IIPS), Intensive Foster and Kinship Care (IFKC), and High Plus (HP) support programs.

Procedure

1. Transfer-in of carers – overview

- 1.1 MC will follow the regional protocols for transfers where an agreed protocol exists. Where there is no regional protocol for transfers, the processes outlined in this procedure apply.
- 1.2 MC acknowledges that partner agencies may have their own processes and procedures around the transfer of carers. Where this is the case, MC will reasonably support the partner agencies requests, undertaking parallel processes, if necessary. Regardless of the partner agencies procedure, if there is no regional protocol, MC FKC Practitioners (FKCPs) must ensure that the processes outlined in this procedure are undertaken.
- 1.3 All transfers must occur via a referral from a Child Safety Officer (CSO) or Placement Services (PS). When other agencies approach MC to accept a transfer, MC will liaise with the relevant PS to facilitate this.
- 1.4 When a non-MC carer contacts MC directly requesting a transfer, they must be directed to the appropriate PS or back to their current support agency.
- 1.5 All decisions regarding the potential transfer-in of a carer should be informed by a current assessment of the carer's capacity to meet the Statement of Standards of Care from the organisation they are transferring from, as outlined in the *Child Protection Act 1999 (Qld)*.

2. Receiving a request to transfer-in a carer

Approved By: FKC Regional Directors and FYP Quality Practice Director

Approval Date	02 Jan 2024	Implementation Date	02 Jan 2024	Review Date	02 Jan 2026
----------------------	-------------	----------------------------	-------------	--------------------	-------------

- 2.1 A request for the transfer-in of a carer may be made by the CSO/PS by phone or by email. When the initial request is made, the allocated FKCP will seek the following information from the referring CSO/PS:
 - Reason for the transfer request;
 - Current approval status;
 - Current children in placement;
 - Any past or existing standard of care matters since the last renewal; and
 - Any other information that would assist MC to support and monitor the carer.
- 2.2 The allocated FKCP will request that the CSO/PS have the relevant parties sign the Declaration section of the *Privacy Agreement – Carer and AHM* prior to any further information being sought. Where there are more urgent timeframes, or the Department of Child Safety, Seniors, and Disability Services (the Department) has been unable to have this document signed by the carer, the allocated FKCP will request the carer's contact details and arrange for this to be signed, either by email or face-to-face.
- 2.3 It is also preferable, although not required, that a MC FKCP meet with the transferring carer prior to the transfer occurring. This meeting should include the carer, the transferring agency, the referring CSO/PS representative, and the MC Line Manager. The Line Manager will discuss the transfer process and outline the MC program.
- 2.4 MC FKCPs will ensure prospective carers complete the *Privacy Agreement – Carer or AHM* during the first face-to-face contact.
- 2.5 A Service File must be created in Penelope for all carers prospectively transferring in. The Team Manager (TM) or allocated Business Support Officer (BSO) will search the Penelope Client Management System (CMS) database to check if the carer/s have previously accessed support through MC.
 - 2.5.1 Where the carer/s have previously accessed MC support, a new Case File containing the carer and all placed children will be created prior to adding a Service File for each individual.
 - 2.5.2 Where the carer/s have not previously accessed MC support, an Individual File will be created for each carer and all placed children prior to the Case and Service Files being created.
- 2.6 The carer/s should have an FKC Service File for all support-related documentation, and an Assessment and Approval Service File for all documentation relating to carer enquiries, assessment, training, transfers, and carer exits. The child/ren should have an FKC Service File for all support-related documentation.
- 2.7 Where a carer family is transferring into IFKC, all documentation will be included in the FKC Service File, with the dates of the transfer added to the *Placement Information and Respite Log*. Where a carer is transferring into the IFKC program, FKCPs will attempt to obtain as much information as possible, however, it is acknowledged that access to this information may be limited.
- 2.8 Within five (5) business days of receiving the required information, the Line Manager must inform the Department whether the request is accepted or declined.

3. Declining a request to transfer-in a carer

- 3.1 MC will only accept the transfer of a carer where the carer/carers family, meets the criteria outlined in the Statement of Standards of Care. Carers may be referred to MC as part of a Standard of Care Review Action Plan and, in these instances, MC will work to address the issues and up-skill the carer. Any concerns about the carer's ability to improve to a point where they will be able to meet these standards must be communicated to the referring CSO/PS.

Approved By: FKC Regional Directors and FYP Quality Practice Director

Approval Date	02 Jan 2024	Implementation Date	02 Jan 2024	Review Date	02 Jan 2026
---------------	-------------	---------------------	-------------	-------------	-------------

- 3.2 Where a decision is made to decline the transfer-in of a carer, the Line Manager will notify the Department in writing, outlining the reasons why the transfer is declined. The Line Manager may wish to confer with the Regional Director (RD) prior to advising the Department.

4. Accepting a request to transfer-in a carer

- 4.1 Where the line manager considers the request appropriate and agrees to accept the transfer-in of the carer, the Department will be notified as soon as practicable, and the transfer-in process will be allocated to a FKCP.
- 4.2 No transfer-in request can be progressed without MC receiving a signed *Privacy Agreement – Carer or AHM* and *Authority to Gain or Release Information Form* from the prospective carer.
- 4.3 The allocated FKCP will send the *Agency Transfer-In Letter* to the transferring agency requesting completion of the *Agency Transfer Report*. The allocated FKCP will also request the following documentation from either the transferring agency or the referring CSO/PS:
- Applications for Approval (APA);
 - Change to carer circumstances details;
 - Certificates of Approval;
 - Any Matter of Concern/Standard of Care Review information and Action Plans;
 - Blue Card information;
 - All initial and re-approval renewal documentation;
 - *Foster Carer Agreements*; and
 - Any current placement agreements.
- 4.4 Upon receipt of this information, the allocated FKCP will contact the child/ren's CSO and complete a *Case Note* titled 'Placement Matching', clearly articulating that no matching assessment was undertaken by MC and this matching was undertaken prior to the carer/s and child/ren entering the service.
- 4.5 Once all of the required information has been obtained, the Line Manager will advise the referring CSO/PS that the transfer is completed and the support and monitoring of the carer/s and child/ren will commence.
- 4.6 The allocated FKCP will commence support by ensuring that all relevant documentation from the transfer is on file. Additionally, the FKCP will make initial requests for any relevant documentation pertaining to the child/ren placed with the transferred carer. These requests may include, but are not limited to:
- A copy of the current *Case Plan*;
 - A copy of the current *Authority to Care*;
 - A copy of the current *Education Support Plan*;
 - A copy of the current *Child Strengths and Needs* or most recent referral; and
 - Request for a placement agreement meeting.
- 4.7 The allocated FKCP will ensure that the child/ren's current CSO is listed on file and the child's Individual Profile under 'Collateral Contacts'. This is to ensure that any other FKCPs or TMs accessing the file in the allocated FKCPs absence has the correct information about case management responsibility of the child. Refer to *FS PROC FKCP Carer Support and Monitoring* for further information about provision of carer support.

5. Records management

Approved By: FKC Regional Directors and FYP Quality Practice Director

Approval Date	02 Jan 2024	Implementation Date	02 Jan 2024	Review Date	02 Jan 2026
---------------	-------------	---------------------	-------------	-------------	-------------

- 5.1 All carer transfer-in requests must have a Case and Service File created in Penelope. All documentation pertaining to this request will be filed in the relevant tabs.
- 5.2 Where a carer is being transferred between MC programs, the TM will request that relevant files be transferred by emailing the MC Service Desk. An important step in this transfer between programs is for the carer to be associated with the correct program within Penelope, ensuring the required information access security clearances are amended to the correct site.
- 5.3 Transfer-related documentation will be filed under the FKC Carer Assessment and Approval Service File.
- 5.4 For accepted transfers, the allocated FKCP or BSO will ensure that the following MC documents are completed within the Service File:
 - *Carer Agreement Summary* (for both general and kin carers);
 - *Carer Household Profile*;
 - *Carer Induction*;
 - *Child Individual Profile*; and
 - *Child Placement Information*.

Without the documents being completed in Penelope at transfer-in, data for bed nights cannot be collected and carer and child tracked dates cannot be monitored effectively.
- 5.5 All documentation is to be uploaded or completed in Penelope within ten (10) working days. Where uploading is anticipated to take longer than this, Practitioners must negotiate this with their Line Manager. Refer to the *FS PROC FKC Records Management* and *FS IP FKC Document Filing Guide* for further instruction.

Definitions

Foster and Kinship Care Practitioner (FKCP)

The employee who has been delegated by the Line Manager to undertake specific case management or placement support tasks.

Line Manager

Employees with supervisory and program management responsibilities within the fostering service.

Regional Director (RD)

The manager with overall finance and program management responsibilities, who is a member of the leadership team.

References

Child Protection Act 1999 (Qld)
 Child Safety Practice Manual (CSPM)
 Departmental Case Plan
 Departmental Child Strengths and Needs
 Departmental Education Support Plan
 Departmental Placement Agreement
 FS DOC FKC Program Overview
 FS IP FKC Document Filing Guide
 FS PROC FKC Carer Support and Monitoring
 FS PROC FKC Records Management

Approved By: FKC Regional Directors and FYP Quality Practice Director

Approval Date	02 Jan 2024	Implementation Date	02 Jan 2024	Review Date	02 Jan 2026
---------------	-------------	---------------------	-------------	-------------	-------------

Related Documents**Penelope Forms:**

Agency Transfer Report
Agency Transfer-In Letter
Authority to Gain or Release Information Form
Carer Agreement Summary
Carer Household Profile
Carer Induction Record
Child Individual Profile
Child Placement Information and Respite Log
Privacy Agreement – *Carer or AHM*

Approved By: FKC Regional Directors and FYP Quality Practice Director

Approval Date	02 Jan 2024	Implementation Date	02 Jan 2024	Review Date	02 Jan 2026
----------------------	-------------	----------------------------	-------------	--------------------	-------------