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<b>Service Stream</b>	Families and Young People Services	<b>Category</b>	Foster and Kinship Care
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## Purpose

- The welfare and best interests of children and young people residing in foster and kinship care is paramount.
- Assessment of the child's or young person's needs – an assessment of the child's or young person's needs is made prior to any placement, communicated to all parties concerned and updated regularly. The depth and type of assessment undertaken is determined by the funding level and program type detailed in the Service Agreement.
- Case planning, placement agreement and reviews - Ensures that all aspects of the agreed and documented Department of Child Safety, Seniors, and Disability Services (the Department) Case Plan as recorded in the Placement Agreement are implemented, reviewed regularly, and any changes made, are only made as a result of a review process, and which are subsequently documented.
- Matching carers with children or young people – each child or young person placed in foster and kinship care is carefully matched with a carer capable of meeting her or his assessed needs and meets foster carer family agreed placement category as documented in carer agreements.

## 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 Foster and Kinship Care (FKC) placements, Intensive Intervention Placement Support (IIPS), and High Plus (HP) support programs.

## Procedure

### 1. Records management – overview

- 1.1. All foster and kinship care programs operated by MC are funded by the Department; records produced that relate to a child or young person in the care of the Department can become public records. For this reason, robust records management processes are required to be maintained.
- 1.2. Records pertaining to children and young people who are a client of the Department are required be returned to the Department when exiting a MC placement. Refer to the process outlined in *GOV WI FS Archiving Files* for further information.
- 1.3. Recordkeeping provisions for each element of service delivery are outlined in specific program procedures.
- 1.4. This procedure is to be read in line with *GOV SOP Records Management and Archiving*.
- 1.5. Saving emails to client and carer files requires FKC Practitioners (FKCPs) to copy and paste an unformatted version of the email into a *Case Note* and save in a Service Event.
  - 1.5.1. Choose the last email in the correspondence chain.
  - 1.5.2. Click 'Forward' to capture all relevant time/date/persons involved in email.
  - 1.5.3. Click into the body of the email "Ctrl" "A" to highlight all text.
  - 1.5.4. Click "Ctrl" "C" to copy the text.

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- 1.5.5. Open the *Case Note* and click into the body of the text field.
- 1.5.6. Click "Ctrl" "Shift" "V" to paste the emails.
- 1.5.7. Text must include the person who sent it and the date/time to ensure historical emails can be located, if necessary.
- 1.5.8. Any attachments within emails should be uploaded and referenced in the *Case Note*.
- 1.6. Content copied from an email must not be changed in any way to retain integrity of the record (i.e., fixing spelling/grammar errors, etc.).
- 1.7. All documentation is to be uploaded to Penelope within ten (10) working days. Where uploading is anticipated to take longer than this, FKCPs must negotiate this with their Line Manager.
- 1.8. Refer to the *FS IP FKC Document Filing Guide* for further guidance on CMS recordkeeping requirements and naming conventions.

## 2. Carer assessment files

- 2.1. Where an individual makes an enquiry to become a foster carer, the enquiry is recorded in a *Case Note* in an EOI Service Event, within the prospective carer's Assessment and Approval Service file. It is important that appropriate naming conventions are followed, and documents are uploaded in a timely manner.
- 2.2. Where the potential carer withdraws their application to become a carer or is not approved by the Department, the Service File and Case File must be closed.

## 3. Carer file structure

- 3.1. All MC approved carers and carer applicants must have an Individual, Case and Service File. All documentation will be saved in the relevant FKC or Assessment and Approval Service Files. Where carers are a couple or carer entity, an Individual File will be created for each carer, adult household member, and biological children of the carers through the *Intake Wizard* (found in the Penelope Search function). Adding all individuals at the same time ensures that they will be added to the same Case File.
- 3.2. Documents that apply to both carers will be added to both carers' Service Files.
- 3.3. Carers have an FKC Service File, which contains records relating to casework and support, such as emails, *Home Visit Records*, *Case Notes*, and other relevant documentation.
- 3.4. Carers have a separate Assessment and Approval Service File, which contains assessment and approval documentation and information relating to enquiry, training, privacy and confidentiality, induction, and exit.
- 3.5. Basic information pertaining to the carer is recorded in their Individual File; however, it is important to note that all workers who have access to Penelope will be able to see these details. Therefore, it is not appropriate to record any case information on the Individual File.
- 3.6. Any original identification documents will be scanned and uploaded to Penelope in the relevant Service File or, alternatively, sent electronically as required, and any original documents will be returned to the carer.

## 4. Child file structure

- 4.1. All children referred and/or placed with carers supported by MC or receiving support from MC programs (through IIPS or HP) will have a FKC Service File. Each child will

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have a single FKC Service File, regardless of placement type or sibling status (although in this case, any files or documents created that apply to the siblings will need to be saved across files).

- 4.2. The child's caseload tracking information will be recorded in the *Child Individual Profile* document within the FKC Service File and any attachments/documents completed for the child will be saved in the relevant Service Events.
- 4.3. The Case and Service Files for each child should only be closed after a child has exited a primary care arrangement, ongoing respite with a MC carer, or has turned 18 years old.
- 4.4. If a child moves from one MC carer to another, a new FKC Service File will be created for each new primary placement. This is not necessary for respite placements, which are recorded within the *Child Placement and Respite Log*.
- 4.5. Any original documents received by MC (for example, birth certificates and school reports), will be scanned and uploaded to the relevant Service Event, as required. The original documents will be sent to the Department or, if instructed by the Department, will be provided directly to the child or their carer.

## 5. Reports

- 5.1. Penelope has the capacity to generate reports on a variety of child/carers and program-specific information and data (referrals, placement availability, bed nights, etc.). This information will be used for P2i and other Departmental reports, service planning, and monitoring.
- 5.2. It is the responsibility of all FKCPs to ensure Penelope files are maintained and up to date. It is then the subsequent responsibility of the Line Manager to ensure that Penelope files are maintained and kept up to date by the relevant Practitioner. The Line Manager may allocate tasks related to the maintenance of files and reports to another Practitioner and/or the Business Support team.

## 6. Recordkeeping away from the office

- 6.1. Where paper copies of child/carers information may be transported outside of the office, this information will be transported using lockable document bags.

## 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.

### Official record

A source of information, written or recorded, prepared in the delivery of a service that may be required in the future for data collection, review, or legal purposes.

### Regional Director (RD)

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

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### References

Department's Child Safety Practice Manual (CSPM)  
FS DOC FKC Program Overview  
FS IP FKC Document Filing Guide  
GOV SOP Records Management and Archiving  
GOV WI FS Archiving Files

### Related Documents

**Penelope Documents:**

Case Note  
Child Individual Profile  
Child Placement and Respite Log

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