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Service Stream	Families and Young People Services	Category	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.
- 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.
- 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)*.

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) and High Plus (HP) programs.

Procedure

1. Carer renewals – overview

- 1.1 Carer renewals are mandated by the Department of Child Safety, Seniors, and Disability Services (the Department) and must occur:
 - One (1) year from the date that the first Certificate of Approval was granted; and
 - Three (3) years thereafter; or
 - At any specific time indicated on a Certificate of Approval; or
 - As necessitated by a Standard of Care Review.
- 1.2 Carer approval expiry dates will be entered into and available in Penelope in the *Foster Carer Approval* or *Kinship Carer Approval* located in the Carer Assessment and Approval Service File.
- 1.3 Reports should be run monthly by the allocated Business Support Officer (BSO) and provided to the Team Manager (TM), Program Manager (PM)/Senior Program Manager (SPM), Regional Director (RD), and allocated Foster and Kinship Care Practitioners (FKCPs) to anticipate and prepare for the expiry of carer approvals. Reports can be found under the FKCPs My Profile in Penelope Client Management System (CMS), clicking on View My Profile, and Documents.
- 1.4 The purpose of the renewal process is to assess the carer/s provision of care since the previous assessment. The intention of the renewal is to consider the carer's progress and the way they have met the Statement of Standards of Care during the period of the current Certificate of Approval, as well as assessing ongoing placement suitability and capacity.

2. Conducting carer renewals

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- 2.1 Where the support and monitoring of a carer is allocated to a MC FKCP, it is the allocated FKCP's responsibility to monitor renewal timeframes and ensure that renewal tasks are undertaken within appropriate timeframes. Unless otherwise agreed by the line manager, appropriate timeframes are as follows:
- Draft to the Line Manager at least eight (8) weeks prior to expiry;
 - Line Manager and allocated FKCP have two (2) weeks to review and finalise; and
 - Final Renewal Assessment submitted to the Department no later than four (4) weeks prior to expiry.
- The Line Manager will also monitor renewal timeframes and the FKCP's progress in meeting these timeframes.
- 2.2 The allocated FKCP or Line Manager will ensure that the renewal process is initiated at least four (4) months prior to the expiry of the carer's current Certificate of Approval. Refer to the *Department's Form 3B Guidelines for completing assessment report (renewal of approval)* for guidance on the renewal process.
- 2.3 The allocated worker will be directed by the *Department's Child Safety Practice Manual* regarding the renewal process, taking note of the type of carer the applicant wishes to become and the relevant process associated. This will include interviews with the carer/s and, if appropriate, other household members, as well as a comprehensive review of MC files.
- 2.4 The need for discretionary checks, as per the *Department's Child Safety Practice Manual*, can be considered when additional information is required to inform whether the carer applicant is a suitable person to be reapproved as a foster or kinship carer.
- 2.5 The allocated FKCP will provide the carer/s all documentation they are required to complete for their renewal at least three (3) months prior to the expiry of their Certificate of Approval, to ensure there is ample time to review this. The allocated FKCP will assist the carer/s to complete the documentation, as appropriate, and ensure that all documentation is collected. Where this documentation is not returned by the carer within one (1) month of the current approval's expiry, the allocated worker will escalate this to the relevant site's PM or SPM.
- 2.6 Regarding the renewal process:
- Interviews with applicants should occur at the applicant's home to ensure that the applicant is comfortable;
 - Applicants must be interviewed face-to-face; and
 - A review of MC carer and child/young person's archived CMS files and Penelope records must be conducted, with a summary of this information to be included in the final report.
- 2.7 Following the initial completion of the renewal assessment, the allocated FKCP will submit the report to the Line Manager for quality assurance. The Line Manager will not change the allocated FKCP's assessment, however, if there is a disagreement of opinion or assessment, this should be discussed with the allocated FKCP. Where these differences of opinion cannot be resolved, the RD may be consulted.
- 2.8 If, following the completion of the renewal report and after discussions with the line manager, the allocated FKCP is recommending that the applicant not be renewed as a foster or kinship carer, they will meet with the applicant to discuss the recommendation. The reasons for this recommendation will be discussed and the applicant will be advised that they may either:
- Withdraw from the renewal process; or
 - Prepare a written report to be included in the MC assessment report.

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- 2.9 If the applicant's renewal as a carer is being recommended, the allocated FKCP will send the report to the applicant for review and comment prior to this being submitted to the Department.
- 2.10 For general foster carers where renewal is being recommended, the allocated FKCP will also develop a revised *Foster Carer Agreement* in consultation with the applicant, to accompany the submitted assessment and Household Safety Study.
- 2.11 Once the renewal assessment has been completed, quality assured and shared with the applicant, it will be submitted to the relevant Placement Services (PS) along with all other required documentation. All renewal assessment information must be provided to the relevant PS prior to the expiry of the *Certificate of Approval*. If this is unable to occur, the Line Manager will contact the PS to discuss an alternate plan.

3. Applicant approval

- 3.1 When MC receives the renewed *Certificate of Approval*, the allocated FKCP will continue supporting and monitoring the carer (see *FS PROC FKC Carer Support and Monitoring*).
- 3.2 The allocated BSO will update the carer/s details, including the approvals and new expiry date of the approval, in the relevant approval document

4. Applicant non-approval

- 4.1 When the Department advises that the carer's approval is not being renewed and all appeal timeframes have expired, the allocated FKCP will ensure that all relevant paperwork has been uploaded to the file and then advise the TM. The BSO will close the carer Service File by clicking on the 'Close Service File' link to the right of the Service File Summary. While the Department will advise the carer/s of the decision, the allocated FKCP will liaise with the Line Manager regarding how MC might support the carer following the Department's decision.
- 4.2 Where there are children or young people placed with the carer, the allocated FKCP will liaise with the Department regarding new placements.

5. Records management

- 5.1 All renewal assessment documentation, including handwritten notes, will be filed in Penelope under the Carer Assessment and Approval Service file.
- 5.2 The allocated FKCP will set alerts in the Workflow task bar in Penelope by clicking on the "Clipboard" Task icon. A reminder should be set for four (4) months prior to the expiry of the certificate of approval for the worker to commence the renewal process. The TM for the program and the allocated BSO worker should also be added as Followers of the task. Notes can also be added to the Task reminder.
- 5.3 Where a carer renewal is withdrawn or not approved by the Department and the carer is closed to MC, the carer file will be closed in line with MC archiving procedures. A copy of all documentation is sent to the Department (see *FS PROC FKC Records Management*).
- 5.4 Saving emails to requires workers to paste unformatted text into a *Case Note*. All documentation is to be uploaded to the Penelope CMS within ten (10) working days. Where uploading is anticipated to take longer than this, FKCPs must negotiate this with their Line Manager.

Definitions

Foster and Kinship Care Practitioner

The employee who has been delegated by the line manager to undertake specific case

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management or placement support tasks.

Line Manager

Employees tasked with client care planning and care management oversight within the program. Line Manager covers Coordinators, Clinicians, Team Managers and Program Managers, to whom workers directly report for their program/region. Line Managers report to the Program Manager/Senior Program Manager.

Program Manager/Senior Program Manager

Employees tasked with day-to-day oversight of MC programs. The Program Manager/Senior Program Manager reports to the Regional Director.

Regional Director

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

References

Child Protection Act 1999 (Qld)
Department's Child Safety Practice Manual (CSPM)
Department's Form 3B Guidelines for completing assessment report (renewal of approval)
Guidelines for completing an assessment report—Renewal of approval | Child Safety Practice Manual (csyw.qld.gov.au)
Department's Foster Carer Agreement Form
FS DOC FKC Program Overview
FS PROC FKC Carer Support and Monitoring
FS PROC FKC Records Management

Related Documents

FS IP FKC Penelope Document Filing Guide

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