Hyder mewn Gofal - Confidence in Care

Induction Framework for Short Break Carers
Guide for Managers and Supervisors
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1. Background
The Care Council for Wales is one of the six organisations making up the Skills for Care & Development UK Alliance; the Sector Skills Council for the social care, children and young people’s workforce. The Council, in its Sector Skills role, has the role of workforce planning and development for the sector and for the Early Years and Childcare Workforce. It is also the regulatory body for social care workers and for social work training in Wales, becoming operational on 1 October 2001.

2. Introduction
Induction is essential for every worker within the children’s workforce, to assist them in understanding the crucial role they play in supporting children and young people during their formative years. Induction is also vital in helping workers understand the roles and responsibilities of the various individuals, agencies and organisations that deliver services and work with children and young people in Wales. Short break carers have a valuable role to play in supporting families with children with a disability, and can make a real difference to the lives of children and their families.

The Induction Framework for Short Break Carers has been designed to provide a structured introduction to working as a short break foster carer, including the specific aspects that are essential for effective work with children and young people with a disability. The framework also incorporates the seven core aims that represent the distillation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). These aims have been adopted by the Welsh Government as the basis for all work with children and young people in Wales.

The Induction Framework has been mapped against the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services and Fostering Services Regulations 2002 and the UK National Standards for Foster Care 1999. It complements the Social Care Induction Framework for Wales.

The Induction Framework for Short Break Carers in Wales has been developed following extensive consultation with people and agencies concerned with fostering and foster care, and has been agreed by the Welsh Government. This guidance will explain what the Induction Framework is and how to use it.

1 See Appendix 1
3.1 Responsibilities of foster care providers

Short break provision is a statutory service for the families and carers of children with a disability, intended not just to provide relief from stress and enable families to cope, but to enhance the overall quality of life for families and improve the quality of care they are able to offer.

Short break care covers a range of provision, which can include overnight or day care, and which may be planned or unplanned. It is particularly important that short break carers are able to facilitate access for children and young people with a disability to the range of universal services in their local area, that is, services that are open to all children and young people. Such services might include children’s centres, leisure activities, holiday play schemes, evening and weekend clubs and so on. These services may provide specialist sessions for children and young people with a disability.

Foster care providers have a duty under the Fostering Services Regulations 2002 to provide training, advice, information and support to foster carers. This includes the recruitment, checking, management, training and support of staff and foster carers, including those providing short break services.

SECTION 5: Recruiting, checking, managing, supporting and training staff and foster carers

The people who work in or for the fostering service are suitable to work with children and young people, and they are managed, trained and supported in such a way as to ensure the best possible outcomes for children in foster care. The number of staff and carers and their range of qualifications and experience are sufficient to achieve the purposes and functions of the organisation.

In practice, this means that foster care providers need to ensure that foster carers are recruited safely, with references taken up and police checks completed. Under the Independent Safeguarding Authority, organisations providing foster care will become regulated activity providers, and short break carers will provide regulated activities.

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2 Children & Young Person's Act 2008: amendment to Schedule 2 of 1989 Children Act, to be implemented by April 2011

3 Fostering Services National Minimum Standards and Fostering Regulations 2002 (DH)
3.2 Access to training

Foster care providers need to have arrangements in place to ensure that staff and carers have access to appropriate training and development opportunities. This means that they need either to provide training within their organisation, or commission training from elsewhere. People providing short break care may already be foster carers or may be other professionals or non-childcare professionals. The Induction Standards can be used to provide additional skills and knowledge for continuous professional development.

It is important to make sure that a range of training opportunities are accessible to foster carers, for example, at weekends or in the evenings so that the training does not conflict with their caring role, or with other employment commitments they may have. It is possible that where foster care is provided in remote or rural areas, or the provider is a small organisation, opportunities for e-learning and online learning should be considered; however, foster carers benefit from contact with each other so networking opportunities are also an important aspect of support.

Training needs to be aligned with arrangements for supervision of foster carers and with the Induction Framework. It must be flexible enough to meet the learning requirements of different foster carers and provide a range of learning opportunities (see 4.1). It is a requirement that foster care providers keep a record of all training attended by foster carers.
3.3 Content of training
More flexible and personalised services designed around the needs of families with children with a disability will require carefully planned training to ensure that short break carers have the special skills required to meet the needs of individual children and young people. It is expected that particular attention will be paid to training that ensures the needs of the following children can be met:

- Those children and young people with autistic spectrum disorders (ASD), who may have other impairments, including learning disabilities and challenging behaviour
- Children and young people with complex health needs who may require technical health care support, including children with physical, cognitive and sensory impairments, and those with life-limiting conditions
- Older children and young people who have moving and handling needs that require equipment and adaptors to help them move around. These children and young people have physical disabilities but may also have other impairments
- Those children and young people whose behaviour is challenging and likely to be associated with severe cognitive impairments

It is recommended that foster care providers work closely with local health partners to commission, develop and deliver health-related aspects of short break carer training, especially moving and handling, medicines management and administration, challenging behaviour, safe restraint and resuscitation.

3.4 Supervisor responsibilities
Staff responsible for supervising short break carers must be suitably qualified. This usually means having a social work qualification, knowledge and experience in family placement work, adoption and fostering, and being competent to assess the evidence provided by carers that they meet the outcomes of the Induction Framework. They should be able to support the foster carer in putting together a portfolio of evidence of their knowledge, understanding and skills.

Supervisors need to be able to support foster carers in their role and with their learning and development. The supervisor will be fulfilling the function of a line manager and the visits should be treated as a supervision session, recorded and documented.
Key points to consider

- The background and experience of the short break carer
- The preferred ways in which the short break carers learn
- The short break carer’s abilities, e.g. if they might need additional support with literacy or numeracy
- How any practical or specialist skills will be taught and practised
- What previous experience can be used to demonstrate that short break carers have met the outcomes
- Access to training and networking opportunities for all short break carers, e.g. financial support for travel or childcare expenses etc.
- What are the opportunities for progression to qualifications for short break carers who wish to develop?
- Opportunities for joint training with other childcare workers
- Any training needs for short break carers identified by looked-after children and young people
About the Induction Framework

The Induction Framework is based on a set of outcomes developed to ensure that new workers have the knowledge and skills they need to carry out their responsibilities safely, as the first step in developing expertise. The framework is not a learning programme; rather it sets out the expectations and requirements for effective practice when working with children and young people. The outcomes reflect the current good practice of many short break carers and foster care organisations that provide training, support and development opportunities. Short break carers are expected to meet the outcomes in the course of their work with the children and young people they look after.

Induction is a process and the first step to proficiency. At the end of the induction period, workers will be able to progress in their development and work towards obtaining the necessary qualifications for further practice if they wish.

The Induction Framework embeds within it the principles and values that underpin work with children and young people, and reflect the Welsh Government’s seven core aims for children and young people in Wales, distilled from the UNCRC, together with the Common Core of Skills, Knowledge and Understanding for the Children and Young People's Workforce in Wales.

4.1 Aims
The primary aim of the Induction Framework is to ensure that short break carers have the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to provide high-quality care for children and young people with a disability they care for.

Evidence has shown that a structured induction process, together with programmes for continuing development, can play a part in retaining foster carers, therefore the Framework can be used:

- To identify the learning (knowledge) and skills (training) needs of new foster carers
- To develop individual development plans for foster carers
- To inform the development of learning programmes, courses and modular training
- To identify and prioritise ongoing learning
- As a quality benchmark to ensure effective practice
- To gather evidence of work activities, knowledge and skills that can be used towards future achievement, e.g. a Qualification and Credit Framework or other qualification
For supervisors of short break carers, a key aspect of the role is to provide support and training opportunities for newly approved short break carers. In addition, they are responsible for assessing the short break carer’s progress in meeting the outcomes in the Induction Framework. A planned approach to training and development will support the implementation of the short break service, for example, the setting up of a trained “bank” or “pool” of workers to provide flexible and accessible provision.

4.2 Outcomes
The outcomes within the Induction Framework incorporate the knowledge, understanding and skills needed by short break carers. These are:

- **Outcome 1:** Understanding your role as a short break carer for children and young people in Wales
- **Outcome 2:** Supporting and promoting health and wellbeing
- **Outcome 3:** Communication and record keeping
- **Outcome 4:** Understanding development and behaviour
- **Outcome 5:** Keeping children and young people safe from harm
- **Outcome 6:** Developing yourself and your skills

The Induction Framework is organised into **main areas**, which are broad areas of knowledge that the worker will need to learn, and which could form the basis of a curriculum or a formal or informal learning programme.

These main areas are then further broken down to show what the **outcomes** of learning are likely to be for the worker – what the worker needs to know, understand and be able to demonstrate.

Associated **guidance** provides further details and **evidence** examples show what the worker can do to demonstrate their learning and skills.
5.1 Planning
The first step in this process is for the supervisor to sit down with the short break carer and decide what knowledge and skills they may already have. It is very likely that they have had previous experience with children and young people, as parents or with family members. It is also possible that they have worked in a professional capacity with children and young people, e.g. in health or with a childcare or education provider, so this will need to be taken into consideration. It may be that they will need to update or refresh their knowledge and skills in some areas.

They will need to agree a plan that takes all previous experience into account, but identifies what else the short break carer needs to know to meet the outcomes. This will form the basis of the induction plan, which will need to be reviewed and amended regularly as the short break carer makes progress.

5.2 Learning and skills development
Because people learn in different ways, such as watching other people, looking up or being given information, or discussing things with others, the supervisor will need to consider using a mixture of learning activities to support the short break carer’s learning and competence. Competence means having the knowledge and understanding, and to be able to apply it to different work activities, e.g. with different children or in different situations.

Suitable learning activities might include:

- Attending a training programme specially designed for short break carers
- Responding to questions asked by the supervisor in relation to the child being looked after, during regular supervision
- One-to-one discussions about specific situations with a more experienced short break carer acting as a mentor, or the parents or regular carers of the child
- Undertaking a distance learning programme
- Reading books or articles recommended or provided by the supervisor
- Attending a general training programme, e.g. first aid
- Keeping a reflective diary in which the short break carer documents what they did, the outcome and what, if anything, they would do differently next time
- Using e-learning programmes to learn specific skills

The supervisor needs to discuss learning with the short break carer and build this into the plan, together with arrangements for how their progress will be assessed.

In addition, the short break carer will need to liaise closely with the parents or carers of the child in question, so that they understand the particular methods, routines and caring activities that are a regular part of the child’s or young person’s routine.
Routine and consistency of care is particularly important for children with a disability, especially those with cognitive disabilities or autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and helps to foster a trusting relationship between all parties. The supervisor can arrange this and such discussions can be documented as evidence towards the Induction Standards.

It is important to recognise that that workers are not expected to meet the requirements as soon as they become approved, and they may need to have supported more than one child or young person placed with them before they complete the Induction Framework. Induction is a process and the first step to proficiency.

5.3 Assessment
Supervisors need to have a good understanding of assessment practice, and the different ways in which short break carers can present evidence of their knowledge, understanding and skills. For example, that in principle knowledge and understanding can be demonstrated by questioning their learning (knowledge) and understanding (application in context), whereas skills are more easily assessed through observed demonstration. Care Council for Wales has provided guidance for short break carers, which provides information about suggested evidence for each outcome of the Induction Framework.

It is possible to carry out some assessment during learning or training sessions, however, care must be taken to assess individual achievement. It is also a good idea to arrange assessment to coincide with supervision arrangements.

It is good practice to keep records of assessments, a copy of which can be given to the short break carer to keep with their portfolio to support future progress, e.g. to link with NVQ as assessment of prior achievement.
What next?

Completion of the Induction Framework demonstrates that short break carers have the basic skills to work safely and effectively with children and young people with a disability. However, there will be some tasks and activities that require ongoing practice over time to become really skilled, e.g. dealing with children whose behaviour can be challenging or seen as difficult, and others that will require additional learning, such as giving medication. These specific skills can be developed as required, but it is important for supervisors to ensure that the short break carer is able to access learning opportunities. Supervisors may, for example, arrange for the short break carer to spend time in the child or young person’s home, shadowing the parents or regular carers.

It is important for workers to continue to develop skills and knowledge to progress to a professional role as a qualified childcare practitioner. This will open up career opportunities and at the same time, benefit children, young people and their families.

Additional training and development can also allow workers to move from one area of childcare practice to another more easily, as they build on the foundations provided by induction and continuing development.

Resources

The Fostering Network (tFN)
www.fostering.net

This is the UK’s leading charity for anyone with a personal or professional interest in fostering. tFN provides a wide range of publications, training and resources to support short break carers and fostering services. It also produces The Skills to Foster, training materials for prospective carers, key policy and recruitment materials, the Signpost series and essential good practice guides, and a wide range of training programmes.

British Association for Adoption and Fostering
www.baaf.org.uk

This is a UK organisation made up of fostering and adoption agencies that provides a range of books and other resources, including training. It also publishes attractive books for children.
Principles and values

Principles and values are an important basis of practice, but can only have an impact on children, young people and families if they are embedded within everyday work. These principles and values underpin the whole Induction Framework, and reflect the concepts of children’s rights and the importance of listening to children and young people. They apply to all care work with children, young people, and their families and carers, and are articulated in other standards that apply to work with children and young people.

**Principles**

- The welfare of the child or young person is paramount.
- Childcare workers contribute to children's and young people’s care, learning and development, and safeguarding. This is reflected in every aspect of practice and service provision.
- Childcare workers support parents and families who are partners in the care, learning, development and safeguarding of their children, recognising they are the child's or young person's first and, in most situations, their most enduring carers and educators.

**Values**

- The needs, rights and views of the child or young person are at the centre of all practice and provision.
- Individuality, difference and diversity are valued and celebrated.
- Equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice are actively promoted.
- Children and young people’s health and wellbeing are actively promoted.
- Children and young people’s educational needs are given high priority to ensure that they reach their full potential.
- Children and young people’s personal and physical safety is safeguarded, whilst allowing for risk and challenge, as appropriate to the capabilities of the child or young person.
- Self-esteem and resilience are recognised as essential to every child’s or young person’s development.
- Confidentiality and agreements about confidential information are respected as appropriate, unless a child’s or young person’s protection and wellbeing are at stake.
- Professional knowledge, skills and values are shared appropriately to enrich the experience of children and young people more widely.
- Social inclusion and advancement of children and young people are actively promoted as specified in the UNCRC.
The seven core aims
The seven core aims for children in Wales have been distilled from the UNCRC. They form the basis of government policies for children and young people in Wales to ensure that the UNCRC apply at all levels. The seven core aims are focused on implementing children’s and young people’s rights, whereas the principles and values are focused on what practitioners need to do.

The seven core aims ensure that children and young people:

1. Have a flying start in life and the best possible basis for future growth and development
2. Have access to a comprehensive range of education, training and learning opportunities, including acquisition of essential personal and social skills
3. Enjoy the best possible physical and mental, social and emotional health, including freedom from abuse, victimisation and exploitation
4. Have access to play, leisure, sporting and cultural activities
5. Are listened to, treated with respect, and are able to have their race and cultural identity recognised
6. Have a safe home and a community that supports physical and emotional wellbeing
7. Are not disadvantaged by child poverty