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| **12.13 Foster Carer Recording Policy** |  |

**REGULATIONS AND STANDARDS**

[**STANDARD 26 - Records**](http://www.minimumstandards.org/fost_twentysix.html)

Outcome - Records are clear, up to date, stored securely and contribute to an understanding of the child’s life.

26.2: Staff, volunteers, panel members and fostering households understand the nature of records maintained and follow the service’s policy for the keeping and retention of files, managing confidential information and access to files (including files removed from the premises). There is a system in place to monitor the quality and adequacy of record keeping and take action when needed.

**SCOPE OF THIS CHAPTER**

Why do we need this policy?

The Fostering Services National Minimum Standards require that The Nottinghamshire County Council Fostering Service has and implements a written policy that clarifies the purpose, format, and content of information to be kept on the fostering services’ files, on the child’s files, and on case files relating to foster carers. This policy sets out our expectations in relation to foster carer recordings.

**AMENDMENT**

This chapter was updated in June 2022 and should be re-read throughout.

 **Contents**

1. [**The Purpose of Recordings**](https://nottinghamshirechildcare.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_fc_record_pol.html#purpose)
2. [**The Content and Style of Recordings**](https://nottinghamshirechildcare.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_fc_record_pol.html#content)
3. [**The Format of Recordings**](https://nottinghamshirechildcare.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_fc_record_pol.html#format)
4. [**Responsibilities in Relation to Storage and Confidentiality**](https://nottinghamshirechildcare.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_fc_record_pol.html#storage)
5. [**Responsibilities of Your Supervising social worker**](https://nottinghamshirechildcare.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_fc_record_pol.html#sworker)
6. [**End of Placement**](https://nottinghamshirechildcare.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_fc_record_pol.html#end)
7. [**Further Information and Advice on Recording**](https://nottinghamshirechildcare.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_fc_record_pol.html#info_advice)

 **1.****The Purpose of Recordings**

Everyone who works with looked after children will be involved in recording. As a foster carer, you play a key role in the care of [**Looked After Children**](http://trixresources.proceduresonline.com/nat_key/keywords/looked_after_child.html), and you are uniquely placed to record important information during a child’s placement with you.

It is essential that you keep accurate records, because:

1. Records can offer children and young people an opportunity to look back at what has happened during their time in your care, to maintain memories and their individual life story, to understand why decisions were made, clarify what your role was in the child’s life and improve a child’s sense of self and identity.
2. Recordings can provide an opportunity to reflect and allow analysis of behaviour; it also allows sharing of information with other professionals to enhance the child’s life, it also assists in continuity when there are changes in care.
3. Records can provide accurate information that can be used in plans and assessments for the children.
4. The information may be required in court both for current and any future proceedings.
5. Recordings are an important part of the fostering role, ensuring you are meeting the accountability and standards required by the National Minimum Standards and Fostering service.
6. They support your supervision, learning and development.
7. They will be referred to in all instances of a concern or allegation being raised regarding a child or young person.

 **2.****The Content and Style of Recordings**

You are expected to keep daily records for children in your care, to include all important details, daily life events, significant events and milestones. Your supervising social worker will discuss with you what to record and there is an expectation that all foster carers access recording training to support around expectations, when undertaking this task. Further specific information required to be included in recordings is detailed within this policy.

Remember, these records should be useful to the child or young person, now and in the future and you should be writing in a way that you would be happy for the child or young person to read what you have written. Recording should offer a balanced view of the child’s life and including positive experiences and achievements as well as the challenges and difficult situations.

You should ensure that all records are relevant, accurate, up to date, and stored securely in line with the UK General Data Protection Regulations (UK GDPR) and by Caldicott which both reinforce the importance of confidentiality.. There are **eight** Caldicott principles for handling personal information [Eight\_Caldicott\_Principles\_08.12.20.pdf (publishing.service.gov.uk)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/942217/Eight_Caldicott_Principles_08.12.20.pdf).

Personal information held about children and young people and their families is subject to a legal duty of confidence and should not be disclosed without the consent of the subject except in exceptional circumstances such as the protection of the child, the investigation of criminal offences or the exercise of a statutory right of access. Those working with children and young people must make it clear that confidentiality may not be maintained if the disclosure of information is necessary in these circumstances. Even in these circumstances, disclosure should be appropriate for the purpose and only to the extent necessary to achieve that purpose. Foster carers should discuss disclosure of information with their supervising social worker if required to support clarity.

Recordings in relation to the child, need to be clear and legible, and the language should be kept simple and free of jargon. You should ensure that you differentiate between fact, opinion, and third-party information in your recordings.

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| **Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards***26.5) Entries in records, decisions and reasons for them, are legible, clearly expressed, non-stigmatising, distinguish between fact, opinion and third party information and are signed and dated.* |

Records should be signed and kept in date order, either electronically on a password protected device, or in a separate physical file for each individual child in your care, that are stored securely. You should avoid recording opinion and stick to the facts wherever possible, however, if you feel you need to record opinion make sure you clearly state that this is your opinion. If this opinion is not regarding the child, it should be shared separately with your supervising social worker/ child social worker and not in a recording about the child

You should ensure these recordings are always available to view by the child’s Social Worker or your Supervising Social worker or a member of their teams acting on their behalf. The contents of these recordings should not be shared with others beyond the team around the child including your personal network or family if this is not essential for the child’s care.

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| **Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards***26.6) Information is recorded clearly in a way which will be helpful to the child when they access their files now or in the future. Children are actively encouraged to read their files, other than necessary confidential or third party information, and to correct errors and add personal statements.* |

**Good Practice Tips**

In terms of recording the following good practice tips are suggested: -

* Be clear, accurate and concise
* Identify specifically what is your opinion or suggestion rather than fact
* Do not record information about yourself personally or professionally unless this directly impacts upon the child.
* Record the child’s views or comments in the child’s own words wherever possible
* Keep records in date order
* Keep separate records for each child in your care
* Keep all information secure and confidential
* Write in a way in which you would be happy for the child, young person, Social Worker or third party (such as legal professionals) to read this now or in the future.
* Discuss your recordings during your supervision and request support and advice as required.
* Attend and refresh your training on reporting and recording regularly

For further information around recording, please see [Recording (fosteringhandbook.com)](https://www.fosteringhandbook.com/nottinghamshire/recording.html)

 **3.****The Format of Recordings**

You will receive blank electronic record, which you should complete and save for each individual child in your care daily. This record is divided in to 31 daily sections for the individual dates to be completed. If you require physical sheets to complete your recordings by hand, please request these from your supervising social worker. Each child in your care will have separate recordings individual to them.

There are five recording documents which you will need to complete which are, a daily running record, a medication sheet, incident form, body map and missing from foster home form. The majority of your recordings will be contained within the daily running record, please indicate on this record if you have also completed any of the other recording sheets for the period of time discussed.

Support carers should record in the same way as mainstream carers and these recordings should be shared with the child’s mainstream carers on the child’s return. You should give these sheets to your supervising social worker who will ensure they are uploaded to the child ‘s electronic file and cross referenced to the support carers electronic file on mosaic and any pertinent information forwarded to the main carers SSW to share with the main carers. Should a child make a disclosure about their mainstream carer or raise concern about the care that they receive this should be recorded separately as a significant incident and immediate reporting to the child’s social worker and your supervising social worker, as outlined below (see section 3).

**Section 1: Daily running record.**

This is the main section of your recordings and should include the following, as well as anything, which you feel is significant for the individual child and their care. What is significant for each child will vary, however, it is better to record more rather than less information if unsure. The content and quality of your recordings will be discussed with you in supervision. If you are unsure, then please speak with your supervising social worker.

Day to day life:

* Anything of significance for the individual child.
* Discussions you have with the child which are significant.
* Any family events, celebrations, achievements, or milestones. Including minor achievements and successes.
* Anything which the child may have found challenging that day and any triggers to these challenges.
* Any rewards, sanctions, responses, or therapeutic techniques utilised and the impact of these for the child.
* Any visitors to the home, with times and indicate if they were alone with the child in your care and for how long. This includes personal and professional visitors to the home.
* Quotes or phrases that the child uses which are significant to them or that day.
* Instances whereby you have used the authority delegated to you (please see the delegated authority form for more information).
* Details of any changes to the household which could impact on the child.

Health and Development:

* Details of appointments and/or telephone calls with medical practitioners.
* Details of any developmental/health milestones and achievements.
* Details of any measurements (i.e. height weight etc.) taken.
* Symptoms and progress of any new or ongoing illnesses.
* Patterns to any ongoing illnesses or conditions such as asthma attacks, eczema flare ups etc.
* Details of the child’s emotional and mental health and any changes or triggers identified.

Education:

* Record details of all visits, meetings, and telephone calls regarding education and what was discussed. This includes PEP meetings and parents’ evenings etc.
* Record all achievements and attainment in education or related activities.
* Record attendance and achievement at extra-curricular activities (social/leisure/ play activities) in and outside of the school environment.

Social Worker and other Professionals’ visits:

* All visits and telephones calls from professionals regarding the children in your care.
* The appointments and telephone calls regarding you personally or professionally should be kept separately.
* Visitors to the home should be noted with times and any instances whereby they are alone with the child in your care. This includes personal and professional visits.

Family Time:

* Details of all forms of family time between the child or young person and their birth family.
* Include details of all telephone calls, video calls, text messages, emails and visits.
* Record if planned family time did not go ahead, recording the reason why the family time did not go ahead.
* Record your child or young person’s responses and reactions to any family time arrangements or cancellation of family time.

You should indicate at the bottom of each recording sheet, any additional forms that have been completed from the below in addition to the daily running record.

**Section 2: Medication Administration Record.**

This is in addition to the running record as a separate sheet. Please follow the below guidelines and indicate in the running record that a medication sheet has been completed.

1. Medication is discussed at the Placement Planning Meeting and will also be detailed on the Delegated Authority Form if a child is taking specific medication prior to placement. Medication should be given to the carer at the start of the placement and supplied in the original packaging with the child’s name, date of issue, expiry date and the pharmacist’s instructions clearly visible. If this is not the case, then the child’s social worker should follow this up seeking medical advice if necessary.
2. Carers must keep an accurate and up to date written record of all medication given and procedures performed. They will be supplied with a record form to document all medications given. This includes all prescribed and non-prescribed medication, creams and chemical treatments (such as head lice treatment).
3. Medication that is self-administered by a child or young person being of the age and understanding to do so, should also be recorded in the same way.
4. If there is any significant unanticipated reaction to the medication, then medical advice should be obtained, and the carer must then record the reaction on the medication record. The child social worker and supervising social worker must be informed.
5. In the event of a child or young person refusing to take medication then no physical attempt should be made to enforce compliance. The carer should advise the child’s social worker, or their supervising social worker and medical advice sought as appropriate. This ‘refusal’ should be recorded.
6. If the carer recognises that an error has been made in the administration of the medication (e.g. incorrect dosage, or the ‘missing’ of a dose(s)) then this should be recorded clearly on the medication record. Again, the seeking of medical advice may be appropriate at this point, along with advising the social worker/supervising social worker.
7. The crushing of tablets and opening of capsules to facilitate administration of medicines can result in a change in the effect of the medication by altering its release rate. This practice should only be undertaken on medical or pharmaceutical advice and should be recorded. Carers should not attempt to disguise medication without appropriate consents and advice.
8. Storage - carers must comply with any written instructions accompanying the medication regarding conditions of storage. All medication must in any event be kept in a secure area or locked box that is accessible only by the carer(s).
9. Methods of administration of medication should consider any specific needs of the child/young person arising from gender, race, culture, ethnicity or religion. This should be discussed with foster carers at the time of placement and recorded separately under ‘Method of Administration’.
10. Individual Health Protocols for children/young person’s requiring rescue medication or “invasive” procedures (e.g. injections) will be drawn up and separate guidelines issued on a child specific basis by the appropriate health professional.

**Section 3: Incidents and Injuries.**

There are two separate records to complete for incidents and injuries an **incident report** and a **body map** noting any injuries sustained. It is good practice to immediately report, record any injuries sustained to a child whilst they are in your care, Expectations around this should be specifically discussed with you at a placement planning meeting and noted on the child’s digital record, as well as within the safer caring document.

A significant incident is also one in which you or your household have been threatened or harmed by a child or young person in your care, their family members or extended network. For your safety and the safety of the children in your care this is also must be reported immediately, as soon as it is safe to do so, and records completed. Further advice, guidance and training is available to minimise risks to yourself and others and deescalate situations in which individuals potentially could be harmed. All incidents of physical restraint should also be reported. For further information around significant events, please see [Significant Events and Notifications - When I need to tell other people about things (fosteringhandbook.com)](https://www.fosteringhandbook.com/nottinghamshire/monitoring.html)

If there are concerns in relation to a child harming a pet or a pet harming a child, then the Pet Policy and Guidance for Fostering Households should be read.

In order to immediately report an incident, you must contact your supervising social worker and the child(ren’s) social worker directly by telephone or e-mail. If you cannot reach these professionals, please contact the duty workers for their teams. If a significant incident occurs outside of office hours the fostering out of hours service should be contacted in the first instance.

Your priority should always be the safety and welfare of the child in your care, yourself and your household members, so seeking safety or medical attention remains priority, however reporting and recording immediately when it is safe to do so is a requirement for all significant incidents and injuries as outlined above.

Record in as much detail as possible the following points as well as any points relevant to the specific incident or injury:

* How the incident happened including what was occurring immediately before and after the incident.
* Where and when the incident took place, who was present and/ or witnessed the incident.
* Any actions taken and by whom.
* Include any incidents of self-harm and significant incidents of an accidental nature.
* Include all instances whereby emergency medical attention is required.
* Include instances whereby you or a member of your household is being harmed by a child or young person.
* Include details of all instances where physical restraint was used. Any restraints should be used as a last resort, with clarity around behaviour management provided in the safer caring document, alongside appropriate training. It is the view of the local authority that other strategies should be utilised where appropriate.
* The outcome for the child, yourself, and household members.
* Any medical advice and treatment sought and the timings of this.

Outcomes and any future actions required of significant incidents will be discussed and agreed by fostering and children’s social workers and managers. Future and ongoing risks to the children and other members of the fostering household will be reviewed. All information and recordings of incidents and injuries will be recorded on the child’s electronic file. Information stored may trigger or be referred to as required to undertake investigations under the concerns and allegations procedures.

**Section 4: Child Missing from a foster home.**

The National Police Chiefs' Council (formerly the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO)) definition of a missing person is:

**Missing** - ‘Anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established and where the circumstances are out of character, or the context suggests the person may be the subject of crime or at risk of harm to themselves or another’.

If a child is missing and you do not know where the child is and they are not found within a reasonable time frame: one hour for under 12's and two hours for over 12's (unless stated otherwise in their Placement Plan), you must contact the child's social worker, duty worker or the Out of Hours team on **0800 085 8995.**

* For all children in foster care, The Missing from Care policy should be followed [11.2.18 Child Missing and Recovery Orders (proceduresonline.com)](https://nottinghamshirechildcare.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_ch_miss_rec_order.html)
* Please also refer to [My Foster Child is Missing (fosteringhandbook.com)](https://www.fosteringhandbook.com/nottinghamshire/missing.html) and [Nottingham City Safeguarding Children Board (proceduresonline.com)](https://www.proceduresonline.com/nottinghamshire/scb/user_controlled_lcms_area/uploaded_files/Children%20Missing%20from%20Home%20and%20Care%20September%202019%20FINAL.pdf)
* An up-to-date photograph of the child should be kept for use by the police - this should be updated every 6 months.
* For some young people, assessed as being at risk from influences in the community, record their significant ‘comings and goings’ and any regular visitors they have to your home.

[The Philomena Protocol | Nottinghamshire Police](https://www.nottinghamshire.police.uk/police-forces/nottinghamshire-police/areas/campaigns/campaigns/the-philomena-protocol/) – information regarding the Philomena protocol, which aims to help locate a young person as quickly as possible when they are missing from care.

[philomena-protocol-form.pdf (nottinghamshire.police.uk)](https://www.nottinghamshire.police.uk/SysSiteAssets/media/downloads/nottinghamshire/campaigns/2022/philomena-protocol/philomena-protocol-form.pdf) – Philomena Protocol Form

[The Philomena Protocol GMP Leaflet (Feb 2020).pdf (nottinghamshire.police.uk)](https://www.nottinghamshire.police.uk/SysSiteAssets/media/downloads/nottinghamshire/campaigns/2022/philomena-protocol/philomena-protocol-information.pdf) – Philomena Protocol Information (PDF)

Further information around missing can be found at the following link [Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care (publishing.service.gov.uk)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/307867/Statutory_Guidance_-_Missing_from_care__3_.pdf) and [My Foster Child is Missing (fosteringhandbook.com)](https://www.fosteringhandbook.com/nottinghamshire/missing.html)

 **4.****Responsibilities in Relation to Storage and Confidentiality**

Whilst you record and hold information on looked after children and young people, this is on behalf of The Fostering Service. All information provided about a child, who is or has been placed with a foster carer is confidential and governed by the UK General Data Protection Regulations (UK GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018. Information about a child, young person, or their family should only be provided to another person if it is for the purpose of the child or young person’s protection or welfare. Information is shared on a strictly “need to know” basis as outlined in National Minimum Standards 26.4. Advice and guidance should be sought from the child’s Social Worker and your Supervising Social Worker before sharing information if you are unsure.

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| **Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards***26.4) Information about individual children is kept confidential and only shared with those who have a legitimate and current need to know the information, and to those parts of a child’s record or other information that they need to know.* |

We recognise that issues of confidentiality relate not only to record keeping, but in a wider sense to conversations you may have with family and friends and in the community. There are situations where there is a legitimate need to share information relating to the background of your fostered child with family or friends who are involved in their care, for the purpose of the child’s protection and welfare. However, seemingly innocent conversations within the community could lead to accidental breaches of the child’s confidentiality, which would be a concern.

We encourage foster carers with consent to take photographs of children to record and preserve memories for their individual life story. These photographs or information relation to the children should not be shared physically or via social media without specific consent to do so by those with parental responsibility for the child and/ or the local Authority. This should be recorded within the delegated authority and on the safer caring document.

A breach of confidentiality could lead to a review, at panel, of your suitability as a foster carer. If you have any concerns about confidentiality, or if you are worried you may have accidentally breached confidentiality, please talk to your supervising social worker.

When information is to be shared to a support carer for safer care purposes, this should be completed by the supervising social worker. This should also include a discussion between the support carers and the main foster carers in respect of the child, alongside include introductions. The support carers welcome book should be shared with the child, as part of the introductions.

Records can be kept electronically, and your supervising social worker can provide templates upon request. If you use a computer to record information, make sure the computer and the files are password protected with a secure password. Documents will need to be printed off as required to ‘travel’ with the child’s file. If documentation are emailed to The Department, the information must be made anonymous, by using the child or young person’s initials throughout the documentation. Do not send confidential information as part of the email message itself, as non NCC email addresses will not be secure. Cryptshare can also be used to send documentation.

Physical documents such as letters and any recordings completed by hand should be stored securely, in a lockable cabinet, until they can be collected by your supervising social worker each month or upon request.

 **5.****Responsibilities of Your Supervising social worker**

Your supervising social worker should collect, read, countersign (if paper copies) records and place a copy of the records on the child or young person’s file within documents, on the children’s social care electronic recording system. When uploaded this should be cross referenced to the carers mosaic file. If electronic records are completed by the foster carer, then the supervising social worker should put a case note on the system to inform that these have been reviewed, highlighting any issues or actions as appropriate. Supervising social workers should then ensure that the child’s social worker receives a copy of the foster carer’s recordings, as appropriate, or alert them to them being available on the system. Any issues or concerns need to be discussed at the earliest opportunity.

For support carers, electronic support carer recordings should be provided to the child’s main carer and the support carers supervising social

worker at the end of each support care period. All handwritten recordings will be collected regularly by the supervising social worker and should be made available upon request to be read and collected.

 **6.****End of Placement**

When a child or young person moves on from your care, including to family members and on to independence, all records and information relating to this individual must be returned to the Local Authority via your Supervising Social Worker or a member of the Fostering Service. For further information, please see [Ending a Placement (fosteringhandbook.com)](https://www.fosteringhandbook.com/nottinghamshire/ending_placement.html)

You should keep a record of the child’s name, and the date he/she arrived and left and when the information was returned.

 **7.****Further Information and Advice on Recording**

[**The Fostering Network**](https://www.thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/)

[**Fostering Regulations and National Minimum Standards**](http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/families/fostercare/a0071234/regs)

[**UK GDPR Principles (ICO Website)**](https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/principles/)

[**Write Enough**](http://www.writeenough.org.uk/) - an interactive training pack commissioned by the Children's Services Division, Department of Health and Social Care (now Department of Education and Skills), to support good practice in recording.

To view any amendments or updates to this policy, please visit: - [Nottinghamshire Children's Procedure Manual (proceduresonline.com)](https://nottinghamshirechildcare.proceduresonline.com/chapters/contents.html)

Reporting and recording training is available from the department via My Learning My Career. Please discuss this with your supervising social worker. If you are unable to access a computer, please speak to your Supervising Social Worker.