Deregistration Policy & Procedure

Foster Carer Policies and Procedures · https://handbook.co.uk/docs/deregistration-policy-procedure-2/

(Last reviewed 17/07/2025)

Ethos of this Policy

Deregistration is a significant step, and the Positive Aspirations Group agencies will work in partnership with a foster carer and their family to try to avoid this outcome wherever possible.

The agency will maintain open, respectful, and honest communication with the foster carer before any deregistration, clearly explaining the reasons and offering the foster carer the opportunity to discuss their perspective and ask questions.

Circumstances when the Deregistration process could be initiated

While we deeply value each of our foster carers and will do everything reasonable to support a fostering family, there are circumstances when a foster carer may need to be de-registered and will no longer be able to foster with the agency:

1. When they have not fostered for an extended period of time and there is no indication they will return to fostering in the near future.
2. When there has been a breakdown in the working relationship between the foster carer and the Positive Aspirations Group or any of its associated agencies, which cannot be restored despite support and intervention.
3. When the conclusion and recommendation of a Standards of Care investigation is for deregistration.
4. When the recommendation of a foster carer’s home review is for deregistration.
5. If the foster carer has taken actions that significantly impact the reputation and trust in the Positive Aspirations Group or any of its associated agencies.

When circumstances arise that may result in deregistration, the Positive Aspirations Group will communicate openly with the foster carer, explain its decisions clearly, and give the foster carer the opportunity to share their views.

The Positive Aspirations Group will also explain the dispute process and provide copies of reports intended for Panel in enough time for the foster carer to make an informed decision about whether to accept or challenge the proposed deregistration.

Foster carers have the right to appeal and request an independent review. Any appeal must be made in writing and received within 28 days from the date of the qualifying determination letter.

Deregistration Procedure

As already stated, deregistration is a significant step and should only be taken after considering all reasonable restorative or supportive actions. The Positive Aspirations Group will be transparent in these considerations, maintaining consistent and compassionate communication with the approved foster carer throughout.

If, during other processes described above, it becomes clear that a situation is, or could be, heading towards deregistration, the SSW, Team Manager, and Registered Manager will hold a case reflection discussion to explore what actions have been taken or could still be taken to help avoid deregistration. This will also be discussed openly with the foster carer to seek solutions and reduce the risk of escalation.

If this is not successful, then the following steps should be taken:

1. In cases of a breakdown in the working relationship, mediation should be considered, using the service of someone independent from the foster carer’s or Positive Aspirations Group’s usual line management.
2. All relevant reports, documents, and evidence explaining why deregistration is being considered should be presented to the agency Registered Manager for review.
3. If the decision is to proceed, the foster carer must be informed as soon as possible and given the chance to discuss the decision with the manager leading the request for a recommendation to de-register.

4. Records of this discussion must be added to the paperwork so that the foster carer's views are represented.
5. Any request for deregistration must be presented to panel.
6. Approved foster carers must be given 4 weeks' notice of the panel date.
7. We must make every reasonable effort to ensure the foster carer is aware of this date. This can include text, WhatsApp, email, post, or an in-person visit. All attempts must be recorded. If one method does not get a response, others must be tried until contact is confirmed.
8. Copies of all paperwork to be presented to panel must be given to the foster carer at least 10 days before panel members receive them, along with an invitation for the foster carer to provide a written response to the proposal.
9. Proof of receipt must be obtained and added to the panel papers; assuming receipt is not acceptable.
10. Seven days before panel, all paperwork will be shared with panel members, including any written representations from the foster carer. If no written representation is provided, this must be recorded.
11. Additional time will be allocated at panel for the foster carer to share their views.
12. Panel will consider all paperwork and use their skills and experience to either:
    1a. Suggest further supportive or restorative actions before deregistration is considered.
    1b. Recommend deregistration to the Agency Decision Maker.
13. The panel chair will clearly explain the next steps to the foster carer.
14. If further actions are recommended, the fostering team will work with the foster carer to carry these out before returning to panel.
15. If deregistration is recommended, the minutes and all paperwork will be shared with the Agency Decision Maker, who will review all actions and make the final decision.
16. The decision will be shared with the foster carer in writing (using multiple contact methods if needed to ensure receipt).
17. The letter will explain the right to appeal to either the Agency Decision Maker or the IRM (Independent Review Mechanism), including how to do this.

If appealing to the Agency Decision Maker, the appeal must be made in writing within 28 days of the qualifying determination letter. The matter will then be referred back to panel to review the decision.

The foster carer will be notified at least 7 days before the panel review date. They will be informed verbally of the decision within 2 working days and in writing within 5 working days.

If this review results in a qualifying determination to terminate approval, the foster carer may request a review by the IRM. Details of how to do this will be included in the letter. Any appeal to the IRM must also be in writing within 28 days.

If no written representations or request for a review are received within the timeframe, a final decision to terminate can be made.

Agency’s Role in DBS Referrals

When the agency proposes deregistration because of concerns that meet the harm test—such as abuse, neglect, or serious safeguarding issues—it has a legal duty to refer the carer to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). This duty exists because the carer is considered to be “removed from regulated activity” due to potential risk of harm to children.

This requirement is set out in the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and supported by DBS and Department for Education guidance. The duty applies even if the carer resigns before the decision is final.

The Positive Aspirations Group will:

1. Assess whether the carer’s actions meet the harm test.
2. Refer to the DBS as soon as deregistration is confirmed.
3. Ensure all referrals are made in line with safeguarding law and guidance.

If a foster carer resigns while an investigation is ongoing and the alleged conduct may meet the harm test, the agency will still complete its safeguarding assessment and make a DBS referral if appropriate.

IMPORTANT

All relevant documents and communications must be recorded on the agency database as they happen. This ensures the foster carer’s rights are protected, and they have the information needed to respond to any proposal for deregistration.

Deregistration with the Positive Aspirations Group does not prevent a family from applying to foster elsewhere. Any new fostering service provider will request permission to review the Positive Aspirations Group’s records as part of their assessment.

Deregistration is mentioned in several other Positive Aspirations Group policies and should be read in the context of:

- Foster Carer Handbook
- Annual Review of Foster Carers
- Standards of Care Foster Carer Investigation Policy
- Panel Handbook