Recording Procedure

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

(Last reviewed 23/09/2025)

The Purpose of Recordings

Accurate, timely and respectful record-keeping is essential to high-quality, trauma-informed foster care. Records:

- **offer children and young people an opportunity to look back at what has happened during the placement, and to understand why decisions were made, in language that is accessible to them;**
- **clarify the role of different adults in the child's life and help a child to understand their identity, culture and sense of belonging;**
- **provide an opportunity for the Supervising Social Worker (SSW) and foster carers to work together, enabling reflection, discussion and the formation of new, child-centred strategies;**
- **serve as a safe medium for the sharing of information with other professionals, ensuring children do not need to retell distressing experiences unnecessarily;**
- **provide continuity when there are changes in the child's care plan;**
- **provide accurate information that can be used in plans and assessments about a fostered child;**
- **are critical if allegations are made against a foster carer, helping ensure a fair, transparent and timely process;**
- **form part of ensuring foster carers are meeting the accountability and standards expected of their role;**
- **support a carer's supervision, reflection and professional development, and celebrate progress.**

SSWs therefore work **in partnership** with foster carers to keep records that are clear, up-to-date, securely stored and that contribute to each child's understanding of their life. Record keeping is a key element of service delivery, assisting with planning, assessing and decision-making.

Case recording gives a structure so that work is focused. The record should allow SSWs to evidence the work undertaken and provide a wider source of information, including carers' input, factual information on the child and SSW analysis/observations.

Remember: *If an action is not recorded, there is no evidence that it happened.*

SSW Responsibilities

To uphold trauma-informed practice, **SSWs will:**

1. **Record every contact/interaction** (calls, emails, documents, supervisions and meeting notes) on the Base system.
2. **Complete the entry within seven (7) days** of the contact, correspondence or meeting.
3. **Keep recordings up-to-date** so that carers, children and professionals always have access to current information.
4. **Complete all core tasks on time** and record them clearly, obtaining relevant signatures where needed, then upload the completed document to the Base system.
5. **Write in plain, jargon-free English,** avoiding slang or colloquialisms, so that children and carers can read and understand the record.
6. **State the purpose** of visits, contacts or meetings wherever possible.
7. **Include only information essential** to the purpose of the contact/visit, respecting the child's privacy and dignity.
8. **Ensure accuracy,** spelling names correctly and consistently throughout.
9. **Keep recordings concise** and relevant to the current intervention.
10. **Provide a clear analysis and agreed actions** in each foster-carer supervision record.
    - **List previous actions clearly** and note whether each has been completed, to prevent delay that could impact the placement.

Additional Requirements

a) The agency has an **open-files policy.** Carers and children are encouraged and supported to read the files maintained on them by the agency, and to add their views if they wish.
b) Files are electronic and stored securely on servers that comply with Cyber Security standards; access is role-based and logged.
c) All documents received must be uploaded to the Base system and linked/tracked to the relevant event.
d) All contacts with foster carers, foster children, placing-authority representatives and other relevant people must be recorded.
e) Each visit must indicate whether foster children were seen; if seen, record child-centred observations.
f) Record the **quality of care** and significant events in the child's or foster family's life that affect the placement.
g) **Supervision** with foster carers must be recorded using the agency supervision format and shared with carers.

- Record concerns and commendations and identify agreed actions.
- Follow up these issues at subsequent supervision sessions and summarise them in the carer's review.
  h) Clearly record the purpose of other visits (e.g. meeting the foster children, whole-family visit, preparation for forthcoming meeting).
  i) Record all participants at any meeting.

Quality of File: Key Content

- **The file must tell the story of the placement and the child's journey.**
  - Record all placement starts, endings and significant events, even if the SSW did not experience them first-hand.
- **Relationships**
  - Evidence the developing relationship between the foster child and the foster family.
  - Evidence the developing relationship between the foster child and the SSW.

- Evidence the SSW’s relationship with foster carers, household members and their support network.

- **Collaboration and Partnership Working**
  - Evidence work undertaken alongside other professionals.

- **Interventions to Support the Placement**
  - Evidence problem-solving and interventions that promote the child’s well-being and sustain the placement.

- **Progress Summaries**
  - Provide a baseline report of the child’s functioning at the start of placement.
  - Subsequent summaries must detail actions taken to encourage progress and the outcomes achieved.

- **Education/Learning**
  - Record academic and non-academic achievements and interests.
  - Record SSW notes from PEP meetings and request/save official minutes from the local authority.
  - Evidence regular discussions with carers about the child’s educational progress.

- **Safer Caring Policies (SCP)**
  - Maintain a household-level SCP and an individualised SCP for each child; update as risks change.
  - Evidence discussion with carers and compliance with the SCP.

- **Delegated Authority**
  - Record ongoing discussion and agreement about the nature and extent of delegated authority.

- **Children’s Guide**
  - Show that the SSW has explained the child’s rights, including how to raise concerns or complain.

- **Local-Authority Meetings** (LAC reviews, PEP meetings, strategy meetings, etc.)
  - SSWs make their own notes and save formal minutes from the chair.

- **New Placements**
  - Detail all additional work required for a new placement:
    - First visit within 72 hours;
    - Placement-planning meeting and IPA within 7 days (with explanation if not possible);
    - Discussion of delegated authority and safer caring.

- **Complaints and Allegations**
  - Demonstrate a timely, proportionate response in accordance with agency expectations, recording the voice of the child and carer throughout.