The Standard for Foster Care

April 2017

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Part one: Guidance

1.0 Introduction

Summary

- The reasons for having the Standard and the background to its development.
- The vision for foster care that underpins the Standard, and how this links to foster carer roles, ethos and values.
- The benefits working towards meeting the Standard can bring for foster carers themselves, and to fostered children and young people.
- Relevant adult education priorities.

1.1 The reasons for having a Standard

The Standard has been developed to establish a framework for the learning foster carers need to undertake for the foster carer role, and to support a realistic level of standardisation and consistency in the ways learning is provided and used.

1.2 Background

The National Foster Care Review (2013) highlighted the importance of ensuring foster carers receive opportunities to learn about different ways to support children and young people and to develop their awareness, knowledge and understanding about the foster carer role. In response, the Scottish Government asked the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) to develop a framework for learning, the Standard, which applies to all foster carers and foster care organisations in Scotland. The Standard describes learning expectations for foster carers at different learning stages, which are summarised as follows.

Pre-approval or induction	Post-approval	Continuous professional development
When prospective foster carers are undertaking initial learning and before they receive approval to have fostered children and young people in their care.	When foster carers have received approval to have fostered children and young people in their care and are likely to be preparing for practice or already practising as foster carers.	When foster carers have been approved to have fostered children and young people in their care, have practised as foster carers, and have already undertaken relevant learning.

It should be noted that the Standard is not a qualification in its own right; and the Scottish Government has made it clear that a formal qualification will not be mandatory for foster carers.

1.3   Vision

In a statement relating to the implementation of the Children and Young People Act (Scotland) 2014, Aileen Campbell (then Minister for Children and Young People) expressed a vision for children and young people living in Scotland as follows:

> We want Scotland to be …'a place where rights are respected and where children can access all the opportunities and support they need, when they need it.'

The foundation for the Standard is a parallel vision of learning designed to ensure foster carers are receiving appropriate learning opportunities to help them cope with the increasingly complex needs of the children and young people in their care.

It is anticipated that this learning will help to ensure fosters carers in Scotland can:

- feel confident to practice flexibly, and in partnership with others, to ensure the children and young people in their care are supported towards achieving the best possible outcomes, and are; Safe, Healthy, Active, Nurtured, Achieving, Respected, Responsible and Included (Getting it right for every child, GIRFEC)
- be aware of and able to promote the rights of fostered children and young people in the context of current Scottish laws, policies and guidance
- be recognised as advocates for the children and young people in their care
- be able to positively influence policy and practice at local and national levels
- be recognised (by themselves and others) as key providers of childcare in Scotland
- be able to exercise self-care and encourage and support each other
- be able to show that they are using their learning in their foster carer practice.

1.4   Foster carer roles, ethos and values

The above vision of learning is closely related to accepted foster carer ethos and values. It is recognised that foster carers provide the children and young people in their care with; nurture, empathy, warmth, security,

stability, safety and a positive experience of family life in a loving and caring environment that supports inclusion, diversity, safety and social justice. On a daily basis, children and young people in Scotland are in need of foster care, because they cannot live with their own families, every child or young person has their own individual needs and many have experienced issues with trauma, difficult relationships, attachment and transitions. Foster carers contribute significantly to meeting these needs and support the children and young people in their care towards achieving their goals. To fulfil this complex role, foster carers need to be provided with learning that is relevant, stimulating, provided at a suitable time and level, and in ways that match their learning styles, preferences and needs. Such programmes should also build on foster carers' previous learning and life experiences to provide an integrated and inclusive package.

1.5 Benefits for foster carers

A summary of some of the benefits foster carers who are working towards or have met the Standard is below and there may also be others.

A positive impact on practice – learning programmes leading towards meeting the Standard will support foster carers to make best use of their values, skills, experiences and knowledge in day-to-day practice and this is likely to have a positive effect.

Transferable learning – the Standard establishes a body of learning that is potentially transferable to other areas of employment; in social services and elsewhere; and offers foster carers career options (if they want). It may also be helpful towards gaining a formal qualification (if foster carers want to do this).

1.6 Benefits for fostered children and young people

Some of the benefits fostered children and young people may experience when foster carers are working towards or have met the Standard are below and there may also be others.

Supporting positive foster care journeys – foster carers who feel confident, well informed and well prepared to support the children and young people in their care are likely to be in the best possible position to support positive foster care journeys.

Upholding relevant guidance – foster carers who feel confident, well informed and well prepared to support the children and young people in their care are likely to be in the best possible position to uphold relevant practice guidance such as GIRFEC and the Curriculum for Excellence.

1.7 Priorities in adult learning

The Standard takes account of priorities in adult learning, such as:

- continuous professional development and lifelong learning
- progression in learning
- career opportunities
- recognition of prior learning, experience and achievement.

2.0 Guidance for the development of learning programmes

Summary

- Who will use the Standard?
- Shared learning areas
- How the Standard may contribute towards formal qualifications
- Learning expectations for the different foster carer stages
- Unplanned foster carer learning and support needs

2.1 Who will use the Standard?

The main audience for the Standard will be:

- foster care organisations who provide or commission the learning experienced by foster carers, and through them foster carers themselves
- learning providers (this describes organisations such as colleges and other organisations that provide learning services to foster carers)
- others who have contact with foster care organisations and foster carers.

All foster care organisations and learning providers will contribute to the provision of an environment in which foster carers can undertake learning and be enabled to show they have matched the values, understanding, and practice skills described in the Standard.

Foster care organisations will actively facilitate learning, and support the progress of individual foster carers in ways that are appropriate to their existing experience, learning styles, preferences and needs; and it is acknowledged that in many (or most) cases this will already be happening. It should be noted that the Standard describes baseline learning expectations and foster care organisations are encouraged (where appropriate) to set learning goals for the foster carers they work with that exceed this baseline. The foster carers who will undertake the learning which is described in part 2 of the Standard will include foster carers at the learning stages identified above (see 1.2) and those who have different levels of experience summarised below.

- Prospective foster carers who may not have previously undertaken relevant learning.
- Foster carers who already hold relevant qualifications and/or have undertaken relevant learning or experience (where this is the case recognition of prior learning (RPL) should always be considered).

- Foster carers who may have undertaken learning or hold qualifications in different disciplines.

It is recognised that all foster carers are likely to have relevant life experiences which can positively contribute to their learning and where appropriate RPL should be used.

The Standard may also support the learning of others who contribute to foster care. Examples of groups and individuals who may want to be included are:

- people considering becoming foster carers
- professionals who support foster carers as part of their role
- the children and families of foster carers
- children and young people who are experiencing foster care, or who have experienced it, their family and friendship networks
- professionals who have an interest in the learning and development of foster carers
- learning providers who may contribute to learning for foster carers in the future
- individuals involved in designing, approving, validating and accrediting or re-accrediting relevant learning programmes
- people who are working with the Standard and supporting learners
- corporate parents
- those with a responsibility for the development of policy, including the Scottish Government.

2.2   Shared learning areas

The Standard for Foster Care shares some features of the learning provided to other groups that contribute to children's services. These include the National Occupational Standards (NOS) for SVQ and HNC awards relating to the care and support of children and young people, the Standards in Social Work Education, the Standard for Childhood Practice and learning requirements for initial teacher education, nursing, midwifery, public health, and community learning and development. This is a strength which will help to promote positive working relationships, inform learning opportunities and encourage flexibility and movement within and across children's services. It is also likely to support opportunities for RPL.

2.3   How the Standard may contribute towards formal qualifications

While the Standard is not a qualification in itself, it is linked to the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework level 7 characteristics (see

appendix 2) and as noted above has shared ground with the NOS for SVQ Awards, such as Social Services (Children and Young People) at SCQF level 7 (which includes a foster carer skill set) and the HNC Qualification Social Services at SCQF level 7. Due to the links between the Standard and formal qualifications, foster carers who are able to show they have met the Standard may be able to use their learning in ways that can contribute towards gaining a formal qualification (if desired) through recognition of prior learning. As previously noted, formal qualifications will not be mandatory for foster carers.

2.4 Learning expectations within the different foster learning stages

The Standard provides a framework for learning that is relevant to foster carers at different learning stages (see 1.2). The learning expectations for these stages are described in the following table. It is anticipated that this detail will be generally supportive of learning programme development, and may be helpful throughout this document. Reflection is viewed as an important developmental tool at all stages of foster carer learning and learning progression.

At the pre-approval stage	At the post-approval stage	At the continuous professional development stage
Prospective foster carers need to be aware of and understand the learning areas that make up the Standard inclusive of all descriptors, and able to relate this to their future practice with children and young people.	Foster carers who are approved need to be aware of and understand the learning areas that make up the Standard inclusive of all descriptors, and skilful in applying this to their practice with children and young people.	Foster carers need to keep their learning up to date in relation to the learning areas that make up the Standard, and be consistently skilful in applying this to their practice with children and young people. They also need to show they are actively working towards enhancing their knowledge, supportive of the learning of others, and working to develop relevant specialist areas.

2.5 Unplanned learning and support needs that can arise at all foster carer stages

It is recognised that unplanned learning and support needs can arise at any time and at every foster carer stage and that meeting these needs in a timely manner can help promote safe practice.

3.0 Guidance for the delivery of learning

Summary

- The delivery of learning
- The principles that should underpin the delivery of learning
- Some of the terms used to describe learning within the Standard
- Approaches to learning

3.1 The delivery of learning

In many instances, foster care organisations will already be involved in the delivery of learning that addresses the same or similar areas to those described in part 2 of the Standard. Where this is the case, foster carers will be well placed to meet the Standard and programmes will need only minimal adjustment. In these circumstances, foster care organisations and learning providers will be able to map the learning already provided to the Standard and ensure they have evidence to show the foster carers they work with have undertaken the necessary learning and are able to apply it to their practice in ways that match the descriptors.

With this in mind, learning programmes that are delivered to support the Standard may cover all of the learning areas outlined in part 2 or complement the learning foster carers are already undertaking or have undertaken.

3.2 The principles that should underpin the delivery of learning

All learning programmes for foster carers leading towards meeting the Standard will:

- provide learning that is relevant to the foster carer ethos, values, knowledge, understanding and practice skills as described in part 2, in ways that are stimulating and thought provoking and which recognise foster carers' progress and development
- provide flexible, accessible learning, which includes taking the learning to foster carers (where this is appropriate)
- be mindful of the commitments all foster carers have to balance
- take account of individual foster carers existing experiences, and also their learning styles, preferences and needs
- make use of a range of suitable learning approaches; including practice-based learning and reflective practice
- support foster carers towards meeting the Standard including showing how they use the learning in their practice
- reflect SCQF level 7 characteristics (see appendix 2)
- take account of current law and policies, including equalities laws and policies
- have effective systems for RPL

- maintain the currency of learning in accordance with local and national developments
- include quality assurance strategies (for purposes of standardisation, monitoring and evaluation)
- deliver learning through collaborative and partnership arrangements where this can realistically support effectiveness (such arrangements may include working with children, young people and their families who have experienced foster care, in addition to working with other foster care organisations and learning providers).

3.3   Practice-based learning as defined for the purposes of the Standard

Practice-based learning is defined as; learning which takes place in the context of the foster carer role and environment, including foster carers' home settings. This approach is likely to involve spending time with individual foster carers to enable their learning. Consideration could be given to use of online learning or virtual learning environments, as one approach to facilitating practice-based learning; however use of this is at the discretion of foster care organisations and learning providers, and should not be to the exclusion of face-to-face approaches. The approaches used must always match with the existing experience, learning, styles, preferences and needs of foster carers.

3.4   Reflective practice as defined for the purposes of the Standard

Reflective practice is defined an exploration of events and practical experiences involving insightful thinking about what can be learned from them. Examples of reflective questions foster carers might be encouraged to ask themselves are listed below.

- What took place and what was my role and responsibility in this situation?
- How was I guided in this situation by the foster care ethos, values and my learning?
- What went well: both from my own point of view: and the points of view of the other people involved?
- What did I learn from this situation and do I have areas for development?

These questions are not the only kinds of reflective questions or approaches to reflection that can be used and you don't have to use them, if alternatives are considered more appropriate. It should also be noted that reflection can be both verbal and written.

3.5 Making use of a suitable range of different learning approaches

Different learning delivery approaches (in addition to practice-based learning and reflective practice) should be used as appropriate to support the learning of foster carers. Examples of potentially suitable learning approaches include:

- facilitated group activity and small group discussions
- case study activity
- peer support
- planned assignments or projects
- mentoring and coaching
- research and self-study
- online learning.

It will be up to foster care organisations and learning providers to determine the most suitable blend of learning approaches to meet the learning preferences, styles and needs of the foster carers they work with and build on their existing experiences. The suggestions above are not the only kinds of learning delivery approaches that can be used; and it is not necessary to use these if alternatives are considered more appropriate.

4.0 Consistency, standardisation and quality assurance

Summary

- What can be done to help make sure learning delivery is carried out in ways that are consistent and transparent?
- How standardisation and quality assurance might take place

4.1 Promoting consistency, standardisation and quality assurance

Approaches to promoting consistency, standardisation and quality assurance will depend on the method of implementation. However, it is clear that taking steps to confirm that learning provided for foster carers is mapped to the learning described in the Standard will help promote consistency, standardisation and quality assurance. Also opportunities for collaborative practices between learning programme providers will help promote consistency and standardisation across and within organisations.

Part two: The learning areas that make up the Standard for Foster Care

1   Introduction

The following standards and the learning areas they describe will underpin all learning and development programmes provided for foster carers in Scotland and reflect the stages of foster carer development.

Pre-approval or induction	Post-approval	Continuous professional development
When prospective foster carers are undertaking initial learning and before they receive approval to have fostered children and young people in their care.	When foster carers have received approval to have fostered children and young people in their care and are likely to be preparing for practice or already practising as foster carers.	When foster carers have been approved to have fostered children and young people in their care, have practised as foster carers and have already undertaken relevant learning.

Each standard is relevant for all of the above stages, and the learning included is consistent with SCQF level 7 (see appendix 2).

How the standards are set out

Each standard covers a learning area that is relevant to foster care. Each standard has the following.

> **A number, title and brief explanation** – each standard has a number and learning area title to help with navigation and have a brief explanation.

> **Descriptors** – beneath the number, title and brief explanation there are sets of descriptors which outline the expectations for foster carers who can show they meet the Standard. In each standard the first set of descriptors are relevant for all foster carers and there are following sets which outline expectations for foster carers at the post-approval and continuous professional development stages.

What does it mean to meet the Standard?

To meet the Standard, foster carers need to show that are working in ways that are in line with all parts of the Standard for their current learning stage.

Holistic learning and evidence gathering

There are natural links between the learning areas that make up the Standard. This reflects the way different parts of the foster carer role fit together and is consistent with the complexity that goes with SCQF level 7. Holistic learning and evidence gathering will help streamline the work foster carers (and others) need to do to show the Standard has been met.

2   List of the standards and learning area titles

Standard numbers	Learning area titles
1	The rights of children and young people
2	Ethics, values and principles
3	Law, policy and guidance
4	Stages and areas of emotional, social, cognitive and physical development
5	Keeping children, young people and others safe
6	Building positive relationships
7	Promoting wellbeing and resilience
8	Effective communication
9	Assessment and planning
10	Supporting children and young people with contact
11	Health and wellbeing
12	Education and achievement
13	Recreation, leisure and play
14	Safe use of social media, and online technologies
15	Promoting positive behaviours and managing behaviours that challenge
16	Managing conflict and crises
17	Foster carers' development
18	Leading and working with others
19	Record keeping and information management

3   Glossary

Glossary of terms used in the standards:

Ways and methods to practice –used to indicate that all ways to practice used by foster carers should be consistent with the child's or young person's age, preferences and understanding.

Practice –used to describe foster carer's engagement with children and young people and the entire team around the child, which may include birth families, social workers, social care practitioners, education, health colleagues and others as appropriate to the needs of the child or young person.

Reflect, reflective practice and reflection – used to describe the processes of exploring events and practical experiences with insightful thinking that can support learning.

Aware – used to indicate that foster carers should be in a position to show they are alert to the areas of learning covered in the descriptors and able to discuss them and relate them to their future or current foster carer practice, for the purposes of the Standard awareness is viewed as closely related to understanding and knowledge.

Understanding, knowledge and knowledgeable – used to indicate that foster carers should be in a position to show that they are familiar with the learning areas covered in the descriptors and able to apply them to their current or future practice, including (where appropriate) aspects of advanced thinking.

Skilled and skilful – used to indicate that foster carers should be in a position to show that they are able to put their learning into practice in a way that is visible, also that their practice skills match those covered in the descriptors and reflect good foster carer practice.

Discuss – used to indicate that foster carers should be in a position to show that they can consider and explore the learning area in question, and apply a suitable level of critical analysis (discussions may be verbal or written, and suitable records will need to be kept if they are to count towards gathering evidence that can show the Standard has been met).

Consistent or consistently – used to indicate that foster carers should be in a position to show they can reliably and regularly carry out a particular activities and/or apply their learning to their practice.

Confidence or confidently – used to indicate that foster carers should be in a position to show they are assured and on familiar ground in terms of their learning.

Descriptor – used to represent statements that identify the values, practice skills, knowledge and understanding that collectively make up

each of the standards. Each descriptor should be read in the context of the standard it is part of.

Keeping up to date – used to indicate that foster carers should take steps to keep their learning current in the context of each standard; this may include contributing to discussions, attending courses, reading relevant material, or undertaking online learning. These examples are not the only ways to keep learning current and you can use others appropriate to individual circumstances.

Enhancing their own learning – used to indicate that foster carers should take steps to develop their own learning in ways that are relevant to the context of each standard, this may include a wide range of learning such as the examples noted above.

Supporting the learning of others – used to indicate that foster carers should take steps to help others learn in ways that are relevant to the context of each standard, this may include peer support, contributing to discussions, role modelling, formal and informal mentoring roles and other ways to support learning that are relevant to individual circumstances.

4 The standards

Notes to support learning programme delivery

These notes apply to all the standards and learning areas. They relate to part 1 of this document and support practical learning programme delivery and evidence gathering that can show the Standard has been met.

Note 1: Meeting the Standard in line with current foster carer learning stages

Foster carers need to meet the standards and learning areas for their current learning stage, as shown in the table.

At the pre-approval stage	At the post-approval stage	At the continuous professional development stage
Prospective foster carers need to be aware of and understand the learning areas that make up the Standard inclusive of all descriptors, and able	Foster carers who are approved need to be aware of and understand all the learning areas that make up the Standard inclusive of all descriptors, and be	Foster carers need to keep their learning up to date in relation to the learning areas that make up the Standard and be consistently skilful in applying this to their practice with

to relate this to their future practice with children and young people.	skilful in applying this to their practice with children and young people.	children and young people. They also need to show they are actively working towards enhancing their knowledge, supportive of the learning of others and working to develop relevant specialist areas.

Note 2: Practice guidance relevant across all standards and stages

There are some pieces of practice guidance that are likely to be relevant and familiar to foster carers across all of the standards and stages.

A strong example is Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) and the SHANARRI wellbeing indicators www.gov.scot/Topics/People/Young-People/gettingitright/background/wellbeing

Because GIRFEC is so widely relevant, and to avoid undue repetition, it has not been cited in every possible instance. Foster carers and everyone involved in learning delivery, and gathering evidence that can show the Standard has been met should work with awareness of this guidance and also feel free to draw on other relevant examples.

Standard 1

The rights of children and young people

Foster carers' understanding of the rights of children and young people and what this means in day-to-day practice. Opportunities for holistic learning and evidence gathering should be considered.

Descriptors for all foster carers

All foster carers should have an understanding of the following.

1. The rights all children and young people have to be supported, nurtured and cared for in ways that recognise their strengths, meet their needs, take account of their choices and keep them safe.
2. Ways to practice that respect, nurture, value and keep safe every child and young person (the SHANARRI wellbeing indicators will be particularly relevant here).
3. The key importance of the interests and wellbeing of children and young people to foster carer practice.
4. Ways to practice that promote the rights, of children and young people to be included in decision making.
5. How foster carers can encourage children and young people to be informed about and understand their own rights and responsibilities, and to show respect for the rights of others.
6. Ways to practice that take account of, and show support for, the child's or young person's beliefs and cultural needs and expectations.
7. Ways to practice that help keep children and young people safe from bullying or discrimination.
8. The support foster carers can provide to children and young people who may have additional needs and the other support services that are available (including who to contact if they need them).
9. Who foster carers should contact if they need support relating to the rights of children and young people.

Descriptors for foster carers at the post-approval and continuous professional development stages

Foster carers at these stages should also be able to show that they have:

10.　put the above ways to practice and understanding into action.

Descriptor for foster carers at the continuous professional development stage

Foster carers at this stage should also be able to show that they are:

11. keeping up to date, enhancing their own learning, and supporting the learning of others.

Standard 2

Ethics, values and principles

Foster carers' understanding of foster care ethics, values and principles, what these mean in day-to-day practice and how they fit alongside those of other groups (such as social services in general, education and health). Foster carer ethics, values and principles should be visible here and in all of the standards. Opportunities for holistic learning and evidence gathering should be considered.

Descriptors for all foster carers

All foster carers should have an understanding of the following.

1. Foster carer ethics, values and principles and where to find out more about them.
2. Issues of equality that relate to future or current practice with children, young people and others.
3. Ways to practice that reflect foster carer ethics, values and principles (GIRFEC and the SHANARRI wellbeing indicators will be particularly relevant here).
4. The power and influence that sits with foster carer roles and how this might affect relationships of all kinds.
5. Why it is important to reflect on any differences there may be between accepted foster carer ethics, values and principles and foster carers' own personal values and principles and what this can mean future or current foster carer practice.
6. The difficult relationships there may be between children's and young people's needs, expectations, choices, aspirations, rights and responsibilities and ways to practice when this is the case.
7. The ethics, values and principles others may hold (such as in social services in general education and health) and how any differences might affect working relationships.
8. Who foster carers should contact if they need support relating to ethics, values and principles.

Descriptors for foster carers at the post-approval and continuous professional development stages

Foster carers at these stages should also be able to show that they have:

9. put the above ways to practice and understanding into action

10. an understanding of how relevant ethics, values, principles and other kinds of guidance can be used to help resolve tensions and dilemmas that arise and to enhance foster care practice.

Descriptors for foster carers at the continuous professional development stage

Foster carers at this stage should also be able to show that they are:

11.   keeping up to date, enhancing their own learning and supporting the learning of others

12.   using appropriate methods to resolve any tensions that may arise between personal and accepted foster carer ethics, values and principles.

Standard 3

Law, policy and guidance

Foster carers' understanding of the law, policy and guidance that is important for different aspects of the foster carer role and what this means in day-to-day practice. Awareness and understanding of the law, policy and guidance included should be visible throughout the standards. Opportunities for holistic learning and evidence gathering should be considered.

Descriptors for all foster carers

All foster carers should have an understanding of the following.

1. The main laws, policies and guidance documents relevant to foster carer practice. This will include different aspects of the foster carer role and will involve foster carers being able to discuss the main laws, policies and guidance documents, as well as showing that they understand why these are important for their practice (see note below).
2. The main laws, policies and guidance documents that relate to equalities. This will include foster carers being able to discuss the main laws, policies and guidance documents and showing that they understand why these are important for their practice.
3. Ways to practice that reflect foster carers' awareness of relevant laws, policies and guidance.
4. Who foster carers should contact if they need support relating to law, policy and guidance.

Descriptors for foster carers at the post-approval and continuous professional development stages

Foster carers at these stages should also be able to show that they have:

5. put the above ways to practice and understanding into action
6. kept abreast of any changes in laws, policies and guidance and made use of this in their foster carer practice.

Descriptor for foster carers at the continuous professional development stage

Foster carers at this stage should also be able to show that they are:

7. keeping up to date, enhancing their own learning and supporting the learning of others.

Note: Foster care organisations and learning providers will need to consider the most relevant current laws, policies and guidance that are important for different aspects of the foster carer role and ensure these are included. Some of those suggested during the consultation on the draft Standard include:

- Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC)
- the children's hearings and courts systems
- the laws, policies and guidance that relate to being asked to foster a child 'permanently' such as permanence orders, ancillary provisions and decisions which can be made
- the laws, policies and guidance that underpin contact
- the Data Protection Act 1998.

A variety of other laws, policies and guidance might also be considered relevant.

Standard 4

Stages and areas of emotional, social, cognitive and physical development

Foster carers' understanding of the stages and areas of development all children and young people go through (from 0 to 21 years). This will include understanding the relationship between stages and areas of development and what this means for day-to-day practice. Opportunities for holistic learning and evidence gathering should be considered.

Descriptors for all foster carers

All foster carers should have and understanding of the following.

1. The developmental stages and areas all children and young people go through (from pre-birth onwards).
2. How development occurs sequentially but with each child developing at different rates.
3. How the holistic needs of children and young people change as they move through the developmental stages and how to adapt foster carer practice to meet these changing needs.
4. Issues that impact on the development of children and young people (such as those linked to trauma, transition, relationship and attachment) and how early experiences can affect future outcomes.
5. The links between stages of development and the impact of transition, trauma, and attachment issues on children's and young people's resilience and wellbeing, and ways to practice in these circumstances.
6. Ways to nurture and boost the self-esteem of children and young people and how this is linked to their development (the SHANARRI wellbeing indicators will be particularly relevant here).
7. The needs children and young people who have a developmental delay may have and ways to support them in foster carer practice
8. The effects disadvantage or discrimination can have on the development and self-esteem of fostered children and young people and ways to support them in these circumstances
9. The services that can provide support for children and young people who have additional needs and who foster carers should contact if they need these kinds of support.
10. Who foster carers should contact if they need support relating to stages of development.

Descriptors for foster carers at the post-approval and continuous professional development stages

Foster carers at these stages should also be able to show that they have:

11. put the above ways to practice and understanding into action, including being able to discuss the developmental stages and areas all children and young people go through
12. an understanding of development issues relevant to the individual children and young they are supporting, or have supported
13. a growing awareness of the principal models and theories relating to stages of development and of how to apply this to foster carer practice; including being able to discuss relevant models and theories at the post-approval stage and showing increasing confidence to do this at the continuous professional development stage.

Descriptor for foster carers at the continuous professional development stage

Foster carers at this stage should also be able to show that they are:

14. developing specialisms that are relevant for the individual children and young people they support and using a suitable ways to enhance their own learning and support the learning of others.

Standard 5

Keeping children and young people and others safe

Foster carers' understanding of how to contribute to keeping children, young people and others safe (see also learning area 14: Social media and online technologies). Opportunities for holistic learning and evidence gathering should be considered.

Descriptors for all foster carers

All foster carers should have an understanding of the following.

1. Ways foster carers can contribute to keeping children and young people safe, together with the safety needs of foster carers themselves and of other people.
2. Ways to discuss and describe physical, emotional (and other) forms of risk and harm.
3. Factors that contribute to risks and harm for children and young people, including different forms of harm (self-harm and substance misuse should be included).
4. Ways to respond appropriately to fostered children, young people or others who disclose concerns about risks, harm and safety.
5. Who to contact, and the processes to follow, when there are concerns about risks, harm and safety, and what it means to share information appropriately in these circumstances.
6. The records that must be kept in relation to safety concerns.
7. The services that can provide support for children and young people who have additional needs and who foster carers should contact if they need these kinds of support.
8. Who foster carers should contact if they need support relating to the safety of children and young people and when they (or others) may be at risk.

Descriptors for foster carers at the post-approval and continuous professional development stages

Foster carers at these stages should also be able to show that they have:

9. put the above ways to practice and understanding into action
10. implemented necessary processes when there are concerns about safety issues, including appropriate information sharing and record keeping
11. a growing awareness of the principal models and theories relevant to keeping children, young people and others safe, and an understanding of how to apply this to foster carer practice (foster carers should be able to discuss relevant models and theories at the

post-approval stage and show increasing confidence to do this at the continuous professional development stage).

Descriptor for foster carers at the continuous professional development stage

Foster carers at this stage should also be able to show that they are:

12.   keeping up to date, enhancing their own learning and supporting the learning of others.

Standard 6

Building positive relationships

Foster carers' understanding of how to contribute to building positive relationships with fostered children and young people, their birth family, friendship networks and others (such as social workers, social care staff, health and education colleagues). The SHANARRI wellbeing indicators will be particularly relevant to this part of the Standard. Opportunities for holistic evidence learning and gathering should be considered.

Descriptors for all foster carers

All foster carers should have an understanding of the following.

1. Ways to practice that can help ensure foster carers have a sufficiently good understanding of the child or young person and their needs before agreeing to a placement (such as working with the supervising social worker) this will include being aware that detailed information may not always be available and how to practice when this is the case.
2. Why it may sometimes be necessary to decline a placement and how to do this.
3. How foster carers can prepare for working with children and young people on placement and why this is important, including making sure available information about the child or young person is to hand and understood (written and/or other forms of information could be discussed).
4. Ways to build up and sustain trusting relationships with children and young people which promote and support their rights, inclusion and understanding, and why this is important (particularly where children and young people have experienced issues with trauma, attachment, and transition, or have health and/or other needs that affect their wellbeing) this could include therapeutic parenting.
5. Why stable adult and peer relationships are important for children and young people and the importance of consistency (especially in any of the circumstances noted in 4 above).
6. Why it is important to encourage continuing direct or indirect birth family contacts (where this is part of the child's or young person's plan) and ways foster carers can do this.
7. Why it is important to encourage children and young people to sustain positive relationships that have developed in previous care placements and ways foster carers can do this.
8. Why it is important to encourage children and young people to sustain positive friendship networks and ways foster carers can do this.
9. What parental responsibility means in the context of future or current foster carer roles, including how it relates to the children and young people individual foster carers support (or may support in the future) and what it means for day-to-day practice.

10. The effects issues with trauma, attachment and transition can have on the relationships children and young people form, and how to help manage this (taking into account factors such as: the possible effects on children and young people, their family and friendship network, foster carers themselves and foster carers' own families).
11. Why placements can sometimes break down and ways to sustain them (where this is safe, possible and appropriate to the needs and circumstances of the child or young person).
12. Ways to safely support children and young people who may be moving on.
13. Ways to safely support children and young people who have moved on and need to maintain contact with foster carers, or who may have returned to foster carers for support.
14. How to build working relationships with others who support fostered children and young people with their relationships (such as the team around the child).
15. The potential for allegations to be made and the processes to be followed should this happen.
16. The services that can provide support for children and young people who have additional needs and who foster carers should contact if they need these kinds of support.
17. Who foster carers should contact if they need support relating to relationships of all kinds.

Descriptors for foster carers at the post-approval and continuous professional development stages

Foster carers at these stages should also be able to show that they have:

18. put the above ways to practice and understanding into action
19. a growing awareness of the principal models and theories relevant to building positive relationships and understanding how to apply this to foster carer practice (foster carers should be able to name and discuss relevant models and theories at the post-approval stage and show increasing confidence to do this at the continuous professional development stage).

Descriptor for foster carers at the continuous professional development stage

Foster carers at this stage should also be able to show that they are:

20. keeping up to date, enhancing their own learning and supporting the learning of others.

Standard 7

Promoting wellbeing and resilience

Foster carers' understanding of how to contribute to promoting the wellbeing and resilience of children and young people (the SHANARRI wellbeing indicators will be particularly relevant to this part of the Standard). Opportunities for holistic learning and evidence gathering should be considered.

Descriptors for all foster carers

All foster carers should have an understanding of the following.

1. What it means to be child-centred in foster carer practice (in the context of promoting wellbeing and resilience).
2. What resilience means and factors that can affect resilience in children and young people (such as issues with trauma, attachment, and transition).
3. The links between resilience and wellbeing and the ways children and young people may relate to others.
4. Ways to practice that can support children and young people to be aware of, express and safely manage their feelings, and why this is important.
5. The connection between children and young people stretching and testing boundaries and their resilience and self-esteem.
6. Ways to support children and young people when relationships do not work out the way they hope.
7. Ways to practice that show empathy and understanding to children and young people, and how foster carers can use different methods to manage their own feelings (such as at times when they may not be feeling confident about their role).
8. The potential for allegations to be made and awareness of the processes foster carers need to follow if this should happen.
9. The services that can provide support for children and young people who have additional needs and who foster carers should contact if they need these kinds of support.
10. Who foster carers should contact if they need support relating to wellbeing and resilience.

Descriptors for foster carers at the post-approval and continuous professional development stages

Foster carers at these stages should also be able to show that they have:

11. put the above ways to practice and understanding into action
12. a growing awareness of the principal models and theories relevant to resilience and wellbeing and understanding how to apply this to

foster care practice (foster carers should be able to discuss relevant models and theories at the post-approval stage and show increasing confidence in relation to do this at the continuous professional development stage).

Descriptor for foster carers at the continuous professional development stage

Foster carers at this stage should also be able to show that they are:

13.   keeping up to date, enhancing their own learning, and supporting the learning of others.

Standard 8

Effective communication

Foster carers' understanding of how to promote effective communication with children, young people and others, including use of a range of methods appropriate to the ages, preferences and understanding of the individuals involved. The SHANARRI wellbeing indicators are likely to be particularly relevant in this part of the Standard. Opportunities for holistic learning and evidence gathering should be considered.

Descriptors for all foster carers

All foster carers should have an understanding of the following.

1. The factors that can help or hold back communication (such as issues with trauma, attachment and transition).
2. Ways to communicate with children, young people and others (this can include verbal, non-verbal, written, electronic and other forms of communication such as art, music and play).
3. The importance of effective communication to the self-esteem and wellbeing of children, young people, and others.
4. Ways to show respect for the child's or young person's beliefs, cultural and language needs and preferences (such as where English is not their first language, or where ways of communication such as MAKATON may be used or preferred).
5. How foster carers can evaluate their own communication methods and change them, when needed, to promote effective communication.
6. Ways to communicate with the birth families and friendship networks of children and young people (as appropriate to individual needs and circumstances) and why this is important.
7. Ways to promote effective communication with others, such as the team around the child and how to build effective working relationships that support good communication practice.
8. The services that can provide support for children and young people who have additional needs and who foster carers should contact if they need these kinds of support.
9. Who foster carers should contact if they need support relating to effective communication.

Descriptors for foster carers at the post-approval and continuous professional development stages

Foster carers at these stages should also be able to show that they have:

10. put the above ways to practice and understanding into action
11. a growing awareness of the principal models and theories relevant to effective communication and an understanding of how to apply this

to foster care practice (foster carers should be able to discuss relevant models and theories at the post-approval stage and show increasing confidence to do this at the continuous professional development stage).

Descriptor for foster carers at the continuous professional development stage

Foster carers at this stage should also be able to show that they are:

12. keeping up to date, enhancing their own learning, and supporting the learning of others.

Standard 9

Assessment and planning

Foster carers' understanding of how to contribute to supporting and including children and young people in assessment and planning processes. This will include being an advocate, and practicing in ways appropriate to individual needs and circumstances. The SHANARRI wellbeing indicators are likely to be particularly relevant in this part of the Standard. Opportunities for holistic learning and evidence gathering should be considered.

Descriptors for all foster carers

All foster carers should have an understanding of the following.

1. What it means to be child-centred in foster care practice (in the context of assessment and planning).
2. Ways to include children and young people and others who are important to them such as birth families (as appropriate to individual needs and circumstances) in assessment and care planning and how to encourage them to express their choices, wishes, needs, goals and preferences. This should include ways of sensitively explaining to children, young people and others that it may be necessary to share what they disclose.
3. Why it is important to respond positively to what children and young people say, and act on it, together with ways to put this into action (where safe and possible).
4. Why it might not always be safe or possible to act on what children and young people have said; how to recognise when this is the case, and ways of sensitively explaining this to the child or young person.
5. Why foster carers might sometimes need to represent the views of children or young people and be their advocate.
6. What it means to be an advocate in terms of the children's hearing system and how this system works.
7. How birth families and other support networks can contribute to assessment and planning, why this is important (as appropriate to individual needs and circumstances) and ways of working in partnership.
8. The effects issues with trauma, attachment and transition can have on the wellbeing of fostered children and young people and ways to practice when this is the case.
9. The services that can provide support for children and young people who have additional needs and who foster carers should contact if they need these kinds of support.
10. Who foster carers should contact if they need support relating to assessment and planning.

Descriptors for foster carers at the post-approval and continuous professional development stages

Foster carers at these stages should also be able to show that they have:

11.   put the above ways to practice and understanding into action
12.   an understanding of why being an advocate can be an important part of the foster care role (such as in the children's hearing system)
13.   a growing awareness of the principal models and theories relevant to assessment and planning and understanding how to apply this to foster carer practice (foster carers should be able to discuss relevant models and theories at the post-approval stage and show increasing confidence to do this at the continuous professional development stage).

Descriptor for foster carers at the continuous professional development stage

Foster carers at this stage should also be able to show that they are:

14.   keeping up to date, enhancing their own, and supporting the learning of others.

Standard 10

Supporting children and young people with contact

Foster carers' understanding of how to contribute to supporting children and young people to cope with contact and the effects this may have. Opportunities for holistic learning and evidence gathering should be considered.

Descriptors for all foster carers

All foster carers should have an understanding of the following.

1. How to identify the priorities for children and young people in relation to contact and how to balance their needs and wishes with those their birth family may have (including where issues with trauma, attachment and transition are involved).
2. How to identify circumstances which may impact on whether contact may not be in the best interests of the child or young person.
3. The legal requirements that underpin contact (see also standard 3).
4. How to contribute to planning for contact (such as working with the supervising social worker and contributing to the practical arrangements necessary for the contact to take place).
5. Ways to best make arrangements for contact for individual children and young people.
6. The negative effects children and young people can experience when contact does not go well.
7. The range of positive and harmful experiences of contact children and young people may have (such as witnessing different kinds of actions, events and communication).
8. The social and emotional effects contacts and the removal of these may have on children and young people (including where issues with trauma, attachment and transition are involved).
9. The effects separation from birth families including siblings may have on children and young people (these may be positive and/or negative).
10. How to raise concerns about circumstances which may impact on how children and young people experience contacts.
11. The services that can provide support for children and young people who have additional needs and who foster carers should contact if they need these kinds of support.
12. Who foster carers should contact if they need support relating to contact.

Descriptors for foster carers at the post-approval and continuous professional development stages

Foster carers at these stages should also be able to show that they have:

13.　put the above ways to practice and understanding into action
14.　a growing awareness of the principal models and theories relevant to contact and an understanding of how to put this into practice (foster carers should be able to discuss relevant models and theories at the post-approval stage and show increasing confidence in to do this at the continuous professional development stage).

Descriptor for foster carers at the continuous professional development stage

Foster carers at this stage should also be able to show that they are:

15.　keeping up to date, enhancing their own learning and supporting the learning of others.

Standard 11

Health and wellbeing

Foster carers' understanding of how to contribute to supporting the health and wellbeing of individual children and young people and promote a safe and healthy foster care environment. Opportunities for holistic learning and evidence gathering should be considered.

Descriptors for all foster carers

All foster carers should have an understanding of the following.

1. The importance of foster carers having up to date information about the health and wellbeing needs and history of children and young people, and ways to make sure this is available (bearing in mind sometimes there may be limited information available).
2. Ways to practice that support the health and wellbeing of children and young people, and encourage them to make healthy choices (such as ways to support children and young people who have particular health and wellbeing needs and where they may be issues with trauma, attachment and transition).
3. Ways to promote a realistically health aware foster care environment for children and young people, including diet, healthy eating, exercise, oral health and the importance of role modelling by foster carers.
4. Ways to support the emotional and mental health and wellbeing of children and young people.
5. Ways of encouraging children and young people to look after their own health and wellbeing (such as how and when to get health advice and what healthy choices might be).
6. How foster carers can contribute to decision making about children's and young people's health and wellbeing in their future or current roles (this may be in partnership with others as appropriate for individual children and young people).
7. Foster carers' roles in supporting children and young people to attend specialist appointments (such as medical, therapeutic or other kinds of appointment).
8. Ways of supporting birth families, where required, to attend appointments (of the kinds outlined in standard 7 above).
9. The importance of balancing risks, reasonable precautions and development opportunities in terms of children's and young people's health and wellbeing, and ways to do this, including being less risk averse in appropriate circumstances.
10. What it means for foster carers to provide safe support with the different kinds of medication children and young people may need.
11. Ways to support children and young people where there may be issues with substance misuse.
12. Ways of providing first aid that are suitable for children and young people at different ages.

13. Realistic good food hygiene in a foster care setting.
14. Realistic good housekeeping, hygiene and infection control in a foster care setting (such as hand hygiene, safe use of equipment, fire risk awareness and use of equipment which is age appropriate for children and young people).
15. What safe moving and handling means in a foster care setting (such as in the context of safe caring) together with being aware of the moving and handling requirements for children and young people who may have additional needs.
16. How factors such as beliefs and culture may relate to the health and wellbeing of children and young people and ways to practice that show respect for these.
17. The services that can provide support for children and young people who have additional needs and who foster carers should contact if they need these kinds of support.
18. Who foster carers should contact if they need support relating to health and wellbeing.

Descriptors for foster carers at the post-approval and continuous professional development stages

Foster carers at these stages should also be able to show that they have:

19. put the above ways to practice and understanding into action
20. supported children and young people with follow up actions in the light of advice received during specialist appointments (where this is necessary)
21. a growing knowledge of the principal models and theories relevant to health and wellbeing and an understanding of how to apply this to foster carer practice (foster carers should be able to discuss relevant models and theories at the post-approval stage and increasing confidence to do this at the continuous professional development stage).

Descriptors for foster carers at the continuous professional development stage

Foster carers at this stage should also be able to show that they are:

22. aware of how important it is for safe and health aware foster carer practice to be kept up to date, including: first aid, food hygiene, general hygiene, infection control (and other areas) and ways of doing this
23. taking action to develop relevant specialisms and using suitable ways to enhance their own learning and supporting the learning of others.

Standard 12

Education and achievement

Foster carers' understanding of how to contribute to promoting formal and informal learning, education and achievement in their day-to-day practice with individual children and young people. The SHANARRI wellbeing indicators are likely to be particularly relevant in this part of the Standard. Opportunities for holistic learning and evidence gathering should be considered.

Descriptors for all foster carers

All foster carers should have an understanding of the following.

1. Ways to provide a foster care environment that is educationally rich, aspirational and nurturing.
2. The links between play, recreation, leisure and learning, and ways to boost positive experiences for children and young people.
3. Ways to support learning about reading and numbers and other kinds of learning for life that are appropriate to the age and understanding of children and young people and appropriately support school activities in line with the Curriculum for Excellence.
4. How issues with trauma, attachment and transition may affect the learning, education and achievements of children and young people.
5. Ways to support birth families to contribute to the learning, education and achievements of children and young people, and how to encourage birth families to access useful information and events (such as by attending parents nights, school shows and other events as appropriate to the needs and circumstances of the child or young person).
6. The possible links and tensions there may be between birth family expectations and the aspirations, learning, education and achievement of children and young people.
7. The possible links and tensions there may be between foster carers' own educational experiences and how they may support the aspirations, learning, education and achievement of children and young people.
8. The ways culture, gender, beliefs and background can affect aspirations and expectations about learning, education and achievement.
9. The services that can provide support for children and young people who have additional needs and who foster carers should contact if they need these kinds of support.
10. Who foster carers should contact if they need support relating to educational development and achievement.

Descriptors for foster carers at the post-approval and continuous professional development stages

Foster carers at these stages should also be able to show that they have:

11. put the above ways to practice and understanding into action
12. adapted the ways they provide an educationally rich and nurturing environment as necessary to meet the needs and circumstances of individual children and young people
13. kept up to date and enhanced their own learning and supported the learning of others.

Note: the descriptors for the post-approval and continuous professional development stages are the same for this standard.

Standard 13

Recreation, leisure and play

Foster carers' understanding of how to contribute to supporting children and young people in their recreation, leisure and play. The SHANARRI wellbeing indicators are likely to be relevant throughout this part of the Standard. Opportunities for holistic learning and evidence gathering should be considered.

Descriptors for all foster carers

All foster carers should have an understanding of the following.

1. Why recreation, leisure and play are important for all children and young people.
2. Ways to provide opportunities for recreation, leisure and play, that are appropriate to the ages and developmental stages of children and young people, such as:
   a. leisure, recreation and play that is suitable for babies and infants
   b. play dates and friendship contacts
   c. visits to swimming and other facilities/services
   d. support for memberships of clubs/associations
   e. providing suitable equipment (such as toys and sports equipment)
   f. structured and unstructured activities (formal and informal)
   g. providing transport to enable recreation, leisure and play to take place.
3. Why it is important for foster carers to take part in recreation, leisure and play activities alongside the children and young people who will be, or are in their care.
4. Ways to promote purposeful activity, including encouraging the personal interests children and young people may have and providing opportunities for them to make choices about recreation, leisure and play.
5. Ways to provide a balance between indoor and outdoor activities.
6. Ways to provide social opportunities that are suitable for individual children and young people.
7. The services that can provide support for children and young people who have additional needs and who foster carers should contact if they need these kinds of support.
8. Who foster carers should contact if they need support relating to recreation, leisure and play.

Descriptors for foster carers at the post-approval and continuous professional development stages

Foster carers at these stages should also be able to show that they have:

9. put the above ways to practice and understanding into action
10. a growing awareness of the principal models and theories relevant to recreation, leisure and play and an understanding of how to apply this to foster carer practice (foster carers should be able to discuss relevant models and theories at the post-approval stage and show increasing confidence to do this at the continuous professional development stage).

Descriptor for foster carers at the continuous professional development stage

Foster carers at this stage should also be able to show that they are:

11. keeping up to date, enhancing their own learning and supporting the learning of others.

Standard 14

Safe use of social media, and online technologies

Foster carers' understanding of how to contribute to the safe use of social media and online technologies alongside others who are involved in planning for fostered children and young people. Opportunities for holistic learning and evidence gathering should be considered.

Descriptors relevant for all foster carers

All foster carers should have an understanding of the following.

1. The different kinds of digital devices used by children and young people, and the benefits, risks and challenges that can be encountered when using social media and online technologies including online bullying.
2. Ways of using social media and online technologies as safely as possible (such as using privacy and parental controls, checking a child's or young person's profile cannot be seen publicly and making sure details (like their lists of friends) remain private).
3. The ways predators can target children through social media and online technologies (such as grooming and posing as children or young people to start up a relationship).
4. Ways to discuss the risks involved in use of social media and online technologies with children, young people and others; and how to work together to find the safest possible solutions, including awareness of the risks that are associated with:
   a. accepting contacts from unknown people (such as making unknown people friends)
   b. making information public that might lead to a child or young person being identified (such as their date of birth, school or address)
   c. using profile pictures
   d. using the child's or young person's real name (an online nick name could be used)
   e. tagging children and young people in photographs
   f. groups or networks that identify where children and young people live or go to school.
5. How to make sure children and young people know how to block people so they don't get unwanted contact and that they know what to do if unwanted contact happens.
6. The reasons why children and young people may want to use the internet and online technologies to trace people and the risks this can bring, such as:
   a. the child or young person not fully understanding the reasons why they came into care and not being aware they may be putting themselves at risk

b. birth parents being unprepared for, and perhaps not able to deal with, the child or young person getting in touch

c. birth parents having kept the birth of the child or young person a secret and not wanting the secret to come out due to the possible effects on their current families or communities

d. birth parents not wanting to be contacted and perhaps rejecting the child or young person.

7. The possible effects on children and young people should birth family members make an unwanted online approach, how to respond and who to contact if this happens.

8. The expectations there may be relating to foster carers use of social media in their fostering role.

9. The policies foster care organisations have relating to use of all kinds of online technologies (such as posting pictures of children and young people, and being online friends with children, young people, birth families and others).

10. The services that can provide support for children and young people who have additional needs and who foster carers should contact if they need these kinds of support.

11. Who foster carers should contact if they need support relating to safe use of social media and online technologies.

12. Keeping their own learning and practice relating to using social media and online technologies up to date.

Note: The above descriptors apply to all foster carer stages. For the post-approval and continuous professional development stages foster carers should be able to show they are keeping up to date and using their learning in their day-to-day practice.

Standard 15

Promoting positive behaviours and managing behaviours that challenge

Foster carers' understanding of how to contribute to promoting positive behaviours and managing behaviours that challenge. The SHANARRI wellbeing indicators are likely to be particularly relevant throughout this part of the Standard. Opportunities for holistic learning and evidence gathering should be considered.

Descriptors for all foster carers

All foster carers should have an understanding of the following.

1. Why it is important to value all family cultures and forms, and the relationship there may be between these and behavioural expectations together with ways to practice when there are issues like these.
2. The role different kinds of relationships and support networks can have in encouraging positive behaviours and promoting the wellbeing of children and young people.
3. Ways to describe and discuss different kinds of behaviours in the context of children's or young people's development (including social, emotional, communication, physical and educational aspects).
4. Why it's important to be observant of children's and young people's behaviour and to notice small changes that may be part of a pattern or indicators of wider issues, and ways of doing this safely.
5. The effects stress and distress can have on the behaviour of children and young people, the frustrations they may feel and how foster carers should respond in these circumstances.
6. The ways positive and unwanted behaviours can be different according to context.
7. The ways positive and negative reinforcements can affect a child's or young person's confidence, identity and self-esteem.
8. What acceptable and inappropriate sanctions might be, taking into account the ages and understanding of the children and young people involved.
9. Ways to enable children and young people to understand what positive behaviour is and how they can achieve it.
10. Ways that can help defuse situations that may lead to unwanted behaviour.
11. Why it is important to set boundaries and be consistent about expectations for children's and young people's behaviour, and ways to do this.
12. Ways to support children whose behaviour may be inappropriately sexualised, including the supports that can be accessed, and how to keep children and young people, foster carers themselves and others, safe in these circumstances.

13.　Ways to respond to and cope with very challenging and aggressive behaviour, including the supports that can be accessed, and how to keep children and young people, foster carers themselves and others, safe in these circumstances.
14.　How to respond and who to contact when a child or young person appears to be in imminent danger.
15.　The services that can provide support for children and young people who have additional needs and who foster carers should contact if they need these kinds of support.
16.　Who foster carers should contact if they need support relating to promoting positive behaviours and managing behaviours that challenge.

Descriptors for foster carers at the post-approval and continuous professional development stages

Foster carers at these stages should also be able to show that they have:

17.　put the above ways to practice and understanding into action, including recognising and responding appropriately to unwanted behaviours with individual children and young people (where necessary)
18.　a growing awareness of the principal models and theories relevant to promoting positive behaviours and managing behaviours that challenge and an understanding of how to apply this to foster carer practice (foster carers should be able to discuss relevant models and theories at the post-approval stage and show increasing confidence to do this at the continuous professional development stage).

Descriptors for foster carers at the continuous professional development stage

Foster carers at this stage should also be able to show that they are:

19.　keeping up to date, enhancing their own learning and supporting the learning of others
20.　engaging with the child's or young person's formal and informal support network as necessary.

Standard 16

Managing conflict and crises

Foster carers' understanding of how to contribute to the management of conflict and crises. Opportunities for holistic learning and evidence gathering should be considered.

Descriptors for all foster carers

All foster carers should have an understanding of the following.

1. How to recognise situations that are likely to lead to crises or conflicts between, children, young people and others.
2. How to contribute to managing crises and defusing conflict when it arises.
3. Ways negotiating and mediating can help resolve crises and conflicts that have arisen.
4. Ways to enable children and young people to be aware of and acknowledge the feelings and priorities of others (including being aware of why this might be difficult for them).
5. Ways to encourage compromise that can help avoid, defuse or resolve conflicts and crises.
6. The services that can provide support for children and young people who have additional needs and who foster carers should contact if they need these kinds of support.
7. Who foster carers should contact if they need support relating to managing conflict.

Descriptors for foster carers at the post-approval and continuous professional development stages

Foster carers at these stages should also be able to show that they have:

8. put the above ways to practice and understanding into action
9. a growing knowledge of the principal models and theories relevant to managing crises and conflicts and an understanding of how to apply this to foster care practice (foster carers should be able to discuss relevant models and theories at the post-approval stage and show increasing confidence to do this at the continuous professional development stage).

Descriptors for foster carers at the continuous professional development stage

Foster carers at this stage should also be able to show that they are:

10. keeping up to date, enhancing their own learning and supporting the learning of others.

Standard 17

Foster carers' development

Foster carers' understanding of the importance of their own development as a foster carer and how they might show their commitment to this, including the formal and informal learning and development opportunities that are available, reflection as a developmental tool, exercising self-care and being supportive of the needs of others. Opportunities for holistic learning and evidence gathering should be considered.

Descriptors for all foster carers

All foster carers should have an understanding of the following.

1. Foster carers own responsibilities, and those of others, to develop their skills, awareness and values in relation to fostering.
2. What it means to be a reflective practitioner and why reflection is an important developmental tool, together with being able to reflect on the foster care ethos in the light of current or future practice experience.
3. The formal and informal learning, development and support opportunities that are open to foster carers and how to access them (such as attending courses, discussions with colleagues, peer supports, mentoring, support groups, buddy systems and online learning).
4. Ways to access information and support relating to the ethos of foster care, good foster carer practice and new developments in foster care.
5. Foster care as a 24 hour, 7 days a week commitment. It requires ways to exercise self-care, as well as seek support and care for the needs of others in their family. This could include peer supports, support groups, buddy systems and other appropriate kinds of support.
6. The effects secondary trauma can have on members of the fostering household.
7. Why it is good practice to seek support if (or when) foster carers feel their own emotions may affect their foster care practice and/or their own wellbeing, including who to contact when they need formal or informal support and how to do this.
8. The responsibilities others have to support foster carers and foster carers' own responsibly to support others.
9. The processes that need to be followed should an allegation or complaint be made against foster carers and how to follow these.
10. Why it is important for foster carers to keep records of their own learning and development and ways these can be used to show foster carers are working towards, or already meeting the Standard for Foster Care.

Descriptors for foster carers at the post-approval and continuous professional development stages

Foster carers at these stages should also be able to show that they have:

11. put the above ways to practice and understanding into action
12. actively followed through on their own responsibilities for developing their values, practice skills and awareness in relation to the fostering role
13. made use of the learning, development and support opportunities open to foster carers (as noted in 3 above)
14. been self-aware and (where necessary) sought the support needed due to the high emotional impact of fostering
15. been both receptive to supervision and able to act more independently when this is appropriate.

Descriptors for foster carers at the continuous professional development stage

Foster carers at this stage should also be able to show that they are:

15. developing relevant specialisms (such as in relation to dyslexia, mental health, the autistic spectrum, substance misuse and others)
16. keeping up to date, enhancing their own learning, and supporting the learning of others.

Standard 18

Leading and working with others

Foster carers' understanding of how they can contribute to good practice through leading and working with others (in the context of foster care practice). Opportunities for holistic learning and evidence gathering should be considered.

Descriptors for all foster carers

All foster carers should have an understanding of the following.

1. Why the abilities to lead and work with others are important parts of the foster carer role and ways foster carers can do both.
2. The foster care role and what it means to be confident about foster carer practice.
3. How to build effective working relationships with others (such as the team around the child) and why this is important for effective foster carer practice.
4. What it means to be supportive of the development of other foster carers and/or other colleagues and ways to do this.
5. Times when it might be appropriate to lead and to work with others.
6. The range of meetings foster carers can be involved in as part of planning for children and young people, together with an understanding of foster carer roles in these meetings.
7. What it means to practice with an awareness of the various agencies and professionals foster carers may engage with (such as education, health, social work and others) together with an understanding of ways different roles and responsibilities interact.
8. Different ways to present information to a range of audiences and for different purposes (such as written and verbal information) and the levels of detail that might be needed in different circumstances, for example, when speaking informally with children and young people and when presenting information in a planning meeting.

Descriptors for foster carers at the post-approval and continuous professional development stages

Foster carers at these stages should also be able to show that they have:

9. put the above ways to practice and understanding into action
10. advocated for children and young people and in this way perhaps influenced both policy and practice (as appropriate to individual needs and circumstances).

Descriptor for foster carers at the continuous professional development stage

Foster carers at this stage should also be able to show that they are:

11.   keeping up to date, enhancing their own learning and supporting the learning of others.

Standard 19

Record keeping and information management

Foster carers' understanding of how they can contribute to record keeping and information management, and make sure their practice is in line with current data protection laws, policies and principles (see standard 3). Opportunities for holistic learning and evidence gathering should be considered.

Descriptors for all foster carers

All foster carers should have an understanding of the following.

1. The rights children, young people and others have to confidentiality of personal information, what this means for day-to-day foster carer practice and ways to ensure these rights are upheld (including working with verbal, written and electronic information).
2. What it means to practice in line with the requirements of current law, policy and guidance on record keeping and information management, such as the Data Protection Act 1998 (see also standard 3).
3. What it means to share information appropriately and ways to do this.
4. When and why safe caring might override the principle of confidentiality.
5. The importance of writing records and reports that are factual, objective and suitable for purpose.
6. The records foster carers need to keep in relation to the individual children and young people in their care and ways to do this (as part of their future or current foster carer roles).
7. Good financial housekeeping practices in the foster care environment.
8. What it means for foster carers to practice with an awareness of the fostering service handbook and policies provided by the foster care organisation they work with, in relation to allowances, registering with HMRC for tax purposes, national insurance liabilities, savings accounts for children and young people, together with an understanding of benefits and other payments in respect of children and young people.
9. What it means to take and safely use photographs (particularly digital images) in a foster care setting and the consents and permissions that are required for this.
10. Best record keeping and information management practice, together with practice guidance on record keeping in the event of an allegation being made.
11. Who foster carers should contact if they need support relating to record keeping and information management.

Descriptor for foster carers at the post-approval and continuous professional development stages

Foster carers at these stages should also be able to show that they have:

12.   put the above ways to practice and understanding into action.

Descriptor for foster carers at the continuous professional development stage

Foster carers at this stage should also be able to show that they are:

13.   keeping up to date, enhancing their own learning and supporting the learning of others.

Appendix 1

Policy context

The following documents are relevant to the Standard and are listed in four parts:

1. Law
2. Reviews, practice guidance and standards
3. Other documents
4. National standards and initiatives.

It should be noted that there are many potentially relevant documents and others might also have been included.

Part 1: Law

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014
www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2014/8/contents/enacted

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 contains several changes to the way children and young people in Scotland are cared for. The act includes provisions designed to:

- promote better permanence planning for looked after children and young people, by entitling all eligible 16 year olds, who are in care, to the right to stay until they reach the age of 21
- extend the support available to young people moving on from care for a longer period (up to and including age 25)
- support the parenting role of kinship carers
- bring elements of Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) into law, by ensuring there is a single approach to planning for children who need additional support from services
- provide a single point of contact for every child and promote a holistic understanding of wellbeing
- create new duties in relation to the United Nations on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and strengthen the role of the Children's Commissioner
- strengthen previously existing law that affects children and young people, including amendments to the process for school closure proposals under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

In particular:

Part 9 – covers the duties of Corporate Parents and details what looked after children and young care leavers should be able to expect

Part 10 – covers aftercare and the extension of entitlement to young care leavers

Part 11 – introduces the concept of continuing care provisions, clarifies the eligible group, and details the entitlements of looked after children.

The Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011
www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2011/1/pdfs/asp_20110001_en.pdf

Identifies the key role foster carers can have in the children's hearing and court system. Foster carers are viewed as 'relevant persons' in view of having, or having had, significant involvement in the upbringing of the child.

The Children (Scotland) Act 1995
www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1995/36/contents

This act centres on the needs of children and their families, defines parental responsibilities and rights in relation to children and sets out the duties and powers available to local authorities to support them and to intervene, where necessary, for the child's welfare. The act placed a responsibility on local authorities to protect and promote children's welfare and to prepare children's services plans. It gave local authorities duties and powers to respond to the requirements of children 'in need' and 'looked after' by them. The act also set the framework for the children's hearing system and measures relating to compulsory care and supervision. The act was accompanied by detailed regulations and guidance and linked closely to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1992. The following principles are integral to the act.

- Each child should be treated as an individual.
- Each child who can form a view on matters affecting him or her has the right to express those views if they wish.
- Parents should usually be responsible for the upbringing of their children and should share that responsibility between them.
- Each child has the right to protection from abuse, neglect or exploitation.
- Where it is consistent with safeguarding and promoting the child's welfare, public authorities should promote the upbringing of children by their families.
- Any intervention by public authorities in the life of a child must be justified and should be supported by services from relevant agencies working together.

The following three themes are present throughout the act.

- The welfare of the child is the paramount consideration when his or her needs are being considered.

- Courts should not make orders relating to a child and children's hearings should not make supervision requirements; unless the court or hearing considers this would be better for the welfare of the child than not making an order or supervision requirement.
- The views of the child should be taken into account whenever decisions are being made about their future.

There is a further requirement to have regard for religion, ethnicity, culture and language.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1992
www.unicef.org.uk/UNICEFs-Work/UN-Convention

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) guarantees that all rights must be available to all children and young people without discrimination of any kind (Article 2); it is based on the following principles.

- The best interests of the child must be a primary consideration in all actions concerning children (Article 3).
- Every child has the right to life, survival and development (Article 6).
- The child's views must be considered and taken into account in all matters affecting him or her (Article 12).

Part 2: Reviews, practice guidance, and standards

The National Foster Care Review (CELCIS, 2013)
www.celcis.org/media/resources/publications/Foster-Care-Review-Final-Report.pdf

The review report made recommendations on issues relating to placement descriptors, a national foster carer database, placement limits, learning and development, allowances and fees.

Moving Forward in Kinship and Foster Care (Scottish Government 2009)

This final report of the 'Getting it Right for Every Child in Kinship and Foster Care' reference group provides an examination of the recruitment, assessment and training of foster carers. It also describes the vision for kinship and foster care and highlights issues to better support children and young people many of whom may have experienced trauma and difficult relationships. It further highlights the growth that has occurred over recent years within foster care and kinship care.

The Looked After Children (Scotland) Regulations 2009
www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2009/210/part/II/made

These regulations replace the 'Arrangements to Look After Children (Scotland) Regulations 1996' and 'Fostering of Children (Scotland) Regulations 1996'. They bring together the regulation of the care planning services offered to Looked After Children and their families and the care provision required when children are separated from their birth parents. They also reflect more detailed and consistent requirements where children are looked after by kinship carers.

Getting it right for every child (Scottish Government, 2014)
www.gov.scot/Resource/0042/00423979.pdf

The Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) approach is designed to support practitioners to focus on what makes a positive difference for children and young people, and how this can be delivered. It provides consistent methods of working with children and young people and defines the key values, principles and practice models required. There are specific core components, values and principles which are relevant across all children's services and can be applied in every setting. In particular GIRFEC promotes a partnership approach that:

- builds solutions with and around children, young people and their birth families
- enables and supports children and young people to get the help they need when they need it
- positively supports a shift in culture, systems and practice
- involves working to improve life chances for children, young people and their birth families.
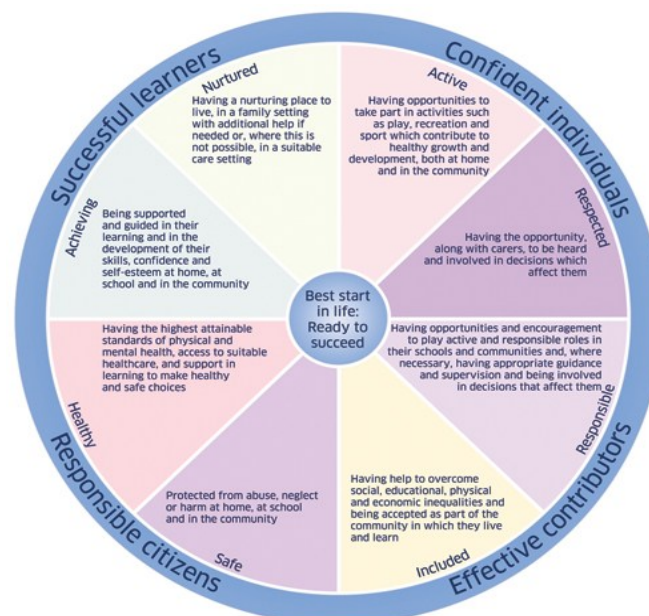
The National Care Standards: Foster Care and Family Placement Services (Scottish Government 2011)
www.gov.scot/Publications/2011/05/16141925/3#11

Standard 11.3 under the heading Services to Foster Carers states that:

> You (Foster carers) know that your reviews always include an assessment of:

- training and support received by you and your family
- information provided
- levels of supervision.

The Social Care (Self-directed Support) (Scotland) Act 2013
www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2013/1/contents/enacted

Self-directed support represents a significant shift in approach across social care provisions. It aims to ensure necessary care and support is delivered in a way that promotes freedom, choice and control and is respectful of everyone's right to be included. The act relates to all age groups and contains guidance that is specific to children and families, including provision for them to take greater control over the supports they receive (children who are supported under the legal duties specified in the 1995 and 2014 Acts are included). In particular, there is provision for:

- a named person who will be the first point of contact for children and families
- integrated approaches to self-directed support alongside the implementation of GIRFEC and associated legislation
- a range and level of services appropriate to the needs of individual children, young people and their families.

Common Core of Skills, Knowledge, Understanding and Values for the Children's Workforce in Scotland (Scottish Government, 2011)
www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0039/00395179.pdf

This document identifies a common core of learning for the children's workforce. The core specifies no levels and takes account of the different roles of workers in the context of necessary knowledge and understanding. The skills, knowledge and understanding are referred to as 'essential characteristics' and are set out in two streams; 'relationships with children, young people and families', and 'relationships between workers'. They are cross-referenced to the guiding principles of the UNCRC.

Part 3: Other documents

Fatal Accidents and Sudden Deaths Inquiry 2015 (110815)
www.scotcourts.gov.uk/search-judgments/judgment?id=eb67e6a6-8980

Inquiry into the circumstances of the death of a foster carer as a result of a violent incident in the foster care environment. Recommendations arising from the inquiry included proposals to enhance learning in preparation for foster care placements.

SSSC Codes of Practice (2016)
www.sssc.uk.com/about-the-sssc/multimedia-library/publications?task=document.viewdoc&id=239

While foster carers are not required to register with SSSC, it is important that everyone is aware of the the Code of Practice for Social Service Workers which sets out clear standards of professional conduct and practice that social service workers must meet in their everyday work and the standards expected of employers of social service workers in Scotland (this includes foster care organisations).

Step into Leadership (SSSC, 2012)
www.stepintoleadership.info

Step into Leadership says:

> 'it can be easy to think that vision is the role of chief executives and management boards. While they have responsibility for developing the overall direction of the organisation, as a frontline worker, you are in a good position to see what could be achieved by the individuals, families and communities you work with every day'.

Joining the dots: a better start for Scotland's children (Scottish Government, 2011)
www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/343337/0114216.pdf

Focuses on the Early Years workforce, and recognises the need for better integration and joint working to support children and families.

Pre-Birth to Three: Positive Outcomes for Scotland's Children and Families (Learning and Teaching Scotland, 2010)
www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/PreBirthToThreeBooklet_tcm4-633448.pdf

This report states that:

> 'providing the right support at the right time can help build resilience, enabling individuals, and families to find their own solutions to problems as they arise'.

Early Years Framework (Scottish Government, 2008)
www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/257007/0076309.pdf

The Early Years Framework states that:

> 'At the heart of this framework is an approach which recognises the right of all young children to high quality relationships, environments and services which offer a holistic approach to meeting their needs. Such needs should be interpreted broadly and encompass play, learning, social relationships and emotional and physical wellbeing. This approach is important for all children but is of particular benefit in offering effective support to those children and families requiring higher levels of support'.

These Are Our Bairns (Scottish Government, 2008)
www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/236882/0064989.pdf

Identifies a guide for community planning partnerships on being good corporate parents. The introduction states that:

> 'Our underpinning theme is working together, one of the key themes identified in Looked After Children and Young People – We Can and Must Do Better (Scottish Executive, January 2007). We are already seeing some excellent work being achieved across Scotland to deliver the actions outlined in that report. This guidance emphasises the key role that local authorities have as corporate parents, and the vital contribution of community planning partners as members of the wider corporate family. It aims to demonstrate the part you can play to make a difference to the lives of children in care, and care leavers, and what you can do to make sure that they have positive experiences that will prepare them for a successful future; one in which they contribute positively to their local communities, and to a successful Scotland.'

Equally Well (Scottish Government, 2008)
www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/06/25104032/0

Equally Well states that:

> 'some relevant education and training is already taking place, for example equality and diversity training, leadership preparation and partnership working. Much of this education tends to focus on particular practitioner groupings and is sometimes specific to policy areas and types of services. In reality, there are many common aspects where learning could be shared'.

Continuous Learning Framework (SSSC, 2008)
www.continuouslearningframework.com

The Continuous Learning Framework states that:

> 'it is important that each individual social service worker takes responsibility for their own learning and development throughout their career, and that employers provide opportunities for continuous learning and improvement in practice'.

21ˢᵗ Social Work Review: Changing Lives (Scottish Executive, 2006)
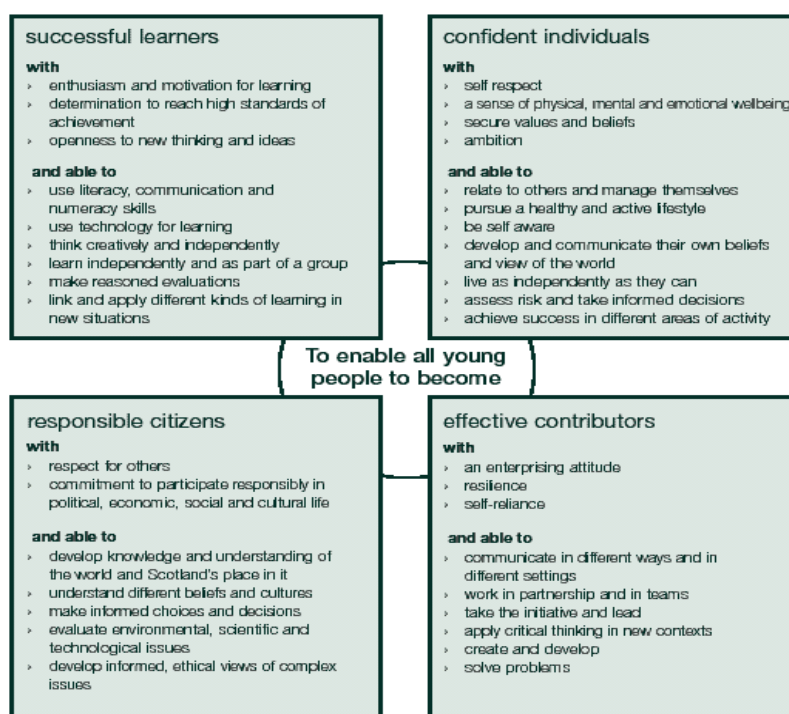www.scotland.gov.uk/resource/doc/91931/0021949.pdf

This identifies workforce planning as important for 'building the capacity and making full use of the whole workforce'.

Curriculum Review Group – A Curriculum for Excellence (Scottish Executive, 2004)
www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2004/11/20178/45862

A Curriculum for Excellence states that:

> 'all children should be enabled to 'develop their capacities as a successful learner, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors to society'.

successful learners

with
› enthusiasm and motivation for learning
› determination to reach high standards of achievement
› openness to new thinking and ideas

and able to
› use literacy, communication and numeracy skills
› use technology for learning
› think creatively and independently
› learn independently and as part of a group
› make reasoned evaluations
› link and apply different kinds of learning in new situations

confident individuals

with
› self respect
› a sense of physical, mental and emotional wellbeing
› secure values and beliefs
› ambition

and able to
› relate to others and manage themselves
› pursue a healthy and active lifestyle
› be self aware
› develop and communicate their own beliefs and view of the world
› live as independently as they can
› assess risk and take informed decisions
› achieve success in different areas of activity

To enable all young people to become

responsible citizens

with
› respect for others
› commitment to participate responsibly in political, economic, social and cultural life

and able to
› develop knowledge and understanding of the world and Scotland's place in it
› understand different beliefs and cultures
› make informed choices and decisions
› evaluate environmental, scientific and technological issues
› develop informed, ethical views of complex issues

effective contributors

with
› an enterprising attitude
› resilience
› self-reliance

and able to
› communicate in different ways and in different settings
› work in partnership and in teams
› take the initiative and lead
› apply critical thinking in new contexts
› create and develop
› solve problems

Part 4: National Standards and Initiatives

The Standard is further informed by the relevant national standards and initiatives.

1. National Occupational Standards – Children's Care, Learning and Development www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/47047.html

2. Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework scqf.org.uk
3. National Occupational Standards Health and Social Care www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/57448.html
4. National Occupational Standards for Leadership and Management in Care Services www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/57449.html
5. National Foster Carers Initiative: Higher Aspirations, Brighter Futures Workforce Report www.celcis.org/media/resources/publications/F4.pdf
6. National Framework for Child Protection Learning and Development in Scotland 2012 www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0040/00409124.pdf
7. Standards for Social Work, Teaching, and Childhood Practice and the Competences for Community Learning and Development
   - www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/47021/0025613.pdf
   - www.cldstandardscouncil.org.uk/the_competences/Competences _for_Community_Learning_and_Development
   - www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/Scottish-Subject-Benchmark-Statements-Standard-of-Childhood-Practice.pdf
   - www.gtcs.org.uk/standards
8. Recognition of Prior Learning Resource Pack www.sssc.uk.com/about-the-sssc/multimedia-library/publications/70-education-and-training/74-recognition-of-prior-informal-learning/552-rpl-resource-pack
9. Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework www.scqf.org.uk/content/files/resources/SCQF_Level_Descriptors_for_ website_-_Feb_2010.pdf

Appendix 2

Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) level 7

The Standard for Foster Care is linked to SCQF level 7. The characteristics that constitute SCQF 7 are described in the following extract from the SCQF website:
www.scqf.org.uk/content/files/resources/SCQF_Level_Descriptors_for_website_-_Feb_2010.pdf

Examples of learning that is also linked to SCQF level 7 are as follows:

- Higher National Certificates
- SVQ Awards such as SVQ Social Services (Children and Young People) SCQF 7.

The following descriptions are for guidance only – it is not expected that every point will be covered.

Knowledge and understanding

Demonstrate and/or work with:

- a broad knowledge of the subject/discipline in general
- knowledge that is embedded in the main theories, concepts and principles
- an awareness of the evolving/changing nature of knowledge and understanding
- an understanding of the difference between explanations based on evidence and/or research and other forms of explanation and of the importance of this difference.

Practice: applied knowledge and understanding

Use some of the basic and routine professional skills, techniques, practices and/or materials associated with a subject/discipline. Practise these in both routine and non-routine contexts.

Generic cognitive skills

Present and evaluate arguments, information and ideas which are routine to the subject/ discipline. Use a range of approaches to address defined and/or routine problems and issues within familiar contexts.

Communication, ICT and numeracy skills

Use a wide range of routine skills and some advanced skills associated with the subject/ discipline, for example:

- convey complex ideas in well-structured and coherent form
- use a range of forms of communication effectively in both familiar and new contexts
- use standard applications to process and obtain a variety of information and data
- use a range of numerical and graphical skills in combination
- use numerical and graphical data to measure progress and achieve goals/targets.

Autonomy, accountability and working with others

Exercise some initiative and independence in carrying out defined activities at a professional level. Take supervision in less familiar areas of work. Take some managerial responsibility for the work of others within a defined and supervised structure. Manage limited resources within defined areas of work. Take the lead in implementing agreed plans in familiar or defined contexts. Take account of own and others' roles and responsibilities in carrying out and evaluating tasks. Work with others in support of current professional practice under guidance.

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