



**Recording Policy for Foster Carers**

**The Local Authority Fostering Services (Wales) Regulations**

**2018**

**Regulation 37**

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## Introduction

The Local Authority Fostering Service (Wales) Regulations 2018 require that Foster Wales Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council has, and implements, a written policy that supports foster carers to understand the importance of record keeping and provides guidance for the completion of daily logs for any child (ren) they care for.

## The Purpose of Recordings

Everyone who works with children who are looked after will be involved in recording. As a foster carer, you play a key role in the care of Children Looked After, and you are uniquely placed to record important information while caring for a child.

It is essential that you keep accurate records, because:

- Records can offer children and young people an opportunity to look back at what has happened during the placement, and to understand why decisions were made.
- Records can help to promote a child's identity.
- Recordings can provide an opportunity to reflect and allow analysis of behaviour.
- They allow sharing of information with other professionals to enhance the child's life.
- They can assist in continuity when there are changes in care.
- Records can provide accurate information that can be used in plans and assessments about the child or young person you look after.
- The information may be required in court.
- Recording can be useful if allegations are made against a foster carer. It also forms part of ensuring you as foster carers are meeting the accountability and standards expected of your role.
- Recording also supports your supervision and professional development as a foster carer.
- They can support life journey work.

## The Content & Style of Recordings

You are expected to keep a record of all significant events and incidents during the child's placement with you. It is important to include anything that you think is significant, even if it seems a small detail. However, you do not have to record anything or everything each day.

While we encourage you to be consistent in your completion of recordings the frequency of recordings may vary depending on the child you are caring for and their care and support plan. For example, where a child is recently accommodated, there may be a need to record daily to understand patterns in the child's behaviour or provide information to court, however if you have cared for a child for several years the need may be less frequent.

It is important to have the recordings available for court if the child you care for is subject to court proceedings and to make arrangements with your supervising social worker for the recordings to be sent on a regular basis. Discuss and agree with the child's social worker the level of recording that is needed to ensure the recordings can be submitted to the Court in a timely manner. This also requires your supervising worker to read through your recordings to ensure all information is correct.

You should ensure that all records are relevant, accurate, up to date, and stored securely in line with the Data Protection Act 2018.

Recordings need to be clear and legible, and the language should be kept simple and free of jargon. Remember, these records should be useful to the child or young person now and in the future and you should be writing in a way that you would be happy for the child or young person to read what you have written. However, in the event of a child making a disclosure/allegation care should be taken to record factually what was said by the child.

Recordings should offer a balanced view of the child's life and include the good points as well as the more difficult points. Requests from children and young people to view their files will consider any confidential or inaccurate information that cannot be shared and will be redacted.

Records should be kept in date order, on the recording log provided by Foster Wales Merthyr Tydfil, with a separate log for each child placed with you. Recording logs should be completed electronically where possible, stored safely, and shared securely with your supervising social worker. Hard copies of the recording log are available for use in emergencies.

You should avoid recording opinion and detail factual events wherever possible, however, if you feel you need to record opinion make sure you clearly state that this is your opinion.

### **What kind of information to record?**

You will use a recording log sheet for each child or young person placed with you. You must use separate logs for each child.

- Details of the improvements and achievements of your fostered child.
- Physical intervention – use an incident form to record the detail of what happened before, when it happened, and how it was dealt with. Note in the child's recording log that an incident occurred, and an incident form has been completed. All incidents need to be reported to your supervising social worker within 24 hours in line with the requirements of the fostering services policy on the appropriate use of control and restraint. If there are any injuries because of the incident, these need to be reported immediately to your supervising social worker or through the out of hours team or Emergency Duty Team (EDT) if outside of office hours.

- Quotes or comments from the fostered child or young person – these can be useful for the child or young person to look back on and can provide important evidence for assessments.
- Details of delegated authority and how you reach decisions.
- Significant changes in behaviour (both positive and negative changes), and how this was dealt with.
- Family events and traditions, such as Birthdays, Holidays and Festivals, which the child is part of.
- Contact with other agencies and professionals.
- Details of any times that the child is away from the foster home, with friends, birth family, or missing.
- Details of contact visits, including how the child or young person responded, and any reasons for failed visits.
- Disagreements and complaints, and how they were dealt with.
- Details of visits by the child's social worker and the supervising social worker, including details of any missed meetings and any agreed actions.
- Details of any theft by the foster child, or damage caused by the foster child.
- Details of any specific events or changes in the foster carer household that may have an impact on the foster child.

## **Health and Development Records**

Foster Wales Merthyr Tydfil has a policy on the management and administration of medications and the recording of health appointments for the child you care for.

We provide you with a Record of Child's Health Appointments and Medication form to complete with the details of medication administered, both prescribed and bought over the counter, and any health appointments.

Please keep this record up to date and use the recording logs to reference any appointments or periods of illness but not the detail of medications administered.

- Details of developmental milestones and achievements – a developmental chart is available from your health visitor, or for younger children the information you record should complement the 'Red Log'.
- Patterns to allergic reactions, or asthma attacks.
- Symptoms and progress of any illnesses.
- Record the child's response and any reactions.

## **Education**

- Record details of all visits and telephone calls regarding education, including PEP meetings or parents evening.
- Record achievements and attainment at school, or school related activities.
- Record details of extra-curricular activities (social/ leisure/ play activities) in and out of school.

## **Social worker and other professionals' visits**

- All visits and telephone calls from Children's Social Care staff, including your supervising social worker, and professionals other than Health and Education.
- The record of all appointments for you should be kept separately.

## **Contact**

- Details of all forms of contact between the child or young person and their birth family; include details of all telephone calls, text messages, emails, and visits.
- Complete the record if planned contact did not go ahead, recording the reason why the contact did not go ahead.
- Record your child or young person's responses and reactions to any contact arrangements.

## **Missing from foster home**

- The Safeguarding children who are absent or missing from care policy should be followed.
- An up-to-date child information form should be kept for use by the police - this should be updated every 6 months.
- For some young people, assessed as being at risk from influences in the community, record their significant 'comings and goings and any regular visitors they have to your home.

## **Incidents and Injuries**

- Reference to any incident/ accident and record when the incident/accident form is completed and sent to your supervising social worker.
- Always inform your child's social worker and your supervising social worker of all significant incidents and injuries.
- Incidents include an episode of self-harming, any incident that involves you or a member of your household being harmed or injured by the child or young person.

- Details of any incidents, which involve physically restraining the child or young person. You should always inform the child's social worker and your supervising social worker.

## **Family Life**

- Record anything about family life that is significant or important. Family traditions and funny stories are important as these can help the child recall significant events and help with understanding their life journey.
- Record family events, religious events, family celebrations, the child's achievements, rewards, and sanctions that were given and any staying visitors to the household.
- Record any positive behaviour or positive changes in behaviour e.g., if a child is kind or caring.
- Record any difficult behaviour that a child displays, how you managed the behaviour, what worked, what did not work, what the possible 'triggers' might have been.

## **Responsibilities in relation to storage and confidentiality**

Whilst you record and hold information on looked after children and young people, this is on behalf of Foster Wales Merthyr Tydfil. All information provided about a child, who is or has been placed with a foster carer is confidential and governed by the Data Protection Act 2018. Information about a child, young person, or his or her family should only be provided to another person if it is for the purpose of the child or young person's protection or welfare. Whilst the child is in placement with you, you are expected to keep information in a safe, secure, and confidential manner in your home, whether the documents are electronic or in paper format.

Recording logs should be kept electronically using the word document your supervising social worker provides. When using a computer to record information, make sure the computer and the files are password protected with a secure password.

Do not send confidential information as part of the email message itself, as non-MTCBC email addresses will not be secure. Only use initials and not names when sending a document electronically.

Any documents to be sent via secure email using egress.

Support carers will be provided with recording log sheets to be completed for each episode of support care. You should send these sheets to your supervising social worker who will forward them to the child's social worker to upload onto the child's electronic file. Any pertinent information will be forwarded to the main carers SSW to share with the main carers.



We recognise that issues of confidentiality relate not only to record keeping, but also in a wider sense to conversations you may have with family and friends and in the community.

There are situations where there is a legitimate need to share information relating to the background of your fostered child with family or friends who are involved in their care, for the purpose of the child's protection and welfare.

However, seemingly innocent conversations within the community could lead to accidental breaches of the child's confidentiality. A breach of confidentiality could lead to a review, at panel, of your suitability as a foster carer. If you have any concerns about confidentiality, or if you are worried, you may have accidentally breached confidentiality, please talk to your supervising social worker.

### **Responsibilities of your Supervising Social Worker**

You should regularly send/provide your supervising social worker the recording logs to read and forward to the child's social worker, who will load store the recording logs on the child's file within the children's social care electronic recording system. Your supervising social worker will send you an email acknowledging receipt of the recording logs, the name of the child and the dates they cover when these are sent electronically

In the event of the recording log being completed as a paper document your supervising social worker will collect the recording log(s), scan the document(s), and send to the child's social worker to store on the child's electronic file. Your social worker will then send you an email confirming collection of the recording logs, the name of the child(ren) and the dates of the log(s).

Where there is a requirement of court to submit your recording logs you will need to send these to your supervising social worker, who will ensure these are submitted to the child's social worker, in line with the required deadlines. If your supervising social worker is absent from work, when the logs are required, you will send the recording logs directly to the child's social worker.

### **End of Placement**

At the end of a placement, any recording log(s) should be sent to your supervising social worker who will forward them to the child's social worker to store on the child's electronic record. All electronic logs should be deleted from your computer. You should keep a record of the child's name, and the date they arrived and left and when the information was returned.

Any paperwork related to the young person should be returned to the department within 14 days of the end of placement ending.

### **Further Information and Advice on Recordings**

Good practice tips:

- Be accurate
- Be concise
- Think about language and what does the word you are using mean
- Avoid personal views
- Record child's comments in the child's words
- Keep records separate for different children
- Record in date order
- Keep all information secure and confidential
- Write in a way that you would be happy for the child or young person to read what you have written
- Talk to your supervising social worker if you are unsure of what you should be recording, and remember, the information that you record may be invaluable to your fostered child.

Fostering Carer Recording Policy 2023