# New Partners

## What a single registered foster carer should tell Norfolk County Council

All foster carers are required to notify the agency holding their registration of any *significant* change in circumstances. A single foster carer who begins a relationship with a new partner that will result in that person having contact with looked after children must inform their supervising social worker. A DBS application in respect of the new partner should ALWAYS be undertaken at this point, as well as a Liquidlogic check.

If the foster carer and their new partner plan to live together, the foster carer should inform their supervisor as soon as possible and the following will need to be recorded:

1. The full address of where the foster carer and new partner will be living;
2. The date from which the foster carer and new partner will be living together;
3. If it is the intention of the foster carer and their new partner to seek joint foster carer registration, or not.

## What Norfolk County Council will do

If the registered foster carer and their new partner to do not intend to seek joint registration, then the foster carer will be considered to have resigned their registration and 28 days notice will be given to them from the date they begin living with their new partner. A meeting will be required to consider the required changes to the care plans for any looked after children in placement with the foster carer.

Where joint registration is sought, the supervising social worker will hold a meeting with the registered foster carer and their new partner to ensure both fully understand the requirements of the fostering task. This will be recorded as a supervision.

The supervising social worker will then inform their team manager and an agreement will be reached on the commencement as soon as possible of a full Form F assessment with regard to the suitability of the foster carer and their new partner to hold foster carer registration. Arrangements should also be made for the new partner to attend Skills to Foster – the registered foster carer can also attend with the new partner if they wish.

The supervising social worker will also inform the social worker and team manager for any looked after children in the care of the registered foster carer and consideration will be given to the need to make changes to the Placement Plan / Care Plan for each looked after child concerned.

## Impact on the single registered foster carer

From this point on, **no new** placements can be made with the registered foster carer and any vacancies the registered foster carer may have will be restricted. If the registered foster carer has no looked after children in placement, they will be considered unavailable for placements.

## How a new partner assessment is recorded and processed

The allocated assessor will record their assessment as an update to the registered foster carers initial Form F assessment, with all relevant additions to the new partner (applicant) included.

The amended and updated Form F assessment will be taken forward in the usual way and only when a positive decision has been made by the Agency Decision Maker and a signed notification of approval has been received can the foster carers be available for new placements. A new foster carer agreement will also need to be signed by both foster carers **before** new placements can be made.

## What if the new partner is deemed unsuitable to become a foster carer

If at any point in the above process the assessment of the new partner concludes they are unsuitable to be registered as a foster carer, the supervising social worker and their team manager will inform the Head of Social Work Resources and the social worker/team manager for any children in placement and an urgent meeting will be convened to consider any changes to the plan for the child or children that maybe necessary. Unless the registered foster carer resigns their registration at this point, it will be necessary to present the evidence regarding the unsuitability of the new partner to a foster panel, either in the form of an updated Form F assessment, or an annual review of the registered foster carer.

The registered foster carer and new partner have the same rights to appeal any decision made by Norfolk County Council as all new applicants to foster.