

# REFLECTIVE TOOL

For actioning the  
Foster Care Practice Guide

FIND MORE INFORMATION & RESOURCES: [FOSTER CARE PRACTICE GUIDE](#)

## About this tool

The Foster Care Practice Guide is one in a series of guides setting out the best available evidence for leaders in the children's social care sector to support effective practice and improve how services are commissioned, developed, and delivered. The Department for Education has commissioned the Practice Guides to help local areas achieve the outcomes of the Children's Social Care National Framework (CSCNF).

The Foster Care Practice Guide provides the best available evidence on the support and training that foster carers need, substantiating what is already known in practice – that supporting foster carers' skills, confidence and wellbeing can improve the outcomes of children in their care. Supporting carers can equip them to provide sensitive, attuned care, which can promote regulated behaviour and placement stability.

By implementing the Guide's key principles and recommendations, local areas will deliver on outcomes 1, 3 and 4 of the CSCNF by enabling foster carers to provide children with stable, loving homes, the support they need and opportunities to remain connected with their families.

The policy and delivery landscape relating to the fostering system is undergoing a period of change and innovation. The Reflective Tool is intended to support local areas to strengthen support for foster carers, trialling innovative approaches and scaling evidence-based models, in line with the vision and action plan set out in *Renewing Fostering*. The tool provides leaders with a mechanism for interrogating the local conditions that are needed to ensure foster carers have “the practical and emotional support they need to keep caring” (*Renewing Fostering*, p.5).

The Reflective Tool focuses on one specific aspect of fostering support: the use of evidence based support designed to strengthen foster carers' skills, confidence, and wellbeing so that they can provide the best possible care to children. **Where carers are supporting children with multiple and intersecting needs**, local areas are encouraged to consider the Foster Care Practice Guide alongside/in conjunction with other Practice Guides such as [Parenting Disabled Children and Young People](#); [Parenting through Adversity 0–10](#); [Parenting through Adversity 11–18](#); and [Mentoring and Befriending](#). This can help in developing an approach that is holistic and tailored to the individual needs of carers and the children in their care.

Local areas are likely to have an established support offer for foster carers that will be a blend of evidence-based interventions and locally developed programmes. The Practice Guide recommendations should inform ongoing review, planning and decision-making in relation to fostering support, while the key principles can be adopted to strengthen whole-system culture change. Leaders are encouraged to use this tool to map the support currently available for foster carers, assess how well it meets local needs and prioritise the most relevant actions. They should use the best available evidence as set out in the Practice Guide, alongside local population and organisational data, professional knowledge and lived experience, to inform commissioning and decommissioning cycles.

## **The foster carers in scope for this Practice Guide**

In England, foster carers can be related to the child under kinship arrangements or non-related. This Guide is predominantly focused on non-related foster carers. The Guide also focuses primarily on short- and long-term fostering arrangements. For more information see the [extended definitions page](#) on our website.

## **Who should use this tool?**

This tool is designed for all those with corporate parenting responsibilities across the multi-agency partnership to achieve the outcomes of the [Children's Social Care National Framework](#) by commissioning, prioritising and expanding access to evidence-based support for foster carers. This tool can support local areas to select and implement the Practice Guide key principles and recommendations that are most relevant to their local context.

This resource is structured around the Assess, Plan, Do, Review approach:

## STEP 1: ASSESS

Establish the right team and bring them together to agree on priorities, ways of working and a shared responsibility across the corporate parenting partnerships. Actively involve the voices of foster carers to critically evaluate the current support offer. Enquire how well current fostering support programmes are meeting the needs of your foster carers by considering barriers and enablers to attendance, retention and completion rates, and assessing foster carer satisfaction and outcomes data. Work with corporate parenting partners to map the currently available foster carer support and consider whether this support features in the Practice Guide. Gather and analyse information about the current and projected needs of children in your area and the implications for your fostering sufficiency.

## STEP 2: PLAN

After establishing the baseline for your local foster carer support across the corporate parenting partnership and in co-production with foster carers, consider whether any gaps have been identified and decide which Practice Guide recommendation(s) and key principle(s) you need to focus on first. When considering where to start, use the information gathered in the Assess stage, alongside other considerations, such as capacity and the wider regional/national fostering policy context. Plan your approach and establish workstreams.

## STEP 3: DO

Proceed with the co-produced plan and address any challenges that arise. Be clear about who will be involved in each agreed-upon action and when it will be reviewed. Establish governance and partnership oversight. Ensure foster carers are heard and are equal partners in the 'doing'.

## STEP 4: REVIEW

As you progress through the plan, review the changes you have made. This review may involve gathering new or additional information, but it may also mean revisiting the information you collated first. Remember that this is an ongoing, cyclical process.

As local contexts are continually changing, and it is important for services to be responsive, the Assess, Plan, Do, Review approach in this resource is intended to be ongoing and cyclical. Following a structure like this allows you to clearly keep track of the progress you are making, and your rationale for making the changes you do.

## How to use this tool

Each stage of the Assess, Plan, Do, Review approach has questions to guide you in reflecting on your local context, acting as a starting point for prioritising the implementation of the key principles and recommendations in the Guide. The aim is to support local areas in refining and developing support for foster carers so they can provide the best possible care to children in care. As local contexts continually change, it is important for services to remain responsive.

We use symbols throughout this resource to indicate how questions relate to one, more, or all of the key principles and recommendations outlined in the Foster Care Practice Guide, as in the example below:

- How do you understand the support needs of foster carers in your area? **KP1**

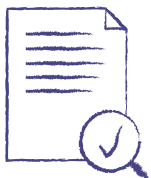
Where a question applies to all of the key principles and recommendations in the Practice Guide, this is indicated by this symbol: **ALL**

Our approach to Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Equity (EDIE) in fostering support has been to embed EDIE across the tool, but specific EDIE reflective prompts are highlighted by this symbol:

- How do practitioners take an intersectional approach with carers and the children in their care with different identities, experiences, and needs e.g., disability, language? **EDIE**

As with the structure of the Practice Guide, each section of the reflective tool addresses both strategic and practice lines of enquiry to facilitate a holistic and end-to-end approach.

## USE THE AUDIT TOOL ALONGSIDE THIS REFLECTIVE TOOL



The Assess, Plan, Do, Review approach in this Reflective Tool is designed to be an ongoing and cyclical process. Following a structure like this allows you to keep track of the progress you are making and your rationale for these changes.

The **Audit Tool** can support you with this. The reflective questions can help to structure conversations with key stakeholders to prompt discussion and agree a shared action plan.

The key principles and recommendations are summarised in the following tables, alongside the symbols associated with each one.

## KEY PRINCIPLES

### Key Principle 1 **KP1**

Create a coordinated network of support for foster families.

### Key Principle 2 **KP2**

Ensure support is delivered by practitioners who are warm, passionate and empathetic, and who approach foster carers as equal partners.

### Key Principle 3 **KP3**

Offer facilitated peer support, as it is valued by foster carers as important for their emotional wellbeing.

### Key Principle 4 **KP4**

Support foster carers' own needs, enabling them to provide children with stable, loving care.

### Key Principle 5 **KP5**

Prioritise support that strengthens foster carers' capacity to understand and respond sensitively to a child in their care.

### Key Principle 6 **KP6**

Provide structured support while allowing for flexibility and tailoring to individual needs.

### Key Principle 7 **KP7**

Help foster carers to engage confidently with support by using a strengths-based, inclusive approach.

### Key Principle 8 **KP8**

Provide foster carers with opportunities to put theory into practice.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Recommendation 1 **R1**

Provide foster carers with evidence-based, multi-level support to improve a range of outcomes

**STRONG EVIDENCE**

### Recommendation 2 **R2**

Provide foster carers with evidence-based positive child behaviour support to improve children's behavioural outcomes

**STRONG EVIDENCE**

### Recommendation 3 **R3**

Offer evidence-based training to support consistent foster carer-child interactions, to improve children's development and wellbeing

**GOOD EVIDENCE**

### Recommendation 4 **R4**

Provide foster carers with evidence-based self-care skills and positive child behaviour support to improve carer wellbeing

**GOOD EVIDENCE**

### Recommendation 5 **R5**

Provide foster carers with evidence-based positive child behaviour support in a group setting to improve placement stability and permanence

**GOOD EVIDENCE**

### Recommendation 6 **R6**

Offer foster carers evidence-based, relationship-focused training to strengthen relationships with children

**GOOD EVIDENCE**

### Recommendation 7 **R7**

Build evidence-based foster carer support networks to improve retention

**PROMISING EVIDENCE**

# STEP 1: ASSESS

Start to develop your approach by gaining a better understanding of the current support offer for foster carers in your local area. Consider who should be engaged and where collaboration is needed to collate your baseline information.

This section will support you in building a holistic picture of your local foster carer population's needs. The guided questions will enable you to draw on what you already know and help deepen understanding by harnessing insights from foster carers themselves; the knowledge and practice wisdom of practitioners involved in the direct support and supervision of carers; and the overarching strategic vision gained from leaders with corporate parenting responsibilities. These sources of local evidence will help you shape an evidence-based support offer that meets the needs of your carers.

The reflective tool can help you assess your starting point, refine and develop your support aspirations for foster carers and help you understand what a measure of success would look like.

## Knowing your foster carers

### Strategic:

- How many approved foster carers are there in your local area? **KP1**
- What is the composition of your fostering population? Does this largely match the demographics of your children? **EDIE** How many carers are long-term, short-term or short-break carers, and how many foster carers provide care across these placement types? Are your foster carers mostly caring in couples or as individuals? **KP1**
- How many foster carers are not currently caring for any child/ren? **KP1**

## TIP

You can begin by making small, achievable changes alongside setting longer term strategic goals:

- **Start by reviewing current fostering support and considering whether it effectively meets the needs of your foster carers.**
- **Use the Recommendations to inform future strategic planning and decision making.**
- **Elements of the Key Principles can be implemented immediately to support positive culture and practice change.**

- How many approvals and resignations have you had in the last year? What were the reasons for resignation? **KP1**
- What did resigning foster carers tell you about the support they received? Is this covered as part of the exit interview? How can you build greater focus on this to learn from the foster carer experience? **KP4**
- How are recruitment, assessment and retention data analysed? What are the common themes? How are these data- driven insights used to dynamically reflect and meet the needs of your foster carers? **KP4**
- How do you understand the support needs of foster carers in your area? How is this information gathered and assessed at a collective level (i.e. beyond individual learning and development plans)? **KP1** **KP4**
- Does your current service provision align with the identified needs? What are the gaps? **KP1** **KP4** **ALL RECS**
- What are the current and projected behaviour support needs of the children living with foster carers in your area? How is this information collected, monitored and reviewed? How do you use this data to plan the selection and commissioning of evidence-based behaviour support training for carers? **KP1** **KP4**

### Practice:

- How do you make sure that support is non-stigmatising and respects the skills, knowledge and experience of the foster carer? How well do practitioners understand the local fostering landscape (numbers, demographics, placement types)? **KP1** **KP2**
- How is this strategic information shared with frontline practitioners in meaningful, accessible ways? **KP5** **KP7**

## USING DATA INSIGHTS TO SHAPE YOUR EVIDENCE-BASED FOSTERING SUPPORT

What could you do to improve the quality and accuracy of the information you collect and collate about your foster carers?

You may want to think about collecting data such as:

- Attendance, intervention retention, levels of acceptability to carers and outcomes such as carer wellbeing, placement stability, carer satisfaction, and carer retention
- How carer support needs are changing
- What your staff are reporting from foster carers
- What foster carers are telling you
- What is the voice of the child telling you (both the child in care and the children of foster carers)?

At this stage, you may need to review the information you have been collecting and/or revisit the information you collated in Step 1.

- Is there any other data collection you might want to consider moving forward?
- How are you analysing your data and using it for decision-making?
- What are foster carers and practitioners telling you about their experiences of the changes to support? What about other partner agencies?

- How does knowledge of your fostering population shape how practitioners prioritise and allocate support? **KP1**
- Where might practice still be based on assumptions rather than on evidence? **ALL RECS**
- Practice supervisors, how do you lead a team that is confident and exudes warmth and genuine passion about the support being delivered to foster carers? **KP2**

## Local context

### Strategic:

- How is the corporate parenting partnership working strategically to understand and address the concerns of foster carers? What learning and action is taken from complaints, standards of care processes, resignations and exit interviews? Are there any overarching themes? **KP1**
- How do you assess local system readiness to implement evidence-based fostering support, including alignment with local, regional and national policies and processes? **KP7** **ALL RECS**
- Are you providing multi-faceted support that offers a mix of practical advice, short breaks, and timely referrals to other services? **KP1**
- Leaders, how are you developing an evidence-based support offer that is multi-level (individual, group and system), which meets the needs of both carers and children? **ALL RECS**
- Does your fostering strategy align with the key principles and recommendations in the Practice Guide? What is missing? **ALL**
- How does the current offer combine carer self-care and positive behaviour support to build carer resilience and nurture sensitive, attuned care giving? How do you know and what needs to happen next? **KP4** **KP5**
- What are foster carers telling you about the strengths and gaps in your current fostering support offer? **KP1** **KP2** **KP4**
- How do you tailor the support offer for foster carers to reflect their stage and levels of fostering experience? **KP2** **KP6**
- How will you draw on regional collaboration via the Regional Care Cooperatives (RCCs) to develop/further embed a hub model of fostering support? **KP1** **ALL RECS**
- How will you develop/consolidate a post-approval support and training offer around the evidence in the Practice Guide? **KP1** **KP2** **ALL RECS**
- As leaders, how do you model and instil a workforce culture that values foster carers as equal partners? **KP2**

- What actions are you taking to support cohesive, joined-up working among the child's social worker, supervising social worker, foster carer, parents, carers and wider family? **KP1** **R7**

### Practice:

- How are foster carers involved as equal partners in care planning decision-making? **KP2**
- How do you take steps to mitigate the feelings expressed by some foster carers of being marginalised and undervalued? **KP2**
- How do you improve communication and effective partnership working among social workers, teachers, health practitioners and other specialists? **KP1**
- How do you reduce the pressures on foster carers? **KP4** **KP7**
- How do you involve the wider foster family in support? How are partners, the children in fostering households, and extended family members included in training and support? What does the wider support network need, and how do you know? **KP7** **KP1**
- How do practitioners take an intersectional approach with carers and the children in their care with different identities, experiences, and needs, e.g., disability, language, culture, sexuality, and neurodiversity? **KP4** **KP6** **KP7** **EDIE**
- How does practice differ when supporting long-term, short-term, short-break, and dual-role carers? How do practitioners support carers who move between placement types? **KP1** **KP4**
- How do you check whether foster carers not currently caring for a child feel supported, valued, and retained? **KP1** **KP6**
- Where there has been an unplanned ending to a placement, is there reflective time with the carer to understand what happened? Is this data collated and are there any overarching themes? **KP4** **KP5** **KP8**
- How are foster carers given the time to practise self-care? **KP3** **KP4** **KP7**

## Evidence-based training and support

### Strategic:

- Are you currently offering the Evidence-Based Interventions (EBIs) in the Practice Guide to foster carers? **ALL RECS**
- If you are offering evidence-based support to foster carers, are there any who are not engaging with this? What barriers are they experiencing? If these are systemic barriers, such as racism, how can you ensure your support offer is accessible and acceptable to all foster carers? **KP7** **EDIE**

- Does your current support offer include peer facilitators? If not, what steps can be taken to embed this approach to help build trust and empathy through shared lived experience? **KP2** **KP3**
- Does your fostering strategy and support offer recognise the importance of foster carers prioritising their mental health and self-care practices? What actions are being taken locally to achieve this? **KP4** **KP7**
- How can you secure the buy-in of the multi-agency corporate parenting partners to embed the recommendations and key principles across the local area? **ALL**
- How do you embed opportunities for group-based peer support that is inclusive of children, and offer a ‘protected’ space for carers to come together separately from children? **KP3**
- Do you have a mixed offer of short breaks, ranging from universal to structured, well-matched and consistent care, with known approved carers? **KP1**

### Practice:

- How do you introduce the support offer to foster carers? Is clear and accessible information provided to carers? **KP1** **KP7**
- How do practitioners provide structured support while allowing for flexibility and tailoring to individual needs? **KP6**
- How confident are practitioners in providing evidence-based support for foster carers? **ALL RECS**
- Are practitioners referring to evidence-based positive child behaviour support outlined in the Guide? How can this lens be embedded within carer supervision, annual carer reviews and placement stability meetings? **ALL RECS**
- How do you support foster carers to become facilitators and mentors, particularly those from underrepresented groups (such as male carers, those from minoritised ethnic backgrounds and members of the LGBTQ+ community)? **KP3** **KP8** **EDIE**
- How are carers encouraged to see themselves as capable of progression, and how are opportunities for peer or mentoring roles introduced in ways that feel empowering rather than pressurising? **KP3** **KP8**
- Are short breaks proactively discussed and embedded within the placement support plan before issues present? Can short breaks be responsive to changing needs and stepped up to de-escalate situations? **KP5** **KP6**
- Are you and the practitioners you supervise familiar with the universal short-break offer? Where it meets the child’s needs, are you supporting carers to navigate suitable youth service provision and holiday activities, for example? **KP1**
- Do you/the practitioners you supervise support carers in identifying and utilising suitable support from within their own networks? **KP1** **KP3**

- Is there a clear pathway for referring foster carers to appropriate services when they or the children they care for have been identified as needing additional support? What do your carers tell you about this experience? **KP1**
- Do you or the teams you supervise recognise and understand the importance of short breaks in supporting carer wellbeing? **KP4**
- When discussing support needs with foster carers, do you/the people you supervise approach this with respect and empathy, avoiding deficit language that can undermine trust and carer confidence? **KP2**
- How do you or can you work with foster carers to plan for short breaks that are both child-centred and meet the needs of the carer? **KP4**

## Lived experience of foster carers

### Strategic:

- Are you engaging with all your foster carers to understand their needs and preferences? **KP7** **EDIE**
- What are your foster carers telling you about the support they receive? How are foster carers involved in strategic decision-making and what more needs to happen? **KP1** **KP2**
- Do your carers feel trusted and supported? How do you know? **KP2**

## HOW ARE YOU STRENGTHENING EDIE IN YOUR SUPPORT FOR FOSTER CARERS?

You may wish to consider:

- How is anti-racist practice and EDIE meaningfully integrated within your fostering support and training offer?
- Who is using the current fostering support?
- Whose needs are unmet, under-met, or inappropriately met?
- How are you understanding the tensions and power dynamics within the fostering system and positioning carers as equal partners?
- How are you tailoring fostering support to reflect the different experiences and needs of foster carers?

Practical steps to embed EDIE in fostering support:

- Establish EDIE leads and analysts to provide a deeper understanding of how the support offer is working for underrepresented foster carers. Use the [Audit Tool](#) to develop an action plan.
- Appoint EDIE Ambassadors to support foster carers and leaders to further develop cultural humility and sensitivity so that children stay connected with their identity and heritage.
- Nurture safer spaces for groups of carers to come together to share experiences.
- Engage foster carers in co-designing the evidence-based support offer.
- Empower foster carers through participatory and strengths-based approaches, such as 'Train the Trainer' and buddying or mentoring schemes.

## Practice:

- How do you create safer spaces for foster carers with different ethnicities, sexualities, gender identities and abilities to come together to share experiences? **KP1** **KP7** **EDIE**
- What are your foster carers telling you about their experience and overall satisfaction with the current support offer and training? **KP1** **KP2** **KP4**
- How do you build on the strengths of experienced foster carers to support carers at the start of their fostering journey? **KP2**
- Do foster carers find the support accessible? Does attendance at support groups and training broadly reflect the demographics of your fostering populations? **KP7**
- Is support offered flexibly? How do you know? **KP6**

## Consistent, supported and skilled workforce

### Strategic:

- How do you ensure that practitioners delivering evidence-based support to foster carers have access to high-quality training and reflective supervision? How do you ensure practitioners are kept up to date with the latest advancements in practice and research? **KP4** **KP5**
- How do you ensure your fostering support is culturally responsive to the values, beliefs, and lived experiences of foster carers in your local area? **KP6** **EDIE**
- How do you support manageable fostering caseloads and build a stable fostering workforce to enable consistent, relational support and supervision with foster carers? **KP5**
- How do you support the continued professional development of fostering practitioners so they are equipped with the skills and confidence to facilitate evidence-based support, e.g. in relation to intervention content, fidelity and outcome measures? What needs to happen to consolidate this? **KP4** **KP8** **ALL RECS**
- How are you supporting the workforce to use strengths-based, relational approaches when working alongside foster families? How are you creating the conditions for carers to have their emotional wellbeing attended to? **KP7**

## Practice:

- How confident are practitioners in understanding what makes an intervention ‘evidence-based’? **ALL RECS**
- To what extent are EBIs explained to carers in accessible, non-technical language? **KP7** **KP8**
- How do practitioners balance fidelity to an EBI with responsiveness to individual carer and child needs? **KP2**
- How do practitioners support foster carers to care with cultural humility and sensitivity? **KP4** **KP5** **EDIE**
- How do practitioners check whether carers feel respected, valued, and understood when engaging in EBIs? **KP2** **KP7**
- How do practitioners demonstrate empathy, warmth and genuine interest when working with foster carers? **KP2**
- How do foster carers experience practitioners’ communication style, tone and availability? **KP2**

## TIP

When actioning the information gathered in Step 1 Assess, you may want to:

- Identify a core group of representatives from across the corporate parenting partnership, including foster carers
  - Work towards reaching a consensus on priorities listed in the Assess section
  - Establish Task and Finish groups to address two to three local priorities
  - Develop a work plan, set timelines and allocate tasks.
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## STEP 2: PLAN

Once you have looked more closely at your existing support offer to foster carers, you can consider where there are gaps in support to help you identify which recommendation(s) and key principle(s) you need to prioritise and plan for. You can use the [Audit Tool](#) which accompanies this Reflective Tool to summarise priorities, reflections, progress, and actions. The following prompts can support your thinking as you plan your next steps.



- How will you secure buy-in across the corporate parenting partnership? What are the barriers and enablers to this engagement? **KP1**
- How will you determine local priorities and achieve consensus with foster carers, senior leaders and commissioners in health, education, and children's social care, as well as the wider fostering sector, including voluntary organisations and independent fostering providers? **KP1 KP7**
- What needs to happen to address the barriers identified in Step 1 that may prevent carers from putting their evidence-based learning into practice? **ALL RECS**
- How will you build on existing peer support opportunities and invest in the personal development of your carers? **KP3**
- What needs to happen to further bolster your short-break offer for foster carers? **KP1**
- How will you plan to involve the corporate parenting partnership in developing a mixed short-break offer that reflects the diverse needs of foster carers and the children they care for? **KP4 KP5 KP6 EDIE**
- What needs to happen next to develop a short breaks policy for foster carers? If you already have one, are there gaps and how can it be strengthened in light of the evidence? How will you engage with foster carers in co-designing an offer? **KP1 ALL RECS**

### STRATEGIC & PRACTICE BARRIERS

**Leaders** – how are you working across the corporate parenting partnership to nurture and develop a workforce that supports and facilitates consistent care planning and promotes close collaboration between health, education, social care and voluntary sector partners?

**Practitioners** – how are you addressing logistics, timings and wrap-around care to enable attendance, offering different delivery approaches (online, peer and mentoring approaches, face-to-face, group and 1:1), as well as twilight and bespoke sessions to reach the secondary carer who may be in employment?

## Key things to consider when planning for any changes across all the recommendations and key principles

### Strategic:

- How will you involve foster carers in forward planning for evidence-based support? **KP7** **ALL RECS** **EDIE**
- How can you make this involvement sustained and meaningful? **KP7**
- How can you build on existing networks and bring different voices into the dialogue? **KP1** **KP2** **EDIE**
- Do you have an officer who has strategic responsibility for foster carer engagement and participation? **KP7**
- Are there opportunities to collaborate with other teams or services within the local authority, or with partner agencies such as Health and Education, or other voluntary organisations? **KP8**
- Are you looking to upskill staff internally, or commission an external organisation? If you do plan to work with external agencies or other services, think about how you will ensure that referrals, coordination and safeguarding are addressed quickly and smoothly. **KP4** **KP8**
- How will you gather information to measure the effect of the planned changes on foster carers? **ALL RECS**

### Practitioners:

- How can you build on existing collaborative approaches to help reduce the pressure on foster carers to coordinate support? **KP1**
- Consider how you can empower and upskill foster carers to take on peer mentoring roles. How are current Train the Trainer schemes working, and is there scope to link carers with accredited courses? **KP3** **EDIE**
- Are you familiar with the learning and development offer to carers? Is the feedback you receive from foster carers about the quality, relevance and acceptability of the training looped back to the Learning and Development Manager? **KP8**

## STEP 3: DO

Now that you have assessed, prioritised and planned, it is time to take action to strengthen your local foster carer support offer. It is normal to encounter challenges and barriers at this stage; however, there are steps you can take to mitigate and successfully navigate them.

The questions below can help prompt your thinking if you start to feel stuck:

- Think about any barriers you're facing. How can you overcome them?
- Is there anyone you still need to seek support from, such as corporate parenting partnerships?
- Consider the progress you have made so far. Is it happening as you expected?
- Are you managing to capture the information you need to know whether the changes made are having a positive impact on foster carers?
- What is the feedback from both fostering services and foster carers?
- Do you need to revisit the Practice Guide to make sure you remain aligned with the key principles and recommendations?
- If you are offering support that you weren't before, how have you integrated it with existing fostering support? Is any troubleshooting required?

### TIP

**Make sure you are clear on who is taking action and by when. Regular check-in points and sharing of updates, progress and challenges can help keep you on track. Using the [Audit Tool](#) as a record of discussions can support this.**

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# STEP 4: REVIEW

Once your plan is in action, begin reviewing the changes you have made. Remember that this is an ongoing, cyclical process. The **Audit Tool** can support you in recording your thinking.



The questions below can help you reflect on the support you offer during the review stage:

- What have you learned from the data or information you have been gathering about the changes you have made? How are you interrogating this and asking, 'So what?' **ALL**
- How will you use this data to 'de-implement' or 'decommission' fostering support that does not align with the identified local fostering needs? How will you navigate this change and take key partners on this journey? **KP6**
- Are the changes you have made still aligned with what you know about the specific needs and strengths of your foster carers? **KP4 KP6**
- How will you monitor and review the demographics or characteristics of both your population of foster carers and children in care over time? **KP1 EDIE**
- How will you ensure that the evidence-based support offer can flex over time and be responsive and agile to changing needs? **ALL RECS**
- What gaps are you finding? How can you overcome them? **ALL**
- When thinking about your evidence-based support for foster carers, what have you learned about how this is achieving its intended outcomes? **ALL RECS**
- How are the Reflective Tool findings and actions being fed into wider quality improvement processes? **ALL**
- How are you closing the feedback loop with carers and taking them on the journey, and what feedback are they giving about the changes made? **KP1 KP4**
- How are you celebrating early successes and sharing these across the corporate parenting partnerships? **ALL**
- What hasn't gone to plan or needs more attention and focused activity? **ALL**
- Are there foster carers who you still need to hear from? Whose voice is missing? What steps are you taking to reach these carers? **KP2 EDIE**
- Do you need to revisit the Practice Guide to make sure you remain aligned with the key principles and recommendations? **ALL**

## TIP

You may need to consider the information you have been collecting and/or revisit the information you collated in Step 1 when initially assessing your existing support offer.

For summary information on the interventions outlined in the Practice Guide, please visit: <https://foundations.org.uk/interventions-foster-care-practice-guide>

This resource is part of a set of publications linked to the Foster Care Practice Guide:

- Foster Care Practice Guide: <https://foundations.org.uk/toolkit/practice-guides/foster-care>

Find out more about the series of Practice Guides [foundations.org.uk/toolkit/practice-guides](https://foundations.org.uk/toolkit/practice-guides)

We want to hear from local leaders who are engaging with the Practice Guides.

Get in touch at [practice\\_guides@foundations.org.uk](mailto:practice_guides@foundations.org.uk).

