

FOSTER CARE PRACTICE GUIDE

WEBINAR Q&A

Thank you for joining us for the Foster Care Practice Guide webinar.

We hope you found it helpful for your work. Here is a summary of the questions from both of our webinars (2 and 17 July 2026) and Foundations' responses.

Question	Foundations' response
There is a focus in our LA around training practitioners in Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy (DDP), what evidence is there around this as an intervention / how might it fit into the recommendations of the guide? Can this be an area of further research	Our systematic review didn't identify any studies of DDP being delivered to foster carers. Our review did identify three qualitative studies of DDP with adoptive parents, but our Fostering Practice Guide specifically focuses on interventions for foster carers. As our recommendations focus on core elements (e.g. self-care skills, positive behaviour support, relationship-focused training, multi-level approaches), there may be elements of DDP that overlap with our recommendations and that are supported by the evidence. A study of DDP is currently underway (funded by NIHR and led by University of Glasgow). More information can be found out about this here: https://fundingawards.nihr.ac.uk/award/NIHR127801 https://www.gla.ac.uk/schools/healthwellbeing/research/mentalhealth/projects/right/aboutthetrial/overview/
Can I also ask the same question as below about what the evidence says about non-violent resistance (NVR)	Our systematic review doesn't report on NVR. We have, however, recently conducted an in-house evidence review on child to parent violence, which includes RCT evidence on NVR. We know the prevalence of this issue is greater among foster families, and we are exploring future work on this topic.
What do you see as the biggest opportunities to improve the support offer for foster carers now, as we design our new	It will largely depend on your local context & needs, but there are clearly opportunities to embed the



expanded end-to-end fostering hubs (which are a perfect opportunity to refresh and set new approaches)?	evidence from the Key Principles and Recommendations as you design the end-to-end fostering hubs. Using the reflective tool will help you to establish a baseline and set priorities both strategically and at the practice level. So, for example, if there is low engagement with your current support and training offer, what is this telling you about the acceptability of your offer for foster carers and what are the barriers to them accessing this? There may be opportunities to build on strengths based and relational approaches that positions foster carers as equal partners and recognises and values their skills and expertise for example by actively encouraging foster carers to take up peer facilitator roles. Feedback from carers may tell you that the support and training available does not speak to their unique situation, which leads to disengagement. There are real opportunities to develop an offer that is relevant to the specific challenges of fostering, that is flexible and can be tailored to specific carer needs and experiences. There are real possibilities for co-creation with foster carers and practitioners and for shaping evidence informed support and training offer. The reflective tool and evidence pie together can help local areas to assess priorities, and the Implementation Framework can help to then actually implement evidence-based approaches into service design and delivery by attending to behaviours, context and process. As you develop the support offer within the fostering hubs there are opportunities to evaluate the exiting offer and to build multi-level support into your ongoing commissioning and de-commissioning cycles
“What considerations specifically support single carers ... there are a significant number of single carers within our locality.”	It's a great starting point to know that you have a lot of single carers and how your offer might need to be adapted to ensure these carers specifically are supported. Looking at data insights in the round, including



	national data, what your local context is like, knowing who your foster carers are, and what you are already offering are the key elements to explore and understand. The Reflective Tool foster-care-practice-guide-reflective-tool.pdf can aid your lines of enquiry and support co-designed approaches with foster carers being asked what they need and want from an evidence-based fostering support offer. Single carers may want to establish an informal community of support around them, facilitated by peer support and/or a short breaks offer, for example.
It's interesting to hear about the importance of short breaks for foster carers and I would like to know how these can be achieved when we don't have sufficiency of short term and long-term foster carers	Foundations response: We absolutely hear the pressures on fostering services to recruit carers more generally, and the evidence tells us that short breaks were valued by Foster Carers. Some children looked after may be able to make use of universal support such as youth clubs and play schemes, but we recognise that this will not be the case for many young people and so bolstering short breaks so that children can be well matched with approved, trusted carers can be extremely impactful, in terms of placement stability, carer wellbeing and child outcomes. In my own experience as a SSW, some carers start their career as short break carers to dip their feet in the water before progressing to full-time care. It's also about being creative – so prospective carers who are incredibly skilled but perhaps don't have the space within their home, could potentially care for the child in their main foster home whilst the carers take a break. Maybe it is about retaining carers who are approaching retirement or looking to step away completely, or who are currently without children and working with them to seek a change in their approval to short breaks carer – and in doing so retain all that knowledge and experience. We would suggest dipping into relevant sections of the Reflective Tool But it's also about really harnessing the informal support networks of foster carers, and this is something that Renewing Fostering speaks to - maximising the use of the foster carers and child's



	existing support networks where safe and appropriate. Foster carers response: I'm quite fortunate that my mum's an approved informal support for me and whenever I need a break, my mum does chip in. So, my mum is my support respite carer, as well as me being part of the 'village hub.' If my mum is not available, then the village hub manager will help me to find a carer in my village who is available. And as long as she's got the time that nobody else has been booked in, I can always have my young person stay with her for the day or for the weekend or however long that's needed. It works well for us and the children because being part of the village hub means we meet up on monthly occasions. We run activities for the kids or we would meet up as adults and just have coffee mornings where it's a chance for us to detox and, you know, have good conversations, speak about how our fostering journeys have gone so far. It's like a nice outlet with the village hub. My mum's been a full-time foster carer and she's also looking to retire in the next two years. But what she has said is that rather than her deregistering, she will consider being re-approved for short breaks, doing emergencies and respite care for other foster carers, because she knows that it is something that is needed that is required for a lot of us foster carers who do need the breaks.
How can the Practice Guide and Reflective Tool be implemented regionally under the roll out of RCCs when so much of what you have mentioned speaks to local conditions and population needs?	Many hubs already have regular pipeline data meetings with their partner LAs to track progress and identify delays, leading to faster approvals etc. In order to move to an end-to-end system that encompasses support and training opportunities as set out in Renewing Fostering, it will be essential that all LAs have a clear understanding of their local fostering needs so that more place-based, responsive approaches can be commissioned and implemented



	As you know, local authorities will continue to hold statutory responsibilities for children in care and will make decisions (as now) about specific placements. So, it is essential that the localised support needs of foster carers are assessed and understood. The Reflective Tool can support local areas and fostering providers to assess your starting point drawing on local data insights, foster carer experience and practice wisdom which can then feed into the developing the regional support and training offer.
Two parts to this question – firstly to foster carer: what has worked for her in terms of peer support and secondly: to the Foundations team about whether these should be solely peer led or with social work/ practitioner support.	Foster carers response: I have found peer support in the form of coffee mornings facilitated by my local Carer Council to be really helpful and an informal WhatsApp is a great way of staying in touch with my peers. In my local area we have what we call 'a village' where carers are part of a network providing practical and emotional support. We meet to discuss the positives and the challenges. Not everyone can be part of the village currently as this is organised around a community of carers who help each other out by providing respite to each other or school pick-ups if needed. We are part of a group who are all approved to assist with each other's children, and we become part of an extended family for both the carers and the children. Foundations response: Building on what has already been said the qualitative evidence shows that peer facilitators – alone or alongside a non-peer facilitator (e.g. a Supervising Social Worker) – was received well by foster carers and reportedly helped to build trust and empathy with carers due to shared lived experience. Peer support also helps enhance carer wellbeing and there is real value in drawing on the skills and expertise of fellow carers who understand and 'get it'.
Do you see independent sector being partners with this, alongside RCC's?	Absolutely. This Practice Guide is for all fostering services to use to design and commission effective services for foster carers. Whether those services are delivered 'in-house' or commissioned externally



	will depend on a local areas context and needs.
Its great to hear from TACT today. I would be interested to hear TACT's views on proposals in Renewing Fostering for partnerships between non-profit independent fostering agencies and the fostering hubs and how these can be developed and strengthened.	TACT: we believe we need to move towards a more collaborative approach that shares support and resources across organisations, we are starting to work with other fostering providers, share best practice and resources. When we move to a position where we see each other not as competitors but as partners and all wanting the same outcome for children and carers, we can hopefully shift the narrative, and I guess this is the underlying ethos of the RCCs. Foundations: under renewing fostering a hub may partner with a high-performing local non-profit IFA to run their approvals process. And we are hearing from Manchester RCC how their approach in uniting LAs and VCSE partners and providers is helping to strengthen the regional offer and reduce a reliance on out of area placements and helping to establish a more sustainable and ethical offer.
Is there any funding available to support LA's to ensure support is valuable and meaningful, as well as a having a key person who is able to develop further support groups, opportunities etc. We already have 4 monthly well attended support groups that are facilitated by our current social workers, as well as 4 hubs. However, to focus on support & retention further, LA's really need support in having key staff to lead and create opportunities.	To our knowledge, there's no government funding available to support local authorities to do that. A lot of the funding that's been announced is being channelled to the Innovation Fund and also the development of the RCCs and the end-to-end hubs. Whilst we are not overly familiar with the conditions for that funding, it is our guess that there could be potential within that funding for a specialised role to be introduced.