
Foster Carer and Prospective Foster Carer Privacy Notice

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INTRODUCTION

We take our legal duty for safeguarding your personal data and privacy very seriously. This privacy notice sets out what sort of information we hold on foster carers and people applying to become foster carers, why we need it, how we hold it, how we use it, who we share it with and what rights you have in relation to this information. This privacy notice is also available on our website (www.cornerstoneuk.org).

Cornerstone has assigned a member of staff to manage data protection and privacy. This person shall be known as the data administrator.

Our current data administrator is:

Name	Phil O'Neill
Address	FuseBox, 90 Coronation Street Sunderland SR1 2HE
Email	office@cornerstonenortheast.co.uk
Telephone	0191 5656423

WHY DO WE COLLECT YOUR PERSONAL DATA?

We collect and use your personal data in relation to your position as a foster carer or person applying to foster because the law requires us to do so. Before we are allowed to approve you as a foster carer we must assess you to consider whether you are suitable to foster children and young people. This involves us collecting and recording a lot of personal information about you, your family and persons in your household. The law requires us to keep this information for a number of years, whether or not you end up being approved.

If you are approved as a foster carer, we have a duty to supervise and support you to look after children, and to keep records of how we are doing that. We also have a legal responsibility to review your approval at least annually, and the information we have gathered and recorded is also used for that purpose.

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WHAT PERSONAL INFORMATION DO WE COLLECT?

As part of the fostering assessment, the personal information we collect and record includes your name, address and contact details, including email address and telephone number, date of birth, gender; nationality, ethnicity, sexuality, health, disability and religion or beliefs.

We will also collect information about your childhood, family and other relationships including current and past marital status, education experience, employment history, and finances. Your social worker will explain the assessment process to you and show you the form we use to record these details. You will be asked to give written consent to us taking up police, medical and other checks and personal and other references. We are required to hold this information in your case record.

If you are approved as a foster carer, we will need details of your bank account, and will continue to collect personal information including records about the children placed with you and how you care for them, training that you undertake, any changes in your health or circumstances, and any complaints or allegations about you. You will have regular supervision meetings and annual reviews, and all this information will form part of your case record.

HOW DO WE COLLECT YOUR PERSONAL DATA?

Much of the personal information we hold will have been provided by you directly on your application to foster form, or in conversations with your assessing social worker, or the supervising social worker allocated to you after approval.

Other information will come from third parties during the assessment such as criminal records checks, or from personal referees or employers, but only where you have given consent for us to approach them.

For approved foster carers, additional information may come from children you are looking after, their parents or family, and from professionals working with the children. Information about you may also come to our attention from other sources. All this information is called third party information.

HOW DO WE USE YOUR PERSONAL DATA?

We keep and use your information to enable us to run a fostering service in line with the requirements that are set out in law. This will include assessing your suitability to be a foster carer, presenting a report about this to our fostering panel, matching you with children who need to be fostered, supporting and supervising your activity as a foster carer, and formally reviewing at least annually your continued suitability to foster.

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WHO HAS ACCESS TO YOUR DATA?

Employees of our fostering service will have access to your information for the legitimate purposes set out above. Any electronic data is held securely on our database that is commissioned from a third party that is compliant with data protection regulations. Additionally we may share your information with third parties in certain situations:

- To undertake checks and references as part of the fostering assessment, and only where you have explicitly consented to this
- With members of our fostering panel at the time of your approval and at subsequent reviews
- With local authority commissioning services who are considering whether you might be suitable to foster a specific child they are seeking to place
- With Ofsted when they are inspecting the fostering service as required by law
- With the Independent Review Mechanism if you ask for a review of any decision by the fostering service about your suitability or continued suitability to foster.

We may make information available to regulatory authorities, governmental organisations, or other third parties if required to do so by any regulatory or legal authority, or in order to comply with the law, or in some circumstances if you ask us to do so.

HOW DO WE MAKE SURE YOUR PERSONAL DATA IS KEPT SAFE?

We have a range of policies and controls in place to try to ensure that your data is not lost, accidentally destroyed, misused or disclosed. We have a system to ensure that your information is accessed only by individuals authorised by us to do so in the performance of their duties.

Your personal data held on paper files is protected by being in locked cabinets within our office that is securely locked outside of office hours. Our office is monitored by external CCTV cameras.

Your personal data that is held electronically is only accessible to legitimate persons, and appropriate encryption and other systems are in place to ensure this. These systems have been assessed and certified as appropriate by an independent person who specialises in this area of work [name available upon request].

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All of our staff are trained in data protection duties, and are required to comply with our data protection policies.

When we share your information with third parties, we are obliged to check that those third parties have systems in place to protect your information with appropriate security measures and that they will not disclose your information to others.

If there is a data breach, where we 'lose' or wrongly share any of your personal information by mistake, we will inform you of that, and tell you what action we are taking.

HOW LONG DO WE KEEP YOUR PERSONAL DATA?

The law is very clear that personal data should not be kept longer than is necessary, but in relation to fostering we are required to hold data for a set minimum period of time.

For approved foster carers, the case record must be kept for at least ten years from the date on which you ceased to foster. There may be circumstances in which we decide the case record should be maintained for more than ten years. We will tell you if we do so.

Where a person has inquired about fostering, but for whatever reason has not gone on to be approved, the case record will be held for three years from the date when it was decided that the inquiry or application would not proceed.

DO WE KEEP DATA ON YOUR FAMILY INCLUDING YOUR CHILDREN?

In assessing you to be a foster carer, and in working with you when you are a foster carer, it is necessary for us to have personal information about others in your family and/or living in your household. Most of this information will have been provided by you as part of your assessment or in supervision after you are approved, or by them directly, or very occasionally by others. This personal information will be contained within your records, and we will not have a separate case record for your family members or household members. We ask that you inform your family and household members about this, according to their age and understanding, and tell them that they can read this privacy notice if they want to.

HOW CAN YOU SEE WHAT PERSONAL INFORMATION IS HELD ON YOUR RECORD?

You can ask to see what personal information we hold about you. This is sometimes called a subject access request. We will provide this information to you within one month (unless things are very complicated), and there is no cost for this. If you want to see the information we hold about you then please contact the data administrator

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whose details are provided earlier in this notice. You do not have to give any reasons for why you want to see this information.

COMMENTS OR CONCERNS

If you have any concerns or comments about how we use your information, we would like to hear from you. Please contact the data administrator whose details are provided earlier in this notice.

Alternatively, you may contact the Information Commissioner's Office (www.ico.org.uk) for guidance and advice, or to lodge a complaint:

ICO
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire SK9 5AF

Telephone: 0303 123 1113 (local rate) or 01625 545745 (national rate)

DECLARATION

I have been provided with a copy of this privacy notice and understand how my personal information will be collected, kept, and shared.

I have explained to family members and others living in my home that I will be sharing information about them, and have explained to them how this information will be held and used.

Name	
Signature	
Date	

Name	
Signature	
Date	