



## FOSTER CARER ASSESSMENT DATA PRIVACY NOTICE

**Data controller:** Team Fostering, Unit 6, Hedley Court, Orion Business Park, North Shields, Tyne & Wear, NE29 7ST

This notice explains what personal data (also referred to as “information”) we collect about you, how we hold it, and how we use and may share information about you during your assessment and after it ends. Please ensure that you read this notice and any other similar notice we may provide to you should you be approved as a foster carer following your assessment.

We are committed to being transparent about how we collect and use your data and to meeting our data protection obligations.

In this notice, references to “**we**”, “**us**”, or “**our**” are references to Team Fostering.

### What information do we collect?

We collect and process a range of information about you. This includes:

- Personal details including name, date and place of birth, gender and contact information.
- Address history.
- Marital status, your spouse or partner, dependents, other family members. Details of previous relationships including any previous marriages/ divorces/ civil partnerships, and children from another relationship.
- Details on birth children, including their contact details; their school details and references if they are still in education.
- Information on any CCJs, criminal convictions, family or civil court proceedings and a DBS check.
- Previous employment details including current employment and voluntary roles.
- Financial information including annual income, mortgage or rental agreement, and details of any times of financial difficulty or bankruptcy.
- Personal references from your chosen personal referees and professional references from any previous employer, including voluntary work.
- Details of any LADO investigations, if applicable, and of any previous fostering or adoption enquiries made by the family.
- A full medical evaluation from the applicants GP.
- Special categories of personal data, including data relating to:
  - racial or ethnic origin;
  - religious or philosophical beliefs;
  - genetics, biometrics or health;
  - sex life or sexual orientation; and
  - the commission or alleged commission of an offence by them.



We may collect this information from you from the details you provide in your application form; obtained from your passport or other identity documents such as your driving licence; or via correspondence with you or through interviews, meetings or other assessments.

During your assessment we will collect personal data about you from third parties, such as references supplied by former employers, from medical and occupational health professionals we engage, from Ofsted and local authorities, the DBS, and information from criminal records checks permitted by law.

### **Why do we process your personal data?**

We will typically collect the above information for the following purposes.

We need to process your data in order to enter into and perform the assessment of your suitability to foster and for us to meet our obligations as a fostering agency by doing so with accurate and detailed information. Processing your data will allow us to make and provide you with an agency decision regarding the outcome of your application.

In some cases, we need to process your data to comply with our legal obligations, including:

- our ethical and professional obligation to conduct a thorough assessment of your suitability to foster, to ensure there are no areas of concern or safeguarding issues and to provide our Fostering Panel with accurate information in order to seek your approved status as a foster carer;
- to check your entitlement to work in the UK;
- to obtain regulatory references and undertake DBS checks as part of our child safeguarding requirements.

In other cases, the collection and use of your information is for the purposes of our legitimate interests or those of a third party (such as benefits providers), but only if these are not overridden by your interests, rights or freedoms. Processing your data allows us to:

- to record your consent to conducting the assessment; to complete the assessment processes accordingly, including the completion of a Form F;
- to keep record of assessment progress including terminations of assessments, to ensure acceptable conduct as an independent fostering agency;
- to maintain accurate and up-to-date records and details of the household for considering your approval and for matching children and young people for placements once approved;
- maintain good agency practice and comply with legal, fostering, regulatory and corporate governance obligations and legislation;
- protect our networks and personal data against unauthorised access or data leakage;
- ensure our business policies, such as those concerning security and internet use are adhered to;
- ensure effective recruitment and business administration;
- respond to and defend against legal claims.



## **How we use your sensitive personal data**

"Special categories" of particularly sensitive personal information require higher levels of protection. We need to have further justification for collecting, storing and using this type of personal information. We have in place appropriate safeguards which we are required by law to maintain when processing such data. We may process special categories of personal information in the following circumstances:

1. In limited circumstances, with your explicit written consent.
2. Where we need to carry out our legal obligations or exercise rights in connection with the fostering and foster carer assessment task.

Less commonly, we may process this type of information where it is needed in relation to legal claims or where it is needed to protect your interests (or someone else's interests) and you are not capable of giving consent, or where you have already made the information public.

## **Our obligations as a Fostering Agency**

We will use your particularly sensitive personal information in the following ways:

1. We will use information to comply with laws and fostering regulations.
2. We will use information about your physical or mental health, or disability status in order to assess your fitness to foster.
3. We will use information about your race or national or ethnic origin, religious, philosophical or moral beliefs, or your sexual life or sexual orientation, to ensure appropriate matching, monitoring and reporting.

## **Do we need your consent?**

We do not need your consent if we use special categories of your personal information in accordance with our written policy to carry out our legal obligations. In limited circumstances, we may approach you for your written consent to allow us to process certain sensitive data. If we do so, we will provide you with full details of the information that we would like and the reason we need it, so that you can carefully consider whether you wish to consent.

## **Who has access to data?**

Your information will be accessible internally with Team Fostering staff and your allocated Form F Assessor. A copy of your Form F will be sent to members of the fostering Panel ahead of your Panel date. This is to allow them to read the Form F and attend Panel with any questions they have about your suitability to foster. All Panel members are under strict instruction to bring their copy of your Form F with them to Panel so that Team Fostering can destroy these securely once a decision has taken place.

We may share your data with third parties where required to do so by law, where it is necessary to administer the working relationship with you or where we have another legitimate interest in doing so. For example, we may do so in order to obtain pre-approval references from other employers,



to conduct local authority and medical checks, and obtain necessary criminal records checks from the DBS.

We will not transfer your data to countries outside the European Economic Area.

### **Where your information may be held**

Information may be held at our offices and those of our affiliates, third party agencies, service providers, representatives and agents as described above.

### **How do we protect your data?**

We take the security of your data seriously. We have internal policies and controls in place to try to ensure that your data is not lost, accidentally destroyed, misused or disclosed. We limit access to your personal data to those who have a genuine business need to know or use it. Those processing your information will do so only in an authorised manner and are subject to a duty of confidentiality.

Physical personal data is stored securely in locked filing cabinets or drawers. When we prepare you for panel we will send a copy of your Form F to our Panel Members. This is done by special recorded delivery in order to be as secure as possible. Electronic data stored on our IT systems is password protected, encrypted and information is held on drives with restricted access.

Where we engage third parties to process personal data on our behalf, the third parties do so on the basis of written instructions, are under a duty of confidentiality and are obliged to implement appropriate technical and organisational measures to ensure the security of your data.

We have procedures in place to deal with any suspected data security breach. We will notify you and any applicable regulator of a suspected breach where we are legally required to do so.

### **For how long do we keep your data?**

If you are approved at Panel, the organisation will hold your personal data for the duration of your career as a foster carer with us. Once you are approved you will be issued with a Data Privacy Notice applicable to being an approved foster carer with the agency.

If your assessment is terminated before Panel or you are not recommended for approval, we will store your data for 3 years as per fostering regulations. We shall not retain your data for any longer than is necessary for the purpose we obtained it.

### **Your rights**

As a data subject, you have a number of rights. You can:

- access and obtain a copy of your data on request;
- require us to change incorrect or incomplete data;
- require us to delete or stop processing your data, for example where the data is no longer necessary for the purposes of processing;



- object to the processing of your data where we are relying on our legitimate interests as the legal ground for processing; and
- request the transfer of your data to another party.

In the limited circumstances where you may have provided your consent to the collection, processing and transfer of your personal information for a specific purpose, you have the right to withdraw your consent for that specific processing at any time. Once we have received notification that you have withdrawn your consent, we will no longer process your information for the purpose or purposes you originally agreed to, unless we have another legitimate basis for doing so in law or to comply with fostering regulations.

If you would like to exercise any of these rights, please contact our Data Protection Officer via [dpo@teamfostering.co.uk](mailto:dpo@teamfostering.co.uk)

If you believe that we have not complied with your data protection rights, we hope that we can resolve any query or concern you have. If not, you can complain to the Information Commissioner.

You can contact the Information Commissioners Office on 0303 123 1113 or via email <https://ico.org.uk/global/contact-us/email/> or at the Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF.

### **What if you do not provide personal data?**

You have obligations as a foster carer applicant to provide us with data. If you fail to provide certain information when requested, we may not be able to conduct your assessment which would in turn prevent you from becoming a foster carer with the agency.

Certain information (such as contact details, payment details, health information) have to be provided to enable us to enter into a contract with you. If you do not provide requested information, this will hinder our ability to fulfil our obligations under the Fostering Regulations and other contracts efficiently.

### **Automated decision-making**

Decisions are not based solely on automated decision-making.