



Kent County Council

DBS Policy

Kent Fostering & Kinship Service

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DBS checks for Foster & Kinship Carers

All foster and kinship carers will be subject to an Enhanced and Barred DBS check, valid for three years. For new applications, the DBS check is completed by the Assessing Social Worker, with the check recorded on the checks tab of the carers Liberi file. For foster carers, including connected persons foster carers renewals will be completed by the Supervising Fostering Social Worker and recorded in the same way. Renewals will not be undertaken for kinship carers (i.e. Special Guardians) who are not covered by the Fostering Regulations.

The request for an updated check of foster carers should be made six months before the check is due to expire, to ensure there is no period where a registered foster carer is without a valid DBS and to take account of any delays in police processing the check.

Except for kinship carers, where some flexibility can be exercised where it is in the best interests of the child connected to the carers to be looked after by them, applications to become a foster carer for KCC are unlikely to be progressed, if any of the following offences/cautions are recorded:

- Offences against children
- Driving disqualification within the last 5 years
- Any offence involving harm (assault) to another in the last 10 years

All offences and cautions recorded on a DBS will be subject to a risk assessment report, with senior management decision on whether to progress to assessment or continue approval as a Foster Carer (see [Appendix 1 'Process for positive DBS Checks'](#) and [Appendix 2 'Positive DBS Report template'](#)).

DBS checks for birth children, children in care and adults living as part of the household

Foster and kinship carer's birth children will be subject to an Enhanced and Barred DBS check at age 16, then for carers covered under the Fostering Regulations every three years whilst they are living as part of the fostering household.

It is not necessary to complete DBS checks for grown up children who are living away from home unless they return regularly to stay overnight. (e.g. for university students returning to the fostering household).

Children in Care who continue to live in the fostering household, past the age of 18 years must have an Enhanced and Barred DBS check completed, at the point of turning 18, to ensure a valid DBS is in place for when they become an adult.

All the time they are living as part of the fostering household, e.g. through Staying Put or Shared Lives; they will be subject to an Enhanced and Barred DBS Check every three years. This is the responsibility of the supervising Fostering Social Worker.

Any other adult living within the fostering household must have an Enhanced and Barred DBS check completed and renewed every three years. Where this includes a household member with limited or no mental capacity, the Fostering Social Worker should ensure that the 'Relevant Persons Representative (RPR)' as defined under The Mental Capacity Act 2005, supports with the application for DBS. It is recognised that this may impact on the timescales for the completion of checks.

Where there is a new partner joining the foster family, foster carers must advise the Fostering Social Worker of the change in relationships and the Enhanced and Barred DBS check must be in place **before** the new partner stays overnight or moves into the home, where children in care are living as part of the householdⁱ

DBS checks for babysitters

It is good practice for all Foster Carers to have a trusted babysitter identified as part of their support network. **Where the babysitter is going to be used on a regular basis as a nominated babysitter (i.e. in a predictable routine way or six times a year or more)**, a DBS check must be completed and renewed every three years.

New Foster Carers will be asked to identify at least one trusted person within and as part of the assessment of their support network and the Assessing Social Worker will complete the DBS prior to Fostering Panel. The Fostering Support Team Social Worker will complete all other subsequent DBS checks for nominated babysitters.

The nominated babysitters name and the frequency of the arrangement should be recorded in the Placement Plan and Safe Care Plan for the child.

If there are any changes in the nominated babysitter, the Foster Carer must inform the Fostering Social Worker and new DBS Checks completed.

Babysitters for children in care must be over the age of 18 years and considered by the foster carer to be an appropriate adult to manage the needs of the child for a short period.

As with all alternative care arrangements, Foster Carers and Social Workers should be satisfied that no child in care will experience multiple carers including babysitters.

Emergency arrangements to care for a child within the fostering household do not require the adult to have a DBS check, where it is a one-off situation that could not have been foreseen (e.g. The main carer is taken unwell or dealing with an emergency for their birth child or other Looked After Child).

Foster Carers should record this within their diary records and advise both the Child's and Fostering Social Workers of the emergency as soon as is reasonably practical.

If a child is going to play at a friend's house or visit an extended member of the foster carers' family, the adult/family they are visiting is not required to have a DBS check.

The reason for this is to enable the child or young person to enjoy the same activities as any other child of their age, for example attending a sleepover or birthday party, with the authority to make such decisions delegated to the foster carer as part of normal day to day arrangements.

Visitors to the fostering household including extended family members

Visitors to the fostering household do not require DBS checks as they will not be having supervision or care of the looked after child and this remains the responsibility of the Foster Carer.

The Foster Carer should always be satisfied that any person staying within their home is safe to be around children. **For one off overnight stays and short visits once a year, a DBS check is not required. For regular and extended overnight stays a DBS Check must be completed.**

The Fostering Social Worker should be advised, and Safe Care Plans discussed and updated as necessary.

International police checks

Where applicants, foster or kinship carers or adults living within the household have had periods of over six months living within another country in the last ten years, an international police check will be completed.

The process for this varies depending upon the country; guidance can be found at [Criminal records checks for overseas applicants - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/criminal-records-checks-for-overseas-applicants) Any costs associated with this check, will be funded by the Kent Fostering and Kinship Service.

It is not necessary to complete a check if there has been 'travel' overseas or through various countries and the subject hasn't resided in a country for six months or more.

Process for positive DBS checks

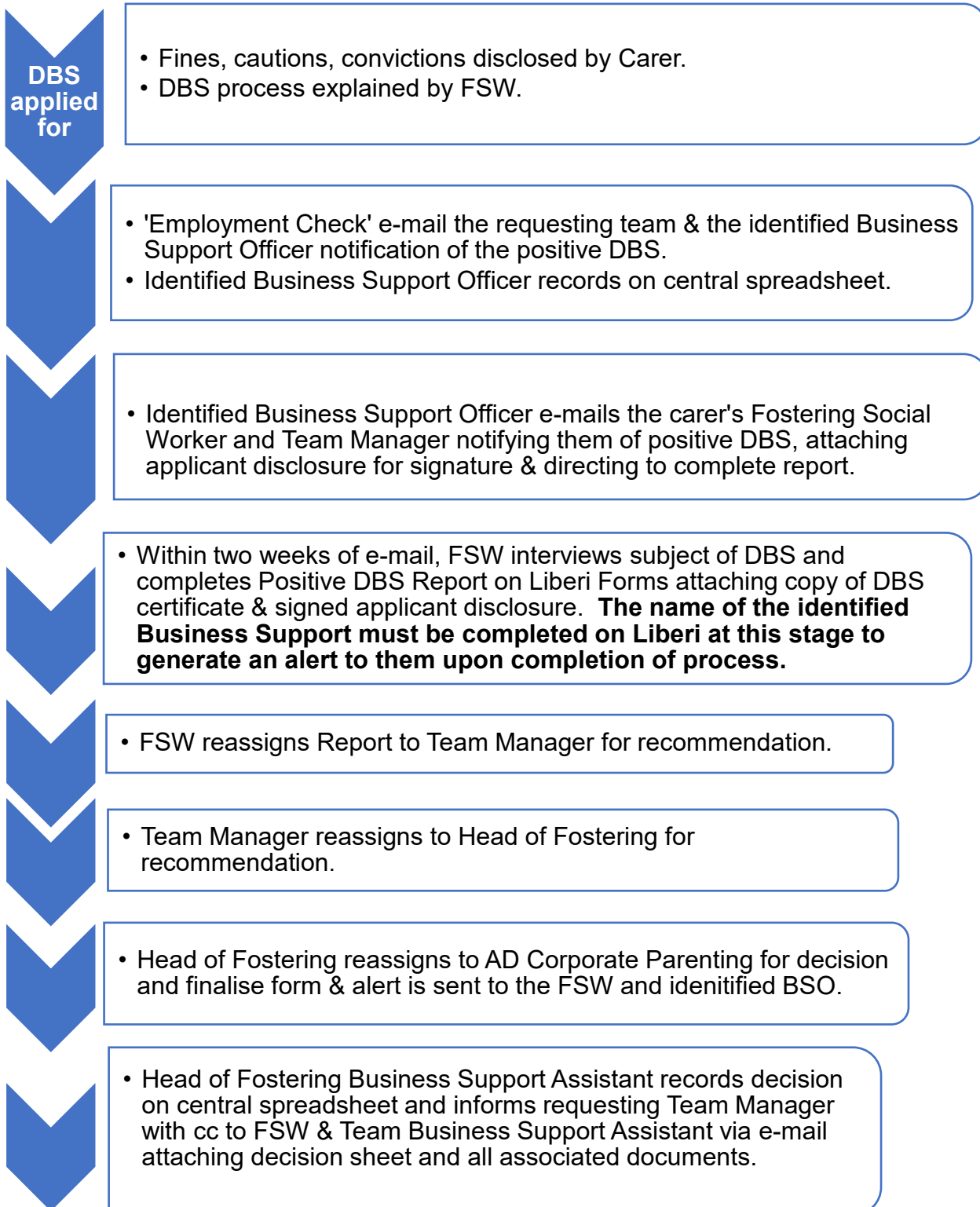
If a DBS check is positive for any person identified as requiring a check under this policy, the process in Appendix 1 must be followed.

If there are changes to the criminal record of a Foster Carer while registered with KCC or any person identified as requiring a check under this policy, the foster carer must advise the Fostering Social Worker immediately and a new DBS check will be requested.

The Team Manager, in consultation with the relevant Head of Fostering , will decide whether this constitutes a significant change in circumstances (depending on the identified persons role and responsibility within the fostering household, type of offence etc) and therefore if an early review of the Foster Carers approval and / or presentation to Fostering Panel is required.

Risks must be clearly recorded on the Liberi 'Risk and Vulnerability Chronology' for the Foster Carer and the Safe Care Plan for all children in placement discussed and updated.

There is also an expectation of transparency where, if foster carers are involved in any situation that could bring KCC into disrepute, that they would advise their Fostering Social Worker immediately (e.g. subject to an employment tribunal, allegation in any other capacity such as employment or within a voluntary position).



Applicant Name and Position in Household	
Fostering Social Worker	
Date Report Completed	

I confirm that the DBS certificate is genuine; this was confirmed by checking that the crown seal watermark was repeated down the right-hand side of the certificate and visible both sides when held to the light. 'Disclosure' was printed in a wave like pattern on the background of the certificate. A copy is attached.

1 Offence(s):
(as shown on the DBS certificate)

1.1 Previous Senior Management Decision(s)
(for DBS renewals previous senior management decision, actions and when completed)

1.2 Information surrounding the offence:
(age of applicant at time, living circumstances, who was present/involved, applicants account of what happened)

1.3 Other relevant information:

(any other significant information about applicant, lifestyle, circumstances that might have impacted on decision making)

2 Disclosure:

2.1 Was the offence declared prior to the check:

(Did applicant declare offence on application? Discuss with IET? Declare at IV?)

2.2 Applicant's attitude towards the offence:

(Does applicant show insight/ understanding? Are they remorseful / reflective about their actions? Do they accept responsibility? Any insight into why events occurred? If parents how has this impacted their parenting style/messages that they give children?)

3 Implications for the fostering application:

(Is there any reason why application should not proceed? If proceeding on what basis – very old conviction? Applicants age at the time? Contrast in lifestyles from time of conviction and now? Evidence of learning/reflection?)

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4 Risk Assessment and future impact on any child / young person placed:

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5 Recommendation:

(Previous offending behaviour should have been scrutinised and applications should not be progressed if any member of the household has been cautioned for, or convicted of: Offences against children, driving disqualification within the last 5 years or any offence involving harm to another in the last 10 years).

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Author's signature:	
Date:	
