

Covering statement

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Covid-19 Restrictions

Due to Covid-19 restrictions, Council staff have been unable to access Council buildings and records. This led to the premature ending of a comprehensive file audit and has limited the research opportunities and materials available to staff in compiling the responses listed below.

PART C – PREVENTION AND IDENTIFICATION

Question	Local Authority
4.2	
(i) Policy	
Past	
a)	<p><u>Did the local authority adhere in practice to its policy/procedures in relation to the provision of foster care?</u></p> <p>Evidence suggests that the City of Edinburgh Council (and its predecessor bodies) adhered in practice to its policies and procedures, as set out below.</p> <p>Edinburgh Corporation (1930-1975)</p> <p>In 1930 the authority continued the policy initiated by the Parish Council of “not keeping children in the Poorhouse”. The authority aimed to place children in a children’s home or Craighleith Hospital and from there board them out with ‘suitable guardians’, as noted in the Public Assistance Committee minutes (Ref. SL61/1).</p>

The authority accepted and introduced (through the Education Authority) the 'Regulations and Rules in regard to Boarded out Boys' and Girls' in 1933. These set out prescriptive criteria in relation to the functions, roles and responsibilities for the authority in providing this service and are provided below. (Ref. SL164/1/7)

I. Regulations in regard to the selection of foster parents (etc.)

(1) A register shall be kept of persons who are willing and fitted to act as foster parents and to undertake the care of boys and girls.

(2) Applications to be placed on the register of approved foster parents shall be made in the form prescribed in Appendix 1 to these regulations.

(3) Applicants must be between the ages of 25 and 55 years and must be resident in Scotland.

(4) The register shall contain, in respect of foster parents, all particulars set out on the applications referred to above, together with a record of the boys or girls boarded out with them.

(5) In selecting foster parents, the Education Authority may have regard to the number of approved foster parents in the area concerned.

(6) Before a boy or girl is boarded out, it shall be established that the selected foster parents can provide the necessary and appropriate discipline and training. A foster parent shall also be selected who is of the same religious persuasion as the boy or girl or who gives an undertaking that the boy or girl will be brought up in accordance with his or her religious persuasion.

(7) As far as possible, boys and girls shall be boarded out in country towns, villages and districts, unless they have previously been under guardianship of some person in a large town or city who has been approved by or on behalf of the Education Authority. Before a boy or girl is boarded out, the Education Authority may cause the proposed foster home to be visited and approved by an official on behalf of the Education Authority.

(8) The Education Authority may supply a visit book to the foster parent for the purpose of recording all official visits made to the foster home.

(9) The Education Authority shall have the right to remove any boy or girl from a foster parent at any time without assigning reason therefor.

(10) Each boy or girl, on being boarded out, shall be supplied by the Education Authority with two complete outfits of clothing, and this shall be renewed as required.

(11) A boy or girl, on being committed to the Education Authority, may be conveyed to the Children's home, Crewe Road, Edinburgh, or other suitable place, in order that arrangements may be made to provide the clothing mentioned above, and that the boy

or girl may be medically examined by a Medical Officer of the Education Authority. If the medical report is satisfactory, arrangements will thereafter be made to have the boy or girl conveyed to the selected foster home.

(12) When arrangements cannot be made for boarding out a boy or girl immediately after committal, the Education Authority may arrange for the boy or girl to be admitted to the Children's Home or other hospital or institution as the Education Authority may consider most suitable, provided that if such temporary arrangements are to continue beyond one week from the date of the Court Order, intimation thereof shall be made to the Scottish Education Department by the City Education Officer.

(13) Intimation shall be made to the Scottish Education Department by the City Education Officer as undernoted: -

(a) On Form C.A.1 on the committal of a boy or girl to the care of the Education Authority.

(b) On Form C.A.2 on the boarding out of a boy or girl and in respect of the removal of a boy or girl from one foster parent to another.

(c) On Form C.A.3 in regard to any material facts regarding a boarded-out boy or girl, e.g. serious illness, infectious and allied disease, accident or death.

(d) Half yearly reports on visits to boarded out boys and girls.

(14) Intimation shall be made by the City Education Officer to the parents or guardians of boarded out boys and girls in respect of serious illness, infectious disease, accident or death.

II. Rules to be observed by Foster Parents

1. General

(a) Foster parents shall be required continually to observe and comply with the following Rules, and any failure shall render foster parents liable to have their names removed from the Register of Foster Parents.

(b) In consideration of such payment as may be agreed upon by the foster parent and the Education Authority, the foster parent shall bring up the boy or girl as one of his or her own children and shall co-operate with the Education Authority and their Official for the boy's or girl's welfare.

(c) The foster parent shall on demand give up possession of the boy or girl to the City Education Officer or to any person duly authorised by the Education Authority.

(d) Communications to the Education Authority shall be addressed to the City Education Officer, Education Offices, Castle Terrace, Edinburgh.

(e) In the case of illness, the doctor to be called if required.

(f) *The foster parent shall not incur expense on behalf of the boy or girl without prior permission of the City Education Officer, except for boot repairs. Expenditure in this latter connection should be incurred with discretion.*

2. *Food.*

Each boy or girl shall be provided with regular meals and the food shall be wholesome, varied and sufficient for good health. The daily dietary shall include a sufficient supply of fresh sweet milk. Where extra nourishment is ordered by a medical attendant the Education Authority shall be informed with a view to its provision.

3. *Clothing.*

The clothing (including sleeping apparel) and boots of each boy or girl shall be kept clean and in good repair. Each boy or girl shall be provided with a complete change of underclothing each week.

4. *Sleeping accommodation.*

(a) *No more persons shall be allowed to occupy a bedroom in which a boy or girl sleeps than may be approved by the Education Authority. The bedroom shall have a window opening to the outside air and not into another apartment.*

(b) *The bedding for each boy or girl shall be adequate and comfortable and shall be kept clean and well aired.*

(c) *No boy or girl shall occupy the same bed or bedroom as an invalid or an old infirm person.*

(d) *Boys and girls over eight years of age shall not occupy the same bedroom; and not more than two shall sleep in one bed.*

5. *Training and discipline.*

(a) *The foster parent shall train each boy or girl in habits of punctuality and thrift, of good manners and language, of cleanliness and neatness, of self-respect, of consideration and respect for others, and of honour and truthfulness in word and act; and shall devote to this duty the care which good parents give to their own children.*

(b) *Each boy or girl shall be brought up in accordance with his or her religious persuasion, and where possible the foster parents shall arrange that the boy or girl shall attend Sunday School or be brought under some religious influence.*

(c) *Where circumstances are suitable, each boy or girl shall be encouraged to join some approved juvenile organisation.*

(d) *A foster parent shall not administer indiscriminate or harsh punishment on any pretext whatever. Any serious act of misconduct on the part of a boy or girl, or any generally unsatisfactory behaviour, shall be reported to the City Education Officer.*

6. *School attendance.*

Each boy or girl of school age shall, if his or her health permits, be sent regularly to school and shall not be removed from one school to another without the consent of the City Education Officer.

7. *Prohibition of intoxicants.*

No boy or girl shall be allowed to partake of any intoxicant except upon the order of the medical officer or other doctor, or in case of sickness or other urgent cause.

8. *Health.*

(a) Each boy or girl shall be given adequate opportunity for play and recreation.

(b) In the event of any serious accident to, or illness of, a boy or girl the foster parent shall send immediately for a doctor and shall notify the facts to the Education Authority. Where the doctor is of the opinion that the life of the boy or girl is in danger, the foster parent shall notify the parents (or guardians) direct and shall inform the Authority that this has been done.

Between 1930 and 1948, the Public Assistance Committee, in conjunction with the Education Committee, Education Officer and the Public City Assistance Officer, took decisions concerning matters of policy, procedure and/or practice in relation to foster care at a local authority level. These are detailed in the minute books of each respective committee (Ref. SL61 & SL164).

Between 1948 and 1969, the Children's Committee, along with the Children's Officer, took decisions on matters of policy, procedure and/or practice in relation to foster care at a local authority level. These are detailed in the Children's Committee minute books (Ref. SL116).

In 1962/63 a Full Council Meeting by the Children's Committee into foster homes stated "*Traditionally the deprived child in Scotland has been boarded out with foster parents. This continues to be the policy of the Committee*". (Ref. SL1/1/411)

In 1968, the Annual Progress Report to the Children Committee recognised that boarding out was the better option for children; however, the authority accepted that some residential units were also required (Ref. SL1/1/418)

Between 1969 and 1975, the Social Work Committee, along with the Director of Social Work took decisions on matters of policy, procedure and/or practice in relation to foster care at a local authority level. These decisions are referenced in the minutes of the Social Work Committee minutes (Ref. SL118).

Lothian Regional Council (1975-1996)

From 1975 to 1994, the Social Work Committee of Lothian Regional Council, along with the Director of Social Work took decisions on matters of policy, procedure and/or practice in relation to foster care at a local authority level. (Social Work Committee minutes, Ref. LRC2)

The minutes of the Social Work Committee (Ref. LRC2) evidence that new policies, procedures or practices were at times discussed and approved at committee level. This would also include any changes that were required to comply with new or emerging legislation. There is evidence the Secretary of State would contact the authority concerning any changes at a national level to policy and associated procedures. For example, a Social Work Committee meeting in November 1976 notes:

Similarly, attention needs to be given to fostering and adoption (particularly for older children) as preferred alternatives to residential care. This would not simply be because they are less costly in financial terms but because no institution, however well provided, is an inadequate substitute for normal family life and the latter should be made available to as many children as possible. At the moment, the department's capacity to recruit foster parents is variable in different parts of the region. Attention should be given to the problem of foster parent recruitment, both where there are disparities and more generally. A number of things could be done. First, more concentrated campaigns may be needed and the use of media needs consideration. Second, allowances to foster parents and their method of payment need to be examined, and all possible improvements. Third, attention must be given to the level of support given to foster parents. Breakdowns in placements might be avoided and fewer foster parents drop out if more social work support were available. Fourth, the possibility of developing a 'professional' foster parent scheme, where experienced foster parents are paid a salary in return for caring for difficult children is worth further examination. This, however, would involve increased costs in the short term, and may be possible to implement only experimentally at present (e.g. the 'community carers' scheme for adolescents leaving residential care) (Ref. LRC3/8/1/1)

A Director of Social Work report at the same time states:

This was a matter raised by our own authority and the resultant circular attempts to provide guidelines for establishing a basic uniform policy for good fostering practice of children placed outside their home authority, but it acknowledges that the guidelines cannot always be implemented so long as some authorities receive more foster children than they have social work resources with which to cope. (Ref. LRC3/8/3/2)

The report suggests that placing children out with their home authority should be discouraged and that if that has to happen, then proper agreements require to be drawn up between the two local authorities. The Social Work Committee agreed that the report be approved, and that attention should be paid to the enforcement of all relevant regulations and policies. (Ref. LRC3/8/3/2)

Over a period of three years between 1976 and 1979 the Director of Social Work reported to committee on a programme of closing older and larger homes and investing in fostering services and of services to prevent children coming into care. (Ref LRC3/8/3/2-5)

A Director of Social Care report of 1981/82 entitled '*Finding Homes for Children in Care*' notes the progress made in finding homes for children in recent years; the number of children still waiting for placements; new initiatives to tackle the problem of this and plans to meet the commitments for older children in care. The Director recommended that:

...the Committee adopts a policy that the Department should work to an explicit target of no child under 12 years remaining in our Local Authority's care for more than two years without there being a firm commitment either to his return to his natural family home, or to his resettlement in a permanent substitute family within that timescale. (Ref. LRC3/8/3/7)

The report also recommended that the department use the next three years to find families for children up to age 12 and that staffing, and resources are reviewed. The report also includes notes from a seminar on childcare and the need for finding permanent families for children in care. (Ref. LRC3/8/3/7).

In 1982, the authority adopted a policy called a "*Time of Change*" to reduce residential care for children (especially younger children), and to develop services to prevent children coming into care and to increase the use of foster care and adoption. (Ref.LRC3/8/3/9)

In 1982, authority also adopted a 'Youth Strategy Policy' which placed an emphasis on developing "*community-based alternatives to residential placements*" (Ref.LRC3/8/3/9). The principles laid out in the Youth Strategy Policy were that no child or young person should be recommended for residential care unless:

- He/she has no home (including substitute home) in the community which can, with appropriate support, provide an adequate degree of control or care, or
- He/she is a risk to him/herself or others
- He/she has medical, psychiatric or special education needs which can only be dealt with in a residential context, and
- It is in the child's best interest which cannot be met in any other way

In 1994 the Director of Social Work presented a report to the Social Work Committee which noted that decisions on matters of policy, procedure and/or practice were being taken at a senior management level and ratified by the Social Work Committee. The Director of Social Work further proposed the development of foster care services in Lothian Region:

Since March 1989, the overall number of children in care had increased by 248 from 1381 to 1629. The great majority of the increase was in foster care. At present there were 46 young people in residential care waiting for placements in foster care. Almost all of these were teenagers requiring between 1- and 3-years care. In order to meet this identified need, it was proposed to increase the number of foster placements by 20, at a full year cost of £204,421. Two additional social workers would also be necessary for the Edinburgh and Districts' Children and Families Resource Teams, costing £41,570 per year (Ref. LRC2/1/1/20/21).

In that year, the Director of Social Work also presented to the Social Work Committee a further report 'Growing up in a Nurturing Environment - Children and Families'. The report noted that Resource Teams had been set up in Districts and were responsible for recruitment, development and maintenance of substitute families, including foster carers. (Ref. LRC3/8/3/14).

The Director of Social Work presented to the Social Work Committee, Report No 16, 1994 - 1995, seeking approval for the further development of fostering services. The report informed:

The organisation and management of the foster care services, previously centralised in the Family Finding Unit, has since October 1992 been devolved to Districts. The Department's policy is that all children under 12 should be accommodated in foster care, unless they have exceptional needs that can only be met in specialist residential settings. For the majority of teenagers, the preferred option of care is with foster carers in community placements. Foster care in Lothian is seen as, in the first instance, a preventative service which seeks to care for children and work with parents towards speedy rehabilitation. Access and an open approach to parents is vital and foster carers are encouraged, prepared and trained to see foster care as short term. This range of need is accommodated within an overall foster care service which acknowledges that whilst children and young people require to be cared for, their families also need help. It encourages the concept of fostering as a caring job at home and seeks to reinforce this with good support, both financially and in other ways. (Ref. LRC3/8/3/20)

The report also notes that as of March 1994, 526 children were in foster care, but that the need is constantly increasing and the majority of these are teenagers who require between one and three years of fostering. The Director of Social Work recommends that Committee commit to a further 20 foster placements and recruit staff for fostering purposes. This demonstrates the local authority's continued ethos that foster care is the preferred service to be offered to the majority of children and young people who require alternative care arrangements out with their immediate families. However, these placements should be as short as possible, in order to allow the children and young people to successfully return to their families' care, with targeted supports and resources being identified and in place in order to allow this to be realised. (Ref. LRC3/8/3/20)

City of Edinburgh Council (1996-2014)

With the newly established City of Edinburgh Council in 1995-96, the Director of Social Work continued to have responsibility for foster care services with committee oversight. This included responsibility for the implementation and compliance of related foster care policies, procedures and practices. While there have been various organisational re-structures and reviews since that time, foster care arrangements have been subject to continued senior management oversight and committee scrutiny. Currently, responsibility rests with the Director for Communities and Families, and the Head of Childrens Services.

The Looked After Children (Scotland) Regulations 1996 sets out the local authority's main aims and responsibilities with regard to the provision of foster care services:

- The Council is committed to best value quality care and a professional service for all people receiving services from it whether provided directly or indirectly. The foster care service has an important contribution to make to this.
- The Council, mostly through its Social Work Department, has duties and powers to provide advice, guidance and assistance for vulnerable children and young people and their families when they are in need, including, where appropriate, accommodation, care and support.
- The Council wishes to develop and maintain services which have the following fundamental values:
 - To safeguard the rights of children and young people and their families and help them exercise these rights where necessary.
 - To promote the welfare of children and for that to be paramount in all decisions.
 - To seek and have regard to the views of children and young people and their families.

- To treat each child, young person and their family with dignity and respect and in a manner, which effects a non-discriminatory practice.
- To protect the privacy of each service user and create an “arena of safety” through the promotion and development of appropriate physical arrangements, routines, attitudes and general atmosphere.
- To assess and respond to the changing needs of the children, young people and their families.
- To provide for the social and emotional needs of individuals.
- To maximise the range of services and care arrangements which can be offered to each child or young person so as to maintain and provide continuity of care arrangements wherever possible.

The authority's *Looked After Children Manual* was produced after local government reorganisation in 1996 and covers a period from 1996 to at least 2001. This provided a whole range of policies and processes relating to looked after children, including foster care arrangements.

The Edinburgh Inquiry in 1999 noted that the authority's approach to looked after children was a commitment in principle to “keep under 12's out of residential care except in exceptional circumstances”.

In January 2000, the Social Work Committee reiterated a preference for family-based care but also determined that for some children under 12, residential care was the best option. It therefore decided to work with Barnardo's to re-provision two units for children under 12 and recruit specialist carers. The committee also approved plans to increase fostering and the development of a Family Group Conferencing Service with the aim of increasing the number of children looked after by their extended families. No children under 12 were to be placed in a Young People's Centre, unless they were part of a sibling group and with service manager agreement. This aspiration was largely realised with only 15 children under the age of 12 being placed in young people's centres (homes for over 12's) for the period 2000-15.

Following government initiatives to promote a corporate parenting approach across public bodies, a 'Corporate Parenting Action Plan' was approved by the Education, Children and Families Committee in March 2012. The plan had 38 actions points under six key themes: Leadership; Health and Wellbeing; Education; Employment and Training; Support and Protection; and Accommodation. Thereafter, the strategic objective of the authority was to shift the balance of resources from high cost local authority provision to high quality local services which included foster care.

	<p>In terms of current provision, the authority has numerous procedures which directly relate to the care of children placed in foster care which include: The Looked After and Accommodated Children procedure 2009 (Updated 2017); Achieving Permanence for Looked After Children 2012 (Updated 2018); Child Protection Procedure; Edinburgh and The Lothian Inter-Agency Child Protection Procedures; Children and Young People Missing from authority Care Procedure; as well as several Social Work Standards.</p>
<p>b)</p>	<p><u>Was there a particular policy and/or procedural aim/intention?</u></p> <p>Evidence suggests that in relation to the City of Edinburgh Council (and its predecessor bodies) this was the case. This is set out below.</p> <p>Edinburgh Corporation (1930-1975)</p> <p>In 1930 the authority continued the policy initiated by the Parish Council of “not keeping children in the Poorhouse”. The authority aimed to place children in a children’s home or Craighleith Hospital and from there board them out with ‘suitable guardians’, as noted in the Public Assistance Committee minutes (Ref. SL61/1). The authority then introduced (through the Education Authority) the ‘Regulations and Rules in regard to Boarded out Boys’ and Girls’ in 1933. These were superseded by The Boarding Out of Children (Scotland) Regulations 1959, which were then in turn replaced by the Boarding Out and Fostering of Children (Scotland) Regulations 1985.</p> <p>Lothian Regional Council (1975-1996)</p> <p>In 1979 the Director of Social Work produced a report into adoption and fostering, with particular reference to the changes implemented by the Children’s Act 1975. The report states that:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>Another principle held by the department is that no child should grow up without people whom he can regard as his parents, whether he be at home, in residential care or with a substitute family. This is in accord with the needs of children for emotional security, a sense of identity and some understanding of the setting in which they live. (LRC3/8/3/5 1979 – 1980).</i></p> <p>In 1992, the authority introduced “<i>The Quality in Caring of Standards for Fostering and Adoption Services</i>” which specifically noted the standards which the authority was adhering to in terms of policy, procedure and practice with respect to all aspects of the fostering and adoption service, which included the needs of the children; the responsibilities of the foster carer to the child and to the Local Authority; and the responsibilities of the Local Authority to the children and foster carers.</p>

City of Edinburgh Council (1996-2014)

A key document in relation to this question is the authority's Manual on Policies, Procedures and Practice Guidance. Produced in 1999, the manual states "*The Departmental Manual of Policies, Procedures and Practice is the main source of information relating to the work of the Department. The Manual contains policies, procedures and guidelines which enable staff to effectively undertake the tasks/functions for which they have been employed within the Social Work Department*". (Policies, Procedures and Practice Guidance Manual, 1999).

In addition, the authority Foster Carers Agreement also underpins the aims and intentions of related policies and procedures (extracts below):

1. Council aims:

- 1.1. *The Council is committed to best value quality care and a professional service for all people receiving services from it whether provided directly or indirectly. The foster care service has an important contribution to make to this.*
- 1.2. *The Council, mostly through its Social Work Department, has duties and powers to provide advice, guidance and assistance for vulnerable children and young people and their families when they are in need, including, where appropriate, accommodation, care and support.*
- 1.3. *The Council wishes to develop and maintain services which have the following fundamental values:*
 - a) *To safeguard the rights of children and young people and their families and help them exercise these rights where necessary.*
 - b) *To promote the welfare of children and for that to be paramount in all decisions*
 - c) *To seek and have regard to the views of children and young people and their parents.*
 - d) *To treat each child, young person and their family with dignity and respect and in a manner, which effects a non-discriminatory practice.*
 - e) *To protect the privacy of each service user and create an 'arena of safety' through the promotion and development of appropriate physical arrangements, routines, attitudes and general atmosphere*
 - f) *To assess and respond to the changing needs of the children, young people and their families.*

g) To provide for the social and emotional needs of individuals

h) To maximise the range of services and care arrangements which can be offered to each child or young person so as to maintain and enhance the possibility of normal development toward adulthood and independence and provide continuity of care arrangements wherever possible.

2. Responsibilities of the Social Work Department

2.1. Preparation, Training, Support and Reviews

2.1.1. To provide the carers with general preparation and; training for their foster care task and an ongoing programme of training and support, including training for special tasks or circumstances where needed.

2.1.2. To provide professional support, consultation and guidance by:

a) regular visits by a liaison worker specifically allocated to the carer/s

b) carer mutual support and training groups

c) an out-of-hours service by the Emergency Social Work Services Team

d) access to specialist and psychological services if required.

2.1.3. To provide carers with information about Departmental policies and procedures with which the carers are required to comply.

2.1.4. To review the care provided by the carers at intervals of no more than one year in accordance with the procedure outlined at Appendix 1.

a. Representations, Complaints and Allegations

1.1.1. To receive representations from carers either individually or collectively about general matters of practice, procedure or policy and to take them into account.

1.1.2. To involve foster carers wherever practicable when significant issues relating to the foster care service are being considered.

1.1.3. To provide foster carers with information about the Department's Child Protection Procedures and about the manner in which concerns about the abuse of children and young people will be dealt with.

1.1.4. To ensure that the child or young person's welfare is safeguarded and to treat seriously and respond to any complaints or allegations that relate to the care,

	<p><i>safety and welfare of the child or young people placed there, and, where necessary, to investigate them and to follow the Departmental Procedures extracts of which are attached as Appendix 2 (Complaints) and Appendix 3 (Allegations). Where abuse is alleged, the Edinburgh & Lothians Child Protection Guidelines will be followed. Carers may see a copy of these guidelines at any of the Social Work Centres or by asking their liaison social worker.</i></p>
c)	<p><u>Where were such policies and/or procedures recorded?</u></p> <p>Edinburgh Corporation (1930-1975) References to policies and procedures for this period can be found in the minutes of the Education Authority.</p> <p>Lothian Regional Council (1975-1996) References to policies and procedures for this period can be found in the minutes of the Social Work Committee. Processes are also set out in extant procedural manuals.</p> <p>City of Edinburgh Council (1996-2014) References to policies and procedures for this period can be found in the minutes of various Council committees. Extant policies, procedural manuals and other documentation (e.g. foster carer agreements) are also available.</p>
d)	<p><u>What did the policies and or/procedures set out in terms of the following:</u></p> <p>(i) <u>Child welfare (physical and emotional):</u></p> <p>Edinburgh Corporation (1930-1975) The authority accepted and introduced (through the Education Authority) the 'Regulations and Rules in regard to Boarded out Boys' and Girls' in 1933. These set out prescriptive criteria in relation to the physical and emotional welfare of children (see extracts below). (Ref. SL164/1/7)</p> <p><i>Rules to Be Observed by Foster Parents</i></p> <p>9. <i>General</i></p>

- (g) Foster parents shall be required continually to observe and comply with the following Rules, and any failure shall render foster parents liable to have their names removed from the Register of Foster Parents.*
- (h) In consideration of such payment as may be agreed upon by the foster parent and the Education Authority, the foster parent shall bring up the boy or girl as one of his or her own children and shall co-operate with the Education Authority and their Official for the boy's or girl's welfare.*
- (i) The foster parent shall on demand give up possession of the boy or girl to the City Education Officer or to any person duly authorised by the Education Authority.*
- (j) Communications to the Education Authority shall be addressed to the City Education Officer, Education Offices, Castle Terrace, Edinburgh.*
- (k) In the case of illness, the doctor to be called if required.*
- (l) The foster parent shall not incur expense on behalf of the boy or girl without prior permission of the City Education Officer, except for boot repairs. Expenditure in this latter connection should be incurred with discretion.*

10. Food.

Each boy or girl shall be provided with regular meals and the food shall be wholesome, varied and sufficient for good health. The daily dietary shall include a sufficient supply of fresh sweet milk. Where extra nourishment is ordered by a medical attendant the Education Authority shall be informed with a view to its provision.

11. Clothing.

The clothing (including sleeping apparel) and boots of each boy or girl shall be kept clean and in good repair. Each boy or girl shall be provided with a complete change of underclothing each week.

12. Sleeping accommodation.

- (e) No more persons shall be allowed to occupy a bedroom in which a boy or girl sleeps than may be approved by the Education Authority. The bedroom shall have a window opening to the outside air and not into another apartment.*
- (f) The bedding for each boy or girl shall be adequate and comfortable and shall be kept clean and well aired.*
- (g) No boy or girl shall occupy the same bed or bedroom as an invalid or an old infirm person.*
- (h) Boys and girls over eight years of age shall not occupy the same bedroom; and not more than two shall sleep in one bed.*

13. Training and discipline.

- (e) The foster parent shall train each boy or girl in habits of punctuality and thrift, of good manners and language, of cleanliness and neatness, of self-respect, of consideration*

and respect for others, and of honour and truthfulness in word and act; and shall devote to this duty the care which good parents give to their own children.

- (f) Each boy or girl shall be brought up in accordance with his or her religious persuasion, and where possible the foster parents shall arrange that the boy or girl shall attend Sunday School or be brought under some religious influence.*
- (g) Where circumstances are suitable, each boy or girl shall be encouraged to join some approved juvenile organisation.*
- (h) A foster parent shall not administer indiscriminate or harsh punishment on any pretext whatever. Any serious act of misconduct on the part of a boy or girl, or any generally unsatisfactory behaviour, shall be reported to the City Education Officer.*

14. School attendance.

Each boy or girl of school age shall, if his or her health permits, be sent regularly to school and shall not be removed from one school to another without the consent of the City Education Officer

15. Prohibition of intoxicants.

No boy or girl shall be allowed to partake of any intoxicant except upon the order of the medical officer or other doctor, or in case of sickness or other urgent cause.

16. Health.

- (c) Each boy or girl shall be given adequate opportunity for play and recreation.*
- (d) In the event of any serious accident to, or illness of, a boy or girl the foster parent shall send immediately for a doctor and shall notify the facts to the Education Authority. Where the doctor is of the opinion that the life of the boy or girl is in danger, the foster parent shall notify the parents (or guardians) direct and shall inform the Authority that this has been done.*

A memorandum from the Scottish Home Department on the boarding-out of children in 1959 provides further helpful detail concerning the welfare of children (extracts below):

A child likely to be in long- term care should never be boarded-out without the most thorough consideration of his needs, unless he is an infant, in which case, if he can be placed with a foster parent able to give him proper nursing, he may perhaps be so placed immediately. The boarding-out officer may decide that he requires a report from a psychologist or a psychologist in addition from the medical officer, and it will be his duty to make arrangements to obtain such a report through the medical officer of health for the local authority, the medical practitioner connected with the children home, the education authority, child guidance clinic, or otherwise as local circumstances may determine. Before going into the foster home, the child should have completed any medical treatment recommended. Once a child had been

placed in a good foster home, his care, development and well-being are a responsibility shared by the foster parents and the boarding-out officer.

The memorandum also sets out our recommendations in relation to:

- Regular and sufficient meals
- Fresh air, exercise, uninterrupted sleep
- Safety in the home
- Clothing
- Children's emotional needs
- Children's health needs including registering with G.P./and or clinic.
- Time for play and recreation.

The Town Clerk Social Work Committee Minutes (1969 -1975) include a reference to a report concerning the health of children in care. This states that the suitability of foster homes is essential for the health of the child and that health assessments of children must be carried out as per the Boarding Out of Children (Scotland) Regulations 1959 prior to the commencement of the foster placement starts and again one month into the placement. Following this, the authority must adhere to Regulation 12 of the above and have foster children medically examined annually, usually by the regular doctor of the foster family. (Ref. EC Town Clerk Files – File 8).

Lothian Regional Council (1975-1996)

There are numerous references for this period which provide detail concerning the physical and emotional welfare of children. Relevant extracts are set out below.

A Director of Social Work report in 1977 noted a request from the South Edinburgh Foster Parents' Association asking to meet with members of the Social Work Committee in relation to oversight visits to foster parents by Committee members. The South Edinburgh Foster Parents Association was formed to promote co-operation amongst foster parents in relation to the welfare of their foster children; to discuss all matters relating to the health of foster children; the education and welfare of children in foster care; and to work with other organisations to develop the concept of fostering in the community. As well as holding monthly meetings, they also organised summer trips and Christmas parties for local foster children. The Director of Social Work noted:

fostering...is perhaps the most satisfactory form of childcare for those children who do not have a natural family in which to grow up...This Association is very highly considered by the Gilmerton Area Team (Social Work). During its short life, it has proved that it has a very real role to play in improving fostering standards and recruiting new foster parents. I feel its work should be encouraged. (Ref. LRC3/8/3/2).

The Director recommended that committee grant money to help towards their administration costs. (Ref. LRC3/8/3/2).

A Social Work Director Report (1978-1979) notes that the Boarding Out of Children (Scotland) Regulations 1959 requires all children being taken into care to be medically examined for their mental and physical health, their fitness to be boarded out and if they are free from infection. It noted that:

A departmental review of procedures under which children should be received into care underlines that practice of obtaining only a freedom from infection certificate.

As a result of the review, the director recommended that a full medical examination should now be carried out, which the committee then approved the additional costs for. (LRC3/8/3/4 and LRC2/1/1/20/5).

The Social Work Committee noted a report by the Director of Social Work in 1979 concerning the implications of the Children's Act 1975 on the local authority's role in fostering and adoption. The report set out that the welfare and wellbeing of the child is of prime consideration when finding homes for them. The report also recommended a number of steps that would rationalise and improve services for foster children. The Social Work Committee approved the Director's report and requested he submit a further report into home finding panels (LRC2/1/1/20/6).

A report by the Director of Social Work from 1994 titled *Growing Up in a Nurturing Environment* noted that a Health and Medical Supervision of Children in Care programme had been initiated. This was designed to not only ensure that medical checks were carried out properly and sensitively, but to actively promote the good health of children who come into care. (Ref. LRC3/8/1/14).

In June 1995, the local authority adopted the *Quality in Caring Standards for Fostering and Adoption Services*. The Standard set out the following:

Standard: *A child or young person who is adopted or fostered should have her/his emotional, physical, developmental needs and rights as an individual recognised and effectively addressed.*

Indicators: *The child or young person: receives love and affection within the family; is well looked after physically; is comfortable and well fed; is protected from harm, including self-harm; has her/his rights respected; is treated with respect and dignity as an individual with her/his own unique relationships, experiences, strengths, needs and future; has her/his origins and ethnicity acknowledged and respected; participates in decisions that affect her/him and those that affect the running of the home, as appropriate to her/his age and understanding; feels safe and secure; has privacy and dignity, with special regard paid to this when she/he needs personal care; has appropriate limits set on her/his behaviour individual attention is paid to her/his health; is actively encouraged in formal education and, as she/he grows older, in further education, vocational training or employment; has new, varied and positive experiences; learns how to look after herself/himself in a practical way and is assisted in developing the common skills required of adults; has the opportunity to work on emotional issues; and is admitted to the carer's family in a planned and sensitive way moves on to well-planned situations*

Outcomes: *A child feels as valued and respected as does a child cared for within her/his family of origin. The emotional, physical and developmental needs and rights of the child as an individual are recognised and effectively addressed.*

City of Edinburgh Council (1996-2014)

There are numerous references for this period which provide detail concerning the physical and emotional welfare of children. Relevant extracts are set out below.

The Looked after Children Regulations, (quoted in full below) describes the professional responsibilities and expectations of foster carers and sets out key requirements around the welfare of children. (Ref. Document 12, 1996)

Responsibilities of Foster carers:

Notifications about changes in the carer's circumstances

To notify the Social Work Department promptly and in writing of any of the following:

- *any intended change of address by the carer's,*

- any change in the composition of the carer household,
- any other change in the carer's personal circumstances,
- any event affecting either
- her/his/their capacity to care for any child or young person
- the suitability of the carer household (including health issues)
- any criminal proceedings or convictions or proceedings by the Reporter to the Children's Hearing in respect of any members of the household
- any further request or application s/he/they or any member of the carer household intend/s to make to provide foster care, to adopt children or for registration (under Section 71 of the Children Act 1989)
- To notify and consult with the Social Work Department before acquiring any type of pet that may present a danger or requires special arrangements for care and/or containment. This requirement includes;
 - Looking after such pets for short periods on behalf of others
 - Any type of dog.

Confidentiality and Records

- To ensure that any information which is given to the carers in confidence relating to the placed child or young person, to her/his family or to any other person will be kept confidential and not disclosed to any person without the consent of the Department
- To maintain records of events involving or affecting the child or young person

Good Parenting

- To protect any placed child or young person from avoidable harm or abuse and report any concerns to the Department immediately.
- To abide by guidance or instructions from the Department about managing behaviour.
- To agree and ensure that corporal punishment or other demeaning punishments are not used in respect of any child or young person placed.
- In the manner of a good parent and having regard to the individual care plan and placement agreement, to care for the child or young person as if s/he were a member of their own family and in a safe and appropriate manner and to promote the child or young person's welfare by:
 - Giving attention and affection and building self-esteem.
 - Developing any interests and talents the child or young person may have and encouraging participation in community activities.

- *Supporting and encouraging the child or young person to develop and maintain a positive approach to their own health and wellbeing and, by example and instruction, encouraging in the child or young person hygienic habits and healthy diet and lifestyle*
- *Setting consistent limits to manage behaviour and helping the child or young person to develop controls over their own behaviour.*
- *Respecting the child or young person's need for privacy when appropriate.*
- *Encouraging the child or young person's pride in her/his identity.*
- *Providing clean, comfortable and appropriately heated accommodation.*
- *Maintain an adequate supply of clothing in good and clean condition.*
- *Making arrangements for the child or young person's safety in the home or when travelling (through the provisions and use of correct safety seats, harnesses or belt).*

Personal Identify, Contact, Health and Education

- *To be sensitive and have regard to the child or young person's cultural, ethnic and linguistic background, sexual identity and orientation; to encourage the child or young person's pride in her/his identity; and to recognise and actively support the child or young person's religious persuasion.*
- *To promote contact and good relationships between the child or young person and his/her own family, except where contact has been restricted by a court, a children's hearing or the Council.*
- *To permit any person authorised by the Department to see the child or young person.*
- *To discuss with social workers beforehand, in so far as they affect the child or young person*
- *Any outings, trips or periods away that are extended in either time or distance*
- *Any regular or extended babysitting and other care arrangements and any changes in these.*
- *To ensure that the child or young person's medical and dental care needs are met, having regard to the medical information supplied and in consultation, whenever practicable, with the child or young person's parents or guardians and the child or young person's social worker;*
- *By consulting medical and dental practitioners when necessary, follow their advice and following up on prescribed treatment or referral for specialist opinion.*
- *By keeping to any arrangements for reviewing the child or young person's health if advised by the medical practitioner or required by the Department.*

- *Keeping a record of significant illnesses, consultation or treatments, and advising the child or young person's parents or guardians and the child or young person's social worker of any events.*
- *To support the child or young person's education and educational opportunities, ensuring attendance at school, assisting with schoolwork and maintaining regular contact with the school staff regarding progress.*
- *To support and encourage the child or young person to develop a positive approach to their health and wellbeing in an age appropriate way*

Care Planning and Reviews

To participate with others in planning the programme of care by:

- *Discussing with the social workers at the time of any changes or developments that may affect the placement or the planning for the child or young person.*
- *Attending Placement agreement and other meetings that may be arranged related to an individual child or young person's care as required by the Department.*
- *Attending at and providing written reports to Child Care Reviews.*
- *Attending at Children's Hearings where appropriate.*

Notification of major events and changes in the child or young person's circumstances

To notify the Department immediately, in respect of a child or young person placed, of:

- *Death or any serious illness*
- *Any other serious occurrence affecting the child or young person*
- *Any instance of running away or unauthorised or unexplained absence*
- *Any instance of being taken away for the home without authorisation or agreement.*

Ending of Placements

- *Where the placement is terminated, to allow the Department to remove the child or young person in a manner consistent with the child or young person's needs and welfare.*

Training, Support and Reviews

- *To participate in foster care training opportunities and events, carer support groups.*
- *To participate in arrangements made to review the care provided.*

Insurance

- *To hold household insurance, including third party liability and, where a vehicle is used to carry children and young people looked after by the Council, motor insurance including legal liability to passengers and, in effecting either such insurance, to declare to the insurers that they are acting as foster carers for the Council.*

Other specific responsibilities

To abide by the Department's procedures, guidance and instructions and its requirements and guidance on:

- *Smoking*
- *The keeping of dangerous, or potentially dangerous, animals as pets*
- *Outdoor activities, details of all of which will be provided separately.*

Further information on this area is contained within the authority's *Looked After Children Policies and Procedures* manual from June 1998. The Procedure provides practice guidance on process in relation to the following areas: Parental Consent to Treatment; Arranging the Initial Medical and Health Assessment; Background Medical Information; Initial Medical; Health Assessment; Update/Review Medical and Health Assessment; and Co-ordination of the Health Care Plan.

Dating from 1999, the authority had a 'Carer Agreement' which outlined the basis by which Foster Carers would provide care for children and on what basis they would be remunerated. This included safeguarding the rights of children and promoting their welfare and covered the following areas:

- *To seek and have regard for their views;*
- *To protect privacy of each service user and create an 'arena of safety' through promotion of appropriate physical arrangements;*
- *To provide for the social and emotional needs of individuals; and*
- *To enhance the possibility of normal development toward adulthood and independence.*

The *National Care Standards for Foster Care and Family Placement Services* was published by the Scottish Executive in March 2005. Within Standard 2, the welfare of children was addressed and included the following points:

"You know that the agency makes sure that your foster carer:

- *Helps you to get the healthcare you need*

- *Gets involved in your healthcare*
- *Contributes to or makes decisions in partnership with you and your parents where appropriate*
- *Understands the implications of your culture and faith*
- *The agency supports your foster carer to help you make sense of therapeutic or other specialist services that you need.*
- *The Agency encourages and supports your foster carer to help you to enjoy play and other leisure activities.*

Standard 3 states:” *You can be confident that your identity and self-esteem will be valued and promoted.*”

Standard 5 states (pg. 16)” *You can be confident that foster carers are assessed on their ability to promote the health, education and personal and social development of you and any other children and young people in their care.*”

In 2006, the authority published a Carer’s Handbook to be issued to all departmental foster carers. Section 6 of the handbook relates to Health and Safety matters and covers the following areas:

- *Carers should have a copy of Caring about Health; Improving the Health of Accommodated and Looked After Children in Scotland. This is an a-z resource pack for staff and carers.*
- *The role of LAAC nurses.*
- *The role of Edinburgh Connect - a mental health service which works in partnership with residential staff and foster carers to promote and enhance the mental wellbeing of looked after and accommodated children and young people. It is part of the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) provided by Lothian Health Board. They provided consultancy for carers about individual children and young people in placement on such issues as attachment problems, challenging behaviour, depression or self-harm. They also referred children and young people for therapy and treatment.*
- *The need for a comprehensive health assessment with children and young people.*

The handbook also noted that:

Carers have a crucial role not only in preventing ill health but also in promoting positive health by following through recommendations made in the health

assessment, ensuring health appointments are kept and helping the child or young person to take an interest in achieving good health.

(ii). The child's views

Edinburgh Corporation (1930-1975)

The main evidence for this period relates to a memorandum on the boarding-out of children which was issued by the Scottish Home Department in 1959. The memorandum notes that when officers of the children's department or other persons authorised by the local authority or the Secretary of State visited boarded out children, they should be given the opportunity of interviewing the child.

Lothian Regional Council (1975-1996)

In 1994, a report by the Director of Social Work to the Social Work Committee notes that:

To encourage children and young people to be aware of their rights and responsibilities and prepare for citizenship, we have participated in the production and implementation of the Lothian Children's Family Charter and have just appointed a Young People's Information, Rights and Complaints Officer.
(LRC3/8/1/14)

This suggests that the authority was taking a pro-active approach to ensuring that children were being heard.

In a 1996 strategic statement on childcare, the Director of Social Work outlined the following requirement of:

Seeking and respecting the views of children and their families and working honestly with them. (Part 5).

The wider statement also included commitments to ensure that the process of involving children in decisions about their care was working and that the views of children (particularly those over 12) were heard. (LRC3/8/3/21)

In June 1995, the authority adopted the document: 'Quality in Caring- Standards for Fostering and Adoption'. Under Standard 1:16 within the document, it was noted that:

The views of children and young people are listened to and respected. They are involved in decision making about their lives.

City of Edinburgh Council (1996-2014)

The authority produced the *Looked After Children Manual* shortly after local government reorganisation in 1996 which was used until at least 2001. This provided guidance on a whole range of policy and processes relating to looked after children, including foster care. It provided key principles common to all care and supervision orders including the views of child. Within this manual there is a report template for young people to complete to add their views to case reviews (dated June 1998).

From 1999 onwards, the authority had a 'Carer Agreement' which outlined the basis by which Foster Carers would provide care for children. In relation to children's views, the Carer Agreement states that foster carers must: "seek and have regard for their views".

The Edinburgh Inquiry (1999) considered that access to an external confidante was an important safeguard for children and recommended that looked after children should have a named independent person of their choosing with whom they would feel confident about expressing any concerns they may have. In response, the authority implemented a policy called the 'Trusted Person'. To support the policy, it produced guidance on the role of the Trusted Person setting out expectations about the role and the importance of visiting and listening to the young person. This guidance forms part of the *Looked After Children Manual* and focuses on the appointment of a trusted person/confidante/additional visitor for young people (Section 16:1). Section 16:5 of that manual also outlines that if a trusted person cannot be identified then a referral needs to be made to a Children's Rights Officer.

Within the Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel minutes (dated 18 November 2004), there is reference to the Annual Report of the Children's Rights Officer from April 2003 March 2004 (Ref. Report 4.1). That report notes that there had been an increase in contact between the Children's Rights Office and children and young people placed with foster carers, mainly due to increased visits to such children and young people. This led to more children requesting assistance from the office. There was also an increase in the number of carers and other professionals referring children and young people in foster care to Children's rights office. The report identified that 70 children and young people in foster care had made contact. The Full minutes from the Scrutiny Panel's consideration of Children's Rights Officer's Annual Report notes the importance of children and young people's views being represented at formal meetings.

There is further reference in the Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel minutes (dated the 14 April 2005), to a report which notes the importance of the role of the Childrens Rights Officer as it:

...ensures the views of accommodated children and young people are listened to and that Childrens Rights Office staff can advocate on behalf of young people and children who are looked after and accommodated by the council.

The National Care Standards for Foster Care and Family Placement Services was published by the Scottish Executive in March 2005 and Standard 4 states:

You and your family and foster carers are encouraged to express your views on any aspect of the work of the agency.

(iii) Placement of siblings

Edinburgh Corporation (1930-1975)

The main evidence for this period relates to a memorandum on the boarding-out of children which was issued by the Scottish Home Department in 1959. The memorandum notes that:

Where more than one member of a family comes into care, the children's officer is required by the Boarding Out Regulations to make every effort to keep the family together by boarding out brothers and sisters in the same home. If in a particular case that would lead to overcrowding in the foster home, it may be possible to board-out the family in two foster homes near each other.

Lothian Regional Council (1975-1996)

In June 1995, the authority adopted the document: *Quality in Caring - Standards for Fostering and Adoption*. Under Standard 3:2, there is reference to sibling groupings sharing bedrooms were applicable. Under Standard 4:8 which concerns planning for children who are placed in foster or adoptive homes, it states that appropriate family contacts should be sustained as this ensures the preservation of the child's identity. It is noted that siblings and extended family members as well as parents are included. The document further highlights and notes under Standard 4:11 (Placement arrangements) that the department's placement policy includes issues such as: placing siblings together, attaining culturally compatible placements and arranging placements for young people who are potentially abusive to other children or carers.

City of Edinburgh Council (1996-2014)

Anecdotal evidence from previous managers within Family Based Care indicates that during the 1990s and 2000s siblings were always placed together, whenever possible. If this was not an immediate option, then there was a tracking list held by the Resource Team of siblings that should be reunited in placement, when a suitable sibling placement became available.

This anecdotal is backed-up by a Care Commission Inspection Report (dated 19 November 2007) which notes that the authority's fostering service promoted the best interests of children by keeping families together or moving siblings to be together as soon as possible after an initial emergency placement.

The Looked After Children (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2014 made an amendment to the Looked After Children (Scotland) Regulations 2009 by the insertion of Regulation 27A. Regulation 27A states that a local authority must not place a child with a foster carer where the placement would result in more than three children being placed with that foster carer at any one time. The exceptions to this regulation are for where a group of more than three siblings have been placed by a local authority; or, where an emergency placement of a child with a foster carer or a short-term placement of less than 4 weeks would result in more than three children being placed with that foster carer.

(iii) The placement of a child in foster care

Edinburgh Corporation (1930-1975)

The main evidence for this period relates to a memorandum on the boarding-out of children which was issued by the Scottish Home Department in 1959. The memorandum notes that:

The child should be taken to his new foster home by the boarding out officer, with whom he is already acquainted and who will subsequently be visiting him.

Within this memorandum it is also noted that:

The first meeting of a child and his foster parents is of great importance to both and should be carefully arranged so as to remove all awkwardness and constraint. A weekend or short holiday with the prospective foster parents may help the child to settle down more quickly and give parents more confidence through the insight they have gained into the child's character. Where a short stay is not possible the child might, where distance makes it practicable, visit the prospective foster parents on

several occasions, or the foster parents might visit him while he is still in the children's home.

Lothian Regional Council (1975–1996)

In June 1995, the authority adopted the document: *Quality in Caring - Standards for Fostering and Adoption*. Within Standard 2:1, it is noted that a child will not normally be placed with any family where there is a child of the same age and/or stage of development. They also note that a child/young person should be admitted to the carer's family in a planned and sensitive way. Within the same document under Standard 4:11 (Placement arrangements), it is noted that the department's placement policy includes issues such as: placing siblings together, attaining culturally compatible placements and arranging placements for young people who are potentially abusive to other children or carers.

City of Edinburgh Council (1996-2014)

Within the authority's Looked After and Accommodated Children Manual there is a policy/procedure on placing children in foster care (including placement meetings and introductions) dated April 1997.

The National Care Standards for Foster Care and Family Placement Services was published by the Scottish Executive in March 2005 and Standard 2 notes:

The agency makes sure that, wherever possible, you and your family have the opportunity to visit and to meet the foster carer and their family in their home before you begin your placement. Information is shared about your preferences and routines and any special needs you may have. If your placement starts at short notice, the agency will make sure your foster carer has the information they need to meet your needs and to keep you up to date about how long the placement will last.

Within the authority's Carers Handbook, which was updated in around 2008, there is a section on the placement of children which includes emergency and planned placements. Extracts are detailed below:

Emergency placements

When a placement is made in an emergency, the first few days are important in helping the child deal with separation from their family or previous carers as well as

helping them to settle into unfamiliar surroundings and situations. It is helpful to the child at the start of the placement to

- *Show the child all the rooms in the house and particularly remind them where the toilet and bathroom are.*
- *Allow them to keep familiar toys and clothes, even if they are dirty or torn.*
- *Find out if they sleep with the light on or not.*
- *Explain family routines- as discussed in your family/safer caring policy.*
- *Provide information on pocket money.*

The child will probably be upset about leaving their present carers and familiar surroundings, sometimes with little preparation. Each child may react in different way, but all will need reassurance from their carers and, if they are old enough, a chance to talk about their feelings. A placement meeting will be held within three working days or if a planned placement, this can be held before the child is placed.

Planned placements

If the placement is planned, it can be useful for parents and children to have information about the carers beforehand. It is helpful if carers can provide a profile of themselves and their family, including photographs and descriptions of their lifestyles and routines.

Before introductions begin, a planning meeting will be held with the child's social worker, possibly the child and their family and the carers liaison worker. The meeting will discuss reasons for the placement, its aims and needs of the child. Carers will be given as much information as possible about the child and the opportunity to talk to those who know the child well. Arrangements may also be made for the parents to meet the carer. The child's social worker will discuss the move and appropriate details about the prospective carer with the child and their family.

Introductory visits will be arranged at a pace suitable to the child's age, understanding and previous experience.

(iv) The particular placement of a child with foster carers

Edinburgh Corporation (1930 – 1975)

While no specific policy relating to the particular placement of a child in foster care has survived from this period, evidence within Council Committee Minutes suggests that any such policy was

based on existing and emerging legislation at the time. In 1930, the function of the authority was to continue the policy agreed by the Parish Council in 'not keeping children in the Poorhouse'. The authority aimed to place children in a children's home before boarding them out with 'suitable guardians' (SL61/1/1). The responsibility of the authority for boarding out children was set out in the Poor Law (Scotland) Act 1934, and discussed by the Public Assistance Committee in 1943:

A Local Authority may make arrangements for the lodging, boarding or maintenance otherwise than in a poor house, of children under the age of 16 years who are orphans or who have been deserted by or separated from their parents, so however that any arrangements so made shall be subject to such regulations as the Department may make with respect thereto (SL61/1/15).

In 1943, the City Social Services Officer further reported that the practice of boarding out was to be continued in line with legislation, but the authority was finding it difficult to recruit suitable carers, and so it was challenging for social work professionals to place children with foster carers (SL61/1/15).

The importance of placing a child with foster carers was further discussed by Full Council in 1959, where it was agreed that children who required alternative care to a traditional family setting would fare better being boarded out with suitable foster carers who had been carefully selected for each individual child. Within these minutes, Council notes that, while legal responsibility for the care of looked after children remained with the Local Authority, foster carers would be a more suitable alternative to a residential care setting (SL1/1/409).

Lothian Regional Council (1975 – 1996)

Surviving policies and procedures relating to the particular placement of a child with foster carers are lacking from this period, however it is plausible to assume that the authority adopted policy and guidance from professional social work bodies. In June 1995, the authority adopted the *Quality in Caring Standards for Fostering and Adoption Services* to ensure that children and young people in foster placements received the highest quality of care possible. These standards set out a best practice approach for Local Authorities and recommend that a child should not normally be placed with a family where there is a child of the same age or stage of development. They also suggest that a child or young person should only be placed with a family in a planned and sensitive way to ensure as smooth a transition as possible for the child in placement.

City of Edinburgh Council (1996– 2014)

While there is no clear policy or procedure outlining the particular placement of a child with foster carers, it can be assumed that the *National Care Standards for Foster and Family Placement Services* form the basis of any policy content relating to this. These Standards were published by the Scottish Executive in March 2005 and, of the particular placement of a child in foster care states:

The agency makes sure that, wherever possible, you and your family have the opportunity to visit and to meet the foster carer and their family in their home before you begin your placement. Information is shared about your preferences and routines and any special needs you may have.

If your placement starts at short notice, the agency will make sure your foster carer has the information they need to meet your needs and to keep you up to date about how long the placement will last.

The Carers Handbook from 2008 further expands on the policy aims and intentions for the placement of children in foster care, and also includes provision for children who are placed in emergency foster placements. The Handbook states that, when a foster placement is made under emergency circumstances, both carers and social work professionals should help the child or young person deal with the separation from their family or previous carers and help them to settle into their new surroundings. The Handbook then sets out actions to be taken by carers in an emergency placement situation and notes that placement meetings should be held within three days:

- *Show the child all the rooms in the house and particularly remind them where the toilet and bathroom are.*
- *Allow them to keep familiar toys and clothes, even if they are dirty or torn.*
- *Find out if they sleep with the light on or not.*
- *Explain family routines- as discussed in your family/safer caring policy.*
- *Provide information on pocket money.*

The Carers Handbook also includes policy aims for planned placements. It states that both children and birth parents should be given information about their new carers before the placement commences, and carers should provide a personal profile of themselves and their family. Before any placement begins, planning meetings must be held between the child's social worker and the carers liaison worker. This meeting will discuss the need for the placements and ensures that the needs of the child will be met by the placement. Carers must be given as much information as possible about the child or young person to be placed with them, and if appropriate, birth parents may also meet the carer. These policy intentions and procedures

ensured that children and young people had a smooth transition into a foster placement to enable the placement to be as successful as possible.

vi) Contact between a child in foster care with his or her family

Edinburgh Corporation (1930 – 1975)

While no full policies relating to family contact for children in foster placements have survived from this period, we can attest to their content by assuming that policies within the authority at this time were created on the basis of national guidance. In 1959, the Scottish Home Department produced a Memorandum on the Boarding Out of Children which noted that:

foster parents should be guided by the Children's Officer in deciding whether the child's parents or relatives should be allowed to correspond with the child or visit him in his foster home.

This Memorandum then goes on to discuss the child's relationship with their birth families and close relatives, and recommends:

In light of the circumstances of the child, agreement will have to be reached between the Boarding-Out Officer and the foster parents as to whether regular contact with the natural parents and relatives should be encouraged. It is frequently the impression of foster parents that, if contact is encouraged between the child and his parents and relatives, the child is likely to become unsettled and less responsive to their authority. It is vital that the foster parent should be guided by the Boarding-Out Officer in this matter; such guidance should result in an understanding that their relationship to the child need not necessarily be impaired by the natural relationship to parents and relatives. Such a relationship is fundamental. It is recognised that in many cases it will be undesirable that the child should receive letters from his parents; by wherever there is no reason for preventing this, such correspondence should be encouraged, and the child trusted to maintain it. The Boarding-Out Officer and the foster parent should exercise their discretion in scrutinising letters received and sent. (p13).

We can suggest that this Memorandum was adopted by the authority as a policy, because there is evidence of the abovementioned contact between children in foster placements and their birth families being denied by social work professionals. From 1930 onwards, the Public Assistance Committee would consider applications from birth parents for contact with their children in foster placements. When the committee and the City Social Services Officer deemed this inappropriate for the welfare of the child, the application would be rejected (SL61/1/2).

The Memorandum makes further representations for family contact arrangements when children are boarded out in foster homes for short periods of time:

If possible, such foster homes should be located in the district to which children belong or an adjacent district so their ordinary life, their contacts with their relatives and their association with the friends of their own age may suffer the least interruption.

It is a service to the father and mother as much as to the children, since the knowledge that the children are being well looked after may help to hasten recovery and possibly enable treatment to be undertaken at an earlier stage. Where children are fostered in the neighbourhood, they can visit the invalid regularly, and the recuperative value to a patient of regular family contacts is now recognised.

Where the boarding-out is likely to be for a comparatively short period and the return of the child to his home almost certain, it is most desirable that regular contact with the natural parents and relatives should be maintained (p14).

It is evident that, while there are not surviving policies relating to family contact for this period, national guidance was highly likely to form the basis of any authority policy.

Lothian Regional Council (1975 – 1996)

The policy covering family contact for children and young people in foster placements appears to have been covered in the *Quality Standards in Fostering and Adoption Services* document. The Quality Standards outline the steps that the authority must take to ensure contact between the child in placement and their birth family:

- *Relationships with the child's own family...are developed and maintained when this is in the best interest of the child*
- *Children's rights to maintain contact with their immediate family are recognised*
- *A respectful and professional approach with parents and other family members is developed*
- *There should be co-operation between the care family and the birth family with regards to issues of the child's care and development*
- *Children should have positive and meaningful links with their families, their home and their community*

The Partnership Agreement also contains a clause stating children and young people in placement should have contact with their birth family if this is deemed appropriate by social work professionals. The inclusion of this clause within the Partnership Agreement ensured that

foster carers were aware of their responsibilities in relation to family contact when caring for a child or young person.

City of Edinburgh Council (1996 – 2014)

The authority had a number of policies relating to contact between children in foster placements and their family from 1997 onwards. One of a suite of Children and Families policies and procedures was the *Looked After Children's Regulations* from April 1997, and this set out the policy aims and intentions for family contact, and the responsibilities of foster carers in facilitating family contact for children and young people placed with them. Under this policy, carers were expected to promote contact and good relationships between the child or young person and their birth family; the exception to this being where contact has been restricted by a court, Children's Hearing or by social work professionals.

Make Someone's Day, Make Someone's Life, produced by the authority in 2010 sets out the policy aims and intentions relating to contact between children and young people in foster placements and their birth families. It states:

The authority has a duty to promote direct contact between children looked after by them and their parents or people with parental responsibilities...The purpose of contact is to enhance the psychological and developmental progress and wellbeing of children who are away from their families and to increase the likelihood of children returning to live with his or her family where that is consistent with the child's welfare. The child's social worker, in consultation with the foster carer, the child and the child's family and friends, should co-ordinate contact arrangements. This will include the frequency and location of contact and any supervision required. There are times when carers may make the arrangements directly with birth parents...in consultation with the child's social worker. Details of all contact arrangements should be contained in the Placement Agreement and discussed at LAAC reviews.

A further document produced in 2010 by the authority, *Keeping In Touch, Managing Contact for Looked After Children*, further outlines the policy of family contact, and the importance of this:

When children are no longer living with their family of origin, they will have to come to terms with the reasons for the breakdown of their family and make sense of growing up with two families. Key things to consider include how the contact contributes to the child's safety and wellbeing and how the contact meets both short term and long-term needs. Well managed contact can help separated children deal

with the conflicting emotions they experience in losing their place in their family and aid their recovery and development.

From the evidence provided above, it is clear that the authority implemented policies in relation to family contact for children in foster care placements, and where evidence has not survived, it is clear from Committee discussions that it is highly likely that national guidance and legislation formed the basis of any such policies.

vii. Contact between a child in foster care and other siblings in foster care

Edinburgh Corporation (1930 – 1975)

While policies and procedures relating to sibling contact have not survived from this period, it can be assumed that national guidance and legislation formed the basis of such policies and procedures as they were discussed at Committee level. In 1959, the Children's Committee discussed the Memorandum on the Boarding Out of Children that was released by the Scottish Home Department. The memorandum advises that every effort should be made to keep sibling groups together by boarding them out in the same placement. Where this was not possible, the Scottish Home Department recommended that Children's Officers should do all they could to ensure that sibling groups met frequently where appropriate (SL116/1/11). As this Memorandum was a national objective and was discussed by the Children's Committee, it is highly plausible that it formed the basis of any policy and procedure relating to sibling contact between children and young people in foster placements.

Lothian Regional Council (1975 – 1996)

National guidance produced by professional bodies for social work appears to have informed policies relating to sibling contact. The *Quality Standards in Fostering and Adoption Services* from 1995 was the subject of a report by the Director of Social Work, and states that it was of the utmost importance that children maintained close relationships with their close family, including siblings. The guidance and the subsequent report by the Director of Social Work states that foster carers and social work professionals had to facilitate such contact as this was in the best interest of the child (LRC3/8/3/21).

During a file audit of foster carer case records, copies of Partnership Agreements were located within foster carer case files. These outlined the responsibilities of the carers, and it appears that a policy aim relating to sibling contact was also included within this record. The Partnership

Agreement stated that carers had to ensure there was contact between sibling groups in separate placements unless social work professionals deemed such contact inappropriate.

As the Quality Standards in Adoption and Fostering Services was reported on by the Director of Social Work, as well as its aims being included in Partnership Agreements, and can be assumed that the guidance formed the basis of policies relating to sibling contact for children and young people in foster placements.

City of Edinburgh Council (1996 – 2014)

Surviving policies from 1997 show that sibling contact was considered highly important for children and young people in foster placements. The Looked After Children's Regulations from April 1997 stated that the authority expected foster carers to promote contact and good relationships between the child or young person in placement and their siblings, except where this was deemed to be unsuitable by social work professionals. A further document produced by the authority in 2010, *Make Someone's Day, Make Someone's Life* states:

The authority...has a duty to promote contact between siblings if they are living apart. The purpose of the contact is to enhance the psychological and developmental progress and wellbeing of children who are away from their families, to increase the likelihood of children returning to live with his or her family and where there that is consistent with the child's welfare, to test out parenting capacity...There are times when carers may make arrangements [for contact] directly with the birth parents or siblings, in consultation with the child's social worker.

The National Care Standards for Foster Care and Family Placement Services were published by the Scottish Executive in March 2005, and states:

"the agency has arrangements in place to make sure that there are appropriate links between you, your foster family and your birth family."

It appears that such national guidance formed the basis of authority policies as the content heavily emphasised the importance of sibling contact between those in foster placements.

vii. Information sharing with the child's family

Edinburgh Corporation (1930 – 1975)

While policies relating to information sharing with the child's family have not survived from this period, it can be assumed that national guidance formed the basis of any such policies. A

Scottish Home Department Memorandum from 1959 sets out some expectations of information sharing with the child's family. The Memorandum on the Boarding Out of Children (1959) states:

It is a service to the father and mother as much as to the children, since the knowledge that the children are being well looked after may help to hasten recovery and possibly enable treatment to be undertaken at an earlier stage. Where children are fostered in the neighbourhood, they can visit the invalid regularly, and the recuperative value to a patient of regular family contacts is now recognised.

Despite policies not surviving from this period, the discussion of this Memorandum by the Children's Committee (SL116/1/11) highlights that the authority were aware of the guidance and as such, it likely formed the basis of policy aims and intentions.

Lothian Regional Council (1975 – 1996)

Policy aims and intentions relating to information sharing with the birth families of children and young people in foster care appear to have been set out in the *Quality in Standards of Adoption and Fostering Services* from 1995. These standards set out ways in which social work professionals should include birth families in the decision making process about the care of their child, as well as ensuring parents were kept up to date on their child's placement.

Relationships should be developed and maintained with parents and extended family of children in placements which show respect, understanding and are non-judgemental. There is an awareness of the importance of developing respectful and professional relationships with the child's family. Discussions should take place with the family regarding the child's progress and development if involvement is deemed appropriate. There should be flexibility and openness to parents' views and wishes, and encouragement given to members of the child's family to feel comfortable in the carers household and to be actively involved in the child's development. Extended family members should be given appropriate information regarding the child or young person.

These Quality Standards show that the authority had policy aims and intentions in relation to information sharing with birth families of children in foster placements and were aware of the importance of this.

City of Edinburgh Council (1996 – 2014)

The authority produced the *Looked After Children Manual* in 1996 and this was in use until at least 2001. The manual provided guidance on a whole range of policy and processes relating to looked after children, including foster care. It provided key principles common to all care and supervision orders and includes, openness with child and parents, parental involvement and information sharing with the child's birth family. The manual highlights the importance of keeping birth families informed and up to date on all matters relating to the care of their child. There is also reference to birth parents receiving information packs about their child, alongside a copy of the care plan and the Placement Agreement.

The *Looked After Children Manual* clearly demonstrates the existence of a policy relating to information sharing with family of a child in foster care and regards it as a necessary part of a child's care where appropriate.

vii. Fostering Panels (including constitution, remit, frequency and record keeping)

Edinburgh Corporation (1930 – 1975)

There were no policies relating to Fostering Panels at this time as these Panels were not carried out in the 1930 – 1975 period.

Lothian Regional Council (1975 – 1996)

Policies relating to Fostering Panels formed part of the *Quality in Caring Standards for Fostering and Adoption Services* from 1995 onwards. These Standards noted that Panels must be carried out and operate within the requirements of the Adoption Agency Regulations and the Fostering Agency Regulations. Rules for setting up these Panels were also given within the policy guidance:

- *Membership of panels must be drawn from agency staff, representatives of care groups, voluntary organisations and individuals with experience of caring who are equipped to make well founded recommendations about the whole range of substitute childcare, leading to good decision making and planning for children*
- *Panel members bring a range of experience, knowledge and skills to the task, receive an induction on joining the Panel as well as ongoing training*
- *Panel membership is composed with due regard to the need for specialist knowledge in the areas of disability, special needs and to issues of gender, race and ethnicity*
- *There is a gender balance within Panels*

- *Panel members keep up to date with legislation, theory and research in the field of substitute child care*
- *Panels seek and take formal account of external advice and expertise where necessary in order to make informed decisions*

City of Edinburgh Council (1996 – 2014)

Policies relating to Fostering Panels are set out in the suite of policies and procedures produced by the Children and Families department. The *Looked After Children Manual Document 12: Fostering of Children (Scotland) Regulations 1996* outline the responsibilities of Local Authorities in terms of conducting Fostering Panels:

- *The authority must appoint a panel of individuals to consider and advise the Authority on the suitability of prospective foster carers and their suitability in respect of a particular child or children*
- *Foster Panels can consider other matters, such as allowances to family and friends caring of children who are not foster children or the needs of children who may have to leave home to be looked after*
- *The regulations do not specify the size of the panel, but require it to be sufficient to discharge its functions efficiently with the number, relevant qualifications and experience of individual members being appropriate for the task*
- *There is a requirement for the appointment, as a panel member, of a medical adviser who will advise Fostering Panels*
- *The Fostering Panel will make recommendations to the authority. They do not make decisions themselves*

This policy appears to have been updated in 2008 and formed part of the Carers Handbook. This ensured that foster carers were aware of the policy surrounding Foster Panels. The handbook outlines the roles and responsibilities of the Fostering Panels as being:

- *To make recommendations to the Agency Decision Maker on the approval or rejection of prospective foster cares*
- *Agreeing approval details, including the age and number of children for which a carer can care for*
- *To undertake care reviews*

The handbook goes on to highlight the professional nature of Fostering Panels, and the social work professionals who will be involved:

The panel has between three and five members who have relevant knowledge, skills, experience and expertise. The panel may include professionals, carers and

previous service users. The Departments medical advisor may also be present if there are specific health issues to discuss. An experienced panel member will chair the panel.

Local Authority policy relating to Fostering Panels was further discussed on 9 October 2012 by the Education, Children and Families Committee when they considered the Annual Review of Service Strategy for Children and Young People. This review related to children and young people who were looked after and accommodated children by the authority, and highlights the capacity, efficiency and quality of Fostering Panels. The review also recommended ongoing training for Family Based Care Team staff and members of the Fostering Panel. In response to this a designated Team Leader post was created to oversee and provide quality assurance for all Fostering Panels held by the authority. This post is still in existence today and is filled by a social work professional. It is clear that the policy aims and intentions relating to Fostering Panels were to ensure that decisions were made based on the best interest of the child or young person.

viii. Recruitment and training of foster carers

Edinburgh Corporation (1930 – 1975)

Policy and procedural aims and intentions relating to the recruitment and training of foster carers were included in the *Regulations and Rules in regards to Boarded Out Boys and Girls*, which was produced in 1933 by the Lord Provost, Magistrates and the Council of the City and Royal Burgh of Edinburgh (SL164/1/7). This policy set out the terms by which foster cares could be recruited:

- A register was to be kept of all persons who were willing and fit to act as foster carers
- Applicants must be between 25 and 55 years old and must live in Scotland
- When selecting foster carers, the authority may have a say as to the number of approved foster carers in a particular area
- Before a child is boarded out, the foster carer will have undergone all the necessary and appropriate training. A foster carer of the same religious practice as the child should be selected to allow the child to be brought up in accordance with their religious persuasion

The recruitment of foster carers was discussed further by the Town Clerk department in 1950, in which the department discussed proposals for the development of social work services over a six year plan. This plan estimated that a further 50 foster carers would be required to cope with the demand for foster placements, and that the authority were worried that boarding out

regulations were not being met because of shortages in professional social work staff and foster carers. The proposals aimed to increase the roll of foster carers and staff, as all prospective foster carers were required to be assessed by senior social work staff, who also had to consider references from both the police and public health departments as to the fitness of prospective carers (TC File 16).

Both the content of the policy relating to the recruitment and training of foster carers and the policy aims and intentions noted in the Town Clerk social work department improvement proposals clearly highlight the aims of the authority when recruiting and training prospective foster carers.

Lothian Regional Council (1975 – 1996)

While no definitive policy on the recruitment and training of foster carers has survived from this period, the Social Work Committee and the Director of Social Work were in constant communication over the issue. The committee minutes and reports by the Director of Social Work give us an insight into the policy aims and intentions of the authority in terms of the recruitment and training of foster carers. In 1975 the Director of Social Work reported to the Social Work Committee that the Division participated in a foster carer recruitment campaign as part of National Foster Care Week. The Director notes that the publicity in local media, posters, leaflets and mobile information centres received a total of 26 definite enquiries from prospective foster carers (LRC3/8/3/31). This suggests the contents of a policy by which the authority would attract and recruit potential foster carers.

A Social Work Department publication from November 1976 further highlights the challenges faced by the authority in recruiting foster carers and provides policy suggestions for how this could be overcome:

...the department's capacity to recruit foster parents is variable in different parts of the region. Attention should be given to the problem of foster parent recruitment, both where there are disparities and more generally. A number of things could be done. First, more concentrated campaigns may be needed and the use of media needs consideration. Second, allowances to foster parents and their method of payment need to be examined, and all possible improvements. Third, attention must be given to the level of support given to foster parents. Breakdown in placements might be avoided and fewer foster parents drop out if more social work support were available. Fourth, the possibility of developing a 'professional' foster parent scheme, where experienced foster parents are paid a salary in return for caring for difficult children is worth further examination. (LRC3/8/1/1)

The Director of Social Work then reported to the Social Work Committee in 1976 on proposed methods for publicising the need to recruit more foster carers. As with above, these suggestions included placing adverts in the local press, as well as adverts on local radio and television adverts (LRC3/8/3/2).

Another report by the Director of Social Work during this period focussed on setting up a Family Care Project as a specialised extension of foster care for children between 14 - 18 for whom suitable foster placements can't be found. The proposal was that "Community Carers" would be recruited on a freelance basis to provide a home for such young people. It was proposed that these carers would be known as "Community Carers" so as to distinguish them from foster parents. Furthermore, the Director of Social Work reported to the Social Work Committee that there would be an awareness week in November for the department to publicise the urgent need for foster parents throughout Lothian region (LRC/8/3/2).

Training for all categories of foster carers was discussed by the Director of Social Work in a report to the Social Work Committee in 1978. In the report, the Director comments on the pilot of a Family Care Scheme in which Community Carers would provide foster placements for young people. He notes that carers must receive training before their approval, and so this suggests the content of policies relating to the recruitment and training of foster carers (LRC3/3/8/4)

The policy content relating to the training of foster carers can further be assumed by a report by to the Social Work Committee in 1994. Within this report, the Director of Social Work notes that a Children and Families Resource Team had been set up within social work districts to co-ordinate the recruitment, training and development of foster carers. It can be surmised that policy at the time dictated that this team was responsible for ensuring all foster carers had been appropriately recruited and had undergone the necessary training before they were able to care for children or young people (LRC3/8/3/1/14).

In June 1995, the *Quality of Caring Standards for Fostering and Adoption Services* provided the authority with an updated policy on the recruitment of foster carers and outlined the eligibility requirements for fostering. The Standards also noted that procedures relating to the recruitment of carers ensured a very high quality of carer would be recruited for the authority. The recruitment policy outlined:

- Subject to legal and professional requirements, carers should be recruited from a wide range of family and household structures, socio-economic groups and cultural groups from all races and religions
- Carers must be primarily committed to caring positively for a child in need, and to a child centred approach to caring

- Legal requirements about the nature and standard of carers must be met, and no one who has been convicted of an offence under Schedule 1 of the Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act 1975 can foster or care for children
- Only applicants between the ages of 21-60 can be considered for foster care. Carers who reach 60 years old will normally be expected to retire from full-time caring with consideration given to the needs of the child already in placement
- Carers must be reviewed annually
- Police and medical checks must be carried out and their results considered. Caution should be exercised where an applicant has been convicted of a criminal offence in the past, particularly in relation to any violent or anti-social behaviour outwith a youthful phase which has been outgrown
- Applicants who are undergoing fertility treatment will normally be expected to cease this before they can be approved as foster carers
- Any applicants who hold racist or other discriminatory views will not be approved as foster carers

The policy further outlines that those who wished to become foster carers should be in stable circumstances, and during the application process, social work professionals would have to investigate a number of areas within the private lives of prospective carers:

- Prospective carers should have insight into the effects of their own life experiences, strengths and limitations
- Carers should be able to ask for advice and support when needed
- Carers should have sufficient time as well as enough physical and emotional energy to offer children
- Carers should be open and willing to develop new skills and knowledge as well as undertake any training required
- Carers must recognise the importance of physical safety, both within and outwith the home
- Carers must recognise the importance of emotional warmth and stability

The Quality Standards also provided policy aims and intentions for the training of foster carers, stating:

- Support, training and supervision are provided by a variety of means, including contact with the appropriate social work staff, topic-based training, peer group support and counselling
- Carers will be kept up to date with new knowledge or advancements in the field of childcare

- Training will be available in specific areas including safe caring, child protection, child development and child health
- Carers must undergo the minimum training programme before they are approved
- Any gaps in training will be identified and filled. Experienced carers contribute to the design of the training programme and take part in delivering training to new carers

It is evident that the authority had many robust policies in place between 1975 – 1995, and where these policies have not survived, we can assume their content through reports and Committee minutes relating to the recruitment and training of foster carers.

City of Edinburgh Council (1996 – 2014)

Part of a suite of policies and procedures produced by the Children and Families Department, the *Looked After Children Regulations 1996* outlines the policy intentions and the responsibilities of the authority in terms of foster carer recruitment and training. It states that the authority must:

- Provide carers with general preparation and training to prepare them for becoming authority carers. This should include an ongoing programme of training and training for special and specific circumstances
- Provide training groups
- Provide carers with departmental policies and procedures

The *Looked After Children Regulations 1996* policy document further outlines the responsibilities of foster carers in relation to their training, and states that carers must participate in all training opportunities and events as well as carer support groups. This policy of training was further encapsulated within the authority Carer Agreement from 1999.

Anecdotal evidence indicates that during the 1990's and 2000s, there was a policy aim to recruit carers through advertising, publicity and information sessions run by the Family Based Care team. From c.2005 a dedicated recruitment team was formed along with a Recruitment Strategy Group made up of social work professionals, senior managers, foster carers and communications professionals. Further anecdotal evidence from staff working within the department during this period suggests that there was a policy commitment to providing training for foster carers. This training was wide ranging and included training sessions on safer caring, HIV Curriculum for Excellence and caring for vulnerable babies.

Between 2007 – 2014, the Education, Children and Families Committee continued to discuss the recruitment of foster carers and Committee minutes from 3 October 2007 show that a Social Work Improvement Plan was considered by Committee in which there was a proposal to increase the number and availability of foster placements by recruiting more carers. Further

minutes from 8 September 2009 show that Committee considered a Service Strategy and Improvement Plan for looked after children and young people who were accommodated by the authority. This outlined a policy intention to increase again the number of foster carers by using feedback from both retired and newly appointed carers to inform improvements on the recruitment process. The Improvement Plan also proposed to explore opportunities for incentive-based strategies to boost recruitment and retention of carers, as well as improve the average time between prospective foster carers submitting their application and receiving registration approval.

The Education, Children and Families Committee also discussed the training of foster carers, and considered the policy aims and intentions that were outlined in the Chief Social Work Officer's Annual Report from 2007-2008. This report outlines the development of a policy for joint training opportunities for foster carers, including additional support for foster carers during training. Further to this, minutes from the Education, Children and Families Committee from 9 October 2012 states that the department was set to publish an annual training programme for foster carers, and that options for health care training were being explored.

Inspection reports by the Care Commission and the Care Inspectorate between 2006 and 2014 show that inspectors scrutinised the authority's foster carer recruitment policies and processes, and these were consistently identified as areas of strength by inspectors. This, along with the extensive examples provide show the existence of clear policies relating to recruitment and training of foster carers within the authority.

- vii. Requiring employers to divulge details of complaints etc. in relation to prospective foster carers to the local authority

Edinburgh Corporation (1930 – 1975)

No records, policies or procedures relating to the divulgence of complaints by employers have survived from this period. Committee minutes, children's client files and the results of the foster carer file audit were scoped, but no evidence was found.

Lothian Regional Council (1975 – 1996)

No records, policies or procedures relating to the divulgence of complaints by employers have survived from this period. Committee minutes, children's client files and the results of the foster carer file audit were scoped, but no evidence was found.

City of Edinburgh Council (1996 – 2014)

Anecdotal evidence from staff suggests that, during this period, there was a requirement of the authority to seek references from current employers during the foster carer application and Home Study assessment process. The British Association for Adoption and Fostering released the Form F application form in 2012 to be used in foster carer applications. In terms of references from current employers, the form asks:

- *How long have you known the applicant, and in what capacity?*
- *What is/was the applicant's position within your organisation?*
- *When did this employment/position start and finish if they are no longer employed by you?*
- *Please comment on the applicant's health/sickness record*
- *Is there a warning or any other disciplinary action on file or pending?*
- *Please comment on the applicant's ability to work with others as part of a team*
- *Please comment on the applicant's honesty, trustworthiness and ability to sensitive information confidential*
- *Please give details of any incidents or events involving the applicant that have caused you concern*
- *Do you have any reason to believe the applicant may do anything to harm a child?*
- *If you had/have a child, would you be happy to leave them in the applicant's care?*
- *If appropriate, please comment on the applicant's knowledge of children. Do they communicate with children appropriate to their age and understanding?*
- *If appropriate, please describe any experience the applicant has had of setting appropriate boundaries and managing children's behaviour*

While this does not equate to a formal policy, the adoption of this form by the authority suggests the existence of a policy intention.

- ix. Reviewing a child's continued residence in foster care or in a particular foster care placement.

Edinburgh Corporation (1930 – 1975)

In 1933 the authority adopted the *Regulations and Rules in regard to Boarded Out Boys and Girls*, which became the focus of their policy aims and intentions relating to the reviewing of continued residence in foster placements for children and young people. These regulations outlined the expectation for continued review of children in foster placements:

- *The Education Authority may supply a visit book to the foster parents for the purpose of recording all official visits made to the foster home*
- *The Education Authority shall have the right to remove any boy or girl from a foster parent at any time without assigning reason therefor (SL61/1/15)*

In 1950, the social work department further discussed the reviewing of placements and suggested that a policy of regular reviewing would be established for all children in foster care (TC File 16). It is evident that the authority had policy aims and intentions relating to reviewing placements as far back as 1933, with discussions and updates continuing throughout the period.

Lothian Regional Council (1975 – 1996)

Policy relating to the review of placement was discussed in 1984 by the Social Work Committee, who agreed to formalise arrangements for the reviewing and recording of such placement reviews for all children in care, including foster care, every 6 months. Further to this, the Director of Social Work recommended that all children in care, including foster care, had reviews of their placements every 6 months. The Social Work Committee approved this policy (LRC2/1/1/20/11).

City of Edinburgh Council (1996 –2014)

As part of the Neighbourhood Model adopted by the authority in 2001, the Looked After and Accommodated Children Reviewing Team was implemented as a centralised service, and this is where policies relating to reviewing foster care placements were carried out. The team consisted of case independent Chairpersons, who were suitably qualified and experienced to perform the role of chairperson for Looked After and Accommodated Child Care Reviews. The main function and responsibility of the team was to review, and amend in accordance with the assessment of need, the child's care plan. These plans were formulated, amended and recorded under SMART principles (Specific Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Timebound), which were then to be progressed and further reviewed at any following procedurally timetabled review.

Minutes from the Children and Families Sub-Committee on Standards from 7 December 2005 show that a report by the Reviewing Team outlined policy content for reviewing foster placements. The Accommodated Review Team Annual Report covering October 2004 –

September 2005 outlines that policies were in place to ensure reviews were being held within statutory timescales. The report does note however, that it is not always possible to do so. The policy states that children and young people should be given advanced warning of reviews, what professional have written about them as well as a chance to express their views on their placement. It is clear, from the evidence presented, that robust policies for reviewing foster placements were in place in the authority during this period.

- vii. Visits to a foster care placement (including frequency, purpose, content, follow up and record keeping)

Edinburgh Corporation (1930 – 1975)

While no particular policy or procedure relating to visiting foster care placements has survived, evidence from various committee minutes can give us an insight into the policy aims and intentions of the authority. In 1934 the Public Assistance Committee discussed the Poor Relief (Scotland) Regulations 1934, which stated:

...each house in which a child is boarded out shall be visited by the City Public Assistance Officer at least twice a year, and a report of the visits recorded in a visiting book which shall remain in the possession of the guardian, on one of which visits be may be accompanied by a member of the Public Assistance Committee (SL61/1/6).

The Public Assistance Committee appear to have approved these regulations as a policy, and reports on visits by Councillors to boarded out children continued to be presented to the committee. Minutes note that these visits usually took place in the summer and were allocated to Councillors through a ballot. With the outbreak of the First World War, the Public Assistance Committee decided that these visits should continue (SL61/1/11).

The Public Assistance Committee minutes from 1943 show that the committee recommended that visits and supervision of boarded out children should be carried out by the City Social Services Officer (SL61/1/15). Town Clerk papers from the Social Work Committee from 1950 further note that visits to children in foster placements were to continue and that a regular review system was to be established for all children in foster placements (TC File 16). Contrary to the recommendations of the Public Assistance and the Social Work Committees noted above, the Children's Committee reported in 1951 that the Counties of Cities Association stated that the local supervision and visits to boarded out children was unnecessary. Despite this, Councillors continued to visited children in foster placements (SL116/1/4). These recommendations and subsequent actions suggest the existence of a policy relating to the visiting of children in foster placements, and so we can assume the content of such policies that have not survived.

In 1965, the visitation to children in foster placements was further discussed by the Children's Committee. Within the minutes of the committee, it is noted that, under the Boarding Out of Children (Scotland) Regulations 1959, Councillors were not obliged to make visits to boarded out children. The obligation to carry out visits rested with the Children's Officer who had to make visits four times per year, however the Children's Committee agreed that Councillors should still make visits to children in foster placements along with the Children's Officer (SL116/1/18).

From the evidence and examples provided above, it can be surmised that there was a policy in place in relation to visits being made to children and young people in foster placements. Despite no policies having survived, the evidence within Committee minutes provide an insight into their content, aims and intentions.

Lothian Regional Council (1976 – 1995)

It is fair to assume that policy and procedural aims relating to the visits of children in foster placements were underpinned by national legislation, such as the Children Act 1975 and the Boarding Out and Fostering of Children (Scotland) Regulations 1985. Please see 4.1 for further details.

In August 1984, the Social Work Committee agreed to formal arrangements for the reviewing and visiting of all children in care every 6 months, including children in foster care, as per the legislation. The Committee noted that there was draft legislation relating to childcare and the authority's involvement in adoption, which would appear to be the Boarding Out and Fostering of Children (Scotland) Regulations 1985. The Director of Social Work recommended that all children in care are subject to 'review and recording' every 6 months which was then approved by the Committee (LRC2/1/1/20/11).

The Boarding Out and Fostering of Children (Scotland) Regulations 1985 introduced further provisions in relation to the monitoring of a child's continued residence in a foster placement. Under regulation 18, the authority was required to ensure that the child and their foster carer were visited within one week of the placement being made and then at intervals no more than three months from the previous visit thereafter. Regulation 18 also stated that the authority should visit the child on all other occasions considered necessary in order to supervise the child's welfare and to give support and assistance to the foster carers. From information provided in 4.2(ii), the adherence in practice to policies and procedures suggest that these regulations underpinned the policy at the time.

In 1995, the authority implemented the Quality in Care Standards for Fostering and Adoption Services, which outlines the policy and procedural aims in relation to visits to foster placements.

The Standard states that supervision of placements must be provided by the relevant social work professionals to ensure the placement is going well for both the child and the carer.

City of Edinburgh Council (1996 – 2014)

Policies relating to the visiting of children and young people in foster placements were contained within the suite of policies and procedures created by the Children and Families Department. The *Looked After Children Procedures* from June 1998 were underpinned by the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 and stated that the minimum statutory requirements for social work professionals to visit children and young people in foster placements was within the first week of the placement commencing and then at 3 monthly intervals after that. It appears that this policy intention was founded on the relevant national legislation.

A further policy aim relating to visits to children and young people in foster placements was noted within the Children and Young People's Strategy Panel minutes from 28th August 2003. A recommended policy aim from the Director of Social Work was to introduce arrangements for unplanned visits to children in foster placements and their foster carers. The minutes note that this suggested policy aim was the result of the Edinburgh Inquiry recommendations.

The policy aims and intentions in relation to visits was set out in the Carers Handbook from 2008 onwards. The Handbook sets out the responsibilities of liaison social workers, including regular visits to both the foster carer and the child or young person in placement. The Handbooks notes that the social work professional would keep a written record of each visit, and these would be kept within the relevant case files. It is clear that the policy aims and intentions of the authority were underpinned by both legislation and recommendations from the Edinburgh Inquiry.

- x. Transfer of a child from one foster placement to another (including preparation and support)

Edinburgh Corporation (1930 – 1975)

While no policy relating to the transfer of a child from one foster placement to another has survived, it is plausible to suggest that any policy aim or intention was underpinned by the *Memorandum on the Boarding Out of Children*, produced by the Scottish Home Department in

1959. This memorandum outlined the reasons under which a child should be removed or transferred from one foster placement to another, which include:

- The placement being unsuccessful
- The child being unhappy in placement
- Unsatisfactory conduct or a poor level of care from foster carers
- A foster home in sub-standard condition
- Ill-health or death of the foster carer

The memorandum further set out the expectation of procedures being followed regarding preparation, visits and introductions should a child have to transfer from one foster placement to another. Given that there is evidence of the authority using the recommendations of this memorandum for policy aims in relation to other areas of foster care, it is highly likely that, in the absence of a direct surviving policy, the memorandum was also used to inform authority policy relating to the transfer of children from one foster placement to another.

Lothian Regional Council (1975 – 1996)

There is very little surviving evidence of policies relating to the transfer of children from one foster placement to another within the authority during this period. The only surviving policy comes from the *Quality in Caring Standards for Fostering and Adoption*, which were adopted as policy by the authority in June 1995. The policy notes that any child should be fully and carefully prepared for any move out of their foster placement, whether that move is back home with their birth family, to another foster home or placement or to an independent living facility. While there is very scant evidence of a policy during this period, these standards outline the policy aims and intentions of the authority in relation to the transfer of a child from one placement to another.

City of Edinburgh Council (1996 – 2014)

The Looked After and Accommodated Children Manual from March 1997 includes a procedure covering the emergency transfer of a child or young person between foster placements. Due to the current Covid-19 restrictions, we are unable to access children's client records or foster carer case files to inform this answer, and so cannot expand further at this time.

- vii. Transfer of a child between foster care and residential care (including preparation and support)

Edinburgh Corporation (1930 – 1975)

While no clear policy relating to the transfer of a child between foster care and residential care has survived, it is likely that the authority based its policy content on the *Memorandum on the Boarding-Out of Children*, produced by the Scottish Home Department in 1959. The memorandum states that where a placement has been unsuccessful, and the child is unhappy, the Boarding Out Officer should assess the child's suitability for being placed into a children's home, as these surroundings may suit the child better. Given the authority appears to have based their policy aims and intentions on national legislation and guidance during this period, it is likely that this memorandum formed the basis of the policy relating to the transfer of a child between a foster placement and a residential placement.

Lothian Regional Council (1975 – 1996)

There is very little surviving evidence of policies relating to the transfer of children from a foster placement to a residential placement within the authority during this period. The only surviving policy comes from the *Quality in Caring Standards for Fostering and Adoption*, which were adopted as policy by the authority in June 1995. The policy notes that any child should be fully and carefully prepared for any move out of their foster placement, whether that move is back home with their birth family, to another foster home, residential placement or to an independent living facility. While there is very scant evidence of a policy during this period, these standards outline the policy aims and intentions of the authority in relation to the transfer of a child from one placement to another.

City of Edinburgh Council (1996 – 2014)

The Looked After and Accommodated Children Manual from March 1997 includes a procedure covering the emergency transfer of a child or young person between foster placements. Due to the current Covid-19 restrictions, we are unable to access children's client records or foster carer case files to inform this answer, and so cannot expand further at this time.

vii. Child protection

Edinburgh Corporation (1930 – 1975)

While no official policies relating to child protection have survived, in 1933 the Education Committee discussed the *Boarding Out of Children Regulations*, which included comment on child protection for those in foster placements:

A foster parent shall not administer indiscriminate or harsh punishment on any pretext whatsoever. Any serious act of misconduct on the part of a boy or girl, or any generally unsatisfactory behaviour, shall be reported to the City Education Officer. No boy or girl shall be allowed to partake of any intoxicant except upon the order of the medical officer or another doctor, or in case of sickness or other urgent cause (SL164/1/7).

As these regulations were discussed at Committee level, it is likely that they informed the content of any child protection policies in place during this time.

Lothian Regional Council (1975 – 1996)

Child protection policy content recommendations were outlined in a report by the Director of Social Work to the Social Work Committee in 1976. In his report, the Director recommends that training should be provided to all social work professionals to allow them to spot and deal with any child protection issues. The report also recommends the creation of a central register for the details of children who are considered to be at risk so they can be quickly identified and suitable action could be taken (LRC3/8/3/2).

In 1988, the Social Work Committee noted that the 4th edition of the *“Lothian Region Child Abuse Guidelines”* had come into force and that these constituted a substantial rearrangement of, and supplement to, existing sections. The changes also took account of other major developments regarding the computerisation of the Register in January 1985 as well as the Data Protection Act 1984 and the move towards open access. (LRC2/1/1/20/15 1988- 1989).

City of Edinburgh Council (1996 – 2014)

Policies relating to child protection were set out in the Children and Families Practice Guidelines from September 1997. These guidelines set out how to handle child abuse allegations against staff and foster carers as well as how the complaints process worked.

The Edinburgh and the Lothians Inter-Agency Child Protection Procedures from June 2007 set out child protection policy and procedures in assessing and addressing child protection concerns. The procedure defines and categories abuse, as well as outlines the roles and

responsibilities of social work professionals and other agencies such as the police and NHS. The procedure also outlines the child protection process step by step as:

- Initial Referral Discussion takes place
- Initial Child Protection Case Conference held
- Risk assessments carried out
- Child protection plans drawn up and discussed
- Core group set up to handle the case
- Child Protection Case Conference reviewed

The roles and responsibilities of the authority are outlined within the procedure, including how to apply for a Child Protection Order and how to evidence the assessed level of risk to the child in order to allow a Sheriff to make the appropriate decisions.

From the evidence and examples of policies and procedures provided above, it is clear that policy aims and intentions existed to protect the most vulnerable children under the care of the authority, and the procedures set out step by step guidance to aid social work professionals to discharge their duties to a high standard.

vii. Complaints handling

Edinburgh Corporation (1930 – 1975)

No policy or procedure relating to complaints handling has survived from this period, however we can assume that the content of any policy aims and intentions were founded on the *Boarding Out of Boys and Girls Regulations* from 1959. These regulations infer that complaints handling was to be the responsibility of the Boarding Out Officer, and any complaints relating to foster care placements should be handled by them:

Any idea of a fault-finding inspection should be quite absent from the Boarding Out Officers mind when visiting the child and foster parents. If the foster home has been carefully chosen in the first place, there should be rarely occasion for criticism.

It may be suggested that these regulations formed any policy aims and intentions relating to complaints handling as there is clear evidence of the regulations being used as policy in other areas of the foster care services provided by the authority.

Lothian Regional Council (1975 – 1996)

Evidence of policy aims and intentions relating to complaints handling are noted in a report by the Director of Social Work to the Social Work Committee in 1992. The report notes that there had been an agreed complaints procedure in place since December 1991 and further suggested:

...there was a need to promote and publicise a proactive approach towards ensuring that children and young people in care were aware of the arrangements. The Director proposed a further Complaints Officer post focused on the needs of children and young people. A key role for the post would be the development of a system which addressed children's rights and advocacy within the context of the Regional Council's Equal Opportunities Policy. In addition, the Director would report further on possible arrangements which would give elected members responsibilities as official visitors to residential homes, including homes for children (LRC2/1/1/20/18)

In 1992, the Director of Social Work further notes that the authority must establish a robust complaints procedure under the Social Work (Representations Procedure) (Scotland) Order 1990. In order to do this, the Director proposed that a Review Committee be set up to ensure complaints policies and procedures adhered to this legislation (LRC3/8/3/18). In 1993, the Director of Social Work advised the Social Work Committee that the complaints policy and procedure had been completed as was ready for implementation (LRC2/1/1/20/19).

In 1995, the Director of Social Work made the Social Work Committee aware of a review of the complaints handling policies and procedures. The Director noted that these updates would include additional guidelines for those investigating complaints made by children or young people in care, and that a working group had been set up to ensure the updated policy guidance was robust. In his report to the Social Work Committee, the Director of Social Work further highlighted the policy aims and intentions of the updates to the complaints handling procedures. They advised the committee that a Children and Young People's Information Rights Officer had been appointed in March 1994 to assist with complaints from children and young people in care, including those in foster placements. This had resulted in more looked after children being aware of the complaints handling procedure. (LRC3/8/3/21). Consequently, the Quality in Caring Standards for Fostering and Adoption Services procedure noted that, from June 1995, part of the policy aim for complaints handling was that all children and young people in care, including those in foster care, were familiar with and knew how to make use of the complaints procedure. Additional policy aims and intentions set out in the Quality in Caring Standards included:

- The complaints policy and procedure is to be made known and freely available to children, young people, birth families and carers

- Children and young people can access complaint forms without recourse to carers
- There is specific material addressed to children on how to make a complaint
- Staff are familiar with and use the Practice Guidance for dealing with complaints
- The Children's Rights and Information Officer is involved with the child or young person submitting the complaint
- There must be a system in place for recording complaints
- Timescales in responding and resolving complaints must be adhered to

It is clear that the policy aims and intentions and the procedures for handling complaints were robust during this period and had undergone reviews to ensure they were relevant for children and young people in care.

City of Edinburgh Council (1996 – 2014)

Edinburgh's Children, produced by the Edinburgh Inquiry after their investigation into the abuse of children in care in 1999 laid out recommendations that formed the basis of complaints policies in relation to foster care. The main recommendation that underpinned the policy aims and intentions is:

- *Recommendation 112 – investigations into complaints and allegations against foster carers be carried out by an independent person with no responsibility for foster care provision in the area*

This recommendation continued to be used to underpin policy aims in August 2002 when the *Children and Families Procedures Manual* was released. This manual outlines the procedures for managing allegations and complaints against departmental carers. From 2003 onwards, a number of authority Committee considered, monitored and reviewed policies relating to complaints. The Social Work Complaints Review Committee was set up in order to review and resolve complaints that were unsuccessful during frontline resolution.

In 2005, the *National Care Standards for Foster Care and Family Placement Services* were published by the Scottish Executive and outlined the expectations of the Executive for complaints handling within authority social work services. These expectations helped to form policy content in relation to complaints handling:

- Children, young people, birth families and carers must know how to make a suggestion or complaint to the social work department
- Children and young people should be aware that their foster carers can make representations on their behalf
- Everyone involved in a complaint should receive a report on the outcomes within an agreed timescale

- Children and young people must be given information about how to make a complaint directly to the Care Commission
- Children and young people should be aware that independent advice and support can be made available to them during the complaints process

The Carers Handbook from 2008 includes the policy aims and intentions in relation to complaints handling to ensure foster carers were aware of the procedure if a complaint was made against them. The Handbook notes that there were two options available to resolve to complaints, depending on their nature. Complaints against foster carers could either be resolved through a joint meeting with the carer's liaison worker and the child's social worker, or a formal complaint could be made to the complaints officer. The handbook states that, whatever the outcome of the complaint, that foster carers should be given feedback, although sometimes this can be restricted due to confidentiality of third-party information.

The policy content and the examples provided above show that policies and procedures relating to complaints handling were underpinned by legislation and national guidance to ensure both children and young people in foster placements, as well as their carers were aware of the processes and to ensure any complaints were dealt with quickly and sensitively.

vii. Whistleblowing

Edinburgh Corporation (1930 – 1975)

There are no surviving records or evidence of whistleblowing policies or procedures being in use by the authority during this period. Committee minutes and children's client files were scoped for evidence in relation to whistleblowing, however no evidence was found.

Lothian Regional Council (1975 – 1996)

There are no surviving records or evidence of whistleblowing policies or procedures being in use by the authority during this period. Committee minutes, children's client files and foster carer files were scoped for evidence in relation to whistleblowing, however no evidence was found.

City of Edinburgh Council (1996 – 2014)

The Children and Families Practice Guidelines from February 1998 set out Whistleblowing policy aims and procedures for staff. They are encapsulated within *Staff Safety and Wellbeing; Expression of Staff Concerns*, but at this time only departmental staff were covered by this policy. These guidelines were further updated in August 2002 to also include carers:

Carers who have concerns should report these to their liaison worker or his/her line managers. If there is any difficulty about reporting any of these the carer should contact the Children's Rights Officer or the Clients Services Complaints Officer. Both at Social Work Headquarters or the Edinburgh and Lothians Registration and Inspection Service.

While evidence surrounding policy intention and content is limited at this time, it is clear that there were procedures in place to include both staff and departmental carers.

vii. Record Retention

Edinburgh Corporation (1930 – 1975)

Taking into consideration the recent legislative changes of the time, the City Social Services Officer asked the Welfare Committee to consider the retention of the bound volumes and the management of closed case files in September 1948. They agreed to a 5 year retention period from the date that the assistance had ceased. They also agreed that the disposal of the bound volumes would be subject to historical review by the City Archivist. This review would be based on the evidential and information value of the records and their suitability for long term preservation as part of the Council's corporate memory. (SL117/1/1)

Lothian Regional Council (1975 – 1996)

During the Lothian Regional Council period, it appears that, from the limited resources available, responsibility for record keeping was devolved to each department. Rather than being documented in separate, discrete procedures, record keeping requirements, including responsibility for record retention, were instead included in operational and administrative procedures issued by the Social Work department.

City of Edinburgh Council (1996 – 2014)

Post 1996, and the creation of the City of Edinburgh Council, the practice of devolved record keeping procedures continued. The first surviving record keeping procedure for children's social

	<p>care is a 1997 Social Work Department 'Retention and Archiving of Records for Children and Young People Procedure. It formed part of a suite of routinely revised departmental administrative procedures that governed various processes, including client file handling, complaints, disciplinary, incident management, record storage and disposal and subject access requests. These continued in various forms as a discrete set of procedures up to and beyond 2004, first in the Social Work Department and then the Children and Families Directorate.</p> <p>From 1996 onwards, the Social Work Department routinely reviewed and updated its record keeping procedures in line with legislative and business changes. This practice continued in the Children and Families directorate from 2005 onwards.</p> <p>In 2004, the Council commissioned a review of its records management arrangements across the organisation. This noted the lack of policy and an organisation wide approach to record keeping. The Council's Records Management Policy was first approved in 2005; then reviewed in 2012 and again in 2014 and 2016. The Council's retention schedules were established in 2011 and were based on national policy and legislation. These had a major review between 2014 – 2016 and have been updated with minor changes since then.</p> <p>In terms of policy, the Council has retained all versions of its Records Management policy. Similarly, since 2011, the Council retains an audit trail of all changes made to its retention rules and corporate record keeping guidance. However, it appears from surviving record keeping procedures elsewhere in the Council, including Children & Families / Social Work, have been updated without any consistency or visible version control.</p>
e)	<p><u>Who compiled the policies and/or procedures?</u></p> <p>Edinburgh Corporation (1930 – 1975)</p> <p>Between 1930 and 1948, the Public Assistance Committee, along with the Education Committee, Education Officer and the Public City Assistance Officer, took decisions on matters of policy, procedure and/or practice in relation to foster care at a local authority level. (Ref. SL61 & SL164). Between 1948 and 1969, the Children's Committee, along with the Children's Officer took decisions on matters of policy, procedure and/or practice in relation to foster care at a local authority level (SL116).</p> <p>Lothian Regional Council (1975 – 1996)</p>

	<p>Between 1969 and 1975, the Social Work Committee, along with the Director of Social Work took decisions on matters of policy, procedure and/or practice in relation to foster care at a local authority level. (SL118).</p> <p>From 1975 to 1994, the Social Work Committee of the Lothian Regional Council, along with the Director of Social Work took decisions on matters of policy, procedure and/or practice in relation to foster care at a local authority level. (LRC2)</p> <p>There is evidence from the minutes from all of the above-mentioned committees that new policies, procedures or practices were at times discussed at committee level, especially those required in line with emerging legislation. The Secretary of State was in contact with the committees with matters relating to any national changes in policy and procedures.</p> <p>City of Edinburgh Council (1996 – 2014)</p> <p>In 1996, the leadership structure, which had responsibilities for foster care services and therefore the implementation and compliance of related policies, procedures and practices was made up of the Director of Social Work, Head of Operations, Operations Manager and Team Manager.</p> <p>A further re-organisation in 2016 produced the current management structure which holds responsibility for the implementation and compliance of policies, procedures and practices relating to foster care service.</p>
<p>f)</p>	<p><u>When were the policies and/or procedures put in place?</u></p> <p>The abovementioned policies and procedures were in use by the authority during the following times:</p> <p>1930 – 1975: Edinburgh Corporation</p> <p>1975 – 1996: Lothian Regional Council</p> <p>1996 – Present: City of Edinburgh Council</p>
<p>g)</p>	<p><u>Were such policies and/or practices reviewed?</u></p> <p>From the evidence gathered and presented in our response to the questions above, we can ascertain that policies and practices were reviewed by the authority.</p>

h)	<p><u>If so, what was the reason for review?</u></p> <p>All policies and procedures were/are reviewed in accordance with changes in legislation, local authority reorganisations, relevant research, changes in local practices.</p>
i)	<p><u>What substantive changes, if any, were made to the policies and/or procedures over time?</u></p> <p>No substantive changes made other than the changes made at review stages, for the reasons noted above.</p>
j)	<p><u>Why were changes made?</u></p> <p>N/A</p>
k)	<p><u>Were changes documented?</u></p> <p>Any changes were reflected in the newly structured policy and/or procedure.</p>
l)	<p><u>Was there an audit trail?</u></p> <p>No</p>
Present	
m)	<p><u>With reference to the present position, are the answers to any of the above questions different?</u></p> <p>Yes.</p>
n)	<p><u>If so, please give details.</u></p> <p>Since 2016, three procedures Family Based Care (FBC) Recruitment to Approval, FBC Approval to De-Registration, and FBC Continuing Care have been developed and continually updated and revised to ensure FBC staff are able to deliver the service from a consistent practice base.</p> <p>All Children's Rights activity is now undertaken by Who Cares Scotland? And is completely independent of the Council. Their function remains the same.</p>

(ii) Practice	
Past	
a)	<p><u>Did the local authority adhere in practice to its policy/procedures in relation to the provision of foster care?</u></p>

Edinburgh Corporation (1930 – 1975)

There is very little surviving information from this period relating to adherence in practice to policies and procedures, however, from the limited information available it would appear that the authority did adhere to its policies and procedures in general terms. A sample of child client files from 1930's – 1970's provides evidence of carers visits being carried out from the 1950's onwards and shows that children were usually boarded out in country towns or villages in accordance with the *Regulations and Rules in regards to Boarded Out Boys and Girls* mentioned above (SL164/1/7). As per these rules, harsh punishment and discipline was forbidden, and there was no evidence found of these practices taking place. From this sample, there is also evidence that medical checks were carried out for children placed in foster care from as far back as the 1930's.

Lothian Regional Council (1975 – 1996)

From the limited information available due to the current Covid-19 restrictions, it is possible to ascertain that, for the most part, policies and procedures were adhered to in practice in relation to the provision of foster care by the authority during this period. A sample audit of children's client files from the 1970's – 1990's show that social work professionals did have oversight of placements through phone calls and visits. A file audit of foster carer files from this period also provides evidence of regular reviews for children places with foster carers, and so demonstrates the local authority's adherence in practice to its policies and procedures.

City of Edinburgh Council (1996 – 2014)

Both the child client file sample audit and the foster carer file audit have shown that policies and procedures were followed in practice in relation to the provision of foster care during the 1996 – 2014 period, particularly in relation to complaints. The child client file sample audit shows that complaints were recorded, investigated and followed up where required. There are also a number of examples within the sample audit of child protection measures being put in place, including joint interviews with social work professionals and the police where necessary.

There is also evidence of adherence to policies and procedures around discipline of children in foster care. Policies and procedures surviving from this time states that physical discipline was forbidden, and the results of the child client file sample show that this was the case in practice. The file sample states that discipline came in the form of non-corporeal sanctions, such as

	<p>children being sent to their rooms for a 'time out' or the withdrawal of treats for bad behaviour by the foster carer.</p> <p>Where possible, further examples of adherence in practice to policies and procedures are highlighted below in question (b).</p>
<p>b)</p>	<p><u>Did the local authority adhere in practice to its policy/procedures on the following:</u></p> <p>i. <u>Child welfare (physical and emotional)</u></p> <p>Edinburgh Corporation (1930 – 1975)</p> <p>From the limited information available from the child client record sample audit, it is plausible to assume that policy and procedure relating to the physical and emotional welfare of children were followed in practice. There is evidence within child client files from the 1950's onwards of physical and emotional welfare being noted by social work professionals during visits. For example, social work professionals would note in the client record if the child was happy and settled in their placement, as well as if they were eating and sleeping well. Any medical issues were also noted within contact records and case notes, including routine medical check-ups and health visitor appointments where necessary. More serious medical intervention also had to be noted within the child's client files, and examples gained from the sample audit include tonsillectomies and appendix removals. All children placed with foster carers also had to have an initial medical examination as mentioned in the relevant sections above, as well as being registered with the family doctor.</p> <p>There is evidence within committee minutes that child welfare for those in foster placements was also considered at a committee level. In 1941, the Public Assistance Committee noted both police and medical reports produced when a boy placed in foster care by the authority was injured getting off a bus (SL61/1/13). This evidence, as well as the records held within child client files, suggests that policy and procedure was adhered to in practice in relation to child welfare up to a very senior level within the authority.</p> <p>Lothian Regional Council (1975 – 1996)</p> <p>In 1979, the physical and emotional welfare of children in foster placements was discussed by the Social Work Committee, with the Director of Social Work submitting that, when looking for foster placements, the welfare of children and young people was the prime consideration (LRC2/1/1/20/6). A further report by the Director of Social Work relating to the fostering and adoption services provided by the authority noted:</p>

Another principle held by the department is that no child should grow up without people whom he can regard as his parents, whether this be at home, in residential care or with a substitute family. This is in accordance with the needs of children for emotional security, a sense of identity and some understanding of the setting in which they live (LRC3/8/3/5).

It is clear that the physical and emotional welfare of children and young people in foster care was a high priority for the authority. The audits of both child client files and carer files has shown that, in practice, this was the case and so it can be deduced that policy and procedure was adhered to.

Minutes from LAAC review meetings, case notes and carer review meeting minutes held in both child client files and foster carer files show that all children and young people in foster placements were registered with their nearest doctor's surgery. There is also evidence within these records of medical attention being sought when required, as well as foster carers ensuring the children in their care attended appointments with more specialist medical professionals, including attending appointments at the Royal Hospital for Sick Children in Edinburgh. There is also evidence within these records of psychological intervention for children and young people when required, including appointments with the Child and Adolescent Mental Health services (CAMHS), and referrals to the Department of Child Psychiatry within NHS Lothian.

City of Edinburgh Council (1996 – 2014)

Evidence gathered from the child client file sample and the foster carer file audit has shown that policy and procedure was adhered to in practice in terms of physical and emotional welfare of children placed with foster carers by the authority during this period. Examples from the child client file sample include foster carers and social work professionals ensuring that children and young people had access to the appropriate psychological services appropriate to their needs, as well as specialist services such as Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). There is also evidence of routine statutory medical investigations taking place, as well as evidence of foster carers ensuring children and young people in their care had access to specialist medical services such as orthodontics and dieticians where required.

The above examples provide evidence of policies and procedures being adhered to in practice by the authority.

ii. The child's views

Edinburgh Corporation (1930 – 1975)

There are no surviving records from this time relating to the views of children placed in foster care. Children's client files were used to inform this answer; however, no evidence of children's views being sought was found.

Lothian Regional Council (1975 – 1996)

Due to Covid-19 restrictions, there is currently insufficient evidence available from the children's client files available to us that would allow us to fully determine if policies or procedures relating to the child's views were adhered to in practice by the authority.

City of Edinburgh Council (1996 – 2014)

There is evidence from the child client file sample audit of policy and procedure being adhered to in practice in relation to seeking children's views about their care. Recorded within the majority of children's files sampled from this period is evidence of social work professionals asking children and young people for their views through the *Having Your Say* form, with copies of these being kept in the child's file. There is also evidence within the client files of children and young people contacting the Children's Rights Officer in order to ensure their views were taken into consideration. A number of LAAC review minutes from the child client file sample demonstrated instances where the views of children and young people placed in foster care were taken into consideration.

iii. Placement of siblings

Edinburgh Corporation (1930 – 1975)

While evidence is limited, the child client file sample audit shows that, where possible, sibling groups were placed together with the same foster carers during this period, as noted in the Children's Separate Registers (SL611) and case notes from within individual case files. The issue was also discussed in a Full Council meeting from 1954 – 1955, when the Children's Committee submitted a report into the difficulty social work professionals had in placing large sibling groups together in the same foster placement (SL1/1/404). From the information available within case files and the Children's Separate Registers (SL611) however, it appears that it was common practice for sibling groups to be placed together in the same foster placement where this was possible.

Lothian Regional Council (1975 – 1996)

Both the client child file sample audit and the foster carer file audit has shown that, where possible, sibling groups were placed in the same foster placements during the LRC period. However, there is also evidence from both children and foster carer files where sibling groups were placed in separate foster placements. This could have been due to the availability of foster placements, or the result of other such professional decisions. Despite this, there is extensive evidence, particularly from foster carers case files, of contact between sibling groups in different foster placements being arranged and taking place.

From the examples provided, it is possible to determine that policies and procedures relating to the placement of siblings in foster care were adhered to in practice where possible.

City of Edinburgh Council (1996 – 2014)

Both the client child file sample audit and the foster carer file audit has shown that, where possible, sibling groups were placed in the same foster placements during this period. However, there is also evidence from both children and foster carer files where sibling groups were placed in separate foster placements. This could have been due to the availability of foster placements, or the result of other such professional decisions. Despite this, there is extensive evidence, particularly from foster carer case files, of contact between siblings in different foster placements being arranged and taking place.

iv. The placement of a child in foster care

Edinburgh Corporation (1930 – 1975)

There are no surviving records from this time period relating to the placement of a child in foster care. Children's client files and committee minutes were used to inform our response to this question, however no evidence relating to the placement of a child in foster care was found.

Lothian Regional Council (1975 – 1996)

Due to limited research opportunities, there is currently insufficient evidence available to allow us to fully determine if policies and procedures relating to the placement of a child in foster care were adhered to in practice by the authority at during this period.

City of Edinburgh Council (1996 – 2014)

Due to limited research opportunities, there is currently insufficient evidence available to allow us to fully determine if policies and procedures relating to the placement of a child in foster care were adhered to in practice by the authority at during this period.

- v. The particular placement of a child with foster carers

Edinburgh Corporation (1930 – 1975)

There are no surviving records from this time period relating to the particular placement of a child with foster carers. Children's client files and committee minutes were used to inform our response to this question, however no evidence relating to the particular placement of child with foster carers was found.

Lothian Regional Council (1975 – 1996)

Covid-19 restrictions have limited our research opportunities for this period, so there is currently insufficient evidence available to allow us to fully determine if policies and procedures relating to the particular placement of a child in foster care were adhered to in practice by the authority at during this period.

City of Edinburgh Council (1996 –2014)

Covid-19 restrictions have limited our research opportunities for this period, so there is currently insufficient evidence available to allow us to fully determine if policies and procedures relating to the particular placement of a child in foster care were adhered to in practice by the authority at during this period.

- vi. Contact between a child in foster care with his or her family

Edinburgh Corporation (1930 – 1975)

There is evidence from the child file audit that children in foster placements did have contact with their family. Any contact between children and their families was noted in the child's client file within social work reports, case notes and observations by social work professionals made during visits. There is also evidence within client files of parental involvement of varying degrees

in meetings and reviews where this was deemed appropriate. From the evidence gathered, a fair assumption can be made that, for the most part, policies and procedures in relation to family contact were adhered to in practice during this period.

Lothian Regional Council (1975 – 1996)

There is extensive evidence within child client files and foster carer files of contact between children in foster care and their families. Any contact between a child or young person in a foster placement and their family was noted in social worker reports, case conference minutes and at LAAC reviews, with these records then forming part of client and carer files. The file audits of client files and foster carer files highlighted examples of children staying overnight with parents and grandparents, as well as visits with extended family members, and indirect contact through phone calls with parents who were incarcerated.

LAAC review minutes, carer review minutes and reports by social work professionals have all provided evidence of parental involvement in meetings and decision making around the care of their children. This is further evidence of the local authority adhering in practice to policies and procedures surrounding contact between children in foster placements and their families.

City of Edinburgh Council (1996 – 2014)

The practices mentioned above appear to have continued within the local authority during this time, as there is extensive evidence within child client files and foster carer files of contact between children in foster care and their families. Any contact between a child or young person in a foster placement and their family was noted in social worker reports, case conference minutes and at LAAC reviews, with these records then forming part of client and carer files. The file audits of client files and foster carer files highlighted examples of children staying overnight with parents and grandparents, as well as maintaining contact by phone calls. There is also evidence within client files of children and young people having contact with extended family members through arranged visits.

LAAC review minutes, carer review minutes and reports by social work professionals have all provided evidence of parental involvement in meetings and decision making around the care of their children where appropriate. This is further evidence of the local authority adhering in practice to policies and procedures surrounding contact between children in foster placements and their families.

vii. Contact between a child in foster care and other siblings in foster care

Edinburgh Town Corporation (1930 – 1975)

As mentioned above in our response to question (iii), the child file audit shows that, where possible, sibling groups were placed together with the same foster carers by the local authority at this time. From the information available, it would appear this was common practice for children and young people placed with foster carers. Due to the limitations of the records available for this period, there is no concrete evidence that children in foster placements had contact with siblings who were not in care at the same time, however the extent of family contact discussed above alludes to contact between siblings not in the same foster placement being highly likely where possible.

Lothian Regional Council (1975 – 1996)

As mentioned above in our response to question (iii), the child file audit and the foster care file audit shows that, where possible, sibling groups were placed together with the same foster carers by the local authority at this time. From the information available, it would appear this was common practice for children and young people placed with foster carers. Where this wasn't possible, there is evidence within LAAC review minutes, carer reviews and social work reports of carers and social work professionals arranging contact between sibling groups placed in different placements, usually through visits.

City of Edinburgh Council (1996 – 2014)

As mentioned above in our response to question (iii), the child file audit and the foster care file audit shows that, where possible, sibling groups were placed together with the same foster carers by the local authority at this time, although there is slightly less evidence of this happening within the local authority during this period. Within LAAC review minutes, case conference minutes, case notes and social worker reports there is, however, an abundance of evidence of contact between sibling groups placed in separate foster placements. The minutes and reports show that this contact was often facilitated by social work professionals and carers and was in the form of visits and phone calls where appropriate.

Within LAAC review minutes and social work reports, there is also evidence of contact between sibling groups having negative effects on the children and young people involved. This evidence suggests that, where deemed appropriate by professionals, contact between sibling groups in

separate foster placements may have ceased if it was deemed emotionally damaging to the children and young people.

viii. Information sharing with the child's family

Edinburgh Town Corporation (1930 – 1975)

There is limited evidence available to determine if policies and procedures relating to information sharing with the child's family was adhered to in practice. From what information is available, there are examples from social work reports stored within children's client files where social work professionals have shared limited and select information with a child's birth family if it was deemed to be appropriate. However, for the most part, the evidence around information sharing is sparse.

Lothian Regional Council (1975 – 1996)

From the audit of child client files and foster carer files, it is possible to determine that, in practice, there was a degree of information sharing with a child's birth family. Evidence from LAAC review minutes, carer review minutes and case notes by social work professionals show that information was shared with birth families, usually through LAAC review meetings and phone calls between foster carers and birth parents. Within the client and carer files, there is also evidence of foster carers sharing photographs of children and young people with birth families if this was deemed appropriate by social work professionals.

City of Edinburgh Council (1996 – 2014)

Evidence within both client files and foster carer files shows that there was a practice within the local authority of sharing information about children in foster placements with birth families. LAAC review minutes, case notes and carer review minutes show that information sharing did happen in practice for the most part at LAAC review meetings, where all adults and social work professionals with a responsibility and interest in the care of the child would be present. There is also evidence within these records of foster carers and social work professionals sharing information, such as educational development and the outcome of any medical appointments with birth families through phone calls and contact.

ix. Fostering panels (including constitution, remit, frequency and record keeping)

Edinburgh Corporation (1930 – 1975)

There are no surviving records relating to fostering panels from this time, as fostering panels did not take place during this time.

Lothian Regional Council (1975 – 1996)

There are specific examples for this period of the local authority adhering in practice to policies and procedures in relation to complaints by family members of children. These examples can be viewed in section 5.9 of our response. Those examples and responses are varied in nature depending on the individual needs of the persons involved, as well as the specific circumstances of the complaint. These have led to various actions including internal, child protection and inter-agency investigations. Subsequent investigation outcomes have included the formal deregistration of foster carers, practice development and training of staff, pastoral, therapeutic interventions, and a change of placement for the children involved. Covid-19 restrictions have limited research opportunities for this period.

City of Edinburgh Council (1996 – 2014)

There are specific examples for this period of the local authority adhering in practice to policies and procedures in relation to complaints by family members of children. These examples can be viewed in section 5.9 of our response. Those examples and responses are varied in nature depending on the individual needs of the persons involved, as well as the specific circumstances of the complaint. These have led to various actions including internal, child protection and inter-agency investigations. Subsequent investigation outcomes have included the formal deregistration of foster carers, practice development and training of staff, pastoral, therapeutic interventions, and a change of placement for the children involved. Covid-19 restrictions have limited research opportunities for this period.

x. Recruitment and training of foster carers

Edinburgh Corporation (1930 – 1975)

There is very little surviving evidence from this time relating to the practice of the recruitment and training of foster carers. From the limited information available, the recruitment of foster carers was discussed by the Public Assistance Committee (SL61), the Children's Committee (SL116) and the Social Work Committee (SL118) in terms of there being a constant requirement to recruit new foster carers to keep up with demand for placements. Within the Public

Assistance Committee minutes from 1945 – 1946, it is noted that the City Social Services Officer reported to committee that there was a difficulty in recruiting suitable foster carers, so the churches of Edinburgh had been approached to help identify suitable people as prospective carers (SL61/1/17). There is no surviving evidence within the Children's Separate Registers (SL611) or child client files showing the adherence in practice to policies and procedures surrounding the recruitment and training of foster carers, however the surviving evidence does show that committee were aware of the difficulties in doing this.

There is no surviving evidence of training for foster carers from this period.

Lothian Regional Council (1975 – 1996)

From the information available from the foster carer file audit, it can be surmised that policy and procedure was adhered to in practice in relation to the recruitment and training of foster carers. Initial contact information and original application forms were kept in order to form part of the overall foster carer case file, as well the findings of the statutory Home Study reports. These individual records provide evidence of statutory checks being carried out in practice, including police, medical and home safety checks. There is also evidence within the foster carer files of third party checks being carried out, including police checks on those identified by the prospective foster carers as being potential babysitters for any children placed with them, and any close family and friends with whom any children or young people may come into close contact with.

Social worker reports and carer panel minutes held within foster carer files have shown that a large quantity of prospective and approved foster carers attended training sessions and information events. These records have evidenced that foster carers attended induction training and fostering preparation training run by the authority. Where approved foster carers have failed to attend training sessions, there is evidence from case notes and correspondence held within carer files of social work professionals contacting them to encourage carers to attend all training and information sessions where possible.

There is also evidence of instances where foster carers took it upon themselves to source and attend additional specialist training, including how to care for children and young people who were HIV positive and those who had additional support needs.

City of Edinburgh Council (1996 – 2014)

From the information available from the foster carer file audit, it can be surmised that policy and procedure was adhered to in practice in relation to the recruitment and training of foster carers by the authority during this period. Initial contact information and original application forms were

kept in order to form part of the overall foster carer case file, as well the findings of the statutory Home Study reports. These individual records provide evidence of statutory checks being carried out in practice, including police, medical and home safety checks. There is also evidence within the foster carer files of third party checks being carried out, including police checks on those identified by the prospective foster carers as being potential babysitters for any children placed with them, and any close family and friends with whom any children or young people may come into close contact with.

Social worker reports and carer panel minutes held within foster carer files have shown that a large quantity of prospective and approved foster carers attended training sessions and information events. These records have evidenced that foster carers attended induction training and fostering preparation training run by the authority. Where approved foster carers have failed to attend training sessions, there is evidence from case notes and correspondence held within carer files of social work professionals contacting them to encourage carers to attend all training and information sessions where possible.

There is also evidence of instances where foster carers took it upon themselves to source and attend additional specialist training, including how to care for children and young people who were HIV positive and those who had additional support needs. In a report to the Education, Children and Families Committee outlining the annual review of Services for Children and Young People from October 2013, the Director of Social Work highlights to committee that training opportunities for foster carers were being increased. This was to provide additional training to carers with teenage placements and who cared for children or young people with additional health needs. From the evidence within foster carer files and that discussed at committee level, it can be argued that recruitment and training policies and procedures were adhered to in practice by the authority.

Since around 2012 the local authority has made use of independent assessors to assess prospective foster carers. These Social Workers have been employed by the local authority on a temporary basis when the in-house fostering team has not had the capacity to undertake these assessments.

- xi. Requiring employers to divulge details of complaints etc. in relation to prospective foster carers to the local authority

Edinburgh Corporation (1930 – 1975)

There are no surviving records from this time period relating to complaint disclosures from employers of prospective foster carers. Children's client files and foster carer files were scoped to inform our response to this question, however no evidence was found.

Lothian Regional Council (1975 – 1996)

From the records available to us at this time, there is no evidence of employers of prospective foster parents being asked to divulge details of complaints. From statutory checks held within foster carers files, there is however, evidence of the authority asking employers of prospective foster carers for references, but no instances of them being asked for complaints disclosures.

City of Edinburgh Council (1996 – 2014)

From the records available to us at this time, there is no evidence of employers of prospective foster parents being asked to divulge details of complaints. From statutory checks held within foster carers files, there is however, evidence of the authority asking employers of prospective foster carers for references, but no instances of them being asked for complaints disclosures.

- xii. Reviewing a child's continued residence in foster care or in a particular foster care placement.

Edinburgh Corporation (1930 – 1975)

From the records available to us, there is extensive evidence of social work professionals reviewing a child's continued residence in a foster care placement. There is evidence within the Children's Separate Registers from the 1930's of children being removed from foster placements upon a review by social work professionals, as that placement was deemed unsuitable (acc 611).

From the 1950's onwards, there is evidence within social worker reports and case notes held in children's client files of professionals frequently contacting and visiting children and young people in social work placements, as well as extensive contact between social work professionals and foster carers. These reports and case notes show that social work professionals were reviewing placements, with one case note stating that the child was 'happy and settled within their placement,' and were taking action where required.

Lothian Regional Council (1975 – 1996)

From the child client files and foster care files scoped from this period, there is extensive evidence that the authority adhered to policy and procedure in practice in relation to reviewing foster care placements. Within the child client files, LAAC review reports show that statutory

reviewing of children and young people in foster placements was taking place. These reports note what was working well within a placement, and suggested areas for improvement if this was deemed necessary by professionals. As well as evidence of regular LAAC reviews taking place, there are also minutes held within the child client files from statutory 72-hour reviews, where social work professionals would review the foster placement and make any changes if required.

City of Edinburgh Council (1996 – 2014)

From the child client files and foster care files scoped from this period, there is extensive evidence that the authority adhered to policy and procedure in practice in relation to reviewing foster care placements. Within the child client files, LAAC review reports show that statutory reviewing of children and young people in foster placements was taking place. These reports note what was working well within a placement, and suggested areas for improvement if this was deemed necessary by professionals. As well as evidence of regular LAAC reviews taking place, there are also minutes held within the child client files from statutory 72-hour reviews, where social work professionals would review the foster placement and make any changes if required.

Carer review meeting minutes held within the foster carer files have also provided evidence of the authority reviewing foster care placements. These minutes show that the success, or otherwise, of placements were discussed by professionals and the foster carer involved. Suggestions for improvement were offered and, if need be, placements were terminated if it was deemed in the best interest of the child, young person or foster carer.

- xiii. Visits to a foster care placement (including frequency, purpose, content, follow up and record keeping)

Edinburgh Corporation (1930 – 1975)

There is extensive evidence within Council committee minutes of visits to foster placements taking place, with the earliest dating back to 1930. Within the full Council minutes from 1930 - 1931, it was noted that the Assistant Inspector for the authority would visit all boarded out children to ensure they were receiving the proper care within their placements (SL1/1/381). It is noted within these minutes that this was the policy adopted by the authority at this time, and there is evidence within further committee minutes that show this was happening in practice. There is also an instance noted within the Public Assistance Committee minutes of Councillors visiting a boarded out boy to discuss his future with his foster carer and other adults involved in his care. In the minutes of 1932 – 1933, it is noted that Councillors met with the child, his carer

and the local parish minister, and agreed that he should remain at school until he was old enough to sit a Clerkship exam (SL61/1/4). This visit is evident that policy and procedures were adhered to in practice by the authority.

In addition to the examples provided above, the various committee minutes show that members of the Public Assistance Committee (SL61), Children's Committee (SL116) and Social Work Committee (SL118) were all visiting children who were boarded out in both Edinburgh and the rest of Scotland. Councillors then reported back to committee on their findings, and there is evidence within the Children's Committee minutes from 1949 - 1950 of a Councillor raising concerns about the level of care given in a placement he visited to the wider committee (SL116/1/2). We have been unable to locate any evidence of this concern being followed up by the appropriate authorities, however the concerns were noted at committee level as stated in the minutes (SL116).

The Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 got rid of the requirement for Councillors to make visits to boarded out children, however in 1971, the Social Work Committee voted to reinstate those visits, and agreed that all Councillors should be accompanied by a social work professional when carrying out visits (SL118/1/3). This was then adhered to in practice, as the minutes show each Councillor submitted reports of their visits to be considered at committee level (SL118).

As well as committee minutes, there is evidence held within child client files of social work professionals visiting children in foster placements, with these being noted in case notes and social work reports. From these reports, it appears that social work visits would take place for children who were in placements in Edinburgh, as well as those placed further afield in the rest of the UK. Social workers noted in these reports that visits took place to ensure the child or young person was happy and settled in their placement, to ensure they were receiving the appropriate care and to ensure the foster carer was able to cope with the children and young people in their care.

It would appear, from the minutes for the committees noted above, that these visits took place annually, usually in the summer, and so policy and procedure were extensively adhered to in practice.

Lothian Regional Council (1975 – 1996)

Within the Social Work Committee papers, there is evidence that visits to children and young people in foster placements took place. In 1976, the Director of Social Work submitted a report to be considered by the Social Work Committee. They argued that visits to children and young people placed in foster placements outwith Edinburgh should still continue, and evidence gathered during the child client file audit has shown that these visits happened in practice

(LRC2/1/1/20/2). From case notes and social work reports held within child client files, it is noted that social work professionals visited those in foster placements in East Lothian, West Lothian and the Borders. These visits were to ensure the placement was going well and to discuss any required changes to the placement or the care of the child or young person.

In November 1978, the Social Work Committee also considered a report on the responsibilities of the authority to children in foster placements under the Boarding Out of Children (Scotland) Regulations 1959. From the report, committee noted that visits to children and young people in foster placement must take place every three months, and the child client files show that visits by social work professionals were happening much more frequently; usually once per month (LRC3/8/1/1). Case notes, internal social work memos and LAAC review minutes held within the child client files all show that social work professionals from the Practice Teams were frequently visiting children and young people in foster placements to review the placement, ensure things were going well and answer any questions or concerns had by either the child or the foster carer.

City of Edinburgh Council (1996 – 2014)

From the records and case files audited, it appears that the above practice of visits continued within the authority during this period. Case notes and LAAC review meeting minutes held within child client files note evidence of frequent visits by social work professionals to children and young people in foster care placements. These visits were to ensure the child was happy in the placement, discuss any future planning for the child and to discuss the content or outcomes of LAAC review meetings. Within the same records, there are also examples of social work professionals visiting children placed by the authority in placements outwith Edinburgh to ensure the placement was going well and that there were no issues from either the child or foster carer.

From case notes in both client files and on SWIFT, there is evidence of Children's Rights Officers visiting children and young people in foster placements where this service was requested. A report submitted to the Education, Children and Families Committee in October 2013 noted that Children's Rights Officers were visiting children and young people in foster placements within 7 days of them being received into care. The purpose of these visits was to ensure that the views of children and young people in foster care were listened to, and to answer any questions arising from their initial reception into care, and to provide advocacy or representation at formal meetings on behalf of the child or young person.

From the evidence and examples provided above, it is clear that the authority adhered to the policies and procedures in practice in relation to visiting children and young people in foster care placements.

- xiv. Transfer of a child from one foster placement to another (including preparation and support)

Edinburgh Corporation (1930 – 1975)

Evidence within the Children's Separate Registers and the child client files shows that transfers between foster placements were common place. These were usually for reasons such as the placement being deemed unsuitable by professionals, illness or death of the foster carer, or the transfer of children from foster placements to adoptive families (SL611). From the information available in the Children's Separate Registers and the child client files, there was no evidence of preparation and support for children and young people being transferred between foster placements for this period.

Lothian Regional Council (1975 – 1996)

From the child client file records scoped from the 1975 – 1990 period, there was evidence within case notes and review meeting minutes of children and young people being transferred between foster placements, however there was no evidence of preparation or support found within the records for this period.

From the 1990's onwards, there is evidence from case notes, both in paper form and electronically, of children and young people being transferred between foster placements and receiving preparation and support where possible before any changes happened. There is evidence within child client files of social work professionals working directly with the children and young people involved to prepare them for their move, including facilitating visits with their new carers and assisting them in carrying out their Life Story work. There was also evidence within case notes and contact sheets of children and young people being advised of their placement transfer ahead of time where other preparation was not possible, as well as young people being asked for their views on any impending transfers.

City of Edinburgh Council (1996 – 2014)

From LAAC review minutes and case notes held in child client records, it is evident that the transfer of children and young people between foster placements was common practice when

deemed necessary or appropriate by the professionals involved. Reasons given for a transfer of placement within minutes and case notes include placement breakdown and moving from emergency foster care to a more longer-term placement. Evidence from the child client files show very little instances of preparation or support prior to a placement transfer, however there are a small number of examples of young people being asked for their input and opinion on a proposed move.

- xv. Transfer of a child between foster care and residential care (including preparation and support)

Edinburgh Corporation (1930 – 1975)

Records held within children's client files for this period show that there was a practice of transferring children and young people between foster care and residential care, as such moves were noted within case notes and medical checks held within case files. There is also evidence from social work reports and case notes within client files of children and young people in foster care being transferred to Approved Schools by the courts if this was deemed appropriate. However, from the files and records reviewed, there is no evidence of preparation or support being offered before such transfers took place.

Lothian Regional Council (1975 – 1996)

From the child client files reviewed, there is very little evidence that there was widespread practice of transferring children and young people between foster care and residential care within the authority. However, specific examples of such transfers were highlighted during the child client file audit, such as a young person being transferred from their foster placement to a secure unit due to their risk-taking behaviour. There is also an example from the file audit of a child being transferred from their foster placement to a residential unit when their foster carer went on holiday. In both examples, no evidence of preparation or support was found.

City of Edinburgh Council (1996 – 2014)

From the child client files included in the file audit, there was no evidence of any children or young person being transferred between a foster placement and a residential unit.

- xvi. Child protection

Edinburgh Corporation (1930 – 1975)

There is very little evidence of child protection practice within the authority during this period. The only concrete example of this was found within the Children's Committee Minutes from 1965, where committee discussed the setting up of an 'at risk' register for children who were deemed to be at risk (SL116/1/8). No follow up was noted within the committee minutes, and so the implementation of such a register cannot be commented on.

While child protection as a term was not used during this period, there are instances within the Children's Separate Registers of children being removed from foster placements due to unsuitable and dangerous conditions, but no formal child protection practices (SL611).

Lothian Regional Council (1975 – 1996)

There is evidence within both client and carer files and committee minutes that show policies and procedures around child protection were adhered to in practice by the authority during this period.

In 1977, the Director of Social Work recommended procedures to the Social Work Committee that would help social work professionals deal with suspected cases of child abuse. These recommendations included training for staff to allow them to identify and deal with suspected child abuse cases, and the creation of a central register that would allow for early identification of children at risk. This proposal included children who were in local authority care and made recommendations as to how these cases should be progressed by the local authority (LRC3/8/3/2).

From the evidence gathered during the child client file and carer file audit, it could be suggested that the recommendations above put forward by the Director of Social Work were adhered to in practice. Within LAAC meeting minutes, social work reports and case notes, there is evidence of child protection procedures being followed when a child in placement made an allegation against the birth son of their foster carers. It is noted in the LAAC review meeting minutes that the child took part in a joint interview with the police and relevant social work professionals as per the authority's child protection procedure. The child, along with two other children in the same placement were removed from the placement during the investigations.

A further example of child protection procedures being adhered to in practice comes from the minutes of a carer review meeting held within a carers file. A young person in placement disclosed to their foster carer that she had been in an intimate relationship with a much older man. Upon the disclosure, the carer review minutes note that the foster carer alerted the relevant social worker, supported the young person through joint police and social work

interviews and at attendance for medical examinations, all in line with child protection guidelines.

The information contained within the child client file clearly shows an adherence in practice to the policies and procedures surrounding child protection.

City of Edinburgh Council (1996 – 2014)

As per the policies and procedures around child protection outlined above in 4.1(i), there is evidence within child protection case conference minutes and carer review meeting minutes of child protection policies and procedures being adhered to in practice. These records provide examples of foster carers raising child protection concerns for young people placed with them when they were out in the community. As a result of the concerns raised, child protection case conferences were arranged as per policy, with evidence of risk assessments being completed where necessary and investigations being conducted by social work professionals. There is also evidence within carer review meeting minutes and social work reports of carers being aware if a child or young person placed with them was on the Child Protection Register and what steps are required in order to keep that child safe, such as non-disclosure of carers address, or no contact with certain family members.

From the evidence and examples provided above, it is possible to surmise that policy and procedure surrounding child protection for those in foster placements was adhered to in practice.

xvii. Complaints handling

Edinburgh Corporation (1930 – 1975)

Within the Children's Separate Registers (SL611) and the child client files that were sampled as part of a file audit, there is very little information surrounding complaints handling in practice by the authority during this period. However, from the examples available to us, it could be suggested that the authority adhered in practice to the policies and procedures around complaints handling.

The Children's Separate Registers from the 1930's show that complaints were made to social work professionals about the level of care received by a sibling group placed in the same foster placement. While the specific details of the complaint are limited due to the nature of record

creation in the authority at that time, the Register states that a social work professional investigated the complaint and removed the children from that placement (SL611).

A further example was located within social worker reports held in a child's client file from the 1970's. The social work professional involved noted that a complaint had been received by the grandmother of a child in a foster placement, who stated that the level of care the child was receiving by the foster carer was inadequate. The report notes that social work professionals investigated this complaint by visiting the placement and talking with the carer and the child. The investigation found that the complaint was a baseless accusation and so the placement continued.

These actions would suggest the existence of a policy or procedure relating to complaints handling, and that it was followed through in practice by the intervening social work professionals.

Lothian Regional Council (1975 – 1996)

The minutes of the Social Work Committee (LRC2) and the reports written by the Director of Social Work (LRC3) for the authority during this period show that there was extensive work carried out on ensuring a robust complaint handling procedure was in place for children and young people in foster placements.

In 1991, the Social Work Committee discussed the complaint handling procedure and noted that it should be publicised in order that children in care, including those in foster placements, were aware of it and the arrangements that could be put in place if they wished to disclose a complaint (LRC2/1/1/20/18). In 1994, the committee furthered their work in ensuring children and young people in care were aware of the complaints procedure by instating a Young People's Information Rights and Complaints Officer. This provided greater awareness of the policy in place and would allow children and young people in foster placements to raise complaints (LRC3/8/3/21). From the examples taken from the carer file audit provided below, it can be argued that, on the whole, complaints handling procedures were followed in practice by social work professionals.

The audit of carer files shows that complaints were recorded in LAAC review meeting minutes, carer review meeting minutes and in social worker reports. These records then went on to form part of child client files and carer files. One carer file highlighted the complaints handling procedure being adhered to in practice, when a child in a foster placement submitted a complaint to their responsible social worker stating their foster carer had physically punished him after a period of absconding. The LAAC report and carer review minute show that child protection procedures were initiated immediately upon the complaint being received. As per the complaints handling procedure, this incident was then fully investigated by social work

professionals, with meetings being held with all parties involved in the incident. Subsequently, social work professionals deemed it necessary to pass the complaint onto the police and remove the child from that placement.

Further LAAC and social worker reports within carer files show that members of the wider community could also raise complaints with the authority in relation to children and young people in foster placements. One such complaint within LAAC and social worker reports states that a complaint was received by the department by the neighbour of a foster carer stating that a child in their charge had been left outside while visibly distressed after having been verbally abused by their carers. As per procedure, the reports within the carer file note that there was an investigation by social work professionals into the incident, however it was deemed appropriate to take no further action.

From the above examples, it is clear that social work professionals were adhering in practice to the complaints handling procedures, and that it was considered a matter of importance by the authority that children and young people in foster care were aware of the policies and procedures surrounding this.

Conversely, the audit of carer records highlighted incidences where policy and procedure was not adhered to in practice. One such example comes from a social work report within a foster carer file outlining the details of the complaint, where the child in placement submitted a complaint to their responsible social worker against the son of their carers. The report does not provide any other detail in relation to the incidents that led to the complaint, and no process appears to have been followed. The incident was discussed by social work professionals as to whether there should be a Non-Accidental Injury case conference held, or if the police should be notified. It was decided by the professionals involved that there would be no further action as this could prove a traumatic experience for the child in placement, however the child was moved to a different foster placement and as such, not at any further risk. The report notes that all allegations of any wrong doing by the carers' son were denied. Further meeting minutes and reviews held within the carer file shows that they continued to take foster placements following this incident. Despite the lack of apparent process being followed, it does appear that complaints handling procedures were adhered to in practice.

City of Edinburgh (1996 – 2014)

As noted in the answer to 4.2(i), there were robust policies and procedures in place within the authority for dealing with complaints. To ensure these policies and procedures were adhered to in practice, the Children and Young Person's Scrutiny Panel and the Education, Children and Families Committee set up the Complaints Review Committee under the Social Work

(Representation) Procedures (Scotland) Directions 1996. The committee met to discuss complaints where the complainant was dissatisfied with the initial resolution of the complaint (Education, Children and Families Committee, 14 March 2014). From the committee and panel minutes available, it is fair to surmise that the majority of complaints were upheld by the Review Committee, and on the whole, they felt that proper processes had been followed in practice by social work professionals involved in complaint resolution. Where this was found not to be the case, improvements and lessons learned exercises were discussed with the Department. For example, in 2006, the Children and Families department aimed to improve their complaints service, and this resulted in complaints being responded to with resolutions of conflict within 28 days. These improvements, along with the policies and procedures referred to in our answer to 4.2(i) appear to have been adhered to in practice, and examples of this can be provided.

From the records scoped as part of the carer file audit, it would appear that policies and procedures relating to complaints handling were adhered to in practice. Social worker reports, case notes and carer review meeting minutes detail a complaint received by the social work department by the mother of a child in a foster placement. The report notes the mother had concerns around her son's carer administering medication to him. As per procedure, social work professionals immediately began an investigation, including conducting interviews with all parties involved, resulting in the responsible social worker acknowledging the concerns raised in the complaint. This followed with the deregistration of the carer.

Contact sheets and social worker reports held within carer files have evidenced that, where possible, the procedure of frontline resolution of complaints was adhered to in practice. This was apparent when the social work department received a complaint from the grandparents of a child in a foster placement. They alleged that their grandchild was being stopped by his carers of contacting them via telephone at prearranged times, and that the carers were using derogatory language when speaking to their grandson about his birth family. The complaint also includes an allegation that verbal threats were being made by the carers to the child as a form of discipline. As per procedure, a meeting between all parties was held in order that a quick frontline resolution could be achieved. This appears to have been achieved, as no further action was taken by the department, and the professionals involved considered the incident as a practice learning issue.

From the evidence provided above, it can be concluded that, on the whole, policy and procedure was adhered to in practice in relation to complaints handling.

xviii. Whistleblowing

Edinburgh Town Corporation (1930 – 1975)

There is no surviving evidence available to allow us to provide an answer in relation to adhering in practice to policies and procedures around whistleblowing for this period. Committee minutes were scoped to inform our response to this question, however no evidence was found.

Lothian Regional Council (1975 – 1996)

There is no surviving evidence available to allow us to provide an answer in relation to adhering in practice to policies and procedures around whistleblowing for this period. Committee minutes, reports and foster carer case files were scoped to inform our response to this question, however no evidence was found.

City of Edinburgh Council (1996 – 2014)

The authority introduced its first whistleblowing policy in May 2000 called *Public Interest Disclosure Policy*. Section 2 of this Policy contained a list of matters that would be considered “malpractice” which included several matters relating to the provision of foster care such as, a criminal offence or breach of law, a failure to comply with a legal obligation and the sexual or physical abuse of clients. Although the authority’s policy does not explicitly make reference to the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, it uses the language from the legislation throughout and was named after the Act thus suggesting that the local authority was aware of the national policy and guidance.

xix. Record Retention

Prior to 1996 it is impossible to comment definitively on record keeping compliance within the Edinburgh Town Corporation and Lothian Regional Council. Given the paucity of surviving information around record keeping policy and procedure, we cannot determine what these predecessor organisations should have adhered to. Where we can comment is when previous reviews gave us insight into record keeping – though these are often expressed in negative terms. In general, record keeping often only surfaces for consideration when things go wrong and this needs to be noted about the comments below.

Edinburgh Corporation (1930 – 1975)

We assume from a 1972 request for a review of the Social Work Department that there were difficulties with its children in care files; one of the four main client files series the department was responsible for (LRC2/1/1/20). The Organisation and Methods team was commissioned to consider whether these four sets of client files could be integrated into a combined ‘information system’ with the aim to improve administration, eliminate duplication, improve access and save

	<p>both professional and clerical time. With no follow up report, we cannot ascertain nor confirm if this was ever undertaken.</p> <p>Lothian Regional Council (1975 -1996)</p> <p>From a 1990 Director of Social Work's report on a proposed computerised client index system, we find reference to issues in manually locating client files across the department, now covering records from the four pre-1974 Local Authorities (LRC1/1/1/20/17).</p> <p>City of Edinburgh Council (1996 – 2014)</p> <p>In the post 1996 period, it is easier to assess whether the Council adhered to its own record keeping policies and practices. From the audit trail of the storage, management and disposal of Council records it appears broadly that the Council has followed its own record keeping policies and practices within children's social work services with increasing confidence up to 2014.</p>
c)	<p><u>How was adherence demonstrated?</u></p> <p>Adherence to policy and procedure was demonstrated through social work professionals recording their practice and the practice of foster carers within child client files and foster carer files. As noted throughout, adherence in practice can be demonstrated through LAAC review meeting minutes, child protection case conference meeting minutes, social work reports and case notes.</p>
d)	<p><u>How can such adherence be demonstrated to the Inquiry?</u></p> <p>Adherence in practice to policy and procedure can be demonstrated to the Inquiry through the access of the records and case files mentioned above.</p>
e)	<p><u>Were relevant records kept demonstrating adherence?</u></p> <p>Yes. Child client files and foster carer files, including the minutes, reports and case notes included in the files have been kept in line with agreed authority record retention periods. Please see our answer to 4.9 <i>Record Keeping</i> for further details.</p>
f)	<p><u>Have such records been retained?</u></p>

	Some records have been retained, such as children's client records and foster carer files, along with the minutes, reports and case notes included, but retention will vary dependent on the retention rule and record format. Please see our answer to 4.9 <i>Record Keeping</i> for further details.
g)	<u>If policy/procedure was not adhered to in practice, why not?</u> From the evidence and examples provided in the answer above, for the most part, policy and procedure was adhered to in practice. Where it was found that policy and procedure was not adhered to in practice, it is unclear from the records available as to why this was the case.
h)	<u>If policy/procedure was not adhered to in practice, what was the practice?</u> From the information available and the examples given above, it does not appear that there was any other practice from those set out in the abovementioned policies and procedures.
Present	
i)	<u>With reference to the present position, are the answers to any of the above questions different?</u> Yes
j)	<u>If so, please give details.</u> The authority developed a programme in 2013, the Looked After Children: Transformation Programme to shift the balance of care towards more preventative services that reduce the need for children to come into care. This programme was a five-year programme which commenced in April 2013. A number of targets were set as part of this programme. One target was to reduce the percentage of independent foster placements from 44% at March 2013. These targets were reviewed in 2017. The transformation programme aimed to increase the proportion of children and young people placed with City of Edinburgh Council carers and reduce the number placed with independent foster carers. This gives the local authority clearer oversight and influence over placements. The authority is also reviewing the Scotland Excell framework agreement which covers agreements with independent foster carers throughout Scotland. This is being replaced by the <i>Edinburgh Fostering and Continuing Care Agreement</i> . This formalises framework agreements with each independent fostering agency and will allow the local authority more flexibility in provision of foster care and clear expectations of the service. It will also allow clearer lines of oversight of placement. As well as representing value for money.

All Children's Rights activity is now undertaken by Who Cares Scotland? This is completely independent of the Council. Their function remains the same as the previous Children's Rights Team.

Since 2016, three procedures Family Based Care (FBC) Recruitment to Approval, FBC Approval to De-Registration, and FBC Continuing Care have been developed and continually updated and revised to ensure FBC staff are able to deliver the service from a consistent practice base.

The Looked After and Accommodated Children Procedure. This was reviewed in 2017. The purpose of this procedure is to ensure consistent and best practice in planning for children who are looked after and accommodated.

Procedure Title - *Achieving Permanence for Looked After Children*. This was reviewed in June 2018. This procedure sets out the process that must be followed when planning permanent care for looked after and accommodated children who are not able to return to live with their birth parents.

A policy entitled *End to End Process* outlines the procedure for the recruitment, assessment and approval of foster carers and was introduced in this local authority in 2016 and last amended in 2018. This document includes sections on the following:

1. Introduction
2. FBC Recruitment Activity
3. FBC Recruitment Line
4. Enquiries Screening
5. Initial Enquiries Visits
6. Information Sharing
7. Checks and References
8. Skills to Foster Prep Group
9. Home Study Assessment
10. Assessment Report
11. Fostering Panel Recommendation
12. Agency Decision
13. Becoming a Care Provider

Specifically, on recruitment this guidance provides a comprehensive guide to the process of engaging with prospective carers through the Fosterline system. A phone line and website enquiry system that allows prospective carers easy access to information and discussion in relation to becoming a carer. It also provides detailed information on the different checks that are required to be carried out on prospective carers and when these need to be carried out.

Comprehensive guidance is also provided on independent agency transfers that is carers who wish to transfer from an independent agency and become a City of Edinburgh Council Foster Carer.

The Foster Carer Agreement continues to be revised in line with best practice, the last revision took place in October 2018. This agreement contains a section on complaints and allegations. This agreement also incorporates changes in General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

The procedure entitled –*Support and Management of Registered Foster Carers (Approval to De-Registration)* introduced in February 2020. This procedure sets out the range of actions to be taken by Family Based Care social workers to manage and support approved Foster Carers in line with legislative requirements, National Standards and agency expectations.

The local authority introduced a new foster carer training programme in 2019 this training is provided post approval and includes,

- Attachment and Child Development
- Child Protection and the Law
- Black and Minority Ethnic children
- Safer Caring
- Report Writing and Record Keeping
- Online safety and Child Sexual Exploitation.

The training is provided by local authority social workers.

The procedure entitled *Support and Management of Registered Foster Carers (Approval to De-Registration)* introduced in February 2020. This procedure sets out the range of actions to be taken by Family Based Care social workers to manage and support approved Foster Carers in line with legislative requirements, national standards and agency expectations.