

Chapter 8 Regulation of care

Purpose

When intervention with a child and family involves placing a child away from their parent's care, Child Safety Services is required to provide the child with a safe and acceptable standard of care.

The purpose of regulating foster and kinship carers, including provisionally approved carers, is to ensure that an individual who provides care for a child placed with them by Child Safety Services, is suitable to care for the child and continues to meet suitability requirements for the duration of their approval.

Key steps

1. Pre-application
2. Assessment
3. Approval
4. Monitor and support
5. Renewal

What ifs - responding to specific aspects of regulation of care

Standards

1. Consideration is given to placing the child with kin, as a first option.
 2. All children are placed with an approved foster or kinship carer or a provisionally approved carer.
 3. All persons to be considered as suitable persons, prior to being issued with a certificate of approval as a foster or kinship carer or provisionally approved carer.
 4. Applications for approval, or renewal of approval, are decided within legislative timeframes.
 5. Personal history checks are undertaken by the CSU for all applicants and adult household members.
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Practice skills (Key areas for reflection)

- Have I accessed all sources of relevant information in undertaking the assessment?
- Did I include in my assessment report relevant, factual and concise information, including evidence and professional opinion, which supports the recommendation for approval or refusal of an application?
- Have I undertaken the assessment in an open, accountable and transparent manner and treated the applicant fairly, with courtesy and respect?
- Have I addressed issues of concern with the applicant during the assessment process?
- How did I facilitate the applicant's participation in decision-making?

Authority

- *Child Protection Act 1999*, section 5 and 6, and chapter 4, part 1 and 2
 - *Child Protection Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2006*, section 9
 - *CCYPCG for Children and Young People Act 2000*, section 100, 101, 104B and part 6
 - Policy No. 457-1: Carer learning and support
 - Policy No. 460-1: Carer participation
 - Policy No. 383-2: Foster care training
 - Policy No. 372-2: Recordkeeping
 - Recordkeeping: Client File Procedure
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Key steps - Regulation of care

1. Pre-application

- 1.1 Distribute an information kit
- 1.2 Invite the person to an information session
- 1.3 Conduct the initial interview
- 1.4 Conduct a household safety study
- 1.5 Address identified concerns about suitability
- 1.6 Lodge the application

2. Assessment

- 2.1 Complete pre-service training
- 2.2 Facilitate personal history checks
- 2.3 Conduct assessment interviews
- 2.4 Conduct referee checks, if applicable
- 2.5 Conduct medical checks, if applicable
- 2.6 Assess the application for approval
- 2.7 Complete the assessment report

3. Approval

- 3.1 Decide the outcome of the application for approval
- 3.2 Extend the timeframe for deciding the application
- 3.3 Approve the application
- 3.4 Refuse the application

4. Monitor and support

- 4.1 Negotiate support arrangements
- 4.2 Complete a Foster Carer Agreement
- 4.3 Monitor and review the ongoing quality of care
- 4.4 Standard and advanced training

5. Renewal

- 5.1 Invite an application for renewal of approval
- 5.2 Lodgement of application for renewal
- 5.3 Facilitate personal history checks
- 5.4 Conduct medical checks, if applicable
- 5.5 Assess the application for renewal
- 5.6 Complete the renewal assessment report
- 5.7 Decide the outcome of the application for renewal
- 5.8 Approve the application for renewal
- 5.9 Review support arrangements
- 5.10 Review the Foster Carer Agreement

What ifs - responding to specific areas of regulation of care

- 1 What if the applicant requires **provisional approval**?
- 2 What if there is a **change in carer circumstances**?
- 3 What if an **external party requests** or requires personal information about the applicant or carer?
- 4 What if **approval has expired** before an application for renewal is lodged?
- 5 What if **one spouse is unavailable** to participate in the assessment and approval process?
- 6 What if a carer **applicant resides interstate**?
- 7 What if the foster or kinship carer decides to **cease being a carer**?
- 8 What if a carer requests access to their **personal information**?
- 9 What if a foster or kinship carer's certificate of approval requires **amendment, suspension or cancellation**, other than on blue card grounds?
- 10 What if a foster or kinship carer's certificate of approval requires **suspension or cancellation**, on blue card grounds?
- 11 What if a provisionally approved carer's certificate of approval requires **amendment, suspension or cancellation**?

1. Pre-application

The purpose of the pre-application phase is to provide a person with advice and information about the role and responsibilities of a foster or kinship carer, and to assist the person to make an informed choice about whether to proceed with lodging an application.

For a comparison of the key steps for each carer type, refer to the practice resource [Comparison of the key steps for carer approval](#).

Steps 1.1 to 1.5 in the pre-application phase may not occur sequentially, however, usually occur prior to an application being lodged. The actions outlined may be undertaken by a Child Safety Services' officer or by staff of a foster or kinship care service, where appropriate. The initial interview or the household safety study may also be completed by a contracted fee-for-service professional, where they are undertaking the assessment of the applicant.

While the activities outlined in the pre-application phase are not listed as assessment activities, the information gathered and observations made will inform the assessment of the applicant, should they proceed with an application.

For further information about the regulation of care, refer to the practice resources [Approved carers - an overview](#) and [Key concepts for the regulation of care](#).

1.1 Distribute an information kit

When an initial enquiry is received about becoming a foster or kinship carer, or where Child Safety Services has approached a person to provide kinship or respite care for a child:

- have a timely discussion with the person and respond to any questions or issues raised
- send a [Covering letter for the information kit](#) and relevant [Carer information sheets](#) to the person.

1.2 Invite the person to an information session

The purpose of an information session is to provide information about foster care, and to enable a person to ask questions, to assist them in deciding whether to proceed with an application to become a foster or kinship carer.

Where the CSSC, zone or a foster and kinship care service provides information sessions for potential carers, determine whether the person would like to attend an information session and if so, invite them using the [Invitation to information session](#).

Attendance at an information session may occur before or after an initial interview with the person, or instead of an initial interview.

1.3 Conduct the initial interview

The purpose of the initial interview is to commence discussions about a range of factors such as a person's interest and motivation in becoming a foster or kinship carer, the realities of providing foster care, the legislative and policy requirements to be met and the likely impact of becoming a foster or kinship carer.

Where a person wishes to proceed, invite them to participate in an initial interview. Arrange a time with the person and, for potential foster carer applicants, complete the [Invitation to initial interview](#) letter.

Where possible, conduct the initial interview **prior to** the person's commencement of Pre-service training.

Prior to conducting the initial interview, for a potential **kinship carer applicant only**:

- obtain the views of the child and of their family about the proposed kinship carer placement, and consider these views in the decision-making process
- provide the recognised entity with an opportunity to contribute specialised cultural and family knowledge and to participate in the decision-making process about any proposed placement for an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child
- seek advice from the team leader, should it become apparent that the views of the child, their family, or the recognised entity, conflict with the proposed kinship carer placement.

During the initial interview with a potential foster or kinship carer applicant:

- provide information about the roles and responsibilities of a foster or kinship carer, and the range of supports available
- provide a copy of relevant 'Carer information sheets'
- discuss the different levels of need for children in care, or for a proposed kinship carer, the needs of the specific child
- assess whether the possible kinship care placement is consistent with the agreed case plan for the child
- provide information about the requirement and the process for the conduct of personal history checks, including obtaining a positive prescribed notice (blue card), from the CCYPCG, as a prerequisite to approval
- request that the person discloses any criminal, domestic violence, traffic or child protection history that they are aware of for themselves, or any adult member of their household
- conduct the household safety study in accordance with 1.4 Conduct a household safety study
- where any significant concerns arise during the interview, discuss the concerns with the person, in accordance with 1.5 Address identified concerns about suitability
- determine whether the person would like to proceed with an application.

Following the interview:

- complete the Form 1: Foster carer intake, for a potential foster carer applicant only
- record relevant information about a potential kinship carer applicant in a case note for the child in ICMS.

The 'Form 1: Foster carer intake' **does not** need to be completed in the one interview, and there will be times when the entire form will not be completed due to the person choosing not to continue with the process.

1.4 Conduct a household safety study

A household safety study is the process of assessing the safety of the potential applicant's household premises and their commitment to safe practices around children. The intent of the household safety study is to prevent injury to children in out-of-home care by identifying potential risks in the proposed applicant's household.

A household safety study is usually conducted during the initial interview and prior to the lodgement of an application. Where mandatory safety requirements are not currently met, hold discussions to identify

the actions required to meet mandatory safety requirements, or the person may decide not to proceed with an application.

For a foster carer applicant, complete the household safety study **prior to** the applicant's attendance at pre-service training, wherever possible.

For a kinship carer applicant, complete the household safety study during the initial interview or during the assessment interview.

Where provisional approval is required, refer to [1. What if the applicant requires provisional approval?](#)

To conduct the household safety study:

- provide information about the mandatory safety requirements, as listed on page 1 of the [Form 2: Household safety study](#)
- request that the person completes a self-assessment, using the [Your home safety checklist](#)
- advise that mandatory requirements **must** be met prior to approval
- where other safety risks are identified, develop a plan to address these risks with the applicant, for consideration by the CSSC manager, should the application proceed
- complete the 'Form 2: Household safety study', based on direct observations of the household, the completed 'Your home safety checklist' and information obtained during discussions.

An applicant is **not** expected to meet all requirements of the household safety study in the early stages of the assessment process but is expected to make any necessary changes to enable the mandatory safety requirements to be met.

1.5 Address identified concerns about suitability

Significant concerns about the applicant's ability to meet suitability requirements may become apparent at any stage during the carer application process.

Concerns prior to application

Where, prior to an application being lodged, it is considered likely that an application would be refused based on the legislative restrictions on granting an application:

- discuss the identified issues or concerns and the likely outcome for an approval decision, with the applicant
- assist the person to make a realistic choice about whether to proceed with an application or self-select out.

Where significant issues are identified:

- discuss the identified issues or concerns, as they arise
- provide the applicant with an opportunity to withdraw their application, where the issue or concern is likely to result in a refusal of the application
- should the applicant wish to proceed with the application, despite significant issues being brought to their attention, the assessment is to be recorded and a decision made by the CSSC manager.

Should a person insist on lodging an application, despite significant issues being brought to their attention, they cannot be prevented from doing so, as this would deny them their right to natural justice. Where the application is subsequently refused, the applicant has the right to have the decision externally reviewed by the CST.

Withdrawal of application

Once an application is 'properly made', the CSSC manager must approve or refuse the application, unless the application is withdrawn by the applicant. At any time during the assessment process, significant issues likely to lead to the refusal of an application may be brought to the applicant's attention, and the applicant may subsequently choose to withdraw their application.

Where the applicant decides to withdraw their application:

- request that they provide written advice to this effect, to the CSSC or foster and kinship care service
- immediately advise the CSU.

1.6 Lodge the application

An application for approval must be decided within **90 days** of the application being 'properly made' (see below), unless an extension is granted.

A person should only submit an application once they have decided to commit to the application and assessment process, and in consideration of the most appropriate time for lodging the application, given:

- the mandatory requirement, for foster carer applicants **only**, to complete pre-service training prior to a decision about their approval (except for an absent spouse, refer to [2.1 Complete pre-service training](#))
- the next available pre-service training date is likely to influence whether the application is able to be assessed and decided within the required 90 day legislative timeframe
- the likely timeframe required for the CSU and the CCYPCG to undertake and provide information about personal history checks and blue card outcomes to the CSSC.

Complete the application documentation

When the person commits to the application and assessment process, use the [Application for approval - Form 3 APA - Guide to completion](#) and:

- request that the applicant and all adult household members complete:
 - the [Application for approval - Form 3 APA](#) (APA form) - (Part A)
 - a [Volunteer foster/kinship carer or adult member blue card application form](#) (blue card application) or, where confirmation of an existing blue card is required, an [Authorisation to confirm a valid blue card/application for a carer or adult member](#) form (blue card validation)
- determine the applicant's adult household members by referring to the [Adult household member guidelines](#)
- attach the 'blue card application' or 'blue card validation' to the 'APA form' (Part A)
- ensure that documents verifying the identity of the applicant and adult household members are sighted and where possible, photocopied or scanned, and attached to either the 'APA form' (Part B) or the 'blue card application'
- ensure the applicant completes the [Carer applicant health and wellbeing questionnaire](#) (refer to [2.5 Conduct medical checks, if applicable](#)) and returns the completed form to the CSSC.

Where consent has been given by the applicant on the 'Carer applicant health and wellbeing questionnaire' to share medical information, provide a copy of the completed questionnaire to the foster and kinship carer service, or fee-for-service professional.

Note: Where an adult household member has an appointed guardian as a result of a disability, the forms will be completed with the household member's details and signed by their guardian.

Verify identity - application for approval

Whenever a 'blue card application' is completed, the identity of the applicant or the adult household member completing the form must be verified by sighting **two** original identification documents, as listed on the 'blue card application'.

If the applicant already holds a current, valid blue card at the time the 'APA form' (Part A) is completed, the identity of the applicant must be verified by sighting their blue card and one other form of identification, as listed on the 'APA form' (Part B).

There is no need to verify identity if an adult household member already holds a current, valid blue card.

Where possible, photocopy or scan each of the original identification documents, to assist the CSU in the process of conducting personal history checks.

Note: If a person is unable to supply the necessary identification documents, liaise with the CSU about the options for alternative forms of identification.

Verify identity - application for renewal of approval

There is no need to verify the identity of an applicant or an adult household member upon application for renewal of approval, **unless** a 'blue card application' is to be completed as part of the application process.

Any person completing the 'blue card application' is to have their identity verified, as outlined above.

Persons able to verify identity

The requirements for verifying identity depends on the nature of the form being completed.

The [blue card application](#) requires that a Child Safety Services' officer verifies the person's identity. Where this is not possible, because of distance or a disability impacting on a person's mobility, a prescribed person may verify the person's identity. Prescribed persons include:

- a Justice of the Peace
- a Commissioner for Declarations
- a lawyer
- a police officer.

Note: Child Safety Services' staff **must** comply with the requirement under the *Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000*, to inform **all** blue card applicants that it is an offence for a disqualified person to sign a blue card application form. This requirement applies even when a prescribed person has verified an applicant's identity. For further information, refer to the practice resource [Mandatory advice to blue card applicants](#).

The 'APA form' (Part B) requires that a Child Safety Services' officer or a staff member of a foster and kinship care service verifies the identity of an applicant who already holds a current, valid blue card.

Ensure the application is ‘properly made’

The **90 day approval period** commences from the date the application is ‘properly made’. To be ‘properly made’ an application:

- is completed, signed and dated by the applicant and each adult member of their household
- includes all appropriate identification documents
- is lodged at the CSSC.

When the above requirements have been fulfilled, record the date in the ‘Date Application Lodged’ field on page 10 of the ‘APA form’ (Part B), or for a renewal of approval, page 17 of ‘APA form’ (Part D). This date becomes the lodgement date and the application is then considered to be ‘properly made’.

Where an application is incomplete at the time it is submitted, ask the applicant or the adult household member to supply the additional information before accepting the application and recording the lodgement date.

If the application is subsequently found to be incomplete by the CSU and returned to the CSSC, obtain the missing information and record a new lodgement date on page 10 of the ‘APA form’ (Part B), or page 17 of the ‘APA form’ (Part D). The amended date then becomes the lodgement date and the date the application is ‘properly made’. The documentation is then returned to the CSU.

When the application has been ‘properly made’, conduct personal history checks in accordance with [2.2 Facilitate personal history checks](#).

Information management

All staff **must** be aware of the strict confidentiality provisions around sensitive information in relation to carer applications. All sensitive information must be filed in a secure location, in accordance with [Client file procedure module 5.3 - Attaching sensitive information to client files](#), with restricted access by authorised officers only. The following information is considered sensitive:

- the ‘APA form’
- outcomes of personal history checks, including the [Form 4: Approval decision](#) and [Form 5: Approval decision - Provisionally approved carer](#)
- medical information.

Highly protected information is placed in an envelope, sealed and marked confidential and the contents indicated, in an informative and concise detail, on the outside of the envelope, in accordance with the ‘client file procedure’.

2. Assessment

The purpose of the assessment of an applicant is to ensure that the care of children in out-of-home care meets the standards of care in the statement of standards, and to ensure that applicants meet suitability requirements under the Child Protection Act 1999, section 135 and the Child Protection Amendment Regulation (No.1) 2006, section 9.

During the assessment process, the assessor will gather evidence relating to the applicant’s experiences and actions in other contexts, and draw conclusions as to how this will impact on their ability to provide foster care in accordance with legislative and policy requirements.

The assessment of a foster or kinship carer applicant may be undertaken by Child Safety Services, staff of foster and kinship care services or by a contracted fee-for-service professional.

2.1 Complete pre-service training

The aim of pre-service training is to equip a foster carer applicant with the necessary skills and knowledge required, to enable them to meet the legislated statement of standards when caring for a child placed in care.

A foster carer applicant is required to complete Pre-service training which consists of four modules, each of three hours duration, which may be undertaken prior to, or following, the lodgement of an application. If feasible, pre-service training occurs over a four week period, however, the content of the modules may be delivered in a range of flexible ways, including one-to-one in the applicant's home, if necessary.

For more information, refer to the Procedures and guidelines for Quality Care: Foster Care Training.

A kinship carer applicant's participation in pre-service training is **optional**, however, where appropriate the applicant is to be encouraged to participate in Quality Care training sessions, to assist them in meeting their support and learning needs. In addition, support the orientation of a kinship carer by using relevant Carer information sheets and the Carer handbook.

Note: Where the partner of a foster carer applicant is genuinely unable to participate in pre-service training due to the nature and location of their employment, for example, those employed by the defence forces or mining industry and working interstate or overseas, both applicants may be granted approval, with the condition (recorded on the certificate of approval) that the applicable partner completes pre-service training when their circumstances change. In exceptional circumstances, the CSSC manager may waive the requirement for pre-service training entirely.

2.2 Facilitate personal history checks

The purpose of undertaking personal history checks is to ensure that people who will have regular and ongoing contact or involvement with a child placed in an approved carer's home do not pose a risk to the safety of a child.

All applicants applying for approval, or renewal of approval, and all adult members of their household, **must** be subject to personal history checks. This includes adults joining a household after an application is lodged.

Prior to issuing a certificate of approval to an individual who wishes to be approved as a foster or kinship carer or provisionally approved carer, the chief executive must be satisfied that the individual is a suitable person.

The outcome of personal history checks is one aspect of determining overall suitability and a decision by the CSU that the application for approval is to be progressed, does not mean that the applicant will be granted approval based on overall suitability requirements.

Personal history checks incorporate applications to the CCYPCG for a blue card and personal history checks undertaken by the CSU. Personal history checks undertaken by the CSU include:

- child protection history within Queensland
- domestic violence and traffic history, in specified circumstances
- interstate and international checks, in specified circumstances.

In addition, the CSU conducts child protection history checks on any children residing in the household of the applicant. This will include any other children who meet the definition of 'household member',

Child Protection Act 1999, schedule 3. The CSU does **not** undertake international child protection history checks on children.

For further information about the role of the CSU and the conduct of personal history checks, refer to the practice resource [Understanding personal history checks](#).

Request personal history checks

Personal history checks on the applicant and adult household members will **not** be commenced until an application is 'properly made' and all necessary documentation has been forwarded to the CSU. Once the application is 'properly made', post the following documentation to the CSU as **a matter of priority**:

- a photocopy of the [APA form](#)
- the **original** [blue card application](#) or [blue card validation](#)
- a photocopy of verified identification documents, where available.

Note: The conduct of personal history checks should **not delay** the commencement of the assessment of the application.

If there is a need to undertake urgent or after hours personal history checks, refer to [1. What if the applicant requires provisional approval?](#)

Request domestic violence and traffic history checks

Traffic and domestic violence history checks will only be conducted:

- when the CSU manager determines that, based on information from the person's own disclosures or other sources, such as the CCYPCG, these checks would be warranted
- the CSSC contacts the CSU (by telephone, email or in writing) to request the conduct of domestic violence and traffic history checks, when information indicates that the applicant or adult household members may have a domestic violence or traffic history.

Conduct personal history checks on new adult household members

Once the 'APA form' has been lodged by the applicant, any adult intending to join the household, **prior to** joining the household, will need to:

- complete a [New adult household member](#) form
- complete a [blue card application](#) or [blue card validation](#) form
- have their identity verified, for a 'blue card application' only.

Immediately forward the 'New adult household member' form, 'blue card application' or 'blue card validation' form and associated identification documents, where available, to the CSU so that personal history checks will be conducted.

Interstate and international personal history checks

For all applicants or adult household members who have resided interstate or in New Zealand for six months or more, in the five years prior to the application:

- interstate and New Zealand child protection history checks **must** be undertaken by the CSU
- other international child protection checks (excluding New Zealand) and criminal history checks (including New Zealand), may be undertaken by the CSU, at the **discretion** of the CSSC manager.

The CSSC manager also has the discretion to request interstate or overseas checks where the applicant or an adult household member resided interstate or overseas six or more years ago.

International child protection checks will be facilitated by the CSU and undertaken by International Social Services (ISS). The CSSC manager has the **discretion** to proceed with the application without this information, or to decide that a full assessment is unable to be undertaken without the completion of international checks.

Decision-making based on personal history check outcomes

The CSU manager has the delegation to decide that either an applicant is not suitable, or that the assessment of the application is to be progressed, based on the outcomes of personal history checks.

The issuing of a certificate of approval must **not** occur until the CSU has advised the CSSC of the outcome of the personal history checks for all persons included on the APA form, unless a zonal director has granted an applicant provisional approval prior to the CSU finalising personal history checks. Refer to 1. What if the applicant requires provisional approval?

Application for approval is to be progressed

Where the CSU manager determines that the outcome of the personal history checks does not indicate that the applicant or adult household members are unsuitable, the CSU will advise the CSSC, and the application will be progressed.

Not suitable based on personal history

Where the CSU manager determines that the applicant is not a suitable person based on the applicant's or adult household members' personal history checks, the CSU manager will:

- refuse the application
- advise the applicant and the CSSC manager of the decision in writing **within 10 days** - the letter will include a statement of reasons and information about review rights.

In this circumstance, it is the responsibility of the CSSC to:

- file a copy of all written advice provided to the CSSC and the applicant by the CSU
- record the refusal decision in ICMS (refer to 3.4 Refuse the application).

Where a child has been placed with a provisionally approved carer **prior to** personal history check results being provided by the CSU, and the CSU then determines that the applicant or adult household members are not suitable, immediately remove the child and cancel the Certificate of Approval (Provisionally approved carer) in accordance with 11. What if a provisionally approved carer's certificate of approval requires amendment, suspension or cancellation?

Impacts of a failure to obtain a blue card

If the applicant or an adult household member is denied a blue card by the CCYPCG, this is referred to as a **disqualifying event** (*Child Protection Act 1999*, section 140AB). In this circumstance, it is the responsibility of the CCYPCG to advise the persons affected about the decision and the processes for review.

If the applicant or an adult household member is given a negative prescribed notice by the CCYPCG, and the affected individual intends to appeal the decision, the CSSC manager may **temporarily** suspend any further assessment of the application for approval, until the outcome of any review process under the *Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000* is known. The application for approval must be refused if:

- no review process is initiated
- the CCYPCG's decision is upheld following a review by the CST.

Change in carer circumstances

When a completed [Change in carer circumstances form](#) is received by the CSSC, **forward** a copy of this form, unless it relates to the carer's health or employment status, to the CSU so that any relevant changes, for example, a change in the address of a blue card holder, or a change in household membership, can be noted and where applicable, personal history checks undertaken.

For further information about changes to be brought to the attention of Child Safety Services by an **approved** carer, refer to [2. What if there is a change in carer circumstances?](#)

2.3 Conduct assessment interviews

The focus of the assessment interviews is the applicant's demonstrable knowledge, skills and abilities, as well as the applicant's ability to reflect on how their experiences, views and behaviour may impact on their ability to provide care for children in care, or for a kinship carer, a specific child.

The interview process should be interactive, with observations and reflections being shared with the applicant. The applicant is also to be provided with sources of information and support, such as referrals to other agencies, including Foster Care Queensland and where applicable, foster and kinship care services.

An applicant living in a spousal relationship **must** be jointly assessed and if approved, issued a joint certificate of approval.

Note: where the partner of a foster or kinship carer applicant is genuinely unavailable to be assessed and approved, along with their spouse, due to the nature and location of their employment, for example, those employed by the defence forces or mining industry and working interstate or overseas, refer to [5. What if one spouse is unavailable to participate in the assessment and approval process?](#)

Foster carer applicants

A foster carer is approved to care for any child in the care of Child Safety Services and only requires one certificate of approval, regardless of the number of children in the placement. The assessment interviews for a foster carer applicant will consist of:

- an initial joint interview with both applicants, if a joint application
- an individual interview with each applicant
- where possible, a further joint interview with both applicants
- an interview with all children and adults who form part of the applicant's home environment.

At least one assessment interview **must** be held in the applicant's home.

If possible, schedule interviews no less than two weeks apart, to afford the applicant the benefit of time for reflection, time to fully explore issues as they are raised and an opportunity to learn more about fostering during the assessment period. Where the two week timeframe between interviews is not possible, particularly in rural and remote areas, the timeframe may be shortened.

Prior to conducting assessment interviews:

- discuss the purpose and process of interviews with the applicant
- agree on a schedule of interviews, including dates, times and venues.

Assessment interviews may also involve adult children residing away from home.

During assessment interviews, include discussions with the applicant about the information and recommendations to be included in the final assessment report.

For specific information about the legislative requirements for approval, and the factors to consider and discuss during assessment interviews with a foster carer applicant in relation to each assessment domain, refer to the [Form 3A - Guidelines for completing assessment report - Initial approval only](#), and the practice paper [Assessment of foster carer applicants](#). The guidelines also refer to a range of 'Interview resources' that are accessible in the resource list at the end of this chapter.

Kinship carer applicants

A kinship carer may be a relative or another person of significance to the child. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, a kinship carer may include another Aboriginal person or Torres Strait Islander who is a member of, or compatible with, the child's community or language group.

A kinship carer is approved to provide care for a specific child for a time-limited period.

The assessment framework for a kinship carer applicant is less structured, due to the family connection that already exists between the kinship carer applicant, the child and the child's parents. Kinship care aims to maintain the child's relationships with parents, siblings, extended family, community and culture, in a manner which best serves the welfare and interests of the child.

Assessment interviews with a kinship carer applicant may occur in a more flexible manner and would usually involve two assessment interviews, to assess the applicant's:

- overall suitability based on legislative and policy requirements
- ability to meet the specific needs of the child.

At a minimum, at least **one** interview will occur with each kinship carer applicant, although this may be a joint interview, and where practicable, other members of the household should be encouraged to participate in interview discussions. More interviews may be required for complex or sensitive kinship carer assessments.

When a sibling group is to be placed with a proposed kinship carer at the same time, conduct one assessment process, which takes into account the applicant's ability to meet the needs of each individual child. If approved, a certificate of approval will be issued for each child. Future placements involving additional siblings will require a new kinship carer assessment, drawing on the previous assessment information.

For specific information about factors to consider and discuss during assessment interviews with a kinship carer applicant, refer to the practice resources [Legislative requirements for the approval of kinship carers](#) and [Assessment of kinship carer applicants](#).

2.4 Conduct referee checks, if applicable

The purpose of conducting a referee check is to obtain a character reference about an applicant. The referee check provides general information about an applicant's parenting practices and values, and the nature of their relationship with their own children.

The conduct of referee checks is **discretionary** and may occur at any point throughout the assessment process based on information available to the person undertaking the assessment, or at the request of the CSSC manager. The CSSC manager makes the decision to conduct referee checks however the check itself is conducted by the person undertaking the assessment. Referee checks are to be conducted by phone wherever possible, at the earliest possible time.

Referee checks should be considered in circumstances where:

- concerns about the applicant's suitability are identified
- inconsistent information is obtained during the assessment process.

Consider the following persons as potential referees:

- the applicant's employer, where the applicant works or volunteers in child-related employment
- a non-relative of the applicant.

To conduct a referee check:

- contact the applicant to inform them of the decision and ask them to nominate referees and provide contact details
- phone the referee, explain that they have been nominated as a referee for the applicant and determine whether they are prepared to provide the reference
- inform the referee that any concerns raised about the applicant will be discussed, partially or in full, with the applicant, as part of the assessment process
- use the [Referee questionnaire for carer applicants](#) to guide the discussion with the referee, and record the information provided by the referee
- place the original, completed referee questionnaire on the applicant's file.

Where the referee check cannot be undertaken by phone, complete the [Letter to referee](#), attach the 'Referee questionnaire for carer applicants' and post the information to the referee, along with a reply paid envelope.

Where the nominated referee declines to provide a reference for the applicant, given that any concerns they raise will be discussed with the applicant, ask if they are willing to provide a reason for their decision. This may provide useful information for the assessment, as well as guide the referee check process.

When a nominated referee declines to respond, ask the applicant to nominate an alternative referee.

When assessing information obtained from the referee, consider:

- whether the information confirms or conflicts with the information already collected, and observations made, during the assessment process
- the relationship and length of time the referee has known the applicant.

Discuss any concerns raised by the referee with the applicant and where necessary, seek further clarifying information from the referee, or another referee.

Record the rationale for conducting the referee check and the outcome in the relevant section of the:

- [Form 3A: Foster carer applicant assessment and recommendation form - Initial approval only](#), for a foster carer applicant
- [Kinship carer assessment report](#), for a kinship carer applicant.

2.5 Conduct medical checks, if applicable

The conduct of medical checks is **discretionary**. The CSSC manager may decide that an applicant requires a medical check at any stage of the assessment process.

The purpose of conducting a medical check is to ensure that any physical or mental health issue for the applicant will not prevent them from fulfilling their responsibilities as an approved carer, and would not significantly impact on any child to be placed with them should they be approved.

Information obtained during assessment interviews, as well as the completed [Carer applicant health and wellbeing questionnaire](#), provided by the applicant upon application (refer to [1.6 Lodge the application](#)), will inform the decision as to whether a medical check is necessary. Sufficient information must be gathered about the nature and potential impact of the medical condition, to enable an informed approval decision to be made.

Conduct the medical check

To conduct a medical check:

- discuss the health issue with the CSSC manager and request their approval for the conduct of a medical check
- inform the applicant of the decision and encourage them to openly discuss their health issues with their doctor
- check the contact details for the applicant's doctor
- encourage the applicant to locate a doctor who will charge the scheduled fee for this service
- ensure the applicant has signed the 'Carer Applicant Authority to Release Medical Information' section of the 'Carer applicant health and wellbeing questionnaire', to provide written consent to the doctor for the release of their medical information
- forward the following documents to the applicant **prior to** their medical appointment, and request that the applicant provides these documents to their doctor:
 - a photocopy of the completed 'Carer applicant health and wellbeing questionnaire'
 - [Letter to general practitioner](#)
 - [General practitioner's report on carer applicant](#)
- record the rationale for conducting a medical check.

Should additional costs be incurred by the applicant, Child Safety Services may reimburse the cost under account code 51020 - Medical/Dental - General.

If an applicant has provided written consent to the doctor for release of medical records, the doctor will **not** be liable for any breach of confidentiality. The signed consent however does not compel a doctor to release records or speak about the client. If a doctor is not co-operating in relation to such a request, it is the applicant's responsibility to request that the doctor releases information on their behalf, for the purposes of the assessment.

Where consent has been given by the applicant on the 'Carer applicant health and wellbeing questionnaire', provide a copy of medical check results to the foster and kinship carer service, or fee-for-service professional.

Ensure that the original, completed doctor's report is retained on the applicant's file.

Following the medical check

Once the medical check has been completed:

- consider the information available from both the health questionnaire and the doctor's report
- where additional information is required, explore the health issue or medical assessment outcome in detail with the doctor or the applicant

- where appropriate, request that the applicant provide any past medical assessments or records which will provide further detail or clarification
- if necessary, seek a more detailed written or verbal report from a doctor with experience in treating either the applicant or the specific condition, including:
 - advice as to whether the condition will impact on the applicant's capacity to provide care for children and if so, in what ways
 - a plan for the management of the condition, should the applicant be approved as a foster or kinship carer.

Child Safety Services may reimburse the costs associated with any additional assessments or pay for any consultants contracted, under account code 51020 - Medical/Dental - General.

A plan for managing medical conditions may not be appropriate when a carer applicant has an infectious or communicable disease, such as HIV or Hepatitis C, and risk of transmission is identified and may be grounds for refusal of the application.

Infection control processes must observe the principles of [Information Standard No 42 - Information Privacy](#). Complaints regarding breaches of the standard must be dealt with through the complaints procedure outlined in Child Safety Services' [Information privacy statement](#).

Record the outcome of the medical check in the relevant section of the:

- [Form 3A: Foster carer applicant assessment and recommendation form - Initial approval only](#), for a foster carer applicant
- [Kinship carer assessment report](#), for a kinship carer applicant.

2.6 Assess the application for approval

The assessment of foster and kinship carer applicants is a process of collecting information about the applicant's abilities and potential to provide foster or kinship care and formulate a recommendation about their suitability.

To assess and approve an applicant requiring provisional approval, refer to [1. What if the applicant requires provisional approval?](#)

To assess the application and determine whether the applicant meets all suitability requirements, consider all information obtained during the assessment process, taking into account:

- their ability to meet the statement of standards
- the outcomes of personal history checks on the applicant and if applicable, adult household members
- any history of concerns about the quality of care provided by the applicant, if they have previously been an approved carer in Queensland or another jurisdiction
- information from the applicant's participation in pre-service training
- the outcome of the household safety study and the completed 'Carer applicant health and wellbeing questionnaire'
- referee reports, outcomes of medical checks and information from other jurisdictions, if applicable
- the views of the recognised entity about the proposed kinship carer for an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child.

2.7 Complete the assessment report

Once all the assessment activities have been undertaken, complete:

- a [Form 3A: Foster carer applicant assessment and recommendation form - Initial approval only](#) (Form 3A), guided by the [Form 3A - Guidelines for completing assessment report - Initial approval only](#), for a foster carer applicant
- a [Kinship carer assessment report](#), for a kinship carer applicant.

These assessment reports are intended to be a brief summary of all the information gathered and assessed, as outlined in [2.6 Assess the application for approval](#), including:

- a few paragraphs relating to each topic
- any confidential information relevant to the assessment
- information about any proposed use of conditions on the certificate of approval, if applicable
- a recommendation to the CSSC manager about the applicant's suitability to be issued with a certificate of approval and the rationale for the recommendation.

When considering the inclusion of conditions on a certificate of approval for a foster carer applicant, in the first instance, determine whether the condition can be included in the [Foster Carer Agreement](#) (refer to [4.2 Complete a Foster Carer Agreement](#)). If conditions should change, a 'Foster Carer Agreement' can be updated without difficulty, whereas changing conditions on a certificate of approval is a more complex process and will require an amendment to the certificate.

Prior to finalising either the 'Form 3A' or the 'Kinship carer assessment report':

- share observations and reflections with the applicant and give them feedback about the conclusions being reached
- incorporate relevant comments and feedback from the applicant in the report.

Once the 'Form 3A' or 'Kinship carer assessment report' is finalised:

- provide a copy of the final 'Form 3A' or 'Kinship carer assessment report' to the applicant
- complete the [Form 4: Approval decision](#)
- provide the assessment report and the completed 'Form 4: Approval decision' to the CSSC manager for a decision.

Do **not** provide the applicant with a copy of the 'Form 4: Approval decision'.

File copies of all interview records, reports, handouts and self-assessments on the applicant's paper file.

3. Approval

3.1 Decide the outcome of the application for approval

*To approve an application the CSSC manager must be satisfied that the applicant is suitable based on **all** aspects of suitability. When an applicant does not meet one or more aspects of suitability, the application must be refused.*

Where reference is made to the CSSC or CSSC manager, this refers to the CSSC or CSSC manager in the geographical area where the carer resides, or the foster and kinship care service conducting the assessment is located.

Unless an application is withdrawn by the applicant in writing, or refused based on an adverse personal history, the CSSC manager is delegated to approve or refuse the application:

- **within 90 days** of the recorded lodgement date of the application
- during the period of extension as agreed in writing (refer to [3.2 Extend the timeframe for deciding the application](#)).

If a decision is not made within either of the above timeframes, the application is taken to be refused and the applicant is provided with written notice of the refusal decision (refer to [3.4 Refuse the application](#)).

When deciding the outcome of an application for approval, the CSSC manager will consider all information provided and the legislative and policy requirements for suitability, including:

- the outcomes of all applications for a blue card or the validation of a blue card and all personal history checks, as recorded on the [Form 4: Approval decision](#)
- information in the [Form 3A: Foster carer applicant assessment and recommendation form - Initial approval only](#) or [Kinship carer assessment report](#)
- whether the applicant is a suitable person to be an approved foster or kinship carer
- the views of the recognised entity about the proposed kinship carer for an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child.

The approval decision may be informed by the convening of an assessment panel however a CSSC manager **must** decide the outcome of the application.

For further information about the legislative and policy requirements underpinning approval, refer to the practice paper [Assessment of foster carer applicants](#) or the practice resources [Legislative requirements for the approval of kinship carers](#) and [Assessment of kinship carer applicants](#).

Note: The CSSC manager may decide the outcome of an application, **prior to** the finalisation of personal history checks for a new adult household member, that joined the household after the application has been lodged.

3.2 Extend the timeframe for deciding the application

Where an application is unlikely to be decided within 90 days of the lodgement date, it is possible to extend the timeframe. The extension is to be for the **minimum** amount of time required to decide the application, as agreed to by the applicant in writing.

When an extension is required, the following actions are required by the CSSC manager, **before** the 90 day time period from the lodgement date lapses:

- contact the applicant and discuss the reason for the application not being decided within 90 days and the additional time required to decide the application
- seek the agreement of the applicant to the extension
- complete the [Letter requesting an extension to Form APA](#) and request that the applicant signs and returns the agreement
- place a copy of the letter and the signed agreement on the applicant's file.

3.3 Approve the application

To approve the application, the CSSC manager will record the approval decision, along with any relevant comments, on the 'Form 4: Approval decision', and sign the form.

When the application is approved, advise the applicant:

- that their application has been approved
- that they are legally obligated to inform Child Safety Services of specific changes in carer circumstances and copies of the [Change in carer circumstances form](#) will be posted to them, for their future completion, if necessary (refer to [2. What if there is a change in carer circumstances](#)).

Following the provision of the above advice to the approved carer:

- provide the following to the approved carer:
 - a [Letter of approval as a foster carer](#) or [Letter of approval as a kinship carer](#)
 - a completed [Certificate of Approval \(Foster carer\)](#) or [Certificate of Approval \(Kinship carer\)](#)
 - copies of the 'Change in carer circumstances form'
 - the [Foster Carer Card - Fact sheet](#)
 - a copy of the [Statement of Commitment between the Department of Child Safety, foster care services and the carers of Queensland](#)
 - a copy of the [Carer handbook](#), if they do not already have one
- place the assessment report, the 'Form 4: Approval decision' and a copy of the certificate of approval and the letter of approval on the approved carer's file
- provide a copy of the certificate of approval and the letter of approval to the foster and kinship care service, if applicable
- generate person records in ICMS for the approved carer and any adult household members, create a carer entity for the carer or carer couple and record the carer's approval details in ICMS
- provide the approved carer's payment details to Carepay by completing a [FIN 23 - Vendor registration/change application](#) form, and forwarding the form to Expenditure and Carer Services, Corporate Link.

For information about determining the expiry date for a certificate of approval, refer to the practice resource [Completing the Certificate of Approval](#).

Note: A kinship carer requires a separate certificate of approval for each child for whom they are approved. A 'Certificate of Approval (Kinship carer)' **cannot** be amended to change the child for whom the carer is approved.

3.4 Refuse the application

Refusal - not on blue card grounds

When an application for approval **or** renewal of approval is refused by the CSSC manager and the refusal is **not** on blue card grounds, or when an application for approval is not decided within 90 days of the lodgement of the application or during the period of extension as agreed in writing:

- provide the applicant with written notice of the decision **within 10 days**, using the [Letter of refusal](#)
- record the refusal decision in ICMS.

To record the refusal decision in ICMS for an application for **approval**:

- create a person record for the applicant
- record an 'alert' on the applicant (refer to [Chapter 10.7 Recording alerts for a child and family](#))
- record the alert 'start date' as the date the decision was made to refuse the application.

To record the refusal decision in ICMS for an application for **renewal of approval**:

- update the carer's approval status from 'approved' to 'cancelled', enter an end date and record the decision to refuse the application in the 'end reason'
- record an 'alert' on the former carer
- record the alert 'start date' as the date the decision was made to refuse the application for renewal.

The CSU must be notified (by email, telephone or in writing) of the decision to refuse the application, if:

- if the applicant does not seek a review of the decision within the required timeframe, or
- if they do seek a review of the decision and the CST upholds the decision of Child Safety Services.

When an **application for approval** is not decided within 90 days of the lodgement of the application or during the period of extension as agreed in writing, the proposed carers will need to submit a new [Application for approval - Form 3 APA](#), if they wish to proceed with an application.

Refusal - on blue card grounds

When an application for approval or renewal of approval is refused by the CSSC manager and the refusal is **due to** blue card grounds:

- provide the applicant with written notice of the decision **within 10 days**, using the 'Letter of refusal'
- explain in the letter the reasons for the decision and that there are no review rights under the *Child Protection Act 1999*, schedule 2, in relation to the decision by Child Safety Services to refuse approval or renewal of approval on blue card grounds
- record the refusal decision in ICMS (see above).

4. Monitor and support

4.1 Negotiate support arrangements

The purpose of providing support to an approved carer is to assist the carer to provide care consistent with the statement of standards for each child placed in their care and to achieve the stated goal and outcomes of a child's case plan.

Direct support to approved carers will be provided by staff of Child Safety Services, and where applicable, the staff of foster and kinship care services.

Following the issuing of a certificate of approval:

- hold discussions with the approved carer to negotiate support arrangements
- provide the approved carer with information about:
 - the foster and kinship carer support line, available on telephone 1300 729 309, Monday to Friday 5.00pm - 11.30pm and Saturday and Sunday 7.00am - 11.30pm
 - and the role and contact details for the Child Safety After Hours Service Centre.

For information to consider when negotiating support arrangements, refer to the practice resource [Negotiating support arrangements for approved carers](#) and the practice paper [Carer support and supervision](#).

The general support needs for foster carers will be negotiated as part of developing the carer support plan within the [Foster Carer Agreement](#) (refer to [4.2 Complete a Foster Carer Agreement](#)).

The support required for any approved carer, specific to the goals of the placement for a particular child, is negotiated with the carer and documented in the placement agreement for the child.

For further information about developing a placement agreement, refer to [Chapter 5, 1.9 Complete a placement agreement](#).

4.2 Complete a Foster Carer Agreement

Child Safety Services is responsible for the provision of support and effective management processes to enable approved carers to meet their legislative responsibilities under the Child Protection Act 1999, including enabling them to provide a level of care consistent with the legislated statement of standards.

Child Safety Services, foster and kinship care services and foster carers share the responsibility to actively identify, promote and address their support and training needs.

A 'Foster Carer Agreement' is to be completed with the foster carer as soon as possible following the issuing of the certificate of approval. It is a written agreement, negotiated between each foster carer and Child Safety Services or a foster and kinship care service, that:

- sets out the terms, conditions and responsibilities of the relationship between the foster carer and the CSSC or the foster and kinship care service
- includes plans for the carer's ongoing support and learning needs.

A 'Foster Carer Agreement' is **not** completed for a kinship carer, as their support is specific to the child placed in their care and recorded in the placement agreement.

The CSSC is responsible for developing the 'Foster Carer Agreement' with a foster carer who is affiliated with the CSSC. The foster and kinship care service is responsible for developing a 'Foster Carer Agreement' with a foster carer who is affiliated with a foster and kinship care service. The CSSC may be involved in this process when a carer has a significant history of matters of concern.

For further information about matters of concern, refer to [Chapter 9.1 Decide whether information constitutes a matter of concern](#).

Prior to completing the 'Foster Carer Agreement', discuss and agree on:

- the type of care to be provided
- the characteristics of the children to be referred for placement
- the needs of the foster carer family.

Following the discussion:

- complete the 'Foster Carer Agreement' and include
 - the carer support plan
 - the carer's learning plan
 - review dates for Part A, B and C
- request that the foster carer signs the 'Foster Carer Agreement', to signify their agreement that the recorded information is a true and correct record of discussions held
- provide the foster carer with a copy of the completed, signed agreement and any attachments

- file the original 'Foster Carer Agreement' on the foster carer's file, and provide a copy to the foster and kinship care service, where applicable.

4.3 Monitor and review the ongoing quality of care

Following approval as a foster or kinship carer, the ongoing quality of care provided by the carer is to be monitored and reviewed for the duration of a child's placement with the carer. This will occur:

- during home visits with the child and the carer
- when reviewing the 'Foster Carer Agreement', if applicable
- when reviewing the placement agreement for a child
- through the implementation of the carer's support and training needs
- through the implementation of an action plan for addressing a matter of concern, if applicable
- during the carer's application for renewal of approval.

Any identified concerns regarding the ongoing quality of care provided by an approved carer are to be addressed at the earliest possible time, in discussion with the carer and where applicable, the foster or kinship care service. Where concerns remain or escalate, consider:

- recording a matter of concern - refer to [9.1 Decide whether information constitutes a matter of concern](#)
- the amendment, suspension or cancellation of a certificate of approval.

4.4 Standard and advanced training

Other than in exceptional circumstances, an approved foster carer **must** complete the following training:

- **Standard training** - three modules, each of three hours duration - within the first 12 months and, as a prerequisite for their first renewal of approval as a foster carer.
- **Advanced training** - minimum of 8 hours - within two years and as a prerequisite for their second renewal of approval as a foster carer.

The content of the standard training modules may be delivered in a range of flexible ways, including one-to-one in the applicant's home, if necessary.

The completion of associated learning journals is at the **discretion** of the foster carer.

Following the completion of standard and advanced training, further participation in advanced training modules occurs at the foster carer's **discretion**.

Kinship carers are **not required** to complete standard and advanced training, however, they may choose to participate in standard or advanced training, to assist them in meeting their support and learning needs.

Note: Where the partner of a foster carer is genuinely unable to participate in standard training due to the nature and location of their employment, for example, those employed by the defence forces or mining industry and working interstate or overseas, both foster carers may be granted renewal of approval, with the condition (recorded on the certificate of approval) that the applicable partner completes standard training when their circumstances change. In exceptional circumstances, the CSSC manager may approve an extension of up to six months for the completion of standard training, or if necessary, waive the requirement entirely.

For more information, refer to the [Procedures and guidelines for Quality Care: Foster Care Training](#).

5. Renewal

The renewal of approval process allows an assessment of the continued suitability of the applicant and any adult household members, whether the applicant has met the standards of care for children placed with them during the preceding one or two year period and whether they continue to meet the legislative and policy suitability requirements.

5.1 Invite an application for renewal of approval

A foster carer is required to renew their approval one year from the date of initial approval and every two years thereafter. A kinship carer is required to renew their approval within one year of the date of initial approval and every two years thereafter.

Regardless of whether the assessment process will be undertaken by a foster or kinship care service, a fee-for-service professional or a Child Safety Services' officer, the **CSSC** is responsible for inviting a foster or kinship carer to renew their certificate of approval.

All applications for renewal **must** be lodged, and be 'properly made', **prior to** the expiry date of the current certificate of approval. The **90 day approval period commences** from the date the application for renewal is '**properly made**' (refer to [1.6 Lodge the application](#)).

Three months **prior to** the expiry date of the current certificate of approval, complete and send the [Letter inviting application for renewal of approval](#) to the carer, along with the following attachments:

- the [Application for approval - Form 3 APA \(APA form\) - Part C](#)
- the [Legislative requirements for providing care - Fact sheet](#)
- if applicable, the [Carer applicant health and wellbeing questionnaire](#), **only** to be completed at renewal where there has been a **change** in health status during the preceding one or two year period.

Should the carer not wish to renew their approval status, they will need to inform Child Safety Services as soon as possible to ensure minimal disruption to the child, as the child will need to be placed with another carer prior to the current certificate of approval expiry date.

Where the carer does not apply for renewal of approval, refer to [7. What if the foster or kinship carer decides to cease being a carer?](#)

5.2 Lodgement of application for renewal

If a carer wishes to renew their approval, they **must** complete the application, attach photocopies of identification documents, where available and lodge the application with the CSSC **prior to** the expiry date of their current certificate of approval.

Note: Referee checks are **not** required at renewal of approval.

Completion of the application documentation

When the carer decides to apply to renew their approval, use the [Application for approval - Form 3 APA - Guide to completion](#) and:

- request that the applicant and all adult household members complete the 'APA form' - Part C
- determine the applicant's adult household members by referring to the [Adult household member guidelines](#)

- complete Part D of the ‘APA form’
- ensure the applicant completes a ‘Carer applicant health and wellbeing questionnaire’, if applicable
- request that the applicant completes the [Interview resource: Statement of standards](#).

A [blue card application](#) or [blue card validation](#) form is **only** provided upon application for renewal where a ‘blue card application’ or ‘blue card validation’ form has **not** previously been provided to, and processed by, the CSU.

If a ‘blue card application’ form is completed as part of the application for renewal of approval, Child Safety Services’ staff **must** inform the blue card applicant that it is an offence for a disqualified person to sign a ‘blue card application’, as required by the *Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000*. This requirement applies even when a prescribed person has verified a person’s identity. For further information, refer to the practice resource [Mandatory advice to blue card applicants](#).

Where the applicant has changed address or undertaken home modifications since the previous approval/renewal, ensure that a subsequent household safety study has occurred, and if not, complete a new [Form 2: Household safety study](#) in accordance with [1.4 Conduct a household safety study](#).

Note: Where an adult household member has an appointed guardian as a result of a disability, the forms will be completed with the household member’s details and signed by their guardian.

Ensure the application for renewal is ‘properly made’

Prior to accepting an application for renewal from the applicant, ensure that the application is ‘properly made’ (refer to [1.6 Lodge the application](#)).

5.3 Facilitate personal history checks

Once the application has been ‘properly made’ and the lodgement date has been recorded, immediately forward Parts C and D of the APA form and if applicable, ‘blue card application’ or ‘blue card validation’ forms and identification documents, where available, to the CSU in accordance with [2.2 Facilitate personal history checks](#).

The conduct of personal history checks should **not delay** the commencement of the assessment of the application for renewal of approval.

The renewal of a blue card

The blue card requires renewal every two years however this does **not** occur as part of the application for renewal of approval process. The CCYPCG will notify existing blue card holders sixteen weeks before their cards expire. Approved carers and adult household members are required to lodge a renewal application at least 30 days prior to the expiry of their card.

5.4 Conduct medical checks, if applicable

The conduct of medical checks at renewal of approval is at the **discretion** of the CSSC manager. Where relevant, consideration should be given to any **change** in the applicant’s health status during the preceding one or two year period and whether this may impact on the capacity of the applicant to fulfil the foster or kinship carer role.

If required, conduct medical checks on the applicant (refer to [2.5 Conduct medical checks, if applicable](#)) and record the outcome of the medical check in the relevant section of the:

- [Form 3B: Foster carer applicant assessment and recommendation form - Renewal of approval only](#) (Form 3B), for a foster carer applicant
- [Kinship carer renewal assessment report](#), for a kinship carer applicant.

5.5 Assess the application for renewal

The assessment of an application for renewal of approval should be relatively straightforward in most cases, given that for the preceding one or two year period:

- the applicant has demonstrated an ability to provide foster or kinship care and to meet suitability requirements
- one or more Child Safety Services' officers, or a staff member from a foster and kinship care service, will have been in regular contact with the applicant to provide support to the applicant and undertake case work with any child placed with the carer.

In these circumstances, the assessment of the application for renewal of approval is primarily a process of:

- gathering relevant information from identified sources
- analysing the information to determine whether the applicant has met, and continues to meet, all legislative and policy suitability requirements.

The assessment of the application for renewal of approval will focus on changes since the previous assessment, and include **demonstrated** examples of how the applicant has provided care in a manner consistent with the legislated statement of standards, and met other suitability requirements.

Alternatively, where there has been limited or infrequent contact with the applicant for the preceding one or two year period, or there have been significant issues of concern regarding the quality of care provided by the applicant or their suitability, the assessment will need to be more comprehensive, and consist of more structured assessment interviews.

For specific information about factors to consider during the assessment of an application for renewal of approval, refer to the practice paper [Assessment of foster carer applicants](#), or the practice resources [Legislative requirements for the approval of kinship carers](#) and [Assessment of kinship carer applicants](#).

Assessing the application for renewal of approval

To assess the application and determine whether the applicant meets all suitability requirements, consider all information obtained during the assessment process, taking into account:

- their demonstrated ability to meet the statement of standards
- information obtained by reviewing the applicant's file, speaking with the child's case worker and having contact with the applicant
- the completed [Interview resource: Statement of standards](#)
- information from the applicant's participation in standard or advanced training, including, where applicable, the applicant's completed learning journals
- the outcomes of any matters of concern which have been responded to for the preceding one or two year period
- the outcomes of personal history checks on the applicant and if applicable, adult household members

- information from additional sources, for example, an updated [Carer applicant health and wellbeing questionnaire](#), medical check or household safety study
- the views of the recognised entity about the kinship carer for an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child
- the **kinship carer applicant's** ability to continue to meet the needs of the **particular** child in their care, by considering the child's case plan and determining whether the applicant is facilitating the agreed case plan goal and outcomes.

5.6 Complete the renewal assessment report

Once all the assessment activities have been undertaken, complete the:

- 'Form 3B: Foster carer applicant assessment and recommendation form - Renewal of approval only', (Form 3B), having regard to the [Form 3B - Guidelines for completing assessment report - Renewal of approval only](#), for a foster carer applicant
- 'Kinship carer renewal assessment report', for a kinship carer applicant.

These assessment reports are intended to be a brief summary of all the information gathered and assessed, as outlined in [5.5 Assess the application for renewal](#), including:

- a few paragraphs relating to each topic
- any confidential information relevant to the assessment
- information about any proposed use of conditions on the certificate of approval, if applicable
- a recommendation to the CSSC manager about the applicant's suitability to be issued with a certificate of approval and the rationale for the recommendation.

When considering the use of conditions on the certificate of approval, firstly consider whether the conditions can be included in the [Foster Carer Agreement](#) (refer to [2.7 Complete the assessment report](#)).

Prior to finalising either the 'Form 3B' or the 'Kinship carer renewal assessment report':

- share observations and reflections with the applicant and give them feedback about the conclusions being reached
- incorporate relevant comments and feedback from the applicant in the report.

Once the 'Form 3B' or 'Kinship carer renewal assessment report' is finalised:

- provide a copy of the final 'Form 3B' or 'Kinship carer renewal assessment report' to the applicant
- a Child Safety Services' officer completes the [Form 4: Approval decision](#), which includes the outcomes of the application for a blue card or to validate a blue card, where applicable, and personal history checks conducted by the CSU
- provide the assessment report and the completed 'Form 4: Approval decision' to the CSSC manager for a decision.

Do **not** provide the applicant with a copy of the 'Form 4: Approval decision'.

File copies of all interview records, reports, handouts and self-assessments on the applicant's paper file.

5.7 Decide the outcome of the application for renewal

Prior to granting renewal of approval, the CSSC manager **must** be satisfied that the applicant is suitable based on **all** aspects of suitability.

Unless an application is withdrawn by the applicant in writing, or refused based on an adverse personal history, the CSSC manager is delegated to approve or refuse the application within 90 days of the recorded lodgement date of the application. If an application for renewal is unlikely to be decided **within 90 days** and more time is required, ensure the applicant is advised of the delay and the reasons for the delay.

Where the application for renewal is lodged and 'properly made' prior to the current certificate of approval expiry date, the current certificate of approval continues in force until the decision regarding the application for renewal of approval is made, regardless of whether the renewal decision is decided within the 90 day timeframe.

When deciding the outcome of an application for renewal of approval, the CSSC manager will consider all information provided and the legislative and policy requirements for suitability, including:

- the outcomes of all applications for a blue card or the validation of a blue card, where applicable, and all personal history checks, as recorded on the 'Form 4: Approval decision'
- whether the applicant continues to be a suitable person to be an approved carer, including for a kinship carer, whether the ongoing placement of the child is consistent with the agreed case plan for the child and continues to be in the best interests of the child
- whether the applicant has demonstrated an ability to provide care to the child in a manner consistent with the statement of standards, for the preceding one or two year period, as noted in the 'Form 3B: Foster carer applicant assessment and recommendation form - Renewal of approval only' or the 'Kinship carer renewal assessment report'
- the views of the recognised entity for a kinship carer placement for an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child, if applicable.

The approval decision may be informed by the convening of an assessment panel however a CSSC manager **must** decide the outcome of the application.

Note: When a new adult has completed the 'New adult household member' form and a 'blue card application' or 'blue card validation' form, after an application for renewal of approval has been lodged, the approval process for the applicant may be completed **prior to** the new adult household member being issued with a blue card, or prior to the CCYPCG validating the new adult household member's existing blue card (*Child Protection Act 1999*, section 135(2)).

5.8 Approve the application for renewal

To approve the application, the CSSC manager will record the approval decision, along with any relevant comments, on the 'Form 4: Approval decision', and sign the form.

When the application is approved, advise the approved carer:

- that their application for renewal has been approved
- that they are legally obligated to inform Child Safety Services of specific changes in carer circumstances and copies of the [Change in carer circumstances form](#) will be posted to them, for their future completion, if necessary (refer to [2. What if there is a change in carer circumstances?](#)).

Following the provision of the above advice to the approved carer:

- complete the [Letter of approval as a foster carer](#) or [Letter of approval as a kinship carer](#)
- complete the [Certificate of Approval \(Foster carer\)](#) or [Certificate of Approval \(Kinship carer\)](#)
- provide the following to the approved carer:
 - their certificate of approval
 - the letter of approval
 - copies of the 'Change in carer circumstances form'
 - the 'Carer handbook', if the carer has not received one previously
- place the assessment report, the 'Form 4: Approval decision', a copy of the certificate of approval and the letter of approval, on the approved carer's file
- provide a copy of the certificate of approval and the letter of approval to the foster and kinship care service, if applicable
- edit the current approval for the approved carer or carer couple in ICMS by changing the approval status to 'renewed' and entering an end date, and add a new approval with an approval status of 'approved'.

For information about determining the expiry date for a certificate of approval, refer to the practice resource [Completing the Certificate of Approval](#).

Note: A kinship carer requires a separate certificate of approval for each child for whom they are approved.

Refusal

If the application for renewal of approval is refused by the CSSC manager, refer to [3.4 Refuse the application](#).

5.9 Review support arrangements

Review the approved carer's support arrangements at three or six monthly intervals, depending on the case, or more frequently where necessary or requested by an approved carer.

To avoid duplication, review support arrangements as part of the review of the:

- 'Foster Carer Agreement', for a foster carer
- placement agreement for the child, for all carer types.

As a **minimum**, support options are to be reviewed when:

- changes are made to the case plan for a child
- there are significant changes in the approved carer's circumstances potentially impacting on the children in their care
- dynamics which may escalate into matters of concern are identified in the placement.

For further information about reviewing support arrangements, refer to [4.1 Negotiate support arrangements](#).

5.10 Review the Foster Carer Agreement

The CSSC is responsible for reviewing the 'Foster Carer Agreement' with a foster carer who is affiliated with the CSSC. The foster and kinship care service is responsible for reviewing a 'Foster Carer

Agreement' with a foster carer who is affiliated with a foster and kinship care service. The CSSC may be involved in this process when a carer has a significant history of matters of concern.

The 'Foster Carer Agreement' consists of three parts. Review Part A at least once a year, and Parts B and C more frequently, for example, every six months. These reviews are referred to as 'routine' reviews.

Prior to conducting a review of the 'Foster Carer Agreement' ensure that the foster carer is clear about the purpose of the review and ensure that the information necessary to inform the review has been obtained from available sources.

To review the 'Foster Carer Agreement', meet with the carer to:

- ensure that the quality of care provided is consistent with the statement of standards
- identify any change of circumstances for the foster carer and their family and explore the impact of the change, if any, on the carer's ability to provide care
- encourage the foster carer to raise any issues affecting them
- discuss the foster carer's readiness for other types of placements
- consider whether the foster carer is being matched with the type of care and children appropriate to their circumstances
- assess the needs of the foster carer family and identify strategies to address these needs, including support arrangements
- assess the foster carer's ongoing commitment to undertake the legislative roles and responsibilities of a foster carer.

To complete the review of the 'Foster Carer Agreement':

- complete the 'Foster Carer Agreement', and include relevant information from discussions held with the carer
- request that the foster carer signs the 'Foster Carer Agreement', to signify their agreement that the recorded information is a true and correct record of discussions held
- provide the foster carer with a copy of the final, signed 'Foster Carer Agreement' and attachments, if applicable
- file the signed, original 'Foster Carer Agreement' on the foster carer's file, with the foster and kinship care service retaining a copy, where applicable.

Complete an additional, early review of the 'Foster Carer Agreement' when:

- there are ongoing matters of concern with regard to the quality of care provided to children
- a notification, involving allegations about the foster carer, or a significant member of the foster carer's household, has been investigated and assessed and has resulted in a substantiated outcome
- there is a change in carer circumstances that may require a review, for example, a change to personal history for the foster carer or an adult household member, such as a new criminal charge or conviction
- the foster carer intends to provide care for other children, for example, becoming a family day care provider or caring for a relative.

For further information, refer to the practice resource [Reviewing the Foster Carer Agreement](#).

Between reviews, continue monitoring the quality of care provided, in accordance with [4.3 Monitor and review the ongoing quality of care](#).

What ifs - responding to specific areas of regulation of care

1. What if the applicant requires provisional approval?

Under the *Child Protection Act 1999* and *Child Protection Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2006*, a person who has made an application to be a foster or kinship carer may be provisionally approved if all of the following requirements are met:

- it is not possible, or not in the child's best interests, to be placed with an approved foster or kinship carer or licensed care service
- the outcomes of child protection and criminal history checks, including self-disclosures, indicate the applicant does not pose a risk to the child's safety
- the applicant is able and willing to protect the child from harm
- all members of the applicant's household do not pose a risk to the child's safety
- a brief assessment indicates the applicant is willing and able to meet the statement of standards.

Provisional approval is for 60 days with a possible further extension of 30 days. The substantive application to be a foster or kinship carer must be decided within this 60 day or where extended, 90 day period, if it is intended for the child to remain in the placement.

If the substantive application is **not** decided within the 60 day or where extended, 90 day period of provisional approval:

- remove the child from the placement, as provisional approval cannot be extended beyond 90 days
- negotiate an extension to the time frame for deciding the substantive application for approval, **prior to** the expiry of provisional approval (see below).

Key steps to obtain provisional approval

To obtain provisional approval of a foster or kinship carer applicant:

- provide a copy of the [Blue cards - Fact sheet](#) and [What is provisional approval? - Fact sheet](#) to the applicant
- the application as a foster or kinship carer must be properly made as outlined in [1.6 Lodge the application](#)
- forward documentation for the conduct of personal history checks to the CSU (refer to [2.2 Facilitate personal history checks](#)), or the CSAHSC if after hours (see below)
- meet with the applicant at their home and:
 - undertake a brief assessment of their ability to provide care in accordance with the statement of standards and to protect the child from harm
 - ensure that the **mandatory** safety requirements will be met and complete page 1 of the [Form 2: Household safety study](#)
- a Child Safety Services' officer records the outcomes of personal history checks conducted by the CSU in the [Form 5: Approval Decision - Provisionally approved carer](#)
- record the brief assessment and make an approval recommendation to the CSSC manager, or zonal director where criminal history results are not yet available from the CSU

- the CSSC manager or zonal director records the approval decision, along with relevant comments if applicable, on the 'Form 5 - Approval decision - Provisionally approved carer' and signs the form.

For further information regarding the brief assessment, refer to the practice resource [Meeting the statement of standards](#).

Note: Child Safety Services' staff **must** comply with the requirement under the *Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000*, to inform **all** blue card applicants that it is an offence for a disqualified person to sign a blue card application form. This requirement applies even when a prescribed person has verified an applicant's identity. For further information, refer to the practice resource [Mandatory advice to blue card applicants](#).

Request urgent personal history checks

When the conduct of personal history checks is urgent, for example, when provisional approval is required so that a placement can be facilitated as soon as possible for a child:

- seek approval from the CSSC manager to request urgent personal history checks
- contact the CSU via telephone and advise them of the need for urgent personal history checks
- immediately fax all forms and associated identification documents, where available (refer to [2.2 Facilitate personal history checks](#)), to the CSU, or make telephone contact where there is no access to a fax
- send the forms and identification documents, where available, to the CSU the following business day, via express post, overnight delivery.

The CSU provides the personal history check results back to the CSSC as soon as practicable however where there are unforeseen delays, the zonal director may grant provisional approval, as outlined below.

Request after hours personal history checks

After hours personal history checks will be conducted by the Child Safety After Hours Service Centre (CSAHSC) and will include child protection and criminal history checks. In this circumstance, fax the necessary documentation to CSAHSC and phone to confirm receipt of the request. Decisions required after hours about a person's suitability will be made by the Duty Executive Officer.

The following business day, send the forms and identification documents, where available, to the CSU, via express post, overnight delivery.

Approval of applicants

The CSSC manager is delegated to grant a carer applicant provisional approval, where the applicant or any adult household members are assessed as not posing a risk to the child's safety, taking into account:

- the outcome of personal history checks undertaken by the CSU
- consideration of any self-disclosures by the applicant or adult household members as recorded in the [APA form](#)
- the brief assessment of the applicant's ability to provide care consistent with the statement of standards, based on an interview in the applicant's home
- the applicant's ability and willingness to protect the child from harm
- any relevant information from Child Safety Services' records
- whether the applicant meets the mandatory household safety study requirements

- the views of the recognised entity about the proposed carer for an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Island child
- whether the placement facilitates ongoing connections with the child's kin or community
- the views of the child about the placement and, where they do not support the placement, the reasons they provide (with due regard to the child's age and developmental level).

The zonal director, or the Duty Executive Officer if after hours, may grant provisional approval **prior to** the completion of criminal history checks in urgent circumstances, taking into consideration the factors outlined above. When this occurs, the approval applies until advice of the outcome of criminal history checks is received from the CSU.

Actions following provisional approval of applicant

Following a decision to provisionally approve the applicant:

- advise the applicant of the decision in writing, using the [Letter of approval as a provisionally approved carer](#)
- issue a [Certificate of Approval \(Provisionally approved carer\)](#) for each child to be cared for by the provisionally approved carer
- provide the provisionally approved carer with a copy of
 - the 'Carer handbook'
 - the [Legislative requirements for providing care - Fact sheet](#)
 - the 'What is provisional approval? - Fact sheet'
 - other fact sheets relevant to the learning and information needs of the carer - refer to [Carer information sheets](#).
- ensure the carer clearly understands:
 - their obligation not to disclose confidential information
 - their obligation to disclose a change in personal history for themselves or adult household members
 - their obligation to advise of any changes in carer circumstances (refer to [2. What if there is a change in carer circumstances?](#))
- complete the household safety study in full (refer to [1.4 Conduct a household safety study](#))
- complete a placement agreement for the child
- generate person records in ICMS for the provisionally approved carer and any adult household members, create a carer entity for the carer or carer couple and add the carer's provisional approval details
- enter the carer's payment details onto Carepay by completing a [FIN 23 - Vendor registration/change application](#) form, and forwarding **the form to Expenditure and Carer Services, Corporate Link**.

The provisional certificate of approval has effect for 60 days from the date of initial approval, as recorded on the [Form 5: Approval decision - Provisionally approved carer](#). For further information, refer to the practice resource [Completing the Certificate of Approval](#).

Extension of the expiry date

Provisional approval can be extended past 60 days, once only, for up to a further 30 days if:

- the existing certificate of approval is current

- the extension is considered desirable and appropriate to meet the needs of the child named on the certificate
- the carer agrees to the amendment.

If the CSSC manager decides that an extension to the expiry date is warranted:

- a new 'Certificate of Approval (Provisionally approved carer)' is issued with all of the existing details and conditions, and the new expiry date
- the provisionally approved carer must deliver the original certificate of approval to the CSSC manager within two days
- the CSSC retains a copy of the new certificate of approval on the provisionally approved carer's file and a copy is provided to the foster and kinship carer service, where relevant
- the information is updated in ICMS.

Where an extension is granted, the new expiry date for the certificate of approval is to be no more than 30 days from the expiry date on the initial certificate.

Interstate applicants

Where an applicant resides interstate, careful consideration must be given to the feasibility of completing all necessary assessment requirements within the specified timeframes before deciding to seek the provisional approval of an interstate applicant.

Rights of review

Carer applicants who apply for provisional approval only have review rights in relation to their substantive application to become either a foster or kinship carer. The cancellation of a provisional certificate of approval does not affect the pending application for approval as an approved foster or kinship carer. If the substantive application is subsequently refused, this decision is reviewable.

2. What if there is a change in carer circumstances?

All approved carers, including provisionally approved carers, are required to notify Child Safety Services of any of the following specific changes that are considered relevant to determining their ongoing suitability:

- a change of address
- a change in spousal relationship, for example separation, divorce, new partner, death of a partner
- a change in other personal circumstances, for example significant health problems or excessive employment demands
- a change to the criminal or personal history of the carer or any adult member of their household (*Child Protection Act 1999*, section 141F and 141G)
- a change of persons living in the carer household, excluding foster children
- an intention to provide care for other children (for example, family day care or relatives).

When any of these circumstances occur, the carer is to complete a [Change in carer circumstances form](#) and provide it to the CSSC. Upon receipt of the information:

- consider whether an additional, early review of the [Foster Carer Agreement](#) is necessary (refer to [5.10 Review the Foster Carer Agreement](#))
- consider whether a review of the carer's suitability is required
- update records in ICMS, as appropriate

- forward a copy of the completed 'Change in carer circumstances form' to the CSU, **except** where the change relates to personal circumstances involving health or employment demands.

Address changes

When a carer has advised Child Safety Services that they have changed their primary place of residence:

- update the new address details in ICMS
- complete a [FIN 23 Vendor registration/change application](#) form and send it to the Vendor Maintenance team as outlined on the form
- complete a household safety study (refer to [1.4 Conduct a household safety study](#)).

Change in carer relationships - new spousal relationship

Carers must advise Child Safety Services when they intend to commence living with a spouse or wish to hold a joint certificate with another adult, for example an adult child of the carer.

Prior to this occurring:

- the carer and their spouse or other adult need to submit a joint application for approval as foster or kinship carers - the carer's existing certificate of approval remains in place until the outcome of a joint application is decided
- progress the application in accordance with the usual assessment process, however, the original approved carer will not require personal history checks and will not need to repeat [Pre-service training](#).

If the application is approved:

- issue the carers with a new joint certificate of approval
- complete a new 'Foster Carer Agreement', where applicable
- review the placement agreement for any child in the care of a kinship carer, where applicable, taking into consideration any changes to the support needs for the carer (refer to [4.1 Negotiate support arrangements](#)).

Change in carer relationships - ending of a spousal relationship

When a spousal relationship ends and only one of the carers wishes to continue as a carer, the carer must apply in writing to the CSSC manager for an amendment to their certificate of approval (*Child Protection Act 1999*, section 137). The existing certificate of approval remains in place until the application for amendment is decided. For the process to amend the certificate of approval, refer to [9. What if a foster or kinship carer's certificate of approval requires amendment, suspension or cancellation, other than on blue card grounds?](#) The carer will not be required to repeat pre-service training.

Where **both carers** wish to continue as approved carers, **both carers** must submit a separate 'Application for approval - Form 3 APA'. The existing certificate of approval remains in place until their individual applications are decided. The carers will **not be** required to repeat pre-service training.

In both of the above circumstances, the approval decision will include an assessment of how the new circumstances of the applicant will impact on any children in their care.

If the application is approved:

- issue the carer with a new certificate of approval
- complete a new 'Foster Carer Agreement', where applicable

- review the placement agreement for any child in the care of a kinship carer, where applicable.

Personal history changes

Carers are required to advise Child Safety Services of:

- any changes to their personal history
- changes or suspected changes to the personal history of any adult household member.

Changes in carer household membership

Carers are required to advise Child Safety Services:

- that a person intends to become a member of the household
- that a person has stopped being a member of the household.

For any adult intending to join a carer household, or **any child turning 18**, who lives in the carer household (including young people placed with the carer by Child Safety Services), conduct personal history checks in accordance with [2.2 Facilitate personal history checks](#).

For a [New adult household member](#), consideration should be given to interviewing the new household member about their views on fostering and their role within the carer household.

3. What if an external party requests or requires personal information about the applicant or carer?

Information about an approved carer or carer applicant can be provided to an external party where:

- the information is necessary in order to perform functions under or in relation to administration of the *Child Protection Act 1999*
- the information is related to the welfare or protection of a particular child.

Examples of functions under or in relation to administration of the *Child Protection Act 1999* include:

- completing the initial or renewal assessment of a foster or kinship carer applicant
- providing support services to an approved carer.

If appropriate, information may be provided to:

- an external assessor completing an initial or renewal assessment
- a foster or kinship care service who is providing ongoing support to the carer
- a carer assessment panel.

The following information may be provided:

- the outcome of medical reports, where the applicant has provided **consent** on the 'Carer applicant health and wellbeing questionnaire'
- copies of foster and kinship carer assessments.

Any information provided must **not** include information that identifies, or is likely to identify, a notifier. Where information is to be provided to an external party, the carer or carer applicant is to be advised.

Personal history

It is **not** appropriate to provide specific details of an applicant's or adult household member's personal history outcomes to an external assessor, foster or kinship care service or an assessment panel.

In the first instance, request that the applicant or adult household member discloses the information about their personal history to the person undertaking the assessment. If the applicant or adult household member **refuses to disclose** this information, inform them that:

- the application will be decided based on information already known
- the application may be refused in the absence of any further information provided by them, where the personal history outcomes are significant.

If the applicant or adult household member still refuses to disclose their personal history to the person undertaking the assessment, the CSSC manager may:

- refuse the application, where personal history outcomes indicate that the applicant or an adult household member is not a suitable person
- approve the application, where the nature of personal history outcomes does not exclude the applicant or adult household member from being considered suitable, and the person meets all other legislative and policy suitability requirements.

Record keeping requirements

CSSC staff must be aware of the strict confidentiality provisions around sensitive information, and refer to the interim record-keeping process, available from the CSSC records officer, when required to provide copies of carer information to external parties. This process includes a receipt form that goes on the Foster Carer History file as a record of information provided and a cover sheet that is attached to the information being provided. The receipt form requires authorisation by the CSSC manager and a signature from the person receiving the information.

4. What if approval has expired before an application for renewal is lodged?

Approved foster and kinship carers must apply for renewal of their existing approval prior to the expiry of the current certificate of approval, if they wish to continue as approved carers.

Where the existing certificate of approval has expired before the approved carer makes an application, the application cannot be progressed as an application for renewal of approval. In this case, the applicant will need to lodge an application for initial approval and to complete the [Application for approval - Form 3 APA \(Part A\)](#).

5. What if one spouse is unavailable to participate in the assessment and approval process?

Where the partner of a foster or kinship carer applicant is genuinely unavailable to be assessed and approved, along with their spouse, due to the nature and location of their employment, for example, those employed by the defence forces or mining industry and working interstate or overseas, the following process applies:

- the available applicant lodges an application as a single applicant
- the assessment and approval process proceeds according to the procedure
- the single applicant, where they meet the legislative and policy requirements for suitability, is approved and issued with a certificate of approval
- when the unavailable spouse returns to the carer household, the approved carer and their spouse immediately submit a joint application for approval, including a 'blue card application' or

'blue card validation' form - the carer's existing certificate remains in place until the outcome of the joint application is decided

- progress the application in accordance with the usual assessment process, however, the original approved carer will not require personal history checks and will not need to repeat pre-service training.

If the application is approved:

- issue the carers with a new joint certificate of approval
- change the carer's details in ICMS and add the details for the carer couple
- request the return of the previous certificate of approval
- complete a new 'Foster Carer Agreement', where applicable
- review the placement agreement for any child in the care of a kinship carer, where applicable, taking into consideration any changes to the support needs for the carer (refer to [4.1 Negotiate support arrangements](#)).

6. What if a carer applicant resides interstate?

When a carer applicant who is proposed to provide care for a child resides in another state, territory or New Zealand (jurisdiction), and the child is subject to a court assessment, custody or guardianship order or proceedings in Queensland, request that the jurisdiction undertake a carer assessment.

To facilitate the assessment of a carer applicant in another jurisdiction:

- ensure that the applicant is aware of the intended assessment and has indicated a willingness to co-operate in the assessment process
- ensure that the applicant is aware of their need to meet legislative requirements under the *Child Protection Act 1999*
- provide the applicant with:
 - the [Carer applicant health and wellbeing questionnaire](#)
 - the '[Application for approval - Form 3 APA](#)' (APA form)
 - [blue card application](#) or '[blue card validation](#)' forms
- ensure that the applicant and all adult household members complete the 'APA form' - Part A and either the 'blue card application' or 'blue card validation' form and the 'Carer applicant health and wellbeing questionnaire'
- request that the interstate officer completes the 'APA form' (Part B) - the interstate officer can verify the applicant and the adult household members' identity - and return all documentation to the CSSC
- send the relevant forms to the CSU for processing where the application has been 'properly made' (refer to [1.6 Lodge the application](#))
- contact the Queensland ILO, Court Services Unit, and obtain the 'Request for Interstate Assessment of Carer/s' form
- complete the 'Request for Interstate Assessment of Carer/s' form and attach appropriate supporting documentation, for example, medical and psychological reports on the child
- have the request signed by the CSO with case responsibility and the team leader
- fax or post all relevant documentation to the Queensland ILO.

Note: upon receipt of any 'blue card application' forms, contact all blue card applicants to advise that it is an offence for a disqualified person to sign a 'blue card application' form. For further information, refer to the practice resource [Mandatory advice to blue card applicants](#).

The Queensland ILO will forward the request and accompanying documentation to the ILO in the other jurisdiction.

If the CSU manager subsequently advises that, based on personal history checks, the applicant is not suitable, contact the Queensland ILO **immediately**, who will withdraw the assessment request from the other jurisdiction.

The interstate officer will complete the 'Form 2: Household safety study' on behalf of Child Safety Services and provide a written assessment report, addressing the assessment factors identified on the 'Request for Interstate Assessment of Carer/s'

Where the carer assessment relates to a family contact visit refer to [Chapter 5, 2.5 Facilitate and monitor family contact](#).

7. What if the foster or kinship carer decides to cease being a carer?

When a carer advises Child Safety Services of their decision to cease being an approved carer:

- ask the carer to return their certificate of approval and the foster carer card within the requested timeframe, which must not be less than seven days (*Child Protection Act 1999*, section 141)
- inform the carer about available supports, for example, counselling or referrals, where the cessation occurs due to difficult personal circumstances
- record the reason why the carer is exiting the system and amend the carer's approval status in ICMS to 'surrendered'
- notify the CSU
- complete the [Advice to FCQ: End of carer approval](#) form and fax the form to Foster Care Queensland.

Foster Care Queensland is responsible for contacting the former carer to offer them an exit interview, which is conducted by Foster Care Queensland.

The CSSC manager is responsible for ensuring that Foster Care Queensland receives written notification of all cessations of approval.

8. What if a carer requests access to their personal information?

If a carer requests access to their personal information held on the Child Safety Services' file, inform the carer that the release of file information is managed by the Freedom of Information Branch.

Advise the carer that their request must be made in writing, through a completed Freedom of Information application, a letter or other written advice, and outline the details of the personal information sought.

Provide the carer with the contact details for the Freedom of Information Branch.

9. What if a foster or kinship carer's certificate of approval requires amendment, suspension or cancellation, other than on blue card grounds?

Under the *Child Protection Act 1999*, a carer's certificate of approval can be amended, suspended or cancelled in the following circumstances:

- the holder of the certificate of approval applies to the chief executive for an amendment of the certificate of approval or agrees to an amendment
- the holder is not meeting the standards required under the certificate of approval or a condition of the certificate of approval
- the holder has contravened a provision of the *Child Protection Act 1999*
- the certificate of approval was issued because of a materially false or misleading representation or declaration (either orally or in writing)
- it is considered necessary or desirable because of a circumstance prescribed under a regulation.

Note: A certificate of approval as a kinship carer **cannot** be amended to change the child for whom the carer is approved.

Amendment, suspension or cancellation decisions

Child Safety Services will consider whether there is a need for the amendment, suspension or cancellation of the certificate of approval of a carer, in circumstances where a carer is not meeting the legislated statement of standards or a condition of the certificate of approval, or alternatively, where an amendment of the certificate of approval is requested by the carer. The amendment, suspension or cancellation of a certificate of approval is to occur in a respectful and transparent manner.

Amendment requested by an approved carer - section 137

Any application by a carer to amend their certificate of approval must be made in writing. Child Safety Services must make a decision on whether the proposed amendment is necessary **within 28 days** of receiving the request. If necessary, meet with the carer to discuss the matter before the 28 day period has lapsed.

If the proposed amendment is decided to be necessary:

- the CSSC manager will provide written notice to the carer using the [Letter of outcome of application to amend](#) and advise:
 - that their request for an amendment has been granted
 - the details of the amendment that has been made
 - that a certificate of approval has been amended
 - that the amended certificate of approval takes effect on the day the CSSC manager gives notice to the carer that the amendment has been granted, or a later day, if stated in the notice
 - that the carer must deliver the original certificate of approval to the CSSC within the requested timeframe, which must not be less than seven days (*Child Protection Act 1999*, section 141)
- provide the carer with a new certificate of approval that incorporates the amendment - all other details, including date of expiry and any existing conditions, must match the details on the original certificate of approval

- retain a copy of the new certificate of approval on the carer's file and provide a copy, where relevant, to the foster and kinship care service.

If the proposed amendment is not considered necessary, the application for amendment must be refused and written notice using the 'Letter of outcome of application to amend' must be provided to the carer **within 10 days** of the decision having been made (*Child Protection Act 1999*, section 137). The notice must:

- state the reasons for the decision
- advise that the carer has the right to have the decision reviewed by the CST, and that an application can be made to the tribunal within 28 days.

Amendment initiated by Child Safety Services - section 138

If the CSSC manager decides that an amendment to a carer's certificate of approval is warranted:

- relevant Child Safety Services' officers must meet with the carer to discuss the reason for the amendment and explain the process
- the CSSC manager must provide written notice to the carer using the Letter of proposed amendment and state:
 - the proposed amendment and the grounds for the amendment
 - the facts and circumstances forming the basis for the grounds
 - that the carer may make written representations to the CSSC manager within 28 days (or longer, if determined by the CSSC manager) to show why the certificate of approval should not be amended.

If, after considering any written representation by the carer, the CSSC manager still considers an amendment to the certificate of approval necessary, the carer must be provided with written notice of the decision **within 10 days** of the decision using the Letter of amendment. The notice must:

- state the reasons for the decision
- advise that the amended certificate of approval takes effect on the day the CSSC manager gives notice to the carer of their decision, or a later day, if stated in the notice
- advise the carer that they must deliver the original certificate of approval to the CSSC within the requested timeframe, which must not be less than seven days (*Child Protection Act 1999*, section 141)
- advise that the carer may have the decision reviewed by the CST if an application is made to the tribunal **within 28 days**.

After providing written notice to the carer of the decision to amend the certificate of approval:

- issue a new certificate of approval that incorporates the amendment and provides all of the details that were recorded on the original certificate, including the date of expiry and any existing conditions
- retain a copy of the new certificate of approval on the carer's file and provide a copy, where relevant, to the foster and kinship care service.

If, at any stage of this process, the CSSC manager decides not to proceed with the amendment, they must provide written notice to the carer of their decision not to amend the certificate of approval.

Suspension or cancellation of a carer's certificate of approval - section 139

A carer's certificate of approval **may be** suspended or cancelled when there is reason to believe that the carer cannot provide care to a child that meets the statement of standards and that the issue of concern cannot be appropriately addressed through other means.

A carer's certificate of approval **must be** cancelled when the CSU manager advises the CSSC manager of the decision to cancel the carer's certificate of approval, where the carer is not suitable as a result of the outcome of personal history checks.

A suspension of the certificate of approval should be considered if the grounds for concern are likely to be temporary or if further assessment is required to determine whether the carer's certificate of approval should be cancelled.

Where the CSSC manager is considering the suspension or cancellation of a carer's certificate of approval, relevant Child Safety Services' officers must meet with the carer to discuss the reason for the proposed suspension or cancellation and explain the process.

Where the decision is made, whether by the CSSC or CSU manager, that the suspension or cancellation of the certificate of approval is warranted, the carer must be provided with written notice using either a Letter of proposed suspension or Letter of proposed cancellation, which is to include:

- the proposed action and the grounds for the proposed action
- the proposed suspension period, for a suspension of the certificate of approval
- advice that the carer may make written representations to the CSSC manager or CSU manager **within 28 days** (or longer, as determined by the CSSC or CSU manager) to show why the certificate of approval should not be suspended or cancelled.

After considering any representation by the carer, where the CSSC manager or CSU manager still considers the suspension or cancellation of the certificate of approval to be necessary, the CSSC manager or CSU manager is to:

- suspend the certificate of approval for no longer than the proposed suspension period (where the action proposed in the notice was to suspend the certificate of approval), or
- cancel the certificate of approval (if the action proposed in the notice was to cancel the certificate of approval).

The suspension or cancellation of the certificate of approval takes effect on the day the CSSC manager or CSU manager gives notice to the carer of their decision, or a later day, if stated in the notice.

Following the suspension or cancellation of the certificate of approval, the CSSC manager or CSU manager must provide written notice to the carer of their decision **within 10 days** of the decision using either the Letter of suspension or the Letter of cancellation. The notice must:

- state the decision to either suspend or cancel the carer's authority
- state the reasons for the decision
- advise the carer that they must deliver the original certificate of approval to the CSSC manager within the requested timeframe, which must not be less than seven days (*Child Protection Act 1999*, section 141)
- advise the carer that they may have the decision reviewed by the CST if application is made **within 28 days**.

If the carer's certificate of approval has been suspended, the certificate of approval must be returned to the carer at the end of the suspension period, unless the certificate of approval has been cancelled.

Following the period of review or if the decision of Child Safety Services is upheld, the CSSC manager is to ensure that the CSU is notified of the suspension or cancellation.

Record the suspension or cancellation in ICMS

Following the suspension or cancellation of a carer's certificate of approval, the CSSC manager is to ensure:

- the carer's approval status is updated in ICMS
- an alert is recorded on the carer (refer to [Chapter 10.7 Recording alerts for a child and family](#)).

At the end of the suspension, update the carer's approval status in ICMS and where the certificate of approval is returned to the carer, close the alert. Where the certificate of approval is cancelled following the period of suspension, the alert remains in place.

Referral for an exit interview - cancellation of a certificate of approval

If the carer does not seek a review of the decision to have their certificate of approval cancelled within the required timeframe, or if they do seek a review of the decision and the CST upholds the Child Safety Services' decision, notify Foster Care Queensland of the end of the carer's approval so that the former carer will be contacted and offered an exit interview by Foster Care Queensland.

To refer the former carer for an exit interview, complete the 'Advice to FCQ: End of carer approval' form and fax the form to Foster Care Queensland.

The CSSC manager is responsible for ensuring that Foster Care Queensland receives written notification of all carers who have had their certificate of approval cancelled.

10. What if a foster or kinship carer's certificate of approval requires suspension or cancellation on blue card grounds?

Change in status of a blue card

The CCYPCG issues blue cards and monitors the changes in criminal history of card holders on a daily basis. The CCYPCG, through the CSU, will advise Child Safety Services of any relevant changes to the criminal history of a carer or an adult household member, for example:

- a blue card holder's card has been suspended because they have been charged with an excluding offence
- a blue card holder has a change in their criminal history which is relevant to child-related employment.

In the case of a suspension or refusal of an existing blue card, the chief executive **must suspend** an approved carer's certificate of approval, pending the outcome of any review process initiated under the *Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000*.

Where the CCYPCG makes the decision to issue an individual with a negative prescribed notice, it means that the person will not be issued with a blue card, or, if they already have one, that their blue card will be suspended or cancelled by the CCYPCG. This is referred to as blue card grounds.

In the above circumstances, the CSSC must take **immediate action** to suspend or cancel the carer's certificate of approval.

The decision to suspend or cancel a carer's certificate of approval on blue card grounds will be effective immediately, and does **not** require that the carer be given an opportunity to provide written

representations to the CSSC manager, prior to the manager deciding to suspend or cancel their approval.

The CSSC manager however must inform the carer of the decision as soon as practicable after the decision is made.

Removal of a child - carer issues

When the CCYPCG suspension or cancellation relates to an approved carer, the carer's certificate of approval **must** be suspended or cancelled, and any child in the placement **must be removed immediately**.

Should the carer subsequently be issued with a blue card and the suspension ended, consideration will be given to whether it is in the best interests of any of the children removed, to be returned to the placement.

Removal of a child - adult household member issues

When the suspension or cancellation relates to an adult member of a carer's household, a decision must be made about whether to remove a child. In this circumstance:

- hold an urgent meeting with the carer and adult household member to discuss what actions they are proposing to take
- ascertain whether the household member intends to leave the household and the proposed timeframe
- assess whether the carer had any knowledge or awareness of the criminal history or change in criminal history of the adult household member
- assess the immediate safety of any child in the placement and determine whether a matter of concern should be recorded. For example, the adult household member's criminal acts may have resulted in harm or risk of harm to the child.

If the adult household member is not planning to leave the household immediately, any child in the placement **must be removed** and the carer's certificate of approval suspended.

If the adult household member is planning to leave the household immediately, the decision about whether it is in the best interests of the child to remain with the carer is to include consideration of:

- the impact on the child, for example, is the child fearful of remaining in the placement
- any risk posed to the child because of the relationship of the household member to the carer
- the carer's response to the suspension or cancellation of the adult household member's blue card and the carer's ability to protect the child in the placement
- the likelihood of any further contact with the adult household member.

Considerations regarding the removal of a child, in this circumstance, would be guided by the Matters of Concern procedure. Refer to [Chapter 9.1 Decide whether information constitutes a matter of concern](#).

Removal of a child - review of decision

The carer is only entitled to have the decision to remove a child from the carer's care reviewed if the chief executive has custody or guardianship of the child, and the carer is an approved foster or kinship carer, and either:

- the child is subject to a child protection order granting long-term guardianship to the chief executive

- the adult household member has left the household, due to the suspension or cancellation of their blue card, however it has been assessed that the carer is no longer a suitable person or the carer is no longer able to meet the standards of care in the statement of standards.

When this applies, provide written notice of the decision to the carer and the child, and ensure that the notice incorporates the information specified in the *Child Protection Act 1999*, section 90.

Cancellation of certificate of approval due to a prescribed provision - carer

A carer's certificate of approval must be **cancelled immediately** (*Child Protection Act 1999*, section 140AG(1)), when the CCYPCG cancels the carer's blue card under a prescribed provision (*Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000*, section 102(6)(a) or 119A - an excluding offence with imprisonment, or a disqualification order, which results in a lifetime ban from holding or applying for a blue card).

The cancellation of the certificate of approval must occur as soon as practicable after Child Safety Services is notified of the decision and the CSSC manager **must**:

- notify the carer in writing of the decision to cancel their certificate of approval using Letter of cancellation - prescribed provision - carer
- notify the CSU of the decision.

There is no right of review to the CCYPCG for a cancellation of a blue card under a prescribed provision or right of review to the CST in relation to Child Safety Services' decision to cancel the carer's certificate of approval.

Suspension or cancellation of a carer's certificate of approval due to a prescribed provision - adult household member

When the CCYPCG cancels the blue card of an adult household member under a prescribed provision (*Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000*, section 102(6)(a) or 119A)) under the *Child Protection Act 1999*, section 140AC and 140AG, one of the following will occur:

- the carer's certificate of approval **must** be suspended
- the carer's certificate of approval **may** be cancelled immediately, where there is no likelihood of the adult household member leaving the carer's home.

The suspension of the carer's certificate of approval is an interim measure to allow an assessment of whether the adult household member has left or is likely to leave the household.

To suspend the carer's certificate of approval, the CSSC manager will advise the carer of the decision and the reason for the suspension using the Letter of suspension - prescribed provision - adult household member.

Where the adult household member leaves the household and the CSSC manager makes a decision to end the suspension, the carer must be provided with a Letter advising end of suspension.

If the household member does not leave the household, or is not expected to leave in the near future, the carer's certificate of approval **must** be cancelled. To cancel the carer's certificate of approval (*Child Protection Act 1999*, section 140AG(3)), the CSSC manager must notify the carer in writing using the Letter of cancellation - prescribed provision - adult household member and advise the carer:

- of the decision to cancel their certificate of approval
- the reason for the cancellation
- that they may apply to the CST to have the decision reviewed, **within 28 days**.

Following the period of review or if Child Safety Services' decision is upheld, the CSSC manager must ensure that the CSU is notified of the decision.

Note: The CSSC manager must **not** suspend or cancel the carer's certificate of approval if satisfied that the person is no longer a member of the carer's household.

Suspension or cancellation of a certificate of approval due to a disqualifying event

A disqualifying event occurs when an approved carer or an adult member of a carer's household:

- is issued with a negative prescribed notice (except under a prescribed provision under the *Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000*, section 102(6)(a) and 119A, or except where a suspended blue card is cancelled)
- has their blue card suspended by the CCYPCG
- withdraws an application for a blue card or it is deemed withdrawn by the CCYPCG.

Disqualifying event - carer

If the disqualifying event relates to the approved carer, the suspension of the carer's certificate of approval **must** occur as soon as practicable after the CSU is notified by the CCYPCG. The CSU will advise the CSSC manager of the notice provided by the CCYPCG.

To suspend the carer's certificate of approval, the CSSC manager **must**:

- notify the carer in writing using the Letter of suspension - disqualifying event - carer, and advise the carer of:
 - the decision to suspend the certificate of approval under the *Child Protection Act 1999*, section 140AC
 - the reason for the suspension.

The suspension of the certificate of approval remains in place until one of the following occurs:

- the certificate of approval expires
- the carer is issued with a blue card, and Child Safety Services ends the suspension of the certificate of approval
- the certificate of approval is cancelled under the *Child Protection Act 1999*, section 140AG.

When the certificate of approval expires, the CSSC manager is to ensure:

- that the carer is advised in writing
- that the CSU is notified.

Should the carer subsequently be issued with a blue card, the CSSC manager is to ensure that the carer is advised in writing that the suspension of their certificate of approval has ended, using the Letter advising end of suspension.

The carer's suspended certificate of approval **must be cancelled** if the CYPCG issues a negative prescribed notice and:

- the carer does not apply for a review of the CCYPCG's decision about the blue card or the review period has expired
- the carer applies for a review of the CCYPCG's decision and the decision is upheld.

The certificate of approval must be cancelled as soon as practicable and the CSSC manager is to notify the carer in writing using Letter of cancellation - disqualifying event - carer.

A carer has no right of review regarding the decision to suspend or cancel the certificate of approval in these circumstances. The CSSC manager must ensure that the carer's status and the alert is updated in ICMS and that the CSU is notified.

Disqualifying event - adult household member

If the disqualifying event relates to an adult household member, the CSSC manager must suspend the carer's certificate of approval, unless the adult member has left or agrees to immediately leave the carer's household.

The CSSC manager however must not suspend or cancel a carer's certificate of approval if they are satisfied that the person is no longer a member of the carer's household and does not pose any risk to the safety of a child.

If the household member remains in the household, the CSSC manager **must**:

- immediately suspend the carer's certificate of approval and provide written advice to the carer using the Letter of suspension - disqualifying event - adult household member. The written advice is to inform the carer of:
 - the decision to suspend the certificate of approval under the *Child Protection Act 1999*, section 140AC
 - the reason for the suspension.

Where the adult member remains in the carer's household, the CSSC manager cannot cancel the carer's certificate of approval until:

- the 28 days in which the adult household member is able to seek a review of the CCYPCG's decision, has expired and they have not applied for a review
- the outcome of the review is decided.

In these circumstances, the adult household member will be advised of their review rights by the CCYPCG, in relation to the CCYPCG's decision to issue a negative prescribed notice.

If the adult household member is subsequently issued with a blue card, the CSSC manager is to ensure that the carer is advised in writing that the suspension of their certificate of approval has ended using the 'Letter advising end of suspension'.

If the household member remains in the household and the period of review expires or the CCYPCG's decision is upheld, the CSSC manager will need to provide written advice to the carer using Letter of cancellation - disqualifying event - adult household member. The written advice is to inform the carer:

- of the decision to cancel their certificate of approval
- that they may, within 28 days of receiving the notice, apply to the CST to have the decision reviewed.

Following the period of review or if the decision by Child Safety Services is upheld, the CSSC manager must ensure that the CSU is notified of the decision.

Suspension or cancellation of a foster or kinship carer's certificate of approval - failure to apply for, or renew, a blue card

When a carer or adult household member fails to apply for a blue card or to renew their blue card, the carer's certificate of approval may be suspended or cancelled (*Child Protection Act 1999*, section 139(5)). In this situation, an assessment of the circumstances may be undertaken to inform the decision

about whether to suspend the certificate of approval, to allow time for the carer or adult household member to apply for a blue card or the renewal of their blue card.

Prior to any decision to suspend or cancel the certificate of approval, the carer must be provided with information about the proposed action (*Child Protection Act 1999*, section 140) and the CSSC manager is responsible for notifying the carer in writing using [Letter to carer - show cause notice](#).

A carer has review rights to the CST about the decision by Child Safety Services to suspend or cancel the carer's certificate of approval on these grounds.

At the end of the 28 day show cause period, if the decision is to proceed with the suspension of the certificate of approval, the CSSC manager is to notify the carer in writing **within 10 days** of the decision, using [Letter of suspension- failure to apply for or renew a blue card](#).

If, within the 28 days, the carer or adult household member is subsequently issued with a blue card, the CSSC manager is to ensure that the carer is advised in writing that the suspension of their certificate of approval has ended and their approval is reinstated, using [Letter advising end of suspension](#).

At the end of a 28 day show cause period, if the carer or adult household member has still not applied for a blue card or the renewal of their blue card, or has not left the carer's home, the CSSC manager must cancel the carer's certificate of approval. The CSSC manager **must** provide written advice to the carer **within 10 days** of the decision, using [Letter of cancellation - failure to apply for or renew a blue card](#) and ensure that the CSU is notified.

Record the suspension or cancellation in ICMS

Following the suspension or cancellation of a carer's certificate of approval, the CSSC manager is to ensure:

- the carer's approval status is updated in ICMS
- an alert is recorded on the carer (refer to [Chapter 10.7 Recording alerts for a child and family](#)).

At the end of the suspension, update the carer's approval status in ICMS and where the certificate of approval is returned to the carer, close the alert. Where the certificate of approval is cancelled following the period of suspension, the alert remains in place.

Referral for an exit interview - cancellation of a certificate of approval

If the carer does not seek a review of the decision to have their certificate of approval cancelled within the required timeframe, or if they do seek a review of the decision and the CST upholds Child Safety Services' decision, notify Foster Care Queensland (FCQ) of the end of the carer's approval so that the former carer will be contacted and offered an exit interview by FCQ.

To refer the former carer for an exit interview, complete the 'Advice to FCQ: End of carer approval' form and fax the form to FCQ.

The CSSC manager is responsible for ensuring that FCQ receives written notification of all carers who have had their certificate of approval cancelled.

11. What if a provisionally approved carer's certificate of approval requires amendment, suspension or cancellation?

Child Safety Services will consider the amendment, suspension or cancellation of a provisionally approved carer's certificate of approval in circumstances where the carer is not meeting legislative requirements under the *Child Protection Act 1999*.

Amendment (other than expiry date)

A provisionally approved carer's certificate of approval can be amended if:

- the carer agrees to the amendment
- the carer is not meeting the statement of standards or a condition of the certificate
- the carer has contravened a provision of the *Child Protection Act 1999*
- the certificate was issued because of a materially false or misleading representation or declaration, orally or in writing
- further information has been obtained about the carer's application
- it is considered necessary or desirable because of a circumstance prescribed under a regulation.

A certificate of approval for a provisionally approved carer **cannot be amended** to change the child for whom the carer is approved.

If the CSSC manager decides that an amendment is warranted and the provisionally approved carer has not applied for the amendment:

- relevant Child Safety Services' officers must meet with the provisionally approved carer to discuss the reason for the amendment and the process
- the CSSC manager must provide written notice to the provisionally approved carer, stating:
 - the proposed amendment and the grounds for the amendment
 - the decision to amend a provisional certificate of approval is not a reviewable decision
 - the amendment of a provisional certificate of approval does not affect the carer's pending application for approval as a foster or kinship carer
 - a request that the provisionally approved carer delivers the original certificate of approval to the CSSC manager **within two days** of receipt of the written notice (*Child Protection Act 1999*, section 141).

Following provision of the written notice:

- issue a new Certificate of Approval (Provisionally approved carer) that incorporates the amendment and provides all of the details that were recorded on the original certificate, including any existing conditions
- retain a copy of the new certificate of approval on the carer file.

If, at any stage of this process, the CSSC manager decides not to proceed with the amendment, they must provide written notice to the provisionally approved carer of their decision not to amend the certificate of approval.

Suspension or cancellation

A provisionally approved carer's certificate of approval will be suspended or cancelled if:

- the CSU determines that a carer or adult household member, based on the outcome of criminal checks conducted by the QPS, is not a suitable person to be a provisionally approved carer

(including circumstances where approval was granted by the zonal director prior to the outcome of personal history checks

- the carer is not a suitable person to be a provisionally approved carer for the child to whom the approval relates
- an adult household member is not a suitable person to associate on a daily basis with the child to whom the approval relates
- the application for approval as a foster carer or kinship carer has been refused
- the carer or other adult household member is issued with a negative prescribed notice, an application for a blue card is withdrawn or a current blue card is suspended or cancelled.

If the CSSC manager decides to suspend or cancel a certificate of approval as a provisionally approved carer:

- relevant Child Safety Services' officers must meet with the carer to discuss the reason for the suspension or cancellation
- the CSSC manager must provide the provisionally approved carer with written notice, using Letter of suspension/cancellation (PAC) and include:
 - the reasons for the decision to suspend or cancel the certificate of approval
 - that the suspension or cancellation, in and of itself, does not affect the carer's application for approval as a foster or kinship carer
 - that there is no right to seek review by the CST
 - that the provisional certificate of approval must be returned to the CSSC **within two days** of receipt of the written notice.

The CSSC manager must ensure that written advice of the decision is forwarded to the CSU manager.

The former carer will not be referred to FCQ at this stage, for an exit interview, as their substantive application is still to be assessed and decided.

A provisionally approved carer has no right to seek a review by the CST, of Child Safety Services' decision to amend, suspend or cancel their certificate of approval or to remove a child from their care. The provisional certificate of approval is a temporary certificate and the holder retains their right of appeal to the CST if the holder's application to be a foster or kinship carer for a child is refused.

Record the suspension or cancellation in ICMS

Following the suspension or cancellation of a carer's certificate of approval, the CSSC manager is to ensure:

- the carer's approval status is updated in ICMS
- an alert is recorded on the carer (refer to Chapter 10.7 Recording alerts for a child and family).

At the end of the suspension, update the carer's approval status in ICMS and where the certificate of approval is returned to the carer, close the alert. Where the certificate of approval is cancelled following the period of suspension, the alert remains in place.

When the substantive application to become a foster or kinship carer is decided, update the carer's approval status in ICMS and close the alert, or change the nature of the alert if the application is refused.

Resources

Forms and templates

- Advice to FCQ: End of carer approval
- Application for approval - Form 3 APA
- Application for approval - Form 3 APA - Guide to completion
- Authorisation to confirm a valid blue card/application for a carer or adult member
- Carer applicant health and wellbeing questionnaire
- Certificate of Approval (Foster carer)
- Certificate of Approval (Kinship carer)
- Certificate of Approval (Provisionally approved carer)
- Change in carer circumstances form
- Covering letter for the information kit
- FIN 23 - Vendor registration/change application
- Form 1: Foster carer intake
- Form 2: Household safety study
- Form 3A: Foster carer applicant assessment and recommendation form - Initial approval only
- Form 3A - Guidelines for completing assessment report - Initial approval only
- Form 3B: Foster carer applicant assessment and recommendation form - Renewal of approval only
- Form 3B - Guidelines for completing assessment report - Renewal of approval only
- Form 4: Approval decision
- Form 5: Approval decision - Provisionally approved carer
- Foster Carer Agreement
- General practitioner's report on carer applicant
- Information privacy statement
- Invitation to information session
- Invitation to initial interview
- Kinship carer assessment report
- Kinship carer renewal assessment report
- Letter advising end of suspension
- Letter inviting application for renewal of approval
- Letter of amendment
- Letter of approval as a foster carer
- Letter of approval as a kinship carer
- Letter of approval as a provisionally approved carer
- Letter of cancellation
- Letter of cancellation - disqualifying event - adult household member
- Letter of cancellation - disqualifying event - carer
- Letter of cancellation - failure to apply for or renew a blue card
- Letter of cancellation - prescribed provision - adult household member

- Letter of cancellation - prescribed provision - carer
- Letter of outcome of application to amend
- Letter of proposed amendment
- Letter of proposed cancellation
- Letter of proposed suspension
- Letter of refusal
- Letter of suspension
- Letter of suspension - disqualifying event - adult household member
- Letter of suspension - disqualifying event - carer
- Letter of suspension - failure to apply for or renew a blue card
- Letter of suspension - prescribed provision - adult household member
- Letter of suspension/cancellation (PAC)
- Letter requesting an extension to Form APA
- Letter to carer - show cause notice
- Letter to general practitioner
- Letter to referee
- New adult household member
- Referee questionnaire for carer applicants
- Volunteer foster/kinship carer or adult member blue card application form

Child Safety Services' resources

- Adult household member guidelines
- Advanced training
- Blue cards - Fact sheet
- Carer handbook
- Carer information sheets
- Client file procedure module 5.3 - Attaching sensitive information to client files
- Foster Carer Card - Fact sheet
- Interview resource: Ecomap
- Interview resource: Instructions
- Interview resource: Interview with child
- Interview resource: Interview with other household member
- Interview resource: Interview with young person
- Interview resource: Support in times of stress
- Interview resource: Use of time
- Interview resource: Childhood experiences
- Interview resource: Family relationships
- Interview resource: Genogram
- Interview resource: Lifeline
- Interview resource: Motivation to foster
- Interview resource: Parenting styles

- Interview resource: Teamwork
- Interview resource: Statement of standards
- Legislative requirements to providing care - Fact sheet
- Practice paper: Assessment of foster carer applicants
- Practice paper: Carer support and supervision
- Practice resource: Approved carers - an overview
- Practice resource: Assessment of kinship carer applicants
- Practice resource: Comparison of the key steps for carer approval
- Practice resource: Completing the Certificate of Approval
- Practice resource: Key concepts for the regulation of care
- Practice resource: Legislative requirements for the approval of kinship carers
- Practice resource: Mandatory advice to blue card applicants
- Practice resource: Meeting the statement of standards
- Practice resource: Negotiating support arrangements for approved carers
- Practice resource: Reviewing the Foster Carer Agreement
- Practice resource: Understanding personal history checks
- Pre-service training
- Procedures and guidelines for Quality Care: Foster Care Training
- Standard training
- Statement of Commitment between the Department of Child Safety, foster care services and the carers of Queensland
- What is provisional approval? - Fact sheet

External resources

- Your home safety checklist
- Information Standard No 42 - Information Privacy