

This guide is intended to assist individuals applying to be an approved Foster or Kinship Carer understand the process of receiving a non-approval issued by the Department for Child Protection (DCP) or agency.

Foster Carer non-approval process

Once you have submitted an application through your chosen Foster Care agency to become a Carer, the Carer assessment and approval/non-approval process will begin. This is a detailed process that assesses specific requirements including historical background checks, training and more.

If the agency recommends a non-approval, the process should proceed as follows:

- the agency notifies the applicant that their application was not successful;
- meet with the applicant to table the agencies concerns regarding why the non-approval was suggested;
- provide the applicant an opportunity to respond to the concerns raised;
- the agency discussed with the applicant if they want to continue or withdraw their application; and
- the agency advises the applicant that, if their application is withdrawn, they will still be able to re-apply to become a Carer in the future, if the identified issues have been addressed.

If the applicant wishes to continue the application for approval and the approval is not supported by the agency, the process should proceed as follows:

- the agency advises the applicant verbally and in writing that there is a recommendation for non-approval forwarded to DCP, including an explanation of the reasons why;
- the applicant is advised they have 14 days to submit in writing any further information they want their agency and DCP to reconsider regarding their application; and
- the applicant is advised of the agencies complaints management process and the DCP Internal Review process.

A final report will be formulated with clear recommendations stating why the agency is deciding not to approve the applicant. In this report, the agency will reiterate the potential for the applicant to re-apply in the future assuming the identified issues and concerns have been addressed by the applicant.

If the above process has been completed correctly by the agency, the DCP Senior Assessment Officer and Team Leader must discuss the reasons why the applicant received a non-approval. If DCP supports this, a Carer Non-Approval Summary will be completed and a letter will be formulated and sent to the applicant and assessing agency. This will then be signed by the Team Leader and Manager at the Carer

Approval and Review Unit (CARU). This summary will clearly state the decision and the reasons why, also letting the Carer know their right to seek an Internal Review. The CF&KC-SA Carer Advocate team can assist in the Internal Review Process.

If the above process has been completed incorrectly by the agency, the DCP Senior Assessment Officer and Team Leader must discuss and request further information prior to supporting the agencies non-approval recommendation.

If CARU has reviewed the application and disagree with the non-approval recommendation, the Manager at CARU must raise the matter with the agency to resolve the area of concern and provide a plan to move forward. A re-assessment may be conducted by another assessor within the agency or the applicant may be transferred to another agency to begin the process again.

Kinship Carer non-approval process

Kinship care placements can occur at random and therefore the child is placed on a temporary order, meaning the Carer approval process has not yet occurred. If this happens and a child is placed in your care, the approval or non-approval process should be completed within three months. The Kinship Carer process is similar to the Foster Care approval process, yet begins with the assessor clearly stating the reasons why the applicant does not meet the requirements to be a Kinship Carer.

Before finalising the non-recommendation, the DCP Assessment Officer must be sure that the assessor has completed the correct steps as follows:

- informed the applicant the approval decision will be made by CARU;
- met with the applicant to outline the concerns;
- provided the applicant with the opportunity to address the concerns raised;
- if a child or young person is already in a placement with the applicant, DCP should organise a case conference with the support worker and a senior staff member from CARU to decide the best way forward;
- advised the applicant verbally and in writing that they will advise DCP of the reasoning behind non-approval with a detailed explanation of the reasons why; and
- advised the applicant they may submit any further information for consideration as to why DCP should reconsider their application within a 14-day period.

If the above process is completed correctly and all parties are in agreement of the non-approval, the Assessment Officer is required to:

- complete a non-approval summary for the CARU team, whereby the final decision for approval or non-approval is confirmed;

- notify CARU and the Kinship Support supervisor with a clear rationale regarding the non-approval; and
- on occasion, request an extension of time so the CARU management team can further assess the information.

After in-depth discussion and decision making has occurred and the manager approves the non-approval, the Kinship Support Worker and applicant will receive written notice of the decision through post or email.

For more information, or to discuss your personal circumstances, please contact us:

Email: support@cfc-sa.org.au

Freecall: 1800 732 272