

Foster Carers' Charter

Family Care Fostering



This foster carers' charter places our foster carers and looked after children at the very centre of all we do.

Introduction

We hope this charter will set out the basis for consistently good partnership working between our staff, foster carers and all others who have an interest in achieving the best outcome for the children we are collectively responsible for.

Foster carers are at the heart of the service we provide to looked after children, many of whom will have distinct disadvantages and vulnerabilities arising from their earliest years as children. They need and deserve the best possible care we can give them to maximise their life chances for the future. We need to ensure that their experience of foster care is a memorable experience, one which is nurturing, encouraging, and which provides them with an opportunity to grow and change, and to realise their potential.

By providing such an experience for children we are uniquely positioned to help them overcome adversity and to look to the future with optimism. This is what makes fostering such a unique experience and one which is full of challenges but also richly rewarding.

This charter has been written to make clear the nature of the partnership that is central to ensuring a successful experience of fostering for our foster carers and a rewarding experience of family life for the children placed in their care.

Most importantly the charter is Family Care's statement of the respect and value it accords its foster carers and our commitment to ensuring that you are provided with the support and resources you need to provide the highest quality of care possible to the children you look after on our behalf.

Phil Williamson
Director and Co-owner

David Barrow
Registered Fostering Manager

Roles & Commitment

Family Care's Role

Family Care aims to provide stable and first rate foster care for children who are valued, supported, and encouraged to grow and develop as individuals. To achieve this aim, we recruit, train, and approve foster carers and deliver ongoing support to them.

The Foster Carers' Role

Foster carers are at the heart of the foster care service. They are assessed, trained, and supported to look after children and young people in a family environment, providing them with stability, care, and an opportunity to grow and develop and to reach their potential.

Our working relationships are based on mutual trust and respect. This charter explains what we expect from each other...



You can expect from us:

1. Working in Partnership
2. Information
3. Clarity about decision
4. Support
5. Learning and development
6. Fair treatment
7. Communication and consultation

We can expect from you:

1. Working in Partnership
2. Respect for the child
3. Information
4. Learning, development, and support
5. Communication and consultation

What foster carers can expect from Family Care...

1. Working in Partnership

We recognise that foster carers have skills and expertise and make the biggest difference to the everyday lives of children in care.

We will:

- Value your skills and expertise equally to those of other professionals
- Recognise that you are the people who live with children every day and know them best
- Include you in all meetings that affect you and the children you care for
- Ensure that our fostering service will meet the standards set out in fostering regulations and guidance

2. Information

We know that information is vital for foster carers to provide care that meets the child's need.

We will:

- Give you all the information you need to care safely for the child
- Provide this information in writing prior to placement (except when there are emergency placements and it is not feasible to do so, when we will provide this information as soon as possible)
- Ensure that there is a placement plan drawn up in discussion with you and agreed with you in advance of placements (except in emergencies where this will be done as soon as possible)
- Provide you with information on all financial matters including tax, allowances, and additional entitlements
- Provide you with full details of all relevant departmental policies and procedures (except in emergencies)
- Treat you without discrimination and respect you as a colleague
- Respect confidentiality

3. Clarity about Decisions

We recognise that for children to live a full family life, foster carers must be able to make decisions regarding the children they foster.

We will:

- Ensure that, wherever possible, you can make everyday decisions that mean that your fostered child is not treated differently to their peers and can feel part of your family

- Provide clarity about any decision you cannot take at the outset so that everyone understands who is responsible for what.

4. Support

We recognise that fostering is an isolating and challenging task and appropriate and timely support makes all the difference to the fostering family and to the child in your care.

We will:

- Respond positively to requests for additional support
- Provide you with monthly supervision and weekly phone contact
- Give you honest and open feedback
- Provide you with access to 24-hour support from people with fostering expertise, pay you allowances, expenses and fees in a timely manner
- Pay fees that reflect the task
- Ensure that there is a local group, recognised by the fostering service, where you and your family can find support and share experiences with other fostering families.

5. Learning and Development

We believe that foster carers must be enabled to access learning and development opportunities throughout their fostering career. This will ensure they have the skills and knowledge they need and allow them to develop their practice in order that they can help transform the lives of the children they foster.

We will:

- Provide you and your family with appropriate and relevant training by trainers who understand the fostering task
- Provide you with other development opportunities which make the best use of your skills and expertise, such as mentoring or providing training or support.
- Every foster carer has an individual development plan considering specific training to meet the needs of the children in placement or the development of the foster carer.

6. Fair Treatment

We recognise that foster carers have a right to be treated fairly, no matter what the circumstances.

We will:

- Consult with you before changing terms and conditions
- Ensure openness in all our discussions and communications with you

- Ensure that you are treated with respect, kept informed and provided with emotional support should you be subject to an allegation
- Provide a framework for dealing with allegations and adhere to our agreed timescales
- Ensure that you know the arrangements for the payment of fees and allowances in the event that you are not able to foster while the subject of an allegation.

7. Communication and Consultation

We believe that open and honest dialogue is the key to a good relationship.

We will:

- Facilitate regular communication between you, councillors and the Director of Children's and Adults' Services
- Ensure that we consult with you in a meaningful way on matters that affect you
- Give you timely feedback from consultations

What Family Care can expect from foster carers...

1. Working in Partnership

We will demonstrate a high standard of care and conduct.

We will:

- Demonstrate our expertise and make use of our skills to the best of our ability
- Provide children with an experience of family life
- Attend meetings about the children and young people we care for
- Work with the agencies involved with the child such as school, health, and religious establishments
- Show a willingness to work with birth parents, wider family, and people significant in a child's life
- Meet the standards set out in fostering regulations and guidance and follow departmental policies and procedures
- Respect confidentiality.

2. Respect for the Child

Every child and young person should be respected as an individual and be supported in meeting their needs and achieving their aspirations and potential.

We will:

- Respect and promote a child's religious, linguistic, and cultural heritage
- Afford the same level of protection and care to a child as we would our own child in accordance with the national minimum standards
- Ensure the child has the right to make decisions regarding their own lives, as appropriate to their age and understanding.

3. Information

We believe that open and honest dialogue is the key to a good relationship.

We will:

- Inform our supervising social worker about changes in our household
- Inform our supervising social worker about any difficulties that arise for us.

4. Learning Development and Support

We must be enabled to access learning and development opportunities throughout our fostering career. This will ensure we have the skills and knowledge we need and allow us to develop our practice in order that we can help transform the lives of the children we foster.

We will:

- Be prepared to develop our skills throughout our fostering career
- Attend relevant training
- Accept opportunities offered to us
- Let you know if we are unable to attend
- Attend and contribute to support groups

5. Communication

We believe that open and honest dialogue is the key to a good relationship.

We will:

- Respond to local consultations and discussion to inform the development of the service
- Meet with councillors, service managers and others to promote dialogue and a good working relationship.