



South Gloucestershire Council

# Foster Carers Charter

[www.southglos.gov.uk](http://www.southglos.gov.uk)

# Part 1: What foster carers can expect from the fostering service

**South Gloucestershire Fostering Service is a regulated provision offered to children placed in foster care with an approved foster carer. The Fostering Service includes all children's services involved in the care of the child and not just those offered by the Family Placement Team. It also includes arrangements made with other agencies, such as Health and those included in the Team Around the Child.**

## Working in partnership

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

As the fostering service we will:

- value your skills, knowledge 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 appropriate meetings that affect you and the child(ren) you care for
- ensure that our fostering service will meet the standards set out in fostering regulations and guidance
- treat you without discrimination and respect you as a colleague
- respect confidentiality.



## Information

The fostering service knows that information is vital in order for foster carers to provide care that meets the child's need.

As the fostering service we will:

- give you all the available information you need in order to care safely for the child
- provide information in writing prior to a 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 (PIR part 1) provided on the day of placement and a PIR 2 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.

## Clarity about decisions

The fostering service recognises that in order for children to live a full family life foster carers must be able to make decisions regarding the children they foster.

As the fostering service we will:

- ensure that, wherever possible, you are able to 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 and record it in the placement plan.

## Support

The fostering service recognises that fostering can be 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.

As the fostering service we will:

- respond positively to requests for additional support
- provide you with regular supervision and phone contact as appropriate
- give you honest, timely 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
- 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.

### Learning and development.

The fostering service believes that foster carers should 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.

As the fostering service 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 to others.

### Fair treatment

The fostering service recognises that foster carers have a right to be treated fairly, no matter what the circumstances.

As the fostering service we will:

- consult with you before changing terms and conditions
- ensure openness in all of 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.

### Communication and consultation

The fostering service believes that open and honest dialogue is the key to a good relationship.

As the fostering service we will:

- facilitate regular communication between you, councillors and the council
- ensure that we consult with you in a meaningful way on matters that affect you
- give you timely feedback from consultations.

## Part 2: What the fostering service can expect from foster carers

### Working in partnership

Foster carers will demonstrate a high standard of care and conduct.

As foster carers we will:

- demonstrate expertise and make use of 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
- contribute and work with the plans that are made by the agencies that are agreed by the Team around the Child
- 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.



## 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.

As foster carers we will:

- respect the child's right to be treated equally and to promote a child's development regardless of any issue of diversity
- 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.

## Information

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

As foster carers we will:

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



## Learning, development and support

Foster carers 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.

As foster carers we will:

- be prepared to develop our skills throughout our fostering career
- attend relevant training, take up opportunities offered to us
- let you know if we are unable to attend
- attend and contribute to support and development groups, and training events.

## Communication and consultation

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

As foster carers we will:

- respond to local consultations and discussion in order to inform the development of the service
- meet with councillors, service managers and others in order to promote dialogue and a good working relationship.



If you would like this information in a different format or language, please contact: ☎ 01454 868009

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