



OWNER

David Brooks, Fostering
Manager

VERSION

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Brighter Futures for Children
Civic Offices, Bridge Street,
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Company number 11293709

Brighter Futures for Children: Fostering
Service registration, number: 2502331

What happens, now that I am approved.

STANDARDS AND REGULATIONS

The Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011:

- [PART 2 - Statement of Purpose and Children's Guide.](#)

Fostering Services National Minimum Standards:

- [Standard 14 – Fostering Panels and the Fostering Service's Decision-Maker.](#)
- [Standard 15- Matching the Child with a Placement which meets their Needs.](#)
- [Standard 16 – Statement of Purpose and Children's Guide.](#)

Training, Support and Development Standards for Foster Care:

- [Standard 2 - Understand your role as a foster carer.](#)

Now that you have been approved as a foster carer, you will have met your Supervising Social Worker (SSW) at panel and you will have started to work together following your induction visit.

Your SSW is responsible for:

- ✓ ensuring that you are feeling secure and happy in your role and that we, the agency, are making sure you have everything you need to fulfil your role so that you are freed up to focus on caring for the children living with you.
- ✓ helping you to understand the needs of the children who are matched with you and your family. She/he will make sure you have all the information you need. She/he will attend the Placement Planning Meeting at which, all day-to-day decisions and actions will be discussed and agreed as part of the Delegated Authority
- ✓ visiting you weekly for the first month of a child joining your family, fortnightly in the next month and thereafter will provide supervision on a regular basis based on your approval. Please refer to our separate "Supervision and Support of Foster Carers" policy for further details.

When you are approved as a foster carer for the Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) of Brighter Futures for Children (BFFC), you commit to a range of responsibilities to fulfil the **purpose of the role** of a foster carer that can be defined as:

Caring for children looked after, in your own home and working together with us and other professionals to help those children fulfil their potential.

Foster Carers' responsibilities:

- ✓ **To provide day to day care and support children looked after:**

You will need to support foster children and young people in their education, look after their health and promote their social wellbeing. You will also need to make sure that they have a positive understanding of their origins, religion and culture.

✓ **Provide a safe and caring environment:**

You will need to ensure that children/young people in your care are kept safe from harm and abuse and that they are taught how to get help should anything untoward occur.

You will actively promote the secure attachment of children/young people.

You will act as an advocate for each child or young person in your care.

✓ **Manage behaviour:**

Not being able to live in your own home or with the people you are used to is a traumatic experience, whatever your age. Fostered children and young people can display difficult or challenging behaviour as a way of coping with this upheaval. As a foster carer you need to be able to recognise the underlying causes of such behaviour and, with the support of our team, develop strategies to help the young person manage their feelings and experiences.

✓ **Attend meetings and manage information:**

Being a foster carer involves more than just looking after a child. You will be asked to attend and actively participate in meetings about the children in your care, keep written records, contribute to reports and manage information that is confidential and sensitive.

✓ **Work as part of a team:**

You will be part of BfFC's IFA and will work with staff and other professionals from within the IFA, the IFA's guidelines, policies and procedures and anyone who is working with or has a significant relationship with the child.

✓ **Promote contact with families:**

For children and young people in foster care, contact with their own families is very important. As a foster carer, you will need to help maintain their family relationships if it is felt to be appropriate. This is important, regardless of any personal feelings you may have about this. Contact can be direct (face-to-face) or indirect (telephone, virtually via whatsapp video call, zoom, email or letters), you will receive training to help you manage this.

✓ **Manage relationships:**

You must be able to communicate effectively, not only with children and young people but with social workers, the children's birth families and others concerned with the wellbeing of the children. You will also need to help prepare children and young people who are moving on to another placement or independence.

✓ **Be able to commit time and energy:**

You will need to have flexibility, patience, time and energy to invest in a child or young person.

✓ **Be willing to develop your skills and undertake regular training:**

You will be expected to take up appropriate training opportunities and recognise the benefit of continued training. Even though we try as much as possible to offer training at times that all foster carers can attend, this is not always possible and might mean that you will have to take a day off work.

Standards of conduct

All those who work with, or care for, children need to know and use these guidelines in their contact with children. Foster carers need to make sure their family also sticks to these standards of behaviour to safeguard children and reduce the risk of misunderstandings, allegations or complaints.

The guidance below has been adapted from a document produced by the Allegations Management Advisors for the Department of Education.

The Duty of Care	This means that you should: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• understand your responsibilities and be aware that sanctions will be applied if these provisions are breached• always act, and be seen to act, in the child's best interests• avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question your motivation and intentions• take responsibility for your own actions and behaviour• consider carefully who you invite into your home and inform your supervising worker about regular visitors or guests. Your supervising worker will advise you about what is acceptable. In some circumstances a Criminal Records Bureau check may be needed• except in an emergency, do not leave the child in the care of another person without prior agreement.
Confidentiality	This means that you : <ul style="list-style-type: none">• are expected to treat information you receive about children and young people in a discreet and confidential manner• are clear about when information can be shared and in what circumstances it is appropriate to do so• should seek advice if you are in any doubt about sharing information you hold• need to know to whom any concerns or allegations should be reported.
Professional Judgement	This means that, where no specific guidance exists you should: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• discuss the circumstances that informed your action, or your proposed action, with your supervising worker or the child's worker• report any actions which could be misinterpreted to your supervising worker• always discuss any misunderstanding, accidents or threats with your supervising worker• always record discussions and reasons why actions were taken• record any areas of disagreement about course of action taken.
Power and Positions of Trust	This means that foster carers and their families should not: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• use their position to gain access to information for their own or others' advantage• use their position to intimidate, bully, humiliate, threaten, coerce or undermine children or young people

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use their status and standing to form or promote relationships which are of a sexual nature, or which may become so. Many allegations and complaints are against members of a foster carer's family rather than the carer. You need to make sure that all members of your family know and follow these guidelines and you should report any concerns to your supervising worker immediately.
Propriety and Behaviour	<p>Propriety in this case, means that you should not:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • behave in a manner which would lead any reasonable person to question your suitability as a foster carer • make, or encourage others to make, unprofessional personal comments which scapegoat, demean or humiliate, or which might be interpreted as such. <p>Behaviour in this case means that you should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be aware that behaviour in your personal life may impact upon your work as a foster carer • understand that the behaviour and actions of other family members may raise questions about your suitability to be a foster carer.
Dress and Appearance	<p>This means that you should wear clothing which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is not likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing, or sexually provocative • does not distract, cause embarrassment or give rise to misunderstanding • is absent of any political or otherwise contentious slogans • is not considered to be discriminatory and is culturally sensitive
Gifts and Rewards	<p>This means that you should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure that gifts received or given are declared • only give personal gifts of value to a young person, where agreed in advance.
Infatuations	<p>This means that you should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • report and record any incidents or indications (verbal, written or physical) that suggest a child or a member of their family may have developed an infatuation with you or any other professional • always acknowledge and maintain professional boundaries.
Communication	<p>This means that you should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • make sure you and your family do not post personal identifiable information on websites or blogs • only make contact with children who have left your care or their families with the agreement of the child's worker • be open about your communication • not use internet or web-based communication channels to send personal messages to a child/young person who has left your care.

<p>Social Contact with a Child's Family Apart from that required as part of their work.</p>	<p>This means that you should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have no secret social contact with children and young people or their parents • consider the appropriateness of any social contact • always discuss and agree any planned social contact with parents with the child's worker • inform your supervising worker of any social contact between yourself and your family and a member of a foster child's family • report and record any situation in which social contact occurs • be aware that the sending of personal communications such as birthday or faith cards should always be recorded and/or discussed with your supervising worker • understand that some communications may be called into question and need to be justified.
<p>Sexual Contact</p>	<p>This means that you and your family should :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure that your relationships with children and young people clearly take place within the boundaries of a respectful professional relationship • take care that your language or conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation. • not have sexual relationships with children and young people • not have any form of communication with a child or young person which could be interpreted as sexually suggestive or provocative i.e. verbal comments, letters, notes, electronic mail, phone calls, texts, physical contact • not make sexual remarks to, or about, a child/young person • not discuss your own sexual relationships with or in the presence of children or young people.
<p>Physical Contact</p>	<p>This means that you and your family should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be aware that even well-intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the child, an observer or by anyone to whom this action is described • never touch a child in a way which may be considered indecent • always be prepared to report and explain actions and accept that all physical contact be open to scrutiny • not indulge in horseplay • always encourage children, where possible, to undertake self-care tasks independently • be aware of cultural or religious views about touching and always be sensitive to issues of gender
<p>Children and Young People in Distress</p>	<p>This means you should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • offer comfort and reassurance to a distressed child in an age-appropriate way • never touch a child in a way which may be considered indecent • record and report situations which may give rise to concern from either party

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not assume that all children seek physical comfort if they are distressed.
Personal Care	<p>This means that you and your family should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • avoid any unnecessary physical contact when children are in a state of undress <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not change in the same place as children • not shower or bathe with children • not assist with any personal care task which a child or young person can undertake by themselves.
Intimate Care	<p>This means that you should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adhere to the agreed care plan where providing intimate care o a child is agreed, for instance, in case of specific disabilities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explain to the child what is happening • consult the child’s worker where any variation from the care plan is necessary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • record the justification for any variations to the agreed procedure/care plan and share this information with the child’s worker • ensure that any changes to the agreed care plan are discussed, agreed and recorded.
Behaviour Management	<p>This means that you should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not use force as a form of punishment • try to defuse situations before they escalate • agree a behaviour management plan or positive handling plan with the child’s worker • adhere to our behaviour management policy.
Use of Control and Physical Intervention	<p>This means that you should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adhere to our physical intervention policy • always seek to defuse situations • always use minimum force for the shortest period necessary • record and report as soon as possible after the event any incident where physical intervention has been used.
First Aid and Administration of Medication	<p>This means that you should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adhere to our policy for administering first aid or medication • explain to the child what is happening. • always ensure that parental consent has been obtained for the administration of first aid or medication • record and report the administration of first aid and medication to your supervising worker and the child’s worker.
Transporting Children and Young People Foster	<p>This means that you should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure you are fit to drive and free from any drugs, alcohol or medicine which is likely to impair judgement and/ or ability to drive

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • record details of the journey in accordance with agreed procedures • ensure that there are proper arrangements in place to ensure vehicle, passenger and driver safety. This includes having proper and appropriate insurance for the type of vehicle being driven.
Trips and Outings	<p>This means that you should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have consent from the child's worker and parent to the activity • never share beds with a child/children or young people • not share bedrooms unless this has been previously discussed and agreed by the child's worker, the child and parent.
Photography and Videos	<p>This means that you should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be clear about the purpose of taking photos • be able to justify images of children in your possession • avoid making images in one-to-one situations • ensure the child/young person understands why the images are being taken and has agreed to the activity and that they are appropriately dressed. • always ensure you have permission to take and/or display photographs.
Access to Inappropriate Images and Internet Usage	<p>This means that you should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure that children are not exposed to unsuitable material on television, video or the internet or in magazines • Ensure that PCs or laptops have parental control software installed and that it is not over-ridden • Monitor children's access to the internet and particularly to chat rooms • ensure that any films, computer games or material shown to children and young people are age appropriate
Whistle blowing	<p>This means that you should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • know our whistle blowing policy • report any behaviour by workers or other foster carers that raises concern

You will be asked to enter into a Foster Care Agreement with the IFA and will not be able to have a child coming to live with you and your family until the agency has received a signed copy of this.

You will automatically become a member of Fostering Network and can contact their helpline any time.

Your approval as a foster carer will be regularly reviewed, see the IFA's policy on Review and Termination of Approval of Foster Carers Procedure for more detailed information like timescales, etc.

Please take time to familiarise yourself with all our policies and procedures as it is important that those are followed and adhered to.

Whilst you will discuss your training needs and expectations with your Supervising Social worker, it is important to start your Training, Support and Development Standards (TSDS) as soon as possible after your approval as there is an expectation that this is completed within the first 12 months of being approved. Please refer to our [Training, Support and Development Standards \(TSDS\)](#) Guidance for more details.

What information do I/we need when a child come to live with me/us?

A social worker from the IFA will contact you when looking for a home for a child/young person that is in your approval category.

It will be useful to prepare a list of questions that you may want to ask when they call. If you are unsure about anything, you may wish to discuss some or all of the following:

1. The social workers name and their manager's name and what Local Authority they are from
2. The child's name, age, how they identify in relation to gender, ethnic origin, religion.
3. You can request pictures or stories be emailed to you, what makes the child happy sad, who is their best friend, what's their favourite food, their favourite time of the day, TV programme film etc. This can help you to establish what you might have in common and could enjoy doing together.
4. Does the child have any special dietary, cultural or linguistic needs.
5. The child's legal status.
6. A summary of the family situation.
7. What are the contact arrangements?
8. How is the child's health, do they have any allergies or medical problems, specific equipment or are they currently on medication.
9. Are they at school, nursery or other provision? Are there any issues. Where is the educational setting?
10. Does the child have any communication issues?
11. Are there any behavioural issues?
12. Are there any known risks from the child, e.g., aggressive or sexualised behaviour.
13. Who will bring the child and with what clothes and belongings?
14. When will you have full information about the child?
15. Can the child/ren live alongside my pet?

You need as much information as possible about a child/ young person before they come into your home.

You should receive written information before the placement is made from the child's social worker. Occasionally for example in emergencies, there can be a delay, but this should be no longer than 5 days. No information can be withheld from you without a manager's approval, and this will only be in rare cases.

The IFA worker/duty worker will draw up a risk assessment with you prior to the child being placed with you. We will attempt to arrange a meeting or video call between you, a worker from the IFA(your SSW or the duty worker) and the child's social worker so you have an opportunity to ask the Social worker any questions you might have before the child arrives. The initial risk assessment will later be updated at the Placement Planning Meeting.

Meeting the child/young person

Wherever possible there should be a period of introductions between you, your family and the child.

This will involve:

- The child/young person receiving information about you, your home and members of your family network. (This is your family profile and the Children in care questionnaire)
- The child/young person having at least one overnight visit where possible before a placement is confirmed.

Throughout the introduction process, you should talk to the child/young person about general information/household rules like bedtimes, meals, visitors, pocket money, school, privacy and your general expectations about behaviour.

The child should be encouraged to talk about what they expect so they can sort out any concerns before the placement starts.

Unaccompanied children from abroad

From time to time, placements will be needed for children who have entered the UK as unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, unaccompanied migrant children or child victims of modern slavery including trafficking.

Some of these children will have been trafficked and may have witnessed or been subject to horrific acts of violence. Other migrant children may have been sent in search of a better life or may have been brought to the UK for private fostering and subsequently exploited or abandoned when the arrangement fails.

As a foster carer, if you have a child placed with you in this situation, the Placement Plan and future reviews will help you understand the plan for the child and what you can do to help support them whilst living with you, particularly in relation to meeting their cultural needs and addressing any trauma they may have experienced. For example, you might need to have the help of an interpreter or support young people in attending appointments in London at the Home Office. But don't worry, your supervising social worker can help you to develop a better understanding of the circumstances and the support which can be accessed for both, you and the child.

The Child's Care Plan

The child's Care Plan provides information of the work that must be done to meet the needs of the child/young person. It is the social worker of the child or children who holds responsibility for specific advice or support in relation to the child and his or her Care Plan and Placement Plan. You should receive a copy of the Care Plan at the Placement Planning Meeting and updates of the plan thereafter. If you do not receive this, please talk to your SSW so they can chase this for you.

The Care Plan usually includes:

- The child's Placement Plan (setting out why the placement was chosen and how the placement will contribute to meeting the child's needs).
- The Permanence Plan (setting out the long-term plans for the child's upbringing including timescales).
- The Pathway Plan (where appropriate, for young people leaving care).

- The Health Plan.
- The Personal Education Plan.
- The contingency plan.
- The date of the child's first Looked After Review (**within 20 working days**).
- The name of the Independent Reviewing Officer.

The Child's Placement Plan

The supervising social worker, you, the child/young person, family members and the child's social worker will put together the Placement Plan. This is completed either on the day, before a child comes to live with you or within five days of a placement being made. It is important that you receive a signed copy of this, please speak to your SSW if this is not forthcoming.

The Placement Plan covers:

- Purpose of the placement.
- Any agreements about health or educational needs.
- The child's personal history.
- The child's likes/dislikes.
- The rules of the placement.
- Agreements for contact between the child/young person, family or relevant individuals.
- When social work visits to the child and you will happen and any review meetings.
- Delegated Authority

The Children's Guide

The child/young person need to receive this when they start living with foster carers. This guide will help children and young people understand about foster care, the agency and provide information that may be important to them. It tells them about their rights and how they can contact people such as their Independent Reviewing Officer, Children's Commissioner or Ofsted if they wish to raise a concern. It explains the information which the fostering service keeps on them and why, including who it might be shared with, and their right to access their case file.

You will be provided with a few hard copies of the children's guides for the age ranges you are approved for. Please liaise with your SSW should you require more.

You need to go through the guide with the child/young person to make sure they understand everything.

If the child needs the Children's Guide in another format such as in another language or Makaton the IFA will provide it.