**BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT POLICY**

At County Fostering Services, we would like to believe that no child would ever be restrained. At County Fostering services, we will never restrain a child. This said, there will be times when a hold would have to be made. A hold would only ever be done to stop a child from severely harming themselves or others. A hold or restraint will never be used for bad behaviour. The restraint/ hold policy would be part of the care plan and documented at the beginning of the placement with all relevant professionals agreeing and signing their permission. No new carers would ever be put into this position and it would be a very rare occurrence that anyone would be required to do a hold and never a restraint. We will work on de-escalation skills for all foster carers and this will be part of their mandatory training.

Our policy forms part of the safe caring policy and provides guidance on how staff can advise and help foster carers to manage behaviour in the foster home. Children who enter the care system do so because they may have suffered some form of abuse, this makes them vulnerable. Foster carers are in a unique position to teach children and young people positive behaviours and strategies for coping with stress and difficult situations. This policy will link with our Safeguarding policy. If children present difficult and challenging behaviour foster carers must use positive strategies and refrain from smacking children. County Fostering will not tolerate smacking. These are some suggestions that will help foster carers to devise positive strategies for coping with difficult behaviour.

**Principle one:** Remember that most behaviour is leant. Children will copy the behaviour of adults and try to imitate behaviours seen on various forms of communication and from their peers. Replace negative behaviours with positive behaviours through positive role modelling. Do not hit or shout at children but try to be calm and reason with them.

**Principle Two:** Have realistic expectations about behaviour and realise that learnt behaviours do not change overnight but with time and patience. Even if behaviour changes take place, people will revert to old behaviours when they are under stress or feel that they cannot cope. Children may also regress after they have had a negative experience that reminds them of past experiences, so be watchful and help the child/young person to cope with their feelings in a positive way.

**Principle Three:** Set limits and boundaries for children and young people, by being firm but also allowing them to express their views and feelings. Find quite times to talk to children and do not embarrass them in the company of other adults or their peers. While adults may have the experience and head knowledge they have to remember that children learn as they make mistakes, so teach them how to learn from their mistakes in a calm and assertive way,

**Principle Four:** Be consistent; remember that inconsistency can strengthen inappropriate behaviour and help children to become resilient.

**Principle Five:** Try to understand why the child is behaving in an inappropriate way but gaining a full appreciation of their history. Do not share information with people who do not need to know, this will only fuel the child’s discontent and frustration.

**Principle Six:** Be precise about what behaviour you want to change and let the child/young person know how you perceive the problem behaviour what you think could help to ease it for all concerned. Help children and young people to understand the consequences of their behaviour and the long-term effects it can have on them and others.

**Principle Seven:** Decide on the method you will use to encourage the behaviour change and involve everyone in the child’s care in any strategies on which you decide. This includes the child in setting realistic goals for changing the behaviour. Rewards can help but be aware that awards may not always be appropriate or successful.

**Principle Eight:** Enable foster carers to develop a clear set of house rules so that you will be able to set limits against which a child’s behaviour can be measured.

**Action:** Help foster carers to devise a progress checklist so that you can monitor the child’s behaviour. Be sure to let the child know when they have managed to change behaviours that were defined as unacceptable.

Sanctions for disciplining children/young people must be agreed with the child’s or young person’s social worker. Any agreements must be adhered to without deviations.

**N.B. If foster carers are unsure of what action to take they must always seek advice from the supervising social worker or the local authority social worker. Supervising Social Workers must talk to foster carer about how they are implementing this policy and it is the manager’s role to discuss this in supervision with staff.**

Once we have exhausted all eight principles, we have used our training to de-escalate the situation but still have concerns that harm may occur to the child, then a hold may be the only other option.

Decisions regarding holds need to be taken as part of the process of managing risk including, where necessary, a decision and time-specific assessment of the person's capacity.

Hold of a person who may have capacity, or in an emergency, can be used to prevent immediate harm to the person or to other people. It must be necessary to prevent harm to the person or others and meet the proportionality test above, and this should be explained in its recording.

What is done to people, why, and with what consequences, must be subject to audit and monitoring, with the intention of learning from each incident and seeking ways to reduce the use of holds. To enable this to happen, the recording must be open and transparent, and create a clear narrative of exactly what happened, using the ABC model of:

* Antecedent: what led up to the person being held, and what might have prevented it at this point?
* Behaviour: what actions or words, on the part of the staff and/or the Service User, led to the hold, and what actions by foster carers might have prevented it at this stage?
* Consequence: what was necessary as a result of those words or actions, in terms of what form the hold took, how long it was used for, how many people were involved, what was the effect on the person; and how could the hold have been reduced or minimised?
* This recording forms part of the care plan for prevention of future holds

Holds, where unavoidable, will be always used in an ethical and lawful way that is in line with the principles of the least restrictive option, necessity and proportionality as described in all appropriate legislation including Mental Health Act Code of Practice, Mental Capacity Act 2005, Human Rights Act 1998, MCA Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards and the common law.

Holds, in all cases, should very much be seen as the ‘last resort’, with other techniques and strategies, such as diversion, prevention, or consideration of allowing the person to have their own way, always being employed before a hold is considered as an option.

All incidents of holds must be recorded and include the behaviour or action that determined that a hold was required, the type of hold used (Age appropriate), and the length of time that the hold took place.

The time-scale for reviewing holds must be laid down as part of the best interests decision-making process that led to this being in the Care Plan.

Holds must be reviewed in accordance with this timetable, which may be linked to a DoLS (Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards) authorisation

Any hold being performed must be immediately notified to the Registered Manager (Duty team in out of hours) who will notify all other professionals and a meeting will be arranged to discuss how to go forward and viability of the placement.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Name of Child | Date of Hold | Time and duration of Hold | Reason why | De-escalation – What was used | Name of people involved | Signatures of all involved |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Training will be given on de-escalation skills to all foster carers as part of their mandatory training. Some of the training will be around talking calmly at the same level, step back and caring hands technique and building on their knowledge of de-escalation as this is the best approach and the only approach County Fostering Services will use.