

Manchester Family Placement Service

Anti-smoking policy

Manchester Family Placement Service

Anti-smoking policy

Manchester City Council gives high priority to the present and future health of looked after children. All foster carers and adopters are entrusted with the health of the children and young people in their care and are in the best position to improve children's health and wellbeing.

This policy is consistent with:

National Minimum Standards for Fostering 2011 – Standard 6, which emphasises the importance of health promotion awareness for foster carers both in relation to their own health and that of the children in their care.

Every Child Matters 2004 – the Government's aim for every child, whatever their background, to have the support they need to be healthy and stay healthy.

The Health Act 2006 – this enforced a smoking ban in England in enclosed public spaces and workplaces in July 2007. Manchester City Council operates a No Smoking policy in all its workplaces.

There is now medical evidence that clearly demonstrates the negative effects second-hand tobacco smoke or 'passive smoking' has on children's health.

- Second-hand smoke is a cause of childhood respiratory diseases, cot death, middle ear disease and asthmatic attacks in children and can increase their risks of developing lung cancer and heart disease in later life.
- Tobacco products are among the top causes of poisoning in children, and smoking materials (lighter fuel, matches and lighters) are the main causes of fire deaths in the UK.
- Children and young people are more susceptible to the damaging effects of smoke because their lungs are smaller and their immune systems are less mature.
- Children who grow up in a household where adults smoke are three times more likely to become smokers themselves than if cared for by adults who do not smoke.

Foster carers need to be aware that they may be cited in any future legal action if a child who has been exposed to their cigarette smoke develops a smoking-related disorder in later life.

Manchester Family Placement's position:

Children and young people who may already have neglected or impaired health prior to becoming looked after should be given every opportunity to improve their health in foster homes where they are not exposed to cigarette smoke.

- Manchester will follow BAAF guidelines and will not place any child under *two* years of age with a foster carer or prospective adopter who smokes. This is because:
 - There are particularly high health risks for babies and toddlers who spend most of their day physically close to foster carers who smoke.
 - Leaving a young child unsupervised while a foster carer smokes outside puts the child's safety at risk.
- All new and existing approved foster carers and prospective adopters will be expected to maintain a smoke-free home.
- Foster carers and prospective adopters who continue to smoke in the presence of children and who do not maintain a smoke-free environment will have their continuing approval reviewed by the relevant Family Placement Panel.

Family and friend foster carers

Where children are to be placed or are already placed with members of their family on a short-term or emergency basis, the risks to the child's health have to be considered alongside the benefits of being placed with family members with whom they share an identity and an emotional tie.

However, as with all placements, children should be given the opportunity to live in a healthy environment, and family and friend foster carers, whether approved as short-term or long-term foster carers, should ensure a smoke-free home.

Existing approved foster carers and prospective adopters who smoke

All existing foster carers and prospective adopters will be expected to continue to maintain a smoke-free environment for children in line with Manchester Family Placement's Safe Caring Policy and signed Safe Caring Agreement. This also applies to all permanent members of the foster carer's or prospective adopter's household, as well as friends, relatives and visitors.

This means that foster carers and prospective adopters and their families must:

- keep their homes smoke-free
- ensure that at least two smoke alarms are fitted
- smoke only outside the house
- not smoke in the presence of or around children, or permit others to do so
- ensure that children's clothes and hair is free from the odour of stale smoke

- not smoke in a car or in any enclosed space when children are present or expected to be present
- extinguish all lighted matches and cigarettes and dispose of them safely.

All foster carers and prospective adopters, irrespective of the age of the child in placement, will be expected to sign and adhere to the Smoke-free Home Agreement. Non-smoking foster carers and prospective adopters will also be expected to sign to ensure that all members of their household, including visitors, do not smoke in the presence of children.

Giving up smoking

Manchester Family Placement Service acknowledges the difficulties involved in giving up smoking and that for some foster carers and prospective adopters, smoking is often a response to stress caused by the responsibilities of caring for a looked after child.

Foster carers will be able to discuss their progress towards giving up smoking with their supervising social workers during supervision visits and at their annual reviews. Further advice and support will be offered where needed.

Contact details of organisations offering information on how to give up smoking are included at the end of this sheet.

Children and young people who smoke

Children and young people may already smoke when they are placed with foster carers and may be resistant to giving up straight away. Foster carers can help by ensuring that the house is smoke-free and that there are clear household rules about smoking. These should be recorded in the Safe Caring Agreement and the young person's Guide to Fostering.

Young people who persist in smoking and who are old enough to make an informed decision should only be allowed to smoke following discussions with their foster carers and social worker. Smoking should then only take place outside the home and away from other children who may be present.

Foster carers and prospective adopters must not:

- buy cigarettes for children and young people
- offer cigarettes as rewards or as presents
- share cigarettes or smoke together with young people
- smoke outside in proximity to children.

Children and young people are more likely to smoke if their parents or carers do so, but they are seven times **less** at risk of becoming smokers if their parents and carers do not smoke themselves and disapprove of smoking.

Foster carers and prospective adopters are therefore expected to set an example by discouraging smoking and promoting the health and financial benefits of not smoking to the children and young people in their care.

Contact number and websites:

Manchester Stop Smoking Service

www.stopsmokingmanchester.co.uk

Specialist support from trained professionals to help people of Manchester stop smoking or to prevent them from starting.

Telephone **0161 205 5998** for further information or to speak to a trained adviser.

Manchester Stop Smoking Service – young people

Provides support for young people in Manchester who want to stop smoking. Confidential one-to-one support and access to nicotine replacement therapy (dependent on age).

Telephone **0161 203 5817**

Call it Quits

Gosmokefree.co.uk

This is an NHS smoking helpline offering information, advice and support to those who are giving up smoking or who have given up and do not want to start again.

Telephone **0800 169 0169**

Completed: February 2009

Reviewed September 2011