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MEDWAY COUNCIL FOSTER CARER AGREEMENT

Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 Regulation 27(5)B) and Schedule 5

THIS AGREEMENT is made BETWEEN:

Medway Council ("The Fostering Service Provider" and here in after referred to as "the Council") situated at Gun Wharf, Dock Road, Chatham, Kent, ME4 4TR and

1. Purpose of this Agreement

- 1.1 The Council has a statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in care, and to provide them with accommodation and maintenance by placing them with an approved foster carer.
- 1.2 The Council will approve person(s) as foster carer(s) having carried out the necessary checks and assessments to determine their suitability. On approval, the Council enters into a written agreement with the foster carer in accordance with Regulations 27(5)(b) and Schedule 5 of the Fostering Service (England) Regulations 2011. This document sets out the terms of the agreement.

2 Terms of Approval as a Foster Carer

- 2.1 On 3 November 2023, THE Council's Fostering Panel Decision Maker agreed your continued approval as Foster carer(s).
- 2.2 The terms of approval as carers is that you are able to be considered as permanent foster carers for

3. The Support to a Foster Carer

- 3.1 The Council provides all foster carers with a named supervising social worker, whose office is at Gun Wharf, Dock Road, Chatham, Kent, ME4 4TR and can be contacted on 01634 335600.
- 3.2 The Social Worker provides the support, supervision and guidance required by the carer.

- 3.3 The Social Worker visits the foster carer's home every month by appointment. Additionally, the Social Worker will occasionally visit a foster carer's home without any appointment at least once a year or if circumstances require this.
- 3.4 If the Social Worker is not available, any support, supervision and guidance required by the carer can be obtained through the daily Duty Social Worker based at Gun Wharf, Dock Road, Chatham, Kent, ME4 4TR, and can be contacted on 01634 335600.
- 3.5 The Council has an Out of Hours Duty Service operating in the evenings and at weekends. In the event of an emergency, accident, or unauthorised absence by a child from the home or any other significant events during evenings and weekends, the foster carer must contact the Out of Hours Duty System on **0300 419191** for advice, assistance, and support.
- 3.6 The Council recommends that foster carers become a member of a national fostering organisation and the Council will enrol and pay the annual subscription for foster carers to become members of the Foster Talk. The services provided by the organisation include a magazine, free legal cover, tax and medical advice, stress counselling, information, and free independent access to the Foster Talk Helpline.
- 3.7 As a foster carer you are self-employed, and it is your responsibility as a foster carer to manage your own tax affairs.

4. Foster Carer Competency

- 4.1 The Council provides foster carers with training and development opportunities to enable a foster carer(s) to provide appropriate care to the child in their care.
- 4.2 The 'Training, and Development Standards for Foster Care' require that all newly approved foster carers reach an established standard within the first year that will be evidenced through the completion of a Training, Support and Development (TSD Workbook).
- 4.3 The Council provides all foster carers with a training programme. The foster carer will attend the training programme and abide by its terms and conditions. The foster carer shall complete the mandatory core Training Programme within the first year of their approval as a foster carer.
- 4.4 The Council will arrange specialised and general training courses and workshops for foster carers. Foster carers shall attend such courses and workshops that meet their training and development needs as discussed with the supervising social workers or recommended by the Independent Reviewing Officer Service.
- 4.5 The Council operates a Medway Carer Competency Scheme. Foster carers who complete required training and who can evidence progress in developing

their skills and abilities through the completion of an appropriate workbook may be eligible for additional remuneration.

5. Review of Approval of Foster Carer

- 5.1 The Council reviews the approval of foster carers within one year of the date of approval and thereafter on a yearly basis. The purpose of the review is to determine whether the foster carer and their household remain suitable to act as a foster parent. The Council will make enquiries and obtain information to make this determination.
- 5.2 The Supervising Social Worker will consider the suitability of the foster carer and their household and consider the views of the foster carers; members of their household; the child in care living with the carers; the social worker for the child; and any other relevant person or agency.
- 5.3 At the conclusion of the review, the Supervising Social Worker will prepare a report setting out whether the foster carer and their household continues to be suitable to act as a foster carer and whether the terms of approval as a foster carer continue to be appropriate.
- 5.4 The report of the Supervising Social Worker is referred to the Council's Fostering Panel for their consideration and recommendations.
- 5.5 After considering the recommendations of the Fostering Panel, the Council, through the Agency Decision Maker decides on the continuing suitability of the foster carer and their household and the terms of approval.
- 5.6 If the Council decides that a person(s) is suitable as a foster carer and the terms of approval are appropriate or need to be changed, the Council will give written notice of its decision to the foster carer.
- 5.7 If the Council decides that a foster carer is no longer suitable to continue as a foster carer, the Council gives the foster carer written notice of its intention to terminate its approval together with its reasons (in a letter referred to as Qualifying Determination).
- 5.8 The Council will advise the foster carer that, within 28 days of the date of the Qualifying Determination, the carers may, (1) submit any written representations to the fostering service provider, or (2) apply to the Secretary of State for a review by an Independent Review Panel of the Qualifying Determination.
- 5.9 If the foster carer fails to make any representation to the Council or apply to the Secretary of State for review by an Independent Review Panel, within the 28 days period, the Council will proceed to make its decision.
- 5.10 If the Council receives any representation within the 28 days period, the Council will refer the matter back to the Fostering Panel for further review and

recommendations. The Council will make its decision having taken into account the recommendations of the Fostering Panel.

- 5.11 If, within the 28-day period the foster parent applies to the Secretary of State for a review by an Independent Review Panel, of the Qualifying Determination, the fostering service provider must make their decision taking into account any recommendation made by the Fostering Panel and the recommendation of the Independent Review Panel.
- 5.12 The Council shall give written notice of its decision to the foster carer stating as the case may be that; (a) the foster carer and their household continue to be suitable, and the terms of their approval continue to be appropriate; or (b) approval is terminated from a specified date and the reasons for the termination; or (c) the revised terms of the approval and the reasons for the revision.
- 5.13 Medway Fostering services will maintain a case record for each foster parent approved by them, which must include copies of:
 - (a) the assessment report and any other reports submitted to the Fostering Panel.
 - (b) any recommendations made by the Fostering Panel,
 - (c) the notice, and terms, or approval,
 - (d) the Foster Carer Agreement
 - (e) any report of a review of approval, and
 - (f) any other notices

6. Procedure for the Placement of a Child

- 6.1 The Council will place a child with a foster carer if satisfied that the care arrangement will safeguard and promote the welfare of the child and is the most suitable, having regard to all the circumstances.
- 6.2 The Council will ensure that the placement is in accordance with the foster carer's terms of approval.
- 6.3 The Supervising Social Worker shall ensure that the child is suitably matched with the foster carer and any other child in placement, and that the foster carer has the skills, knowledge, and experience to meet the needs of the child.
- 6.4 At the time of the child moving in with the foster carers the child's social worker will ensure that the carer is provided with Placement Information Record, and a 'setting up' payment if necessary.
- 6.5 **Planned Placements:** the child's social worker will provide detailed information on the child(ren) and conditions of care and support required. They will be responsible for ensuring that, wherever practical, each child has been consulted about the arrangement and, if possible, have an introductory visit to the carer, prior to moving in.

Child/Young Person's Placement Plan

6.6 The Child/Young Person's Placement Plan will include the following information:

Section 1	Child/Young person's details
Section 2	Details of involved professionals
Section 3	Placement details
Section 4	Information about the child/young person
Section 5	Contact arrangements
Section 6	Emotional and behavioural development and self-care skills
Section 7	Health
Section 8	Education
Section 9	Visits
Section 10	Financial support
Section 11	Placement duration and ending
Section 12	Additional information for placements with parents
Section 13	Additional information for placements made under Section 20
Section 14	Additional information – recording and sharing

6.7 The foster carer must comply with the terms of Child/Young Person Placement Plan.

6.8 **Emergency Placement** - in an emergency and at short notice, and if satisfied that the care arrangement will safeguard and promote the welfare of the child, the Council may place a child with a foster carer.

6.9 The Supervising Social Worker will endeavour to provide the foster carer with sufficient information (such as is referred to in Clause 6.5(a) above) necessary to enable the foster carer to care for the child.

6.10 **Placement by another Local Authority** - the placement of children from another local authority with the Council's approved foster carer is subject to the consent of the Council, the requirements of the terms of approval, and compliance with the Fostering regulations.

7. Notice of Changes

7.1 The foster carer must immediately give the Council full written notice of:

- (a) Any intended change of the foster carer's address.
- (b) Any change in the composition of their household.
- (c) Any other change in their personal circumstances and any other event affecting either their capacity to care for any child in care or the suitability of their household; and
- (d) Any request or application to adopt children, or for registration for child minding or day care.

7.2 The foster carer can terminate their approval with the Council and should give written notice as follows:

- (a) If they have a child in placement, 28 days' notice to facilitate the needs of the child: or
- (b) If they do not, at that time, have a child in placement, reasonable notice to allow for the administrative process to be completed.

8. Corporal Punishment

8.1 The foster carer must not administer corporal punishment to any child placed in their care.

9. Confidentiality of Information

9.1 The foster carer must ensure that any information relating to the child, their family, or any other person, which has been given to them in confidence, is kept confidential and is not disclosed to any person without the consent of the Council.

10. Care for the Child

10.1 In accepting to provide care to a child, the foster carers enter into a written agreement with the Council to:

- (a) To care for the child and meet all their needs (i.e. health, education, identity, emotional and behavioural needs, social presentations, etc.);
- (b) Permit any person authorised by the Council to visit the child;
- (c) Allow family time between the child and their family including siblings in accordance with any arrangement made by the Council or the terms of any court order; and
- (d) Ensure that any information relating to the child, or their family, or any other person, which has been given to them in confidence in connection with a placement, is kept confidential and is not disclosed to any person without the consent of the Council.

10.2 Children should know that their views, wishes, and feelings are taken into account in all aspects of their care; are helped to understand why it may not be possible to act upon their wishes in all cases; and know how to obtain support and make a complaint.

11. Compliance with Policies and Procedures for Protecting Children

11.1 The foster carer must comply with the Council's policies and procedures for the protection of the child placed in their care.

11.2 The foster carer must comply with the Standards, Policy and Procedures contained in the Medway Council Foster Carer's Handbook. The Council will provide a copy of this document to the foster carer.

- 11.3 The Council will also provide copies of the following documents to the foster carer:

- (a) Medway Foster Carer Training Portfolio
- (b) National Minimum Standards 2011 for Foster Care
- (c) Fostering Network: Safe Caring
- (d) Foster Talk contact details
- (e) TSD Standards and Workbook
- (f) Accident Form Book.

12. Co-operate with the Ofsted Regulatory and Inspection Authority

- 12.1 The foster carers will co-operate as reasonably required with the inspectors from Ofsted and allow a person authorised by Ofsted to interview them and visit their home at any reasonable time.

13. Keeping Medway Council Informed

- 13.1 The foster carer must keep Medway Council Fostering Service informed about the child's progress and notify the Council immediately of any significant events affecting the child including serious accidents and illness and unauthorised absences from the home.
- 13.2 The information on a child's progress (including significant events) must be recorded in a diary by the foster carer and must be shared with the Supervising Social Worker and the child's social worker.
- 13.3 Information about the child/young person, recorded by the foster carer is clear and recorded in a way which will be helpful to the child when they access their file, now or in the future.
- 13.4 All recorded information, decisions and reasons are legible, clearly expressed, non-stigmatising and distinguish between fact, opinion, and third-party information, and are signed and dated.

14. Removal from Placement

- 14.1 The foster carer shall allow any child placed with them to be moved by the Council, if the Council decides that the continuation of the placement is no longer suitable in fulfilling its duty to the child, or that the continuation of the placement would be detrimental to the welfare of the child.

15. Insurance and Legal Liabilities

- 15.1 Foster carers shall be responsible for any claim that is founded on any unauthorised action or omission of the foster carer during the stay of a child in their care.

- 15.2 Foster carers shall have and maintain an insurance policy to cover all claims and liabilities arising out of the placement of a child in their care.
- 15.3 The foster carer shall produce to the Council the insurance policy including the claims and liabilities covered by the policy.
- 15.4 The Council will not reimburse foster carers for any additional expenses unless agreement has been reached prior to the foster carers engaging in such expenses in writing by the Fostering Registered Manager.

16. Complaints and Representations

- 16.1 The Council has a formal complaints procedure, a copy of which can be found online:
https://www.medway.gov.uk/info/200422/complaints/470/make_a_complaint_about_a_medway_council_service .
- 16.2 If the foster carer has any complaints about the Council and its officers or its services, the carer should follow the Council's complaints procedure.
- 16.3 The foster carer could also make representations to the Fostering Registered Manager who is based at Gun Wharf, Dock Road, Chatham, Kent, ME4 4TR and be contacted on 01634 334179.

I have read and accept the contents of this agreement.

Signed Date
Foster Carer

Signed Date
Foster Carer