

Newham Fostering Service

Foster Carers' Charter

Children come first

Children in foster care deserve to experience as full a family life as possible, as part of a loving foster family with carers who can make everyday decisions as they would their own child and with-out the child feeling that they 'stand out' as a looked after child.

Children must be given every support to develop their own identities and aspirations, fulfil their potential and take advantage of all opportunities to promote their talents and skills. Above all, they should be listened to.

Newham Fostering Service will:

- recognise in practice the importance of the child's relationship with his or her foster family as one that can make the biggest difference in the child's life and which can endure into adulthood
- listen to, involve foster carers and their foster children in decision-making and planning and provide foster carers and their foster children with full information about each other
- in making placements be clear about the continuing care or support there will be (including for the child into adulthood), be sensitive to the needs of the foster carer and the child in making and ending placements and have contingency plans should the placement not work
- treat foster carers with openness, fairness and respect as a core member of the team around the child and support them in making reasonable and appropriate decisions on behalf of their foster child
- ensure that foster carers have the support services and development opportunities they need in order to provide their foster child with the best possible care. That includes liaising with lo-cal foster carers groups and seeking to respond to problems and disseminate best practice
- make sure foster carers are recompensed on time and are given clear information about any support, allowances, fees, and holidays they will receive including in cases of dispute with the serv-ice or during gaps in placements.

Newham Foster Carers will:

- provide positive adult role models, treat the foster child as they would their own child, and be a "pushy parent" in advocating for all aspects of the child's development, including educational attainment and physical and emotional health and wellbeing and co-operate fully as part of a team with other key professionals in the child's life

- support their foster child and do all they can to make the placement work. Take part in learning and development, use skills and approaches that make a positive impact and enable the child to reach his or her potential. Support their foster child to help them to counter possible bullying and discrimination as a result of their care status

Changes to your circumstances

We need to know if there are any significant changes in your family or in your home. The list below gives examples of the sorts of changes we need to know about:

- If you are planning to move
- If someone in the family develops a serious illness or injury
- If someone is joining or leaving your household – even for a short while
- If there has been changes in your employment
- If you have a new pet, in particular any dogs or cats.
- About major changes to your relationship i.e. divorce or break up of a partnership
- About a new partnership
- If a member of the family has been charged with a criminal offence.

The usual fostering limit

The maximum number of children that can be placed in a foster home is three, unless the children are brothers and sisters from the same family. However, we sometimes will ask you to care for a child above your approval rating. If you agree, we then seek approval to do this from the Agency Decision Maker. This is called an exemption. If you live outside of Newham, it's the borough you live in who will grant the exemption.

Fostering for another agency

You cannot foster for any other agency while you are a Newham foster carer. However, you can be lent to other boroughs, but only when all parties (Newham Fostering Service, the borough where the child lives and yourself) agree to the placement.