



**Foster Care Agreement
Fostering Services Regulations 2011
Regulation 30 (2) (d) and Schedule 5**

Foster Care Agreement Family and Friends

The Agreement sets out the terms and conditions of being a Foster Carer. This agreement applies to all Foster Carers who have been assessed by Rochdale Fostering Team Social Workers in line with statutory requirements and approved by Rochdale's Fostering Panel.

In signing the Agreement, both the Foster Carer and the Department are agreeing to abide by its conditions.

The Foster Carer must not enter into another agreement with another Fostering Service provider whilst this Agreement remains in force.

The Agreement will commence once signed by both parties and may be terminated by agreement or in accordance with the procedures described in section 1 of this document.

Foster Placement Agreement

In addition to the details contained within this agreement, each child will have a Foster Placement Agreement. The Foster Placement Agreement will, as specified in the Fostering Regulations 2011 include:

- Placement Information Records – part 1 and 2 (PIR)
- Care Plan

Each child should have the above documents when placed.

Both the RMBC Children's Social Care and the Foster Carer will operate this Agreement in accordance with the Agency's policy of providing services that value diversity and promote equality.

Terms of Approval

The terms of approval are attached to this agreement and should be completed in line with each annual review.

Changes to the approval status must only be made by the head of service, following recommendation from the appropriate panel.

Allowances will be paid to the Foster Carer according to the skills of the carer and age of the child in accordance with Rochdale's Fostering Service scale of allowances.

If the Carer wishes to terminate the agreement, he/she must give written notice. The carer's approval then terminates automatically 28 days after the Fostering Service receives the notice.

If the Fostering Service wishes to terminate the agreement (i.e. by terminating the Foster Carer's approval), it has to give him/her written notice of its proposal and the reasons for it. The Foster Carer then has 28 days to make any representations against the proposal. The Fostering Service cannot terminate their approval until either the 28 days have elapsed without the carer making any representations or the carer's representations have been considered and the service still wants to terminate the approval.

Foster Carers cannot be registered with any other Fostering Agency whilst part of Rochdale's Fostering Service and must have either resigned or been de-registered prior to applying elsewhere, unless agreement has been reached between Rochdale's Children's Social Care Service and the new fostering service provider about arrangements for the continuing management of the placement.

2. Support and Training

The Fostering Service will provide ongoing training and support to Foster carers so that they can carry out their role effectively and improve their level of skills.

All Foster Carers are expected to attend Introduction to Child Protection and First Aid training within 3 months of their approval. These courses will be re-accessed every 3 years.

All Foster Carers are also expected to be nominated to attend a minimum of 2 training courses a year. This will include the compulsory training that must be completed by ALL carers within 2 years of approval which is –

- Health Needs of Looked After Children
- Basic Report Writing
- Safer Caring
- Food Hygiene
- Cultural Awareness

Training programmes will be regularly reviewed in consultation with Foster Carers and updated in order to take account of current issues and research findings. Certificates will be presented to those who attend training.

Each Foster Carer will have their own training file held within the training section. Support will be as required; however Supervisory visits will be at least every 6 weeks for short-term placements and 3 monthly for long-term placements. At least one unannounced visit will take place per year.

Access to additional support from services within RMBC Children's Social Care should be made available as and when required.

All Foster Carers will become a member of The Fostering Network and can access support and advice via the website or phone line.

3. Review of approval

Foster Carer Reviews will be undertaken by the Fostering Team and will be held at the Fostering Team's place of business. The review will take place on an annual basis.

All initial Foster Carers reviews and where there is a change of approval will be presented to Fostering Panel. All other Foster Carer reviews will be presented to the Foster Carer Review Panel, and the outcome fed in to the Fostering Panel.

Foster Carer Reviews dealing with complex issues can also be presented to the RMBC Fostering Panel.

Panels are held monthly and you will be expected to attend. The review will consider any placements made, training undertaken and support given since approval or the previous review. It will include consultation with Social Workers of children placed currently or within the review period. You will also be sent a review questionnaire to complete and return to the Safeguarding Manager prior to your review.

The review will provide an opportunity for both the RMBC Children's Social Care and the Foster Carer to reflect on the past year and plan for the year ahead.

The terms of approval will be considered and any changes made as a result of the review will be put in writing to the Foster Carer.

4. The placement of children

RMBC Children's Social Care and Foster Carers have a shared commitment to promoting and safeguarding the welfare and development of the child at all times within the Foster Care service provided.

Matching of a child to a carer capable of meeting his or her assessed needs will be achieved by means of information sharing and consultation with the child, their family, potential carers and their families, other children in placement, the Child's Social Worker and all other relevant professionals.

Matching decisions will consider a child's assessed racial, ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic needs and match those as closely as possible. Practical arrangements must also be considered, such as contact arrangements, transport, schools and leisure.

5. Legal Liabilities

Comprehensive insurance for approved Foster Carers is provided through the Council's insurance arrangements. This includes:

Public Liability (third party) insurance.

Loss or damage "all risks" insurance – excluding damage to cars.

Personal accident and injury insurance

Foster Carers are expected to have their own insurance in relation to home and car insurance cover to protect them in the case of damage by foster children. The Council's insurance specifically excludes damage by members of the household other than children placed by Rochdale with Foster Carers.

There is a full policy available, should carers wish to have access to this – please quote FO3 (j).

All car insurers should be notified of the fostering role and it is the responsibility of the Foster Carer to ensure that their car insurance states that they are aware the person(s) are Foster Carers and will be transporting children as part of their role.

Home contents insurance should also be sought and documents should also highlight the role of Foster Carer.

6. Making representations

Prior to any changes taking place there should be written notification which will specify the proposed change and the reasons for it and allow carers 28 days to make representation. Should Foster Carers not respond to this the "proposal" will become the "decision". Foster Carers will then be notified in writing of the decision.

Foster Carers should receive guidance should they need to make representations.

7. Informing the Fostering service of changes

Foster Carers must give written notice to the Fostering Service, with full particulars of: -

- Any intended change of address.
- Any change in the composition of the household.
- Any other change in their personal circumstances and any other event affecting either their capacity to care for any child placed or the suitability of their household.
- Any request or application to adopt children, or for registration for child minding or day care.

The Foster Carer must also notify the Fostering Service if:

- The Carer or a member of their household is charged or cautioned by the police or convicted of a criminal offence.
- The Foster Carer is unable temporarily to look after a child placed with them.

8. The treatment of children

Foster Carers may only use acceptable measures of control as outlined in the Foster Carer Safer Care Policy. Each Safer Caring Policy should be updated in relation to each new child. Foster Carers are not to administer corporal punishment to any child placed with them. This includes a no smacking policy.

There must be no locks on a foster child's bedroom and foster children must be able to access support from their carers as required, therefore locks of carers bedroom should not be used as a measure to restrict children accessing support day or night.

9. Confidentiality

Foster Carers may be required to document information regarding the children placed.

Foster Carers will ensure that any information provided by RMBC Children's Social Care which relates to a child placed the family of a child or any other person is kept confidential and is not disclosed to anybody without the permission of the Local Authority.

All recorded information in relation to a child must be stored in a secure place and returned to RMBC Children's Social Care if the placement ends. Foster Carers can be provided with a lockable storage unit.

Foster carers must not use social networking sites (e.g. Facebook) to discuss any aspects of fostering including reference to children or photographs with any other person including other foster carers. This will be deemed a breach of confidentiality

10. Foster Placement Agreement

In providing care for any child placed with them the Foster Carer will ensure that the care provided is in accordance with the child's Placement Plan and statutory requirements.

The particular requirements and objectives of a placement will be confirmed at the placement planning meeting, which will be arranged to take place before the placement starts in the case of a planned placement or, in the case of an immediate or emergency placement, as soon as possible thereafter.

The Child's Social Worker will provide: -

- A copy of the Placement Information Records Part 1 and Part 2 (PIR)
- Care Plan

Ideally, the Placement Plan will also provide:

- A full personal history of the child, (if not already known) including information about the child's racial origins, religion, culture and linguistic background, in addition to any other significant information about the child's life.
- Information about the child's health needs, how these are planned to be met and information as to whether there is any agreement for delegation of consent to dental or medical examination or treatment.
- Information about education needs and how these are to be met, including details of the Person Education Plan.
- A detail of the role of the Child's Social Worker and the intended frequency of visits to the child by the Social Worker.
- Information about the roles of any other relevant professionals.

The Foster Carer will be expected to participate in the child's statutory reviews (including completion of a consultation document).

11. Promoting welfare

Foster Carers must care for any child placed with them as if the child were a member of the Foster Carer's family even if they are not and promote the child's welfare having regard to the long and short-term plans for the child.

This might include (where appropriate) promoting contact with significant members of a child's family.

The responsibilities will also include support around the needs of a child which include: –

Health

- ♦ Taking the child to any health appointments
- ♦ Helping the child to access any health services they might need
- ♦ Registering a child with a doctor or dentist as necessary
- ♦ Ensuring appropriate day to day care of the child's personal care, personal hygiene and diet

Education

The Foster Carer will encourage and promote the child's education and development as appropriate by:

- ♦ Arranging play group or nursery, where appropriate
- ♦ Promoting regular school attendance
- ♦ Maintaining regular contact with the child's school and teachers
- ♦ Attending school parents evening
- ♦ Providing a suitable environment for study in the home
- ♦ Supervising the completion of homework set by the child's school

Wherever possible educational needs and arrangements for meeting these should be a subject of discussion and planning before a placement is made. The placement planning meeting and subsequent review meetings should confirm that the child's educational needs are being met in an appropriate way.

The Child's Social Worker must ensure all children should have a Personal Education Plan (PEP).

Leisure

The Foster Carer should ensure that children and young people have opportunities to access age appropriate leisure activities. These activities should include sporting activities, organised groups such as cubs and brownies or other youth or community based groups.

Children's Rights

All children should have a Children's Guide when entering Foster Care. The Foster Carer needs to ensure the child has access to this and ensure the child understands the content.

Children should be aware of how to complain should this be required, as should Foster Carers.

Children should be aware of the Children's Rights Service and Independent Visitors that are available should this be required.

All care planning and Fostering regulations can be viewed at:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/families/childrenincare/regs>

12. Policies and procedures within Fostering

Foster Carers must comply with the policies and procedures of the fostering service issued under The Fostering Services Regulations 2011, regulations 12 and 13.

Regulation 12 – policy regarding safeguarding children against abuse and neglect within the foster placement. The procedure is the course of action taken in the event of any allegation of abuse or neglect.

Regulation 13 – Acceptable measures of restraint, control and discipline, which should be clearly detailed in the Safer Caring policy

Also Foster Carers must follow the appropriate procedure if a child is missing from home without permission.

Procedures are currently accessible via their fostering Supervising Social Worker.

13. Ofsted

Foster Carers must co-operate as reasonably required with the Regulatory body (Ofsted), and in particular allow a person authorised by Ofsted to interview them and visit Foster Carers homes at any reasonable time.

14. Significant events affecting the child

Foster Carers have an obligation to keep the Fostering Team informed about the child's progress and to notify it immediately of any significant events affecting the child.

Schedule 6 and Regulations 35 (1) and 36 require the Registered Manager to be informed of and monitor the following: –

- All accidents, injuries and illnesses of children placed with Foster Carers, including where the child requires hospital treatment
- Complaints in relation to children placed with Foster Carers and their outcomes.
- Any allegations or suspicions of abuse in respect of children placed with Foster Carers, including outcomes of any investigations.
- Any unauthorised absence from the foster home of a child accommodated. (The Child's Social Worker and police must be informed. The Emergency Duty Team must be informed if this happens out of office hours)
- Suspected / actual involvement in child sexual exploitation.
- Use of any measures of control, restraint or discipline in respect of children accommodated in a foster home.

15. Children being removed

It is intended that foster placements will end in a planned way, (if the child is not staying on a long term basis) according to the placement plan. However, in some circumstances it may prove necessary to terminate a placement as a matter of urgency. RMBC Children's Social Care will in partnership with Foster Carers try to minimise the impact of disruption on the child and the Carer.

Where there are concerns regarding potential disruption within a placement, there should be a Stage 1 Planning meeting. This meeting will be an opportunity to look at what additional support might be needed to support the child and the Foster Carer to prevent placement breakdown. If the placement is still at risk of breakdown there will be a stage 2 planning meeting, where future alternative placement plans for the child can be made.

In circumstances where a placement has broken down or is likely to break down, Foster Carers must work with Children's Social Care Services to safeguard the interests of the child until such times as alternative arrangements can be made. If the authority decides to terminate a foster placement, Foster Carers are obliged to allow the child to be removed.

There should be a Review if a short term placement has broken down or a disruption meeting if a long term placement has broken down. Recommendations and decisions must be made regarding future placements.

A child's Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) must also be notified prior to a placement move and a looked after child's review must be held.

Signed: _____ Dated: _____
(On behalf of Rochdale MBC Fostering Service)

Signed: _____ Dated: _____
(Family and Friends Carer)

PRINT NAME: _____

Signed: _____ Dated: _____
(Family and Friends Carer)

PRINT NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

