



TRAFFORD
COUNCIL

Services for Children, Young People and Families

CHILDREN IN CARE/FOSTER CARE FOSTER CARER'S AGREEMENT

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FOSTER CARE AGREEMENT

BETWEEN TRAFFORD CYPS &

DETAILS OF APPROVAL

The above named carers are approved to foster children *(insert approval status, number and age of children approved to foster)*

The Children Act 1989 requires the approving authority (Trafford) to enter into a written agreement with a foster carer at the time of their approval. The purpose of the agreement is to provide written information about the terms and conditions of the partnership and about what can be expected by both parties.

1. SUPPORT AND TRAINING

Trafford has a responsibility to provide ongoing support and training to carers although individual needs may vary. Your support worker (Supervising Social Worker) from the Family Placement Team and/or the Social Workers for the child are likely to be the main source of ongoing support and you should receive a visit from them at least once every 3 months, this may increase if more support is required. You will be invited to attend monthly support group meetings and following approval you are expected to attend training in line with the requirements of the payments for skills scheme

Training needs will be one of the matters discussed at the annual review and you will be expected to make use of further training relevant to your particular fostering task. Those carers who attend the required on-going training will progress to the next pay band. Carers on Band will need to continue to with their training in line with what has been agreed with their supervising social worker and the requirements of the payments for skills scheme.

2. ANNUAL REVIEW OF CARERS APPROVAL

This review provides an opportunity for carers to share their experiences of caring for children and any difficulties that have arisen as well as to discuss the service offered by Trafford. The views of social workers and other local authorities who have used the placement in the last 12 months may be sought. Carer's Safer Caring Policies will be reviewed at this stage as well as their Health and Safety Check. Carer's statutory checks (including DBS's) will be renewed every 3 years. These reports are then presented to the fostering panel or the reviewing manager and a record of the review and the decisions of the review will be recorded and carers will be notified in writing of the outcome. Should a change in terms of approval result a notice of re-approval will be sent to the carer(s) once the Agency Decision Maker has ratified the decision.

3. FOSTER PLACEMENT AGREEMENT

A planning meeting will be held either before or within 72 hours of a placement being made. This will be attended by the child's social worker, the carers, Supervising Social Worker and the child and their parent if this is appropriate.

Trafford undertakes, in consultation with carers, to provide a written placement agreement

for each child that is placed, usually before or at the time of placement and constitutes the Placement Information Record. This agreement sets out the arrangements for the child and confirms what is expected of the carer, the responsibilities of the authority (Trafford) and what has been agreed with the parent(s) of the child. This agreement will be provided by the social worker for the child before or at the time of placement. All information both written and given verbally concerning a child must be kept both secure and confidential.

4. CARER'S RESPONSIBILITIES TOWARDS CHILDREN PLACED

Carers are expected to:

- Comply with any placement agreement.
- Care for the child or children as though they are members of the carer's family, by giving due care and attention and by respecting the child's or children's wishes and feelings.
- Keep the relevant professionals, (Social Workers, Supervising Social Workers, Health Professionals etc.) updated on the progress a child in your care is making and any significant events.
- Promote the child's welfare in accordance with the authority's (Trafford) plans for the child.
- Notify the authority (Trafford) of any serious illness or occurrence affecting the child as soon, as is reasonably practical. During normal working hours this will be the child's social worker, or manager or Supervising Social Worker or manager. Out of hours the Emergency Duty Team must be contacted. (The notifiable incidents form should be used in these for this.)
- Attend to and promote the needs of any child placed in respect of their health, safety, education, religion, race, language and culture.
- Ensure all confidential information on any children placed with the carer/s is kept stored safely and securely

5. CONTACT WITH CHILD'S FAMILY

In accordance with the Children Act 1989 the Local Authority must seek to work in partnership with parents of children they looked after. This extends to the contact that children in foster care have with their birth parents. This duty applies to foster carers of the Local Authority. The LAC Placement Plan will detail contact arrangements.

Except in exceptional circumstances, the carer's name, address and telephone number will normally be included in the plan and therefore available to contributors to it. Contact may include visits to the carer's home, but any arrangements made should take account of the carer's own commitments.

6. VISITORS TO CARER'S HOME

Whilst the Regulations state that carers are expected to permit personnel authorised by the Authority to visit the child in their home, clearly these arrangements will be made by social workers and Supervising Social Workers with due respect to carer's routines and other commitments. However, the Authority does have a duty to see the child/young person alone on occasions, and to make impromptu visits in addition to pre-arranged ones, and to see the child's accommodation (including their bedroom).

When a placement ceases to meet the child's needs, the Authority has a duty to remove the child. The carer is, however, not only entitled to as full a discussion and explanation as is possible regarding this course of action but also to expect sensitive handling of the situation and consideration of the impact on a carer's family.

The authority has a duty under the Fostering Regulations 2011 and the National Minimum Standards for Fostering to make unannounced visits to foster carer's homes.

7. OFSTED

Ofsted is responsible for ensuring that the National Care Standards are being met and the carers are expected to permit their inspectors to visit their homes. Ofsted and their inspectors can be contacted at:

By post:

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

Telephone: 0300 123 1231

Email : enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Carers are also expected to co-operate as reasonably required with Ofsted inspectors, this could involve carers being interviewed and visited at home at any reasonable time.

8. POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

The Regulations expressly forbid the use of physical punishment. Carers are encouraged to discuss any difficulties with the child's social worker or their support worker at any stage. Trafford's policy on Behaviour Management gives further guidance on the approaches and strategies carers can use to positively manage the behaviour of children in foster care; the policy includes non restrictive physical interventions. The policy Restrictive Physical Intervention provides information regarding the use of restraint and those permitted to use PI. Further training and support to carers about promoting positive behaviour and managing behaviour is available as part of the ongoing training program for approved carers.

9. MISSING FROM CARE

Trafford's Missing from Care or Home Policy provides guidance on what to do and who to contact should a foster child go missing from a foster carer's home is available. Carers should contact the police, child's social worker (or EDT if out of hours) if they suspect a

child has gone missing in accordance with the policy.

10. INSURANCE

(i) *Liability to Users of the Scheme*

- a) You should notify your Insurance Company(ies), in writing of your fostering activities and ask for confirmation that children placed will be considered members of the family.
- b) You should make sure your household policy gives you cover to pay all sums for which a member of the family is legally liable in respect of accidents which result in bodily injury or illness to any person, or loss or damage to property (public liability option).

(ii) *Car Insurance*

You should inform your insurers of your fostering activities.

(iii) *Public Liability*

Trafford Council has third party cover for Carers, to meet claims for which they can legally be held liable.

(iv) *Personal Accident Including Assault*

Trafford Council holds a personal accident policy for Carers up to a maximum of £50,000.

11. CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

Information, both verbal and written, which has been given to a carer in connection with the placement of a child, must be kept confidential and must not be shared without consent of the Authority. Any documentation relating to the child must be returned to the Authority when the placement ends.

12. WRITTEN NOTICES TO CARERS

A Carer is required to give written notice to the Authority in the following circumstances:-

- * Any intended or actual change of address.
- * Any change in composition of the household.
- * Any events or changes in personal circumstances which may effect the suitability of the household or the carers capacity to care for the child placed.
- * Any request or application made by the carer or any other member of the household to foster or adopt a child or to register as a Child Minder.
- * If there is an incident that leads to police involvement.

Failure to provide this information could lead to the suspension of a carer's registration.

13. SAFER CARING

Foster carers are expected to practise “Safer Caring” in their homes with children and young people placed in their care. All carers should have a “Safer Caring Policy” which they complete jointly with their Supervising Social Worker prior to a child being placed in their care which details what carers will and won’t do in order to ensure that any risks to carers, their families and foster children are minimised as much as possible. The following are some general guidelines which carers can follow in order to practice “Safer Caring”

Many people who foster, particularly men feel safe caring can limit the level of their involvement with fostered children. The main concern for many carers is the risk of allegations against themselves and family members and how best to minimise this. The following guidelines provide a practical, sensible approach to safe caring issues, which will enable all carers, including men to be involved carers and to feel comfortable around children who have, or may have been abused. Such an approach will also help children to feel comfortable with their carers. Foster carers are expected to follow the practical guidelines outlined below.

Practical Guidelines to Safe Caring

- Understand the pattern of abuse child or young person has previously suffered and ask questions of the social worker – normal family routines can be realistically adapted.
- Agree with the social worker how daily routines such as bed times and bath times should be approached based on the individual child’s needs, and thus enabling and allowing carers to give nurturing care.
- Offer positive one-to-one time with children – outings, leisure pursuits, help with homework, reading, again, be clear with other professionals that this is ordinary family life and take advice on whether there are any particular risks attached.
- Offer children comfortable, safe alternatives to sexualised behaviour. Don’t avoid all intimacy – make it safe and ordinary for youngsters. As a family be open to discussing issues about sex, sexuality, and emotions.
- Always keep a written record of significant incidents and signs. Be clear with the social worker what recording is required.
- Talk openly with your partner (if you have one), especially about your feelings and reactions to the fostered child.
- Let professionals know at the time if you are concerned about behaviour promptly.
- Introduce safe rules – no one touches another person’s body without their permission e.g. ask to give/receive hugs. Help children learn to say no if they do not want to be touched, make sure that all members of the family have and wear dressing gowns. Do not allow sharing of beds (carers should not share children’s beds even when they are ill). Discuss these rules with other professionals involved with the child/young person.
- Avoid tickling games, warmth and affection in the bedroom with children (bedtime stories can be done on the sofa), skin to skin contact in intimate care (use a flannel).
- Carers to have an awareness and sensitivity towards the use of cameras and video equipment etc. i.e. always ask permission from the child/young person first.

14. ALLEGATIONS AGAINST A CARER

In the course of caring for other people's children, allegations may be made against the carer by a child or parent or any other person. The Authority has a responsibility to investigate any such allegation. This investigation will be undertaken by a member of the Community Teams. The child's welfare has to be protected, but account will be taken of the sensitivities and rights of carers and consideration will be given to the need for additional support. Trafford's policy on Allegations and Complaints against foster carers and Trafford's Safe Guarding Board 'Child Protection Procedures' detail the procedures to be followed in such circumstances and the support available to carers.

15. ENDING OF CARER'S APPROVAL

Termination of approval may come about for a number of reasons and may be instigated by the carer or by the Authority. Where a decision is taken to end approval by the Authority, the decision and the reasons for it will be discussed with the carer as far as is practicable. A written notice will be sent to the carers after termination by the decision maker (see 15 below for information about complaints/representations). Carers will have 28 days to appeal against termination of approval if they wish to do so and their intention to appeal should be submitted in writing to the Family Placement Manager. This will either be to the agency decision maker or to the Independent Reviewing Mechanism. Foster carers need to give 28 days' notice in writing of they wish to cease fostering.

16. COMPLAINTS AND REPRESENTATIONS

Carers may wish to make complaints/representations about aspects of the foster care service, decisions made about them or about children placed with them. If the matter cannot be resolved by discussion with support worker or their Team Manager, a letter can be sent to the Complaints Manager at Trafford Town Hall, Talbot Road, Stretford, M32 0YT tel: 0161 912 4698 (see Trafford's Complaints Procedure for more details).

17. REMOVAL OF CHILDREN FROM FOSTER CARE

In the unlikely event that it is felt to be necessary, foster carers must allow a child placed with them to be removed by the relevant authorities.

We have read this Foster Care Agreement and understand and agree to the terms and conditions

Signature Carer:		Date:	
Signature Carer:		Date:	