

# Wirral Fostering Service

## Foster Care Agreement

IT TAKES A BIG **HEART** TO FOSTER



## **Wirral Fostering Services**

Approved Foster Carers and the Fostering Agency are legally obliged to sign a Foster Care Agreement and as partners abide by its conditions – National Minimum Standards Fostering Regulations 2011 – Schedule 5 Regulation 27(5) (b).

The purpose is to provide written information about the Terms and Conditions of the partnership between the Authority and its Foster Carers and further important information.

### **Foster Care Agreement**

Name of Foster Carer/s \_\_\_\_\_

Registration Details \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Approval \_\_\_\_\_

### **Foster Carers agree:**

1. That I/we will strive to treat any child(ren) placed with me as an equal and valued individual in their own right and to promote their welfare having regard to the Every Child Matters Agenda and National Minimum Standards/Fostering Service Regulations 2011.
2. That I/we will attend reviews, case conferences, planning and other meetings concerning the child/ren in my/our care and give my/our views clearly. I/we will provide a written report for the meeting.
3. That I/we will receive a copy of the written placement agreement(s) drawn up between the agency, myself/ourselves and, where appropriate, the child(ren) and his/her/their parents and will work with all parties towards the goals identified and keep this information confidential. I will return all information regarding the child(ren) to the Child's Social Worker at the end of the foster placement.
4. That I/we will inform the agency immediately if a new member joins the Foster Carer household, and that I/we understand that a Disclosure and Barring Service Check and child protection check must be undertaken for all household members and regular visitors aged 18 years and over.
5. That I/we will not offer my/our services as a carer to another agency without the consent of this approving agency. That I/we will not apply to adopt or apply to register as a childminder(s) without prior notice to the agency.
6. That I/we will have a Supervising Social Worker with whom I/we will maintain open communication and from whom I/we will receive supervision, advice and support. I/we will inform him/her immediately of any changes in household composition, change of address, illness or any other significant events which may affect the fostering household.

7. That I/we will receive from my/our Supervising Social Worker four Supervisory Home Visits (one unannounced) within any 12 month period, and that I/we undertake to retain written records of these visits.
8. That I/we have received details of the agency's Representations and Complaints procedures and understand that these can be used to deal with any disagreement or dissatisfaction.
9. That I/we will attend relevant training courses in line with my/our Personal Development Plan and TSDS requirements to further develop my/our fostering skills. That I/we undertake to access other forms of support made available by the agency, including required attendance at foster carer support groups.
10. That I/we will maintain appropriate household contents, buildings, and motor insurance and inform my/our insurers of my/our approval as a foster carer(s). I/we understand and accept the agency's provision of household and other insurance cover as detailed in separate departmental procedures and documentation.
11. That I/we will arrange for any child/ren to receive medical attention whenever s/he is ill and allow him/her to be examined at such times and places as the agency requires, e.g. dentists, opticians, medical checks etc.
12. That I/we will ensure that all children placed with me/us are encouraged to practise their religion if they and their parents wish and will advise the agency of any difficulties in achieving this.
13. That I/we will encourage and enable a child(ren)/young person(s), when needed, to understand their ethnicity, cultural background and family history. That I/we will use training and advice offered by the agency to enable this to be done and will advise the agency of any difficulties regarding this.
14. That I/we will promote and support contact between a child(ren)/young person(s) and his/her/their family unless stipulated otherwise in the placement agreement.
15. That the welfare of the foster child is paramount. I/we will be positively committed to the best interests of a child/young person in my/our care and be an advocate for that purpose at all times. I/we am committed to using my/our skills to enable the agreed aims of a placement to be achieved and completed.
16. That I/we will be responsible on a day-to-day basis for encouraging the child(ren)/young person(s) to attend school/college/work, support a child's Personal Education Plan, and will maintain contact regarding progress at school and attend meetings at/with school where appropriate.
17. That I/we will allow social workers to have access to the child(ren) in my/our care at all reasonable times and for the child(ren) to be seen alone when requested. I/we will allow any agency authorised person to visit my/our home to see the child if approved by the Child's Social Worker.
18. That I/we will keep the agency informed about the child(ren)'s progress and notify them immediately of any serious illness of the child(ren) or any other significant events affecting the child(ren).

19. That I/we will communicate with the child(ren)'s Social Worker and my/our SSW, particularly if things are not going well with the child(ren). I/we will try to avoid the situation reaching crisis point without warning by discussing matters openly at an early stage.
20. That I/we must allow the agency to remove the child(ren) if they decide to do so.
21. That I/we will not terminate a placement without prior discussion or reasonable notice being given. If I/we do not give reasonable notice of termination, my/our approval and registration may be reviewed.
22. That I/we will inform the agency immediately if any child in placement runs away or is taken away from the foster home without agency authorisation.
23. That I/we will inform the agency if the police are involved with any child(ren) in my/our care.
24. That I/we agree to keep a record of the child(ren)'s life while placed with me. I recognise the importance of photographs and other mementos for children leaving my care.
25. That I/we will undertake to maintain the child(ren)'s clothing from the clothing allowance received and that any clothes purchased will be the property of the child concerned, will be transferred with the child(ren) on leaving the foster family.
26. I/we am/are aware of the agency's policy and guidance on dogs in foster homes and will advise my/our SSW if I/we obtain a dog, or any other pet that may potentially present a risk to a child/young person.
27. That I/we will have due regard to health and safety in the home and will advise my/our SSW if this is compromised in any way. I/we will also inform my/our SSW if I/we require any equipment, financial assistance or advice to promote the maintenance of a safe environment for children/young people.
28. That I/we will produce and maintain a safe care plan for my/our household.
29. That I/we understand and agree to adhere to agency fostering policy regarding smokers and smoking.
30. That I/we understand and agree to the agency's policy of no physical chastisement of children/young people looked after and will not use corporal punishment or any measure of control, restraint or discipline which is excessive or unreasonable.
31. That I/we understand and agree to the agency's policy and procedures on safeguarding.
32. That I/we understand and agree to the agency's policy and procedures on investigating complaints and allegations involving foster carers.
33. That I/we am aware I/we need to request permission from the agency to take a child(ren) out of the country.
34. That I/we will co-operate as reasonably required with regulatory bodies and fostering service inspections, facilitating interviews with responsible persons and allowing visits to the foster home if required.

35. That I/we will repay any overpayment of fostering fees and maintenance payments.

36. That I/we accept that this agreement may be terminated by either party at any time giving the other 28 days' notice in writing.

### **USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

Integrated Front Door: 606 2006  
Emergency Duty Team: 677 6557  
Wirral Fostering Service: 666 4616  
Ofsted: 08456014772

All policies and procedures in relation to Children's Services can be accessed via the Wirral Council website.

### **Wirral Fostering Service agrees:**

1. That Foster Carers will be provided with a summary of the regulations that apply to fostering, and a Foster Carer Handbook of information which the agency undertakes to update at regular intervals
2. That Foster Carers are members of the care team for children placed with them and will be expected to attend reviews and planning meetings concerning children in their care. A written summary of the meeting and its decisions as these relate to themselves and/or a child/ren will be given to the Foster Carers within 21 days. The Foster Carer's opinions and views will be given the same value and respect as any other professional in the team. In arranging meetings and appointments with other professionals, eg health and education, reasonable care will be taken to fit these into the lifestyle of the Foster Carers and their household.
3. That a child will have been fully examined by a doctor or consultant within the three months prior to placement with the Foster Carers. The implications of any illness or developmental issues will be fully explained to them. If a child is unknown to the agency prior to placement, a full developmental medical will take place within 14 days of placement.
4. That Foster Carers will be provided with written information about the child, their family background and history, educational and medical information plus any other information relevant to the placement. Information will be supplied at the time of placement, or for children previously unknown to the agency, within five working days. This information will be kept up-to-date and any facts affecting placements of children will be communicated immediately to Foster Carers.
5. That at the time, or prior to each placement, a written placement agreement will be drawn up in consultation with the Foster Carers, child, parents and agency which includes the length of placement, contact arrangements etc. Where a placement is made at short notice, the agreement must be completed within five working days of the start of the placement. This will be reviewed within four weeks of being looked after by the Local Authority and thereafter at intervals of not more than six months.

6. That the agency will provide Foster Carers with their own Supervising Social Worker (SSW) who will provide supervision, support and advice. If their SSW is not available, foster carers should contact the relevant Team Manager.
7. That foster carers are provided with insurance cover by the agency.
8. That carers will be made aware of, and have access to, the Department's Representation and Complaints procedures.
9. That a review of the Foster Carer(s) will take place within one year of approval and registration and thereafter every 12 months. The Foster Carer review will include the views of the child(ren)/young person(s) and will provide an opportunity for both the Foster Carer(s) and the agency to consider how each has helped to provide services for children in their care and what, if anything, needs to change in order to improve these services. The review will also consider if TSDS requirements are being met. A copy of the review report will be given to, and retained by, the foster carer.
10. That the Supervising Social Worker will, within a 12 month period, undertake four Supervisory Home Visits (including 1 unannounced) with the Foster Carer(s). Each visit will be recorded; a copy will be retained by the Foster Carer(s).
11. That information held by the agency in relation to Foster Carers is available to them and also to departmental staff and other professional agencies (eg Education, Health, Cafcass, Police) in connection with the placement of children.
12. That Foster Carers can expect to be kept fully informed of all facts affecting placements and expectations of the agency regarding the care of the child(ren)/young person(s) and the facilities, procedures and support available to them.
13. That, prior to a Foster Carer(s) approval the agency has undertaken to provide an appropriate preparation course. That following approval the agency will provide support groups and a range of mandatory and other training opportunities on a continuing basis in line with TSDS requirements. Mandatory training, other training courses will be made available via the agency's published foster carer training strategy.
14. That a Social Worker should be allocated for every child placed with carers and that any changes will be notified. That any child will be visited and seen in the foster home by a Social Worker within one week of placement and then at least six weekly during the first year of the placement. Thereafter, visits will be at no less than three monthly intervals. At other times, the child should be visited whenever a reasonable request is made, either by the child, Social Worker or Foster Carer.
15. That no placement will be terminated by the Foster Carer(s) or the agency without prior discussion or reasonable notice being given on either side, except in circumstances where safeguarding issues arise. That where a placement ends prematurely, a meeting will be called to review the implications for the child(ren), foster carer(s) and for the department.
16. That the agency will provide Foster Carers with procedures, guidance and advice on safeguarding.

17. That the agency will provide Foster Carers with procedures, guidance and advice on investigating complaints and allegations against foster carers.
18. That the agency will provide Foster Carers with procedures and guidance on children/young people looked after and missing from care.
19. That the agency will be open and honest in dealing with Foster Carers and provide them with all available information to enable a child's needs to be met.
20. That in an emergency, where the child's Social Worker cannot be contacted, the Team Manager or Fostering Team Manager should be contacted. For emergencies out of office hours, contact should be made with the Emergency Duty Team on 677 6557.
21. That this agreement may be terminated by either party giving 28 days' notice. If the agency terminates the agreement, Foster Carers may challenge this decision via the Representations or Complaints procedures.

# Wirral Fostering Service

## Foster Care Agreement

### Foster Care Regulations 2011: Schedule 5

I/We have read and understand this Foster Care Agreement, and will adhere to the conditions therein.

Foster Carer Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Registration Details: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Approval: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Foster Carer Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisors Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Tel: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(Two copies need to be signed by the parties, one to be kept by Foster Carer/s, and one returned to Wirral Fostering Services, to be kept on file).