

Wirral Fostering Service

Guidelines on Pornography for Foster Carers and Adopters

IT TAKES A BIG **HEART** TO FOSTER



Pornography is a subject on which many people have strong, but often opposing, views.

The Department follows the Council's policies of promoting equality and combating discrimination and is opposed to anything which will lead to people being viewed as objects or which will degrade them.

It is absolutely opposed to pornography which involves children or adults posing as children.

It is also opposed to the portrayal of human suffering or of animals or dead people in pornography.

Because it is not possible to arrive at a definition of pornography which is accepted by everyone and because it is available in a wide variety of settings, decisions about the consequences of Foster Carers and Adopters using or sharing pornography will need to be on a case by case basis.

The following guidelines are intended to be used by Fostering and Adoption panels and by Foster Carers and Adopters. Contravening these guidelines will not automatically involve deregistration or refusal to approve people as Foster Carers or Adopters but this will be an option available to the Panels.

1. Children should not be given pornography or have access to it or be present or in earshot when it is shown or used.
2. Older children might buy or use pornography. Provided it only portrays adults and does not otherwise contravene these guidelines, they can possess it for personal use. They should not share it with other children in any way. Carers should act as reasonable parents in deciding what a young person can view and should consider:
 - a. The age of the young person concerned.
 - b. The level of maturity and understanding of the young person.
 - c. The background of the young person, in particular any abuse they may have suffered.
 - d. The nature of the material.
 - e. The extent to which other children in the placement may need to be protected.
3. If a Carer finds pornography unacceptable in any form, they have the right to ban it from their household following discussion with the Supervising Social Worker and the child's Social Worker.
4. Council provided computers cannot be used by adults or children to view or download pornography.
5. If Carers access or have pornography on their personally owned computer for private use, they cannot allow children to see it or view it being downloaded. Every effort should be made to ensure children are not present or aware that it is being used for personal purposes.
6. Carers should not be directly involved in the sale or distribution of pornography, to friends or the general public, which they have downloaded or produced themselves. It is accepted that some Carers may have jobs, such as working in a newsagents, which will involve them in the sale of "soft" pornography. This should be acceptable to Fostering and Adoption Panels when considering complaints, but they will need to take all the circumstances into account.