BIRMINGHAM ADOPTION AND FOSTERING SERVICE’S COMMITMENT TO FOSTER CARERS

“The role of the Birmingham City Foster Carer is essential to ensuring that the needs of some of our most vulnerable children in our City are met. Your role deserves to be recognised and supported and this Foster Carer Charter is designed with this in mind.

The aim of this Charter is to bring together the responsibilities of staff and foster carers into one clear document so all can be sure about what is expected of us. The best foster care families can change lives and we want to be able to support you to achieve this. It is essential that foster carers remain at the heart of our arrangements for looked after children and that they feel involved, supported and consulted within this process.

Our intention is that this Charter will assist us with the task of developing and sustaining an excellent working relationship together, so that children and young people in foster care can feel safe and thrive. You will continue to seek to achieve the very best possible outcomes for children and young people and we will continue to strive to meet the expectations placed on us to deliver high quality support and supervision services to you.”

Katie Harris
Assistant Director
Directorate for People

What Foster Carers Can Expect From the Service

1. Partnership working

   We recognise that foster carers are core members of the team around the child (TAC) and that the influence of the child’s relationship with the foster family can make the biggest difference to the child’s life, enduring into adulthood.

   We will:

   • value your skills and expertise equally to those of other professionals.
   • include you in relevant meetings that affect you and the children for whom you care.
   • work to ensure there is continuity wherever possible in the link workers supporting you.

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• continue to work with BFCA to develop services offered by and to foster carers and improve outcomes for children.
• facilitate and assist the production of life story work.

2. Information

We know that information is vital for foster carers to provide the best possible care.

We will:

• provide all information at the earliest possible opportunity and within agreed timescales.
• keep you fully informed and listen attentively to your input while respecting confidentiality.
• provide you with details of all relevant departmental policies and procedures.

3. Clarity about decisions

We acknowledge that in order for children to live a full family life foster carers must be able to make decisions regarding each child they foster, within the limits of the child placement plan.

We will:

• provide a clear statement of the extent to which you may make everyday decisions in the delegated authority document attached to the child’s placement plan.
• ensure that you are provided with a full delegated authority document as quickly as possible after each child is placed.
• explain any limitations in respect of a specific child at a particular time.

4. Support and Fair Treatment

Fostering is a complex task and appropriate timely support can make all the difference to the fostering family and to the child in your care. The Adoption and Fostering Service upholds the right for foster carers to be treated fairly in all circumstances.

We will:

• consult with you before changing your terms and conditions of approval to foster.
• be positive and respectful about those with whom we work.
• provide you with regular, sensitive and honest supervision.
• respond to calls, concerns and complaints quickly and with understanding.
• ensure you’re kept informed and provided with support if subject to an allegation.

5. Learning and Development

We believe that foster carers must be enabled to access learning and development opportunities in order that they can help transform the lives of the children they foster.

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We will:

• provide you with appropriate and relevant training by qualified trainers.
• recruit, approve and train foster carers and help them develop their skills and career.

Foster carer’s commitment and what the Adoption and Fostering Service and children can expect from us:

1. Partnership working

We will demonstrate a high standard of care and conduct.

We will:

• attend meetings, providing updates and/or written reports on the child’s progress.
• work with the agencies involved with the child such as school, health and religious.
• show a willingness to work with birth parents, wider family and significant people.
• meet the standards in fostering regulations and follow departmental policies.
• respect confidentiality and others working in the team around the child.

2. Information

We believe that open and honest dialogue is the key to a good relationship.

We will:

• inform our supervising social worker about changes or difficulties in our household.
• inform the social worker about any incidents, problems, accidents or difficulties.
• follow policies and procedures and complete forms as required.

3. Fair treatment

Every child and young person should be respected as an individual and be supported in meeting their needs and achieving their aspirations and potential.

We will:

• provide children with a positive experience of family life.
• respect and promote a child’s religious, linguistic and cultural heritage.

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• give at least the level of protection and care to a child as we would our own child in accordance with the national minimum standards.
• ensure the child has the right to make decisions regarding their own lives, as appropriate to their age and understanding.
• assist and facilitate the production of life story work.

4. Learning and Development

We must be enabled to access learning and development opportunities throughout our fostering career. This will ensure we have the skills and knowledge we need, and allow us to develop our practice so that we can help transform the lives of the children we foster.

We will:

• provide evidence of continued training, learning and development.
• be prepared to develop our skills throughout our fostering career.
• attend and contribute to support groups.

Janet Denny
Head of Service
The Adoption and Fostering Service
Birmingham City Council

Delores Collett
Chairperson - Birmingham Foster Care Association

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