



## Foster Care Charter

### The Fostering Service's role

Chrysalis Care aims to provide stable and Outstanding foster care for children who are valued, supported and encouraged to grow and develop as individuals. To achieve this aim, we recruit, train and approve foster carers and deliver ongoing support to them.

We want our working relationship to be based on mutual trust and respect. We also want to make it as easy as we can for you to provide a safe, caring, nurturing environment for some of the most vulnerable children in our society.

This charter is based on the Government's version, produced in consultation with foster carers and documents our promise to you that we will recognise you as a professional in your field.

This charter explains what you can expect from us and what we expect from you.

### More information

The Fostering National Minimum Standards and Regulations 2011 and Statutory Guidance sit alongside the Charter. They provide the detail on many of the topics set out in the charter and cover the fostering services regulatory duties.

The Charter should be read alongside the Foster Care Agreement, a legal requirement as specified by the Regulations which covers responsibilities, requirements and expectations between the fostering service and foster carer.

You will be given written information about the National Minimum Standards, as well as the opportunity to attend workshops about them in the near future.



## Your rights

### What you can expect from us:

1. Recognition and representation
2. Enable you to make decisions
3. Information
4. Support
5. Learning and development
6. Fair treatment during allegations
7. Communication and consultation



## Your rights

### What you can expect from us:

1. Recognition and representation

We recognise that foster carers have skills and expertise and make the biggest difference to the everyday lives of children in care.

#### For example, we will:

- Value your skills and expertise equally to those of other professionals
- Recognise that you are the people who live with children every day and know them best
- Consult with you on all matters that affect you
- Include you in all meetings that affect you and the children you care for
- Ensure we work to relevant regulations and practice instructions
- Treat you without discrimination and respect you as a colleague

## 2. Making decisions

We recognise that in order for children to live a full family life foster carers must be able to make decisions regarding the children they foster.

### **For example, we will:**

- Ensure that you know the everyday decisions you can make to ensure that your fostered child is not treated differently to their peers and can feel part of your family

## 3. Information

Having information is vital in order for foster carers to provide care that meet the child's need.

### **For example, we will:**

- Ensure that there are placement agreement meetings in advance of placements (except in emergencies) which provide you with honest, clear and accurate information about the child to enable appropriate safe care for that child and other in your home
- Provide you with information about departmental policies and procedures

## 4. Support

We recognise that fostering is a challenging task and good support makes all the difference to the fostering family and also the child in your care.

### **For example, we will:**

- Provide you with monthly supervision and weekly phone contact
- Give you honest and open feedback
- Provide you with access to 24 hour supervision from people with fostering expertise
- Pay you any allowances, expenses and fees in a timely manner
- Pay fees that equate to a living wage
- Find ways to help foster carers come together for mutual support

## 5. Learning and development

We believe that foster carers must be enabled to access learning and development opportunities throughout their fostering career. This will ensure they have the skills and knowledge they need, and allow them to develop their practice in order that they can help transform the lives of the children they foster.

### **For example, we will:**

- Review your training needs with you
- Provide you and your family with appropriate and relevant training delivered by trainers who understand the fostering task
- Provide you with other development opportunities which make the best use of your skills and expertise such as mentoring or providing training or support
- Ensure that training is arranged at times that suit you

## 6. Fair treatment

Every way we deal with you we will have processes that are open and fair. We recognise that like other child care professionals, foster carers are open to the possibility of allegations being made against them.

### **For example, we will:**

- Ensure that you are treated with respect, kept informed and provided with emotional support while suspended from the fostering task
- Provide a framework for dealing with allegations and adhere to times.

## 7. Communication and consultation

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

### **For example, we will:**

- Facilitate regular communication between you and Senior Management Staff and Children's Services
- Ensure that foster carers are represented on the corporate parenting board.
- Ensure that we consult with you on matters that affect you in good time
- Give you feedback from consultations
- Provide you with information on all financial matters including tax, allowances and additional entitlements

## Your obligations

### What we can expect from you:

1. Working partnership
2. Learning and development
3. Respect the child
4. Information



## Your obligations

### What we can expect from you:

#### 1. Working in partnership

We recognise you as equal in status to all staff. Our expectation is that you will demonstrate the same commitment to high standards of care and conduct which is required of all our staff.

#### We expect you to:

- Attend meetings about children and young people you care for
- Work with the agencies involved with the child such as school, health and religious establishments
- Show a willingness to work with birth parents, wider family and people significant in a child's life
- Follow departmental policies and procedures
- Respect confidentiality

## 2. Learning and development

We believe that foster carers must be enabled to access learning and development opportunities throughout their fostering career. This will ensure you have the skills and knowledge they need, and allow you to develop your practice in order that you can help transform the lives of the children you foster.

### **We expect you to:**

- Be prepared to develop your skills throughout your fostering career
- Attend training on time
- Let us know if you are unable to attend
- Take up opportunities offered to you
- Attend support groups regularly

## 3. Respect the Child

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

### **We expect you to:**

- Respect and promote a child's religious, linguistic and cultural heritage
- Care for any child placed with you as if he or she were a member of your family
- Ensure the child in your care has the right to make decisions regarding their own lives, as appropriate to their age and understanding

## 4. Information

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

### **We expect you to:**

- Inform your supervising social worker about the changes in your household
- Inform your supervising social worker about any difficulties that arise for you

# The Foster Carer's Charter

## Children come first

- ✓ Children in foster care deserve to experience as full a family life as possible, as part of a loving foster family, with carers who can make everyday decisions as they would their own child and without the child feeling that they 'stand out' as a child in care.
- ✓ Children must be given every support to develop their own identities and aspirations, fulfil their potential, and take advantage of all opportunities to promote their talents and skills. Above all, they should be listened to.

## Local authorities and Chrysalis Care should

- ✓ Recognise in practice the importance of the child's relationship with his or her foster family as one that can make the biggest difference in child's life and which can endure into adulthood.
- ✓ Listen to, involve foster carers and their foster children in decision-making and planning, and provide foster carers and their foster children with full information about each other.
- ✓ In making placements be clear about the continuing care or support there will be (including for the child into adulthood), be sensitive to the needs of the foster carer and the child in making and ending placements and have contingency plans should the placement not work.
- ✓ Treat foster carers with openness, fairness and respect as a core member of the team around the child and support them in making reasonable and appropriate decisions on behalf of their foster child.
- ✓ Ensure that foster carers have the support services and development opportunities they need in order to provide their foster child with the best possible care. That includes liaising with local foster carers groups and seeking to respond to problems and disseminate best practice.
- ✓ Make sure foster carers are recompensed on time and are given clear information about any support, allowances, fees, and holidays they will receive including in cases of dispute with the service or during gaps in placements.

**Foster carers should**

- ✓ Provide positive adult role models, treat the foster child as they would their own child, and be a “pushy parent” in advocating for all aspects of the child’s development, including educational attainment and physical and emotional health and wellbeing and co-operate fully as part of a team with other key professionals in the child’s life.
  
- ✓ Support their foster child and do all they can to make the placement work.
  
- ✓ Take part in learning and development, use skills and approaches that make a positive impact and enable the child to reach his or her potential. Support their foster child to help them to counter possible bullying and discrimination as a result of their care status.
  
- ✓ Encourage and support children and young people to develop and maintain positive relationships and that this is reflected in the foster carer’s respect for the child/ren and young person/s and especially in relation to their privacy and reasonable confidentiality.
  
- ✓ Develop skills in managing behaviour that is based in an ethos of acknowledging antecedents and previous experiences and that this is grounded in a commitment to developing positive and respectful relationships and also in the foster carer managing and addressing their own needs and feelings in their work with children and young people.

**In signing this Charter, Chrysalis Care and foster carer/s agree to reflect the spirit and intentions of the Charter in their actions**

- **Chrysalis Care**  
**[Contact details for person responsible for implementing the aims of the Charter]**

**Signed:** .....

**Date:**.....

- **Foster carer/s**

**Signed:** .....

**Date:**.....

