



Fostering for the future!

The Foster Carer's Charter



Putting it into practice

Roles and commitment

Acorn House's role

Acorn House Fostering aims to provide stable and first rate 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.

Foster Carer's role

Foster carers are at the heart of the foster care service at Acorn House Fostering. We are assessed, trained and supported to look after children and young people in a family environment. We provide them with stability, care and an opportunity to grow and develop, to reach their potential and achieve positive outcomes. Our working relationships are based on mutual trust and respect.

This charter explains what we expect from each other.

Acorn House's commitment

You can expect from us:

1. Working in partnership as part of a team
2. Information
3. Clarity about decisions
4. Support
5. Learning and development
6. Fair treatment
7. Communication and consultation

Foster carers' commitment

You can expect from us:

1. Working in partnership as part of a team
2. Respect for the child
3. Information
4. To fully engage in personal development and training
5. Communication and consultation
6. Commitment

What foster carers can expect from Acorn House



1. Working in partnership

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

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
- include you in all meetings that affect you and the children you care for
- ensure that Acorn House will meet the standards set out in fostering regulations and guidance
- treat you without discrimination and respect you as a colleague
- respect confidentiality.

3. Clarity about 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.

We will:

- ensure that, wherever possible, you are able to make everyday decisions that mean that your fostered child is not treated differently to their peers and can feel part of your family
- provide you with regular supervision and phone contact.

2. Information

We know that information is vital in order for foster carers to provide care that meets the child's need.

We will:

- give you all the information you need in order to care safely for the child
- provide this information in writing prior to placement (except when there are emergency placements and it is not feasible to do so, when we will provide this information as soon as possible)
- ensure that there is a placement plan drawn up in discussion with you and agreed with you in advance of placements (except in emergencies where this will be done as soon as possible)
- provide you with information on all financial matters including tax, allowances and additional entitlements
- provide you with full details of all relevant policies and procedures.

4. Support

We recognise that fostering is an isolating and challenging task and appropriate and timely support makes all the difference to the fostering family and to the child in your care.

We will:

- respond positively to requests for additional support
- provide you with regular supervision and phone contact
- give you honest and open feedback
- provide you with access to 24-hour support from people with fostering expertise
- pay you allowances, expenses and fees in a timely manner
- pay fees that reflect the task
- ensure that there is a local group, recognised by the fostering service, where you and your family can find support and share experiences with other fostering families.

What foster carers can expect from Acorn House



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.

We will:

- provide you and your family with appropriate and relevant training 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.

7. Communication and consultation

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

We will:

- facilitate regular communication between you, your Supervising Social Worker and their Manager and the Directors
- ensure that we consult with you in a meaningful way on matters that affect you
- give you timely feedback from consultations
- ensure that all parties are confident that policies, procedures and practices are based on current research and best practice standards and that all parties are committed to adhering to them.

6. Fair treatment

We recognise that foster carers have a right to be treated fairly, no matter what the circumstances.

We will:

- consult with you before changing terms and conditions
- ensure openness in all of our discussions and communications with you
- ensure that you are treated with respect, kept informed and provided with support should you be subject to an allegation
- provide a framework for dealing with allegations and adhere to our agreed timescales
- ensure that you know the arrangements for the payment of fees and allowances in the event that you are not able to foster while the subject of an allegation.

NOTES

What Acorn House can expect from foster carers



1. Working in partnership

We will demonstrate a high standard of care and conduct.

We will:

- demonstrate our expertise and make use of our skills to the best of our ability
- provide children with an experience of family life
- attend meetings about the children and young people we 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
- meet the standards set out in fostering regulations and guidance and follow policies and procedures
- respect confidentiality.

3. Information

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

We will:

- inform our supervising social worker about changes in our household
- inform our supervising social worker about any difficulties that arise for us
- provide written records in a timely manner in accordance with Acorn House policies and procedures
- report any accidents and incidents within 24 hours

2. Respect for the child

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:

- respect and promote a child's religious, linguistic and cultural heritage
- afford the same 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.
- encourage and support the young person to maintain their cultural identity and connection with family and community

4. To fully engage in personal development and training

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 in order that we can help transform the lives of the children we foster.

We will:

- be prepared to develop our skills throughout our fostering career
- attend relevant training
- take up opportunities offered to us
- let you know if we are unable to attend
- attend and contribute to support groups.

What Acorn House can expect from foster carers



5. Communication and consultation

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

We will:

- respond to local consultations and discussion in order to inform the development of the service
- meet with supervising social workers, managers and others in order to promote dialogue and a good working relationship.
- seek support when needed, including networking with other carers.

6. Commitment

We believe that commitment from all parties is key to a successful partnership.

We are committed to:

- ensuring that we work to promote positive outcomes for the young people we care for
- relationships based on a shared understanding of, and the need to always focus on, the needs of the young people we care for
- encouraging and supporting the young person to participate in recreational and community activities
- assisting the young person to access an advocate for resources, goods and services required to meet their immediate needs and to ensure that their full potential is reached
- implementing protective behaviours within the home

NOTES



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Putting it into practice

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