



RUTLAND
FOSTER CARE



Rutland Fostering Service

Carers' Charter – Putting the charter into
practice

2018 - 2019

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Rutland
County Council

Foreword

In March 2011, the Fostering Network welcomed the Government's Foster Carers' Charter. Fostering Network has long campaigned that Carers should be regarded as full members of the team working with a child. Therefore a Charter that is agreed by the Fostering Service and Carers will help to make this a reality. As a Local Authority, we fully support this Charter.

This **Carers' Charter - Putting the Charter into Practice** is the result of consultations and how we want to ensure our Carers are valued and supported. We believe this Charter will embed the Governments' Charter into our practice, so that our Carers get the recognition they deserve and are able to provide children and young people with the best possible care.

We have some excellent Carers in Rutland; they are committed, dedicated and are highly valued. We want to ensure our corporate parenting duties are upheld and continue to ask ourselves '*would this be good enough for my child, my family*'.

We want to ensure children and young people have access to the best possible placements, therefore we feel this Charter further supports the work of the Council in supporting, developing and retaining Carers.

I would like to thank you, our Carers, for this ongoing dedication and commitment to our children and young people.



Helen Briggs
Chief Executive – Rutland County Council
May 2018

As the Lead Member for Children's Social Care and Director for Children's Services, we fully support this Charter; we believe Carers are highly valued and we need to ensure the Charter is fully embedded and adhered to. We are signing to show our support and commitment to the Charter and will ensure this is upheld.

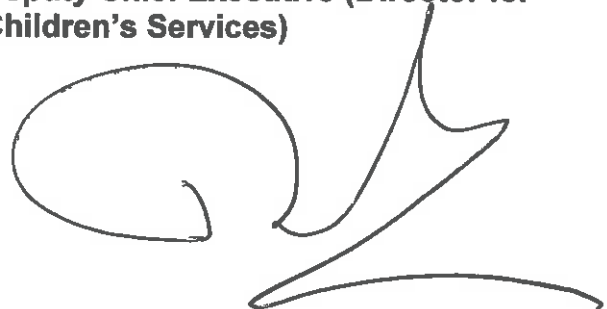
SIGN

**Councillor Richard Foster – Lead
Member for Children's Social Care**



SIGN

**Dr Tim O'Neill – Director for People and
Deputy Chief Executive (Director for
Children's Services)**



Roles and Commitment

The Fostering Service's Role

The fostering service aims to provide stable and high quality care for children and young people to ensure they feel valued, supported and encouraged to grow and develop as individuals. To achieve this aim, we recruit, train and approve carers and deliver ongoing support to them.

The Carer's Role

Carers are the heart of the foster care service. They are assessed, trained and supported to look after children and young people in a family environment, providing them with stability, care and an opportunity to grow and develop and to reach their potential.

Our Vision for Children and Young People in Rutland...

*Children and young people in Rutland will have access to the **right support at the right time** and this will be delivered in the right way, so that all Children and Young People in Rutland achieve their potential. More specifically for Children Looked After we will ALWAYS ask ourselves **'would this be good enough for my child'***

Our working relationships are based on mutual trust and respect. This charter explains what we expect from each other.

Fostering service's commitment

You can expect from us:

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

Carers' commitment

You can expect from us:

1. Working in partnership
2. Respect for the child
3. Information
4. Learning, development and support
5. Communication and consultation.

What carers can expect from the fostering service

1. Working in partnership

We recognise that carers have skills and expertise and make the biggest difference to the everyday lives of children and young people looked after by Rutland County Council.

We will:

- value your skills and expertise equally to those of other professionals
- recognise that you are the people who live with children and young people every day and know them best
- include you in all meetings that affect you and the children and young people you care for
- ensure that our fostering service will meet the standards set out in fostering regulations and guidance
- treat you without discrimination and respect you as a colleague
- respect confidentiality.

2. Information

We know that information is vital in order for 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 departmental policies and procedures

3. Clarity about decisions

We recognise that in order for children and young people to live a full family life, carers must be able to make decisions regarding the children and young people they care for.

We will:

- ensure that, wherever possible, you are able to make everyday decisions that mean that the child or young person you care for is not treated differently to their peers and can feel part of your family
- provide clarity about any decision you cannot take at the outset so that everyone understands who is responsible for what.

4. Support

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

We will:

- respond positively to requests for additional support
- provide you with monthly supervision and regular contact as needed
- give you honest and open feedback
- provide you with access to 24-hour support from people with fostering expertise. An out of hours service will be delivered by our Emergency Duty Team
- 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 caring families.

5. Learning and development

We believe that carers must be enabled to access learning and development opportunities throughout their caring 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 and young people they care for.

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 and providing training or support

6. Fair treatment

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

We will:

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

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, councillors and the Director of Children's Services
- ensure that we consult with you in a meaningful way on matters that affect you
- give you timely feedback from consultations

What the foster service can expect from 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 and young people with a safe and nurturing experience of family life
- attend meetings about the children and young people we care for work with the agencies involved with the child or young person, 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 departmental policies and procedures
- respect confidentiality.

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 and young person has the right opportunity to make decisions regarding their own lives, as appropriate to their age and understanding.

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.

4. Learning, development and support

We must be enabled to access learning and development opportunities throughout our caring 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 and young people we care for.

We will:

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

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 councillors, service managers and others in order to promote dialogue and a good working relationship.



Please sign below to demonstrate your commitment to working within the scope of this charter.

Carers

Name	Signature	Date
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Name	Signature	Date
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Team Manager

Name	Signature	Date
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Supervising Social Worker

Name	Signature	Date
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