

Foster Care Agreement

The Fostering Services Regulations 2011 Regulation 27 (5) (b) Schedule 5. Standard 14

		Carer Reference Number	
Foster Carer(s):			
Address:			
		Tel. No.:	
Main Language Spoken:			
Date of Approval:		Panel:	
Approved for:			

1. Hampshire County Council values and respects foster carers. This agreement sets out the expectations of both the Council in its role as Fostering Agency, and those of foster carers approved by this agency.

These responsibilities are underpinned by The Fostering Regulations 2011 and the National Minimum Standards. Foster carers are asked to read and sign this agreement in conjunction with the attached Standards.

This agreement should be reviewed on an annual basis as part of the Household Review process.

2. **The Authority's responsibilities to Foster Carers**

- i. Provide a minimum of six weekly supervision.
- ii. Undertake an unannounced visit at least once a year (National Minimum Standard 21.8).
- iii. Provide additional support through contact by telephone or visit as appropriate.
- iv. Appropriate out of hours support will be available and easily accessible to foster carers.
- v. Facilitate support groups across the county for carers.
- vi.

- Provide an opportunity for carers' children to express their views and experiences of fostering to a Family Placement Social Worker a minimum of four times a year.
- vii. Provide a training pathway and a personal development plan for each approved carer and to keep carers up to date with information relevant to their role (National Minimum Standard 20.5).
 - viii. Foster carers are properly recompensed for loss or damage to their property as a result of caring for a child looked after.
 - ix. Foster carers are covered for any civil legal liability as a result of fostering, as if they were employees of the department.
 - x. Foster carers and their children are covered for injury arising as a result of fostering, as if they were employees of the Department.
 - xi. Foster carers are aware of the Department's representation and complaints procedure and the procedure for investigating complaints against foster carers.
 - xii. Foster carers are sent each year a list of fostering allowances, and receive allowances appropriate to the age of the child. These allowances will be paid promptly.
 - xiii. Foster carers are loaned equipment necessary for the needs of the child.
 - xiv. Be open and honest when working in partnership with foster carers.
 - xv. Foster carers will be able to access all known information and the County Council will ensure that they are informed of all plans for the child.
 - xvi. Provide, via email, regular updates deemed relevant by the Fostering Service to support foster carers with training and information, in line with regulation 17 of the Fostering Services (England) Regulation 2011 and in accordance the Foster Carers' Privacy Notice.

3. Foster Carer's responsibilities to Hampshire County Council Children's Services Department

- i. a. Foster carers will include looked after children fully in the family.

- b. Work with all professionals involved and comply with a child's care plan.
 - c. Promote safeguarding at all times.
 - ii. Give written notice (by letter or e-mail) to the Department immediately, with full particulars of:
 - a. any intended change of address.
 - b. any change in the composition of the household.
 - any other change in their personal circumstances and any other event affecting either their capacity to care for any child placed or the suitability of the household. Regulation 27 (5)(b) as reflected in Schedule 5.2
 - iii. Notify the Department if they, or a member of their household, intend to or have applied to:
 - a. Foster
 - b. Adopt
 - c. Register as a childminder
 - d. Offer day care or private fostering to a child
 - e. Provide overnight support to children formerly in their care.
 - iv. Agree not to use any physical punishment (including smacking, shaking, holding roughly, physically restraining, pushing, pulling, or any other physical contact which causes, or could be interpreted as, causing distress). In addition, will not withhold pocket money, deprive a child of food, or restrict contact with relatives, as a form of discipline (Regulation 13).
 - v. Will always encourage children's self esteem and self worth through their actions and behaviours.
 - vi. Will keep confidential, any information in whatever media format, relating to a child placed with them, to the child's family or to any other person, and not disclose to any person without the written consent of the Department.
 - vii. Agree not to publish (including via social media), any information or images about a foster child or his / her birth family without the written permission of the Children's Services Department.
 - viii. Work in partnership with the child's parents and any other significant adults in the child's life according to the care plan.
 - ix. Comply with the policies and procedures of Hampshire's Fostering Service issued under regulations 12 and 13 of the Fostering Regulations 2011 and keep the Department informed of any changes.

- x. Notify the Department immediately of any significant events affecting the child. This includes disclosure/concern raised by child or other, injury, young person missing, hospital admission and those notifiable events under Regulation 36(1) Schedule 7 of the Fostering Regulations 2011.
- xi. Allow the child to be removed by the Department when the Department's decision is that the child's welfare is no longer being met.
- xii. Comply with the Fostering Service National Minimum Standards in the provision of care for the child in placement (attached).
- xiii. Co-operate as reasonably required with officers from Ofsted in any interview or visit to your home, at any reasonable time, as part of the inspection of fostering services.
- xiv. Check allowances received are in line with the schedule of foster care allowances. If there is a discrepancy, inform your Family Placement social worker. In the event of an overpayment of fostering allowances, refund to the Local Authority any overpayments of fostering allowances.
- xv. Inform HMRC of self-employment status following approval as a foster carer and submit annual tax returns.
- xvi. Ensure household insurance policy covers the fostering role and that your insurance provider is informed of your fostering registration. Contact your household insurance in the first instance regarding any claims against damage or loss.
- xvii. Complete all essential courses and the Training, Support and Development Standards (TSDS) within 12 months of approval, 18 months for Short Breaks and Connected Persons carers (National Minimum Standard 20.3).
- xviii. Develop a personal development plan with your Family Placement Social Worker and actively engage in your own learning and development.
- xiv. Be open and honest when working in partnership with staff from Hampshire Children's Services and other agencies.
- xv. Keep accurate (and daily) records of the behaviours of any foster children in their care and use this as part of their own development and also the child's.

4. Review Procedure

A review of your approval will be held a minimum of every 12 months.

An additional review may be needed following a change of circumstances in your household.

A review of your approval may be needed on investigation of allegations or complaints against you as a carer.

As part of the review process any Skills Fee Award received will also be assessed against the Skills Fee criteria and reviewed annually or prior to the annual review if any of the circumstances set out in the Skills Levels criteria are triggered.

I / We the undersigned have read and understood this Foster Care Agreement and accepts its contents.

Signed:	(Foster Carer) Date: / /
	(Foster Carer) Date: / /
	(Representative of Department) Date: / /

REGULATIONS 12 AND 13

ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN

- 12 (1) The Fostering Service provider shall prepare and implement a written policy which:
- (a) is intended to safeguard children placed with foster parents from abuse or neglect: and
 - (b) sets out the procedure to be followed in the event of any allegation of abuse or neglect.
- (2) The procedure under paragraph (1) (b) shall, subject to paragraph (3), provide in particular for:
- (a) liaison and co-operation with any local authority which is, or may be, making child protection enquiries in relation to any child placed by the fostering service provider;
 - (b) the prompt referral to the area authority of any allegation of abuse or neglect affecting any child placed by the fostering service provider;

- (c) notification of the instigation and outcome of any child protection enquiries involving a child placed by the fostering service provider, to the Commission;
- (d) written record to be kept of any allegation of abuse or neglect, and of the action taken in response;
- (e) consideration to be given to the measures which may be necessary to protect children placed with fostering parents following an allegation of abuse or neglect; and
- (f) arrangements to be made for persons working for the purposes of a fostering service, foster parents and children placed by the fostering service, to have access to information which would enable them to contact:
 - (i) the area authority; and
 - (ii) the Commission,

Regarding any concern about the child welfare or safety.

- (3) Sub-paragraphs (a), (c) and (f) (i) of paragraph (2) do not apply to a local authority fostering service.
- (4) In this regulation “child protection enquires” means any enquires carried out by a local authority in the exercise of any of its functions conferred by or under the 1989 Act relating to the protection of children.

BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT AND ABSENCE FROM FOSTER PARENT’S HOME

- 13. (1) The Fostering Service provider shall prepare and implement a written policy on acceptable measures of control, restraint and discipline of children placed with foster parents.
- (2) The Fostering Service provider shall take all reasonable steps to ensure that:
 - (a) no child placed with foster parents is subject to any measure of control, restraint or discipline which is excessive or unreasonable; and
 - (c) physical restraint is used on a child only where it is necessary to prevent likely injury to the child or other persons or likely serious damage to property.
- (3) The Fostering Service provider shall prepare and implement a written procedure to be followed if a child is absent from a foster parent’s home without permission.

National Minimum Standards 2011 – Fostering Services

STANDARD 1 - The child's wishes and feelings and the views of those significant to them

Underpinning Legislation

Regulations:

- **11 - Independent fostering agencies - duty to secure welfare**
- **18 - Independent fostering agencies - representations and complaints**

Children Act 1989:

- **Section 22 - General duties of local authority in relation to children looked after by them**
- **Section 61** and **Section 62** - duties of voluntary organisations and local authorities in relation to children accommodated by or on behalf of the voluntary organisation

Outcome

- Children know that their views, wishes and feelings are taken into account in all aspects of their care; are helped to understand why it may not be possible to act upon their wishes in all cases; and know how to obtain support and make a complaint.
- The views of others with an important relationship to the child are gathered and taken into account.

- 1.1 Children's views, wishes and feelings are acted upon, unless this is contrary to their interests or adversely affects other members of the foster care household.
- 1.2 Children understand how their views have been taken into account and where significant wishes or concerns are not acted upon, they are helped to understand why.

- 1.3 Children communicate their views on all aspects of their care and support.
- 1.4 The views of the child, the child's family, social worker and **Independent Reviewing Officer** are sought regularly on the child's care (unless in individual cases this is not appropriate).
- 1.5 Children have access to independent advice and support from adults who they can contact directly and in private about problems or concerns, which is appropriate to their age and understanding. Children know their rights to advocacy, how to access an advocate and how to contact the **Children's Rights Director**.
- 1.6 Children can take up issues in the most appropriate way with support, without fear that this will result in any adverse consequences. Children receive prompt feedback on any concerns or complaints raised and are kept informed of progress.
- 1.7 The wishes, feelings and views of children and those significant to them are taken into account in monitoring foster carers and developing the fostering service.

STANDARD 2 - Promoting a positive identity, potential and valuing diversity through individualised care

Underpinning Legislation

Regulations:

11 - Independent fostering agencies - duty to secure welfare

Children Act 1989:

Section 22 - General duties of local authority in relation to children looked after by them

- **Section 61** and **Section 62** - duties of voluntary organisations and local authorities in relation to children accommodated by or on behalf of the voluntary organisation

Outcome

- Children have a positive self view, emotional resilience and knowledge and understanding of their background.

- 2.1 Children are provided with personalised care that meets their needs and promotes all aspects of their individual identity.
- 2.2 Foster carers are supported to promote children's social and emotional development, and to enable children to develop emotional resilience and positive self-esteem.
- 2.3 Foster carers meet children's individual needs as set out in the child's placement plan as part of the wider family context.

- 2.4 Children exercise choice in the food that they eat, and are able to prepare their own meals and snacks, within the context of the foster family's decision making and the limits that a responsible parent would set.
- 2.5 Children exercise choice and independence in the clothes and personal requisites that they buy and have these needs met, within the context of the foster family's decision making and the reasonable limits that a responsible parent would set. **This sub-standard is not applicable to short break placements.**
- 2.6 Children develop skills and emotional resilience that will prepare them for independent living.
- 2.7 Children receive a personal allowance appropriate to their age and understanding, that is consistent with their placement plan. This sub-standard is not applicable to short break placements.

STANDARD 3 - Promoting positive behaviour and relationships

Underpinning Legislation

Regulations:

- **11 - Independent fostering agencies - duty to secure welfare**
- **13 - Behaviour management and absence from the foster parent's home**
- **17 - Foster parent to be provided with up to date information about the child including the child's care plan**

Children Act 1989:

- **Section 22 - General duties of local authority in relation to children looked after by them**
- **Section 61** and **Section 62** - duties of voluntary organisations and local authorities in relation to children accommodated by or on behalf of the voluntary organisation

Outcome

- Children enjoy sound relationships with their foster family, interact positively with others and behave appropriately.

- 3.1 Foster carers have high expectations of all of the foster children in their household.
- 3.2 Foster carers provide an environment and culture that promotes, models and supports positive behaviour.
- 3.3 Children are able to develop and practice skills to build and maintain positive relationships, be assertive and to resolve conflicts positively.
- 3.4 Children are encouraged to take responsibility for their behaviour in a way that is appropriate to their age and abilities.
- 3.5 Foster carers respect the child's privacy and confidentiality, in a manner that is consistent with good parenting.
- 3.6 Foster carers have positive strategies for effectively supporting children where they encounter discrimination or bullying wherever this occurs.
- 3.7 Foster carers receive support on how to manage their responses and feelings arising from caring for children, particularly where children display very challenging behaviour, and understand how children's previous experiences can manifest in challenging behaviour.
- 3.8 All foster carers receive training in positive care and control of children, including training in de-escalating problems and disputes. The fostering service has a clear written policy on managing behaviour, which includes supporting positive behaviour, de-escalation of conflicts and discipline. The fostering service's policy is made clear to the responsible authority/placing authority, child and parent/s or carers before the placement begins or, in an emergency placement, at the time of the placement.
- 3.9 Each foster carer is aware of all the necessary information available to the fostering service about a child's circumstances, including any significant recent events, to help the foster carer understand and predict the child's needs and behaviours and support the child within their household. The fostering service follows up with the responsible authority where all such necessary information has not been provided by the authority.
- 3.10 The fostering service's approach to care minimises the need for police involvement to deal with challenging behaviour and avoids criminalising children unnecessarily.

STANDARD 4 - Safeguarding Children

Underpinning Legislation

Regulations:

- **11 - Independent fostering agencies - duty to secure welfare**
- **12 - Arrangements for the protection of children**
- **Hampshire County Council's - Safeguarding Policy**

Outcome

- Children feel safe and are safe. Children understand how to protect themselves and are protected from significant harm, including neglect, abuse, and accident.
- 4.1 Children's safety and welfare is promoted in all fostering placements. Children are protected from abuse and other forms of significant harm (e.g. sexual or labour exploitation).
 - 4.2 Foster carers actively safeguard and promote the welfare of foster children.
 - 4.3 Foster carers make positive relationships with children, generate a culture of openness and trust and are aware of and alert to any signs or symptoms that might indicate a child is at risk of harm.
 - 4.4 Foster carers encourage children to take appropriate risks as a normal part of growing up. Children are helped to understand how to keep themselves safe, including when outside of the household or when using the internet or social media.

- 4.5 The service implements a proportionate approach to any risk assessment
- 4.6 Foster carers are trained in appropriate safer-care practice, including skills to care for children who have been abused. For foster carers who offer placements to disabled children, this includes training specifically on issues affecting disabled children.
- 4.7 The fostering service works effectively in partnership with other agencies concerned with child protection, e.g. the responsible authority, schools, hospitals, general practitioners, etc., and does not work in isolation from them.

STANDARD 5 - Children Missing from Care

Underpinning Legislation

Regulations:

- **13 - Behaviour management and absence from the foster parent's home**
- **Hampshire County Council's – Missing from care policy**

Outcome

- Children rarely go missing and if they do, they return quickly.
- Children who do go missing are protected as far as possible and responded to positively on their return.

- 5.1 The care and support provided to children, minimises the risk that they will go missing and reduces the risk of harm should the child go missing.
- 5.2 Foster carers know and implement what the fostering service and the responsible authority's policy is in relation to children going missing.
- 5.3 Foster carers are aware of, and do not exceed, the measures they can take to prevent a child

leaving without permission under current legislation and Government guidance.

- 5.4 Children who are absent from the foster home without consent, but whose whereabouts are known or thought to be known by carers or staff, are protected in line with the fostering service's written procedure.
- 5.5 The fostering service and foster carers take appropriate action to find children who are missing, including working alongside the police where appropriate.
- 5.6 If a child is absent from the fostering home and their whereabouts are not known (i.e. the child is missing), the fostering service's procedures are compatible with the local Runaway and Missing from Home and Care (RMFHC) protocols and procedures applicable to the area where each foster home is located.
- 5.7 Where children placed out of authority go missing, the manager of the fostering service follows the local RMFHC protocol. They also comply with, and make foster carers aware of, any other processes required by the responsible authority, specified in the individual child's care plan and in the RMFHC protocol covering the authority responsible for the child's care. **[Statutory Guidance on children who run away and go missing from home and care - 3.5(27)].**
- 5.8 Children are helped to understand the dangers and risks of leaving the foster home without permission and are made aware of where they can access help if they consider running away.
- 5.9 Where a child goes missing and there is concern for their welfare, or at the request of a child who has been missing, the fostering service arranges a meeting in private between the child and the responsible authority to consider the reasons for their going missing. The fostering service considers with the responsible authority and foster carer what action should be taken to prevent the child going missing in future. Any concerns arising about the foster carer or the placement are addressed, as far as is possible, in conjunction with the responsible authority.
- 5.10 Written records kept by the fostering service where a child goes missing detail action taken by foster carers, the circumstances of the child's return, any reasons given by the child for running away from the foster home and any action taken in the light of those reasons. This information is shared with the responsible authority and, where appropriate, the child's parents.

STANDARD 6 - Promoting good health and wellbeing

Underpinning Legislation

Regulations:

- **15 - Health of children placed with foster parents**

Children Act 1989:

- **Section 22 - General duties of local authority in relation to children looked after by them**
- **Section 61** and **Section 62** - duties of voluntary organisations and local authorities in relation to children accommodated by or on behalf of the voluntary organisation

Outcome

- Children live in a healthy environment where their physical, emotional and psychological health is promoted and where they are able to access the

services to meet their health needs.

- 6.1 Children's physical, emotional and social development needs are promoted.
- 6.2 Children understand their health needs, how to maintain a healthy lifestyle and to make informed decisions about their own health.
- 6.3 Children are encouraged to participate in a range of positive activities that contribute to their physical and emotional health.
- 6.4 Children have prompt access to doctors and other health professionals, including specialist services (in conjunction with the responsible authority), when they need these services.
- 6.5 Children's health is promoted in accordance with their placement plan and foster carers are clear about what responsibilities and decisions are delegated to them and where consent for medical treatment needs to be obtained.
- 6.6 Children's wishes and feelings are sought and taken into account in their health care, according to their understanding, and foster carers advocate on behalf of children.
- 6.7 Foster carers receive sufficient training on health and hygiene issues and first aid, with particular emphasis on health promotion and communicable diseases.
- 6.8 Foster carers receive guidance and training to provide appropriate care if looking after children with complex health needs.
- 6.9 Medicines kept in the foster home are stored safely and are accessible only by those for whom they are intended.
- 6.10 Foster carers are trained in the management and administration of medication. Prescribed medication is only given to the child for whom it was prescribed, and in accordance with the prescription. Children who wish to, and who can safely keep and take their own medication, do so.
- 6.11 Foster carers keep a written record of all medication, treatment and first aid given to children during their placement.
- 6.12 Any physical adaptations or equipment needed for the appropriate care of the children are provided to foster carers.

STANDARD 7 - Leisure activities

Underpinning Legislation

Regulations:

- **16 - Education, employment and leisure activities**

Outcome

- Children are able to enjoy their interests, develop confidence in their skills and are supported and encouraged to engage in leisure activities.
- Children are able to make a positive contribution to the foster home and their wider community.

- 7.1 Children develop their emotional, intellectual social, creative and physical skills through the accessible and stimulating environment created within the foster home. Children are supported

to take part in school based and out of school activities.

- 7.2 Children pursue individual interests and hobbies. They take part in a range of activities, including leisure activities and trips.
- 7.3 Foster carers understand what is in the child's placement plan and have clarity about decisions they can make about the day to day arrangements for the child, including such matters as education, leisure activities, overnight stays, holidays, and personal issues such as hair cuts.
- 7.4 Foster carers are supported to make reasonable and appropriate decisions within the authority delegated to them, without having to seek consent unnecessarily.
- 7.5 Children have permission to take part in age appropriate peer activities as would normally be granted by a reasonable parent to their children, within the framework of the placement plan. Decision-making and any assessment of risk to the child should be undertaken on the same basis as a reasonable parent would do.
- 7.6 Children are encouraged and enabled to make and sustain friendships, which may involve reciprocal arrangements to visit friends' homes.
- 7.7 Children can stay overnight, holiday with friends, or friends and relatives of their foster carer, or go on schools trips, subject to requirements of the care/placement plan, if foster carers consider it appropriate in individual circumstances. CRB checks are not normally sought as a precondition.

STANDARD 8 - Promoting educational attainment

Underpinning Legislation

Regulations:

- **16 - Education, employment and leisure activities**

Children Act 1989:

- **Section 22(3A) - duty on local authority to promote educational achievement**

Outcome

- The education and achievement of children is actively promoted as valuable in itself and as part of their preparation for adulthood. Children are supported to

achieve their educational potential.

- 8.1 Children, including pre-school children and older children, have a foster home which promotes a learning environment and supports their development.
- 8.2 Children have access to a range of educational resources to support their learning and have opportunities beyond the school day to engage in activities which promote learning.
- 8.3 Children are supported to attend school, or alternative provision, regularly.
- 8.4 Children are helped by their foster carer to achieve their educational or training goals and foster carers are supported to work with a child's education provider to maximise each child's achievement and to minimise any underachievement.
- 8.5 The fostering service has, and is fully implementing, a written education policy that promotes and values children's education and is understood by foster carers.
- 8.6 Foster carers maintain regular contact with each child's school and other education settings, attending all parents' meetings as appropriate and advocating for the child where appropriate.
- 8.7 Foster carers engage and work with schools, colleges and other organisations to support children's education, including advocating to help overcome any problems the child may be experiencing in their education setting. Foster carers have up-to-date information about each child's educational progress and school attendance record.

STANDARD 9 - Promoting and supporting contact

Underpinning Legislation

Regulations:

- **14 - Duty to promote contact**

Outcome

- Children have, where appropriate, constructive contact with their parents, grandparents, siblings, half-siblings, wider family, friends and other people who play a significant role in their lives.
- 9.1 Children are supported and encouraged to maintain and develop family contacts and friendships, subject to any limitations or provisions set out in their care plan and any court order.

- 9.2 Foster carers are given practical help to support appropriate contact, including financial help where needed, alongside support to manage any difficult emotional or other issues that the child and foster carer may have as a result of contact.
- 9.3 Emergency restrictions on contact are only made to protect the child from significant risk to their safety or welfare and are communicated to the responsible authority within 24 hours of being imposed.
- 9.4 Ongoing restriction on communication by the child is agreed by the child's responsible authority, takes the child's wishes and feelings into account and is regularly reviewed in collaboration with the responsible authority.
- 9.5 The fostering service feeds back to the responsible authority any significant reactions a child has to contact arrangements or visits with any person.
- 9.6 When deciding whether to offer a placement, the fostering service works with the responsible authority in giving consideration to how the child's contact with family and significant others will be supported, particularly where a child is placed at a distance from home.
- 9.7 Foster carers understand what decisions about contact are delegated to them, in line with the child's care plan, and make those decisions in the child's best interests.

The above standards are not required for short breaks. For children in short breaks the foster carer must know how to contact parents and maintain such contact as has been agreed in the short break care plan.

STANDARD 10 - Providing a suitable physical environment for the foster child

Underpinning Legislation

Regulations:

- **26 - Assessment of prospective foster parents**
- **Schedule 3 - Information as to prospective foster parent and other members of their household and family**

Outcome

- Children live in foster homes which provide adequate space, to a suitable

standard. The child enjoys access to a range of activities which promote his or her development.

- 10.1 The foster home can comfortably accommodate all who live there including where appropriate any suitable aids and adaptations provided and fitted by suitably trained staff when caring for a disabled child.
- 10.2 The foster home is warm, adequately furnished and decorated, is maintained to a good standard of cleanliness and hygiene and is in good order throughout. Outdoor spaces which are part of the premises are safe, secure and well maintained.
- 10.3 Foster carers are trained in health and safety issues and have guidelines on their health and safety responsibilities. Avoidable hazards are removed as is consistent with a family home.
- 10.4 Foster carers understand the service's policy concerning safety for children in the foster home and in vehicles used to transport foster children. The service's policy is regularly reviewed in line with the most recent guidance from relevant bodies.
- 10.5 The foster home is inspected annually, without appointment, by the fostering service to make sure that it continues to meet the needs of foster children.
- 10.6 In the foster home, each child over the age of three should have their own bedroom. If this is not possible, the sharing of a bedroom is agreed by each child's responsible authority and each child has their own area within the bedroom. Before seeking agreement for the sharing of a bedroom, the fostering service provider takes into account any potential for bullying, any history of abuse or abusive behaviour, the wishes of the children concerned and all other pertinent facts. The decision making process and outcome of the assessment are recorded in writing where bedroom sharing is agreed.

STANDARD 11 - Preparation for a placement

Underpinning Legislation

Regulations:

- **11 - Independent fostering agencies - duty to secure welfare**

Children Act 1989:

- **Section 22 - General duty of local authority in relation to children looked after by them**

Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010

- **Regulation 22 - Conditions to be complied with before placing a child with a local authority foster parent**

Outcome

- Children are welcomed into the foster home and leave the foster home in a planned and sensitive manner which makes them feel loved and valued.
 - Children feel part of the family. They are not treated differently to the foster carer's own children living in the household. The child's needs are met and they benefit from a stable placement.
- 11.1 The service has and implements clear procedures for introducing children into the foster care placement, to the foster carer and to others living in the household, which cover planned and, where permitted, emergency/immediate foster care placements. They help children understand what to expect from living in the foster home.
- 11.2 Children are carefully matched to a foster placement. Foster carers have full information about the child (as set out in **standard 3.9**).
- 11.3 Unless an emergency placement makes it impossible, children are given information about the foster carer before arrival, and any information (including where appropriate, photographic information) they need or reasonably request about the placement, in a format appropriate to their age and understanding. Wherever possible, children are able to visit the foster carer's home and to talk with the foster carers in private prior to a placement decision being made. Children can bring their favourite possessions into the foster carer's home.
- 11.4 Children are given free access to the household facilities as would be consistent with reasonable arrangements in a family home. Foster carers explain everyday household rules and expectations to children.
- 11.5 Where children are leaving the foster family, they are helped to understand the reasons why they are leaving. Children are supported during the transition to their new placement, to independent living or to their parental home.
- 11.6 Foster carers are supported to maintain links with children moving on, consistent with their care plan.

STANDARD 12 - Promoting independence and moves to adulthood and leaving care

Underpinning Legislation

Regulations:

- **11 - Independent fostering agencies - duty to secure welfare**

Children Act 1989:

- **Section 22 - General duty of local authority in relation to children looked after by them**

Outcome

- Children are prepared for, and supported into, adulthood so that they can reach their potential and achieve economic wellbeing.

12.1 Children are supported to:

- a. establish positive and appropriate social and sexual relationships;
- b. develop positive self-esteem and emotional resilience;
- c. prepare for the world of work and or further or higher education;
- d. prepare for moving into their own accommodation;
- e. develop practical skills, including shopping, buying, cooking and keeping food, washing clothes, personal self-care, and understanding and taking responsibility for personal healthcare;
- f. develop financial capability, knowledge and skills;
- g. know about entitlements to financial and other support after leaving care, including benefits and support from social care services.

12.2 Foster carers contribute to the development of each child's care plan, in collaboration with the child, including the pathway plan for an "eligible" child, and work collaboratively with the young person's social worker or personal adviser in implementing the plan.

12.3 The fostering service ensures there are comprehensive arrangements for preparing and supporting young people to make the transition to independence. This includes appropriate training and support to foster carers caring for young people who are approaching adulthood. Arrangements are consistent with the young person's care plan, including their placement plan, pathway plan and transition plan for children with disabilities and special educational needs.

12.4 The fostering service has a policy and practical arrangements which enable children to remain with their foster carer(s) into legal adulthood, for example so that s/he may develop appropriate life skills before being required to move to more independent accommodation. Any such decisions are agreed with foster carers at a placement meeting and are detailed in a child's placement plan.

The above standards are not required for short breaks.