



FOSTER CARERS CHARTER





The Children's Family Trust uphold the importance of good quality Foster Care for children, and in doing so invests in Foster Carers who can provide high standards of care for children looked after placed in our care.

This charter ensures that all children placed with CFT Foster Carers will be given every opportunity to achieve and reach their own individual potential, whilst gaining a strong sense of identity with positive self-esteem and confidence. We strongly believe that all children deserve to have a family life free from trauma and abuse.

The CFT's philosophy is founded on our commitment to the quality care of children and our 'family for life' ethos. It is a foundation that promotes partnership between carers working with The CFT and local authorities, and a matching process which provides stability and continuity for children who have had uncertainty and disruption in their lives.

What Foster Carers can expect from The CFT

Working in Partnership

The professional partnership between The CFT and its Foster Carers is built on trust and respect. The Foster Carer Charter outlines what we expect from each other and details the support that The CFT will provide to its Foster Carers, and what we expect that our Foster Carers will provide for children placed in their care.

This Charter recognises the Foster Carers role in day to day care and responsibilities as outlined by the delegated authority that Foster Carers hold under the 2011 regulations. We also recognise that Foster Carers make the biggest difference to the everyday lives of children in care.

As an organisation, we will:

- Value you as Foster Carers whilst recognising the current skills and experience you bring to the fostering role, as well as the skills, knowledge and experience you will gain from the training and support provided by The CFT.
- Recognise and acknowledge that you are the people that will best know the children and young people placed with you, from caring for them daily.
- Ensure that as an agency we will meet the standards set out in the fostering regulations and guidance.
- Treat you fairly and without discrimination.
- Respect confidentiality.





Information

Information is key in order for Foster Carers to provide the best care to meet the needs of children placed in their care.

As an organisation, we will:

- Ensure that we provide Foster Carers with all the information needed to establish as best as possible that the match is suitable for Foster Carers and their families.
- Ensure all available information is provided in order for Foster Carers to care safely for the child/ren.
- Ensure that there is a placement plan drawn up in discussion with Foster Carers within specified timescales.
- Provide Foster Carers with all relevant information regarding financial matters.
- Ensure that all CFT Carers have a 'getting started' induction on approval to support their role as Foster Carers.
- Provide Foster Carers with full details of all relevant policies and procedures.





Clarity about decisions

It is important for Foster Carers to feel able and confident in making day to day decisions for children in their care.

As an organisation, we will:

- Provide clarity through delegated authority about the decisions that Foster Carers can make on a day to day basis for any child placed in their care.
- Where decisions cannot be made, we will ensure that this information is shared with Foster Carers and outlined in the delegated authority, but is reviewed regularly for any child/ren placed long term.

Learning and Development

As an organisation, we will:

- Ensure that CFT Foster Carers receive all the mandatory training required to support them in safely caring for children, delivered by trainers who understand the fostering role.
- Provide learning and development opportunities to meet the individual needs of children looked after.
- Provide development opportunities which makes the best use of Foster Carers skills and expertise, such as mentoring or providing training or support to other Foster Carers.
- Provide consultations with specialist services to support our Foster Carers with their understanding of attachment and trauma-based behaviours, where there is an identified need.

Support

The CFT prides itself on the quality and level of support it provides to its Foster Carers. We recognise that support is essential in supporting Foster Carers in their role. Fostering can be challenging at times and timely support makes all the difference to the fostering family and to the child/ren in your care.

As an organisation, we will:

- Provide you with regular monthly supervision, support calls, emails and contact as required.
- Always be at the other end of the phone when any difficulties or challenges arise.
- Provide 24 hours access to support through our Out of Hours service.
- Provide Foster Carers with membership to Foster Talk.
- Give you honest and open feedback.
- Be a listening ear whenever it is needed recognising that Foster Carers need a safe space at times to talk/work through their feelings and thoughts in emotional and challenging times.
- Praise success and achievements with you as Foster Carers, and celebrate with you the achievement and successes of both your own birth children and foster children in your care.
- Value Foster Carers Sons and Daughters by providing support groups and advice.
- Ensure that we consult with and listen to Foster Carers on matters that affect them, their family and the children and young people they care for.
- Recognise that positive endings of placements are important for children, young people and Fostering families, ensuring that support is in place to achieve this.



Fair Treatment and Communication



We believe that everyone has a right to be treated fairly.

As an organisation, we will:

- Ensure open and transparent communication.
- Ensure you are treated with respect; keep you informed and provide support should a Foster Carer be subject to an allegation or practice concern.
- Facilitate regular communication with Foster Carers through Foster Carer team meetings, support groups, supervision and support visits.
- Ensure we consult in a meaningful way on matters that affect Foster Carers and provide opportunities for feedback.
- Support Foster Carers to contribute their views, and make sure that Foster Carers are empowered to take part in all placement and care planning decisions in the child's best interests.





What The CFT can expect from Foster Carers



Working in Partnership

Foster carers will demonstrate a high standard of care and conduct.

As CFT Carers, we will:

- Uphold the standards and expectations as set out in our 'fostering agreement'.
- Include foster children and young people as part of our family by including them in daily routines and activities.
- Provide a safe, warm, and caring home.
- Respect confidentiality recognising that children need their own space and have a right to privacy.
- Meet the standards set out in fostering regulations and guidance and follow CFT's policies and procedures.
- Use our knowledge, expertise and skills to the best of our ability.
- Attend meetings, and provide information for meetings, about the children and young people in our care.
- Work co-operatively with the team around the child/young person for example work with education and health colleagues.
- Show a willingness to work with birth parents, wider family and people significant in a child's/young person's life.
- Inform the child's social worker about any concerns we have relating to the child.
- Seek to solve problems quickly by using available formal and informal support networks, advocating strongly for the best outcomes for children in our care.
- Complete paperwork in advance of annual reviews and encourage our sons and daughters to give feedback.
- Read and digitally sign all documentation using Charms with the exception of the first Foster Carer Agreement and any amended agreements which will have a hard copy signature.
- Embrace the culture and ethos of The CFT and engage with the organisation.



Respect for the Child

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

As CFT Carers, we will:

- Provide a warm, caring and secure environment for the children and young people to experience safe and positive role models.
- Respect a child/young person's identity, religion, linguistic and cultural heritage.
- Afford the same level of protection as we would to our own child.
- Empower and support children and young people's rights to make decisions regarding their own lives, as appropriate to their age and understanding.
- Be a strong advocate for any children and young people in our care to ensure they are treated fairly, listened to, heard and acknowledged as individuals with their own thoughts, feelings and needs.
- Help collect and preserve memories of the time the child or young person spends with our family.
- Ensure that if children have to move placements they are moved in a respectful and considerate manner.



Information

Foster Carers understand the need to share information to create an open and honest relationship with The CFT.

As CFT Carers, we will:

- Inform our supervising social worker about any changes in the household.
- Inform The CFT of any incidents or notifiable events.
- Be open and transparent with The CFT about any difficulties we are experiencing so appropriate support can be provided.
- Ensure we adhere to the recording policy and record information in a child centred way that respects the child and demonstrates understanding of any difficulties presented.

Learning, Development and Support

As CFT Carers, we will:

- Access learning and development opportunities throughout our fostering career and take an active role in our own professional growth. This will ensure we have the skills and knowledge we need and allow us to further develop our practice in helping to improve the lives of the children and young people we foster.
- Embrace any opportunities offered to support development and understanding of caring for children and young people who may have experienced abuse and trauma in their lives, in order to gain an understanding of the impact of this on their development and behaviours.
- Work with professionals to develop appropriate strategies in caring for traumatised children and young people.



Communication and Consultation

As Foster Carers we recognise the importance of communication and believe that open and honest dialogue is essential to creating a positive working relationship.

As CFT Carers, we will:

- Communicate in an open and honest manner.
- Ensure we share any issues or difficulties in a timely way to enable appropriate support and processing of information.
- Take an active role in consultations and provide feedback to support the development of services.

On behalf of The Children's Family Trust, we agree to uphold the declarations set out in this Charter.

Marina Mulholland
Chief Executive

As a Foster Carer/s with The Children's Family Trust, I/We agree to uphold the declarations set out in this Charter.

Name	Signature	Date