

## Channels and Choices Therapeutic Fostering Standards for Foster Care/Expectations of Foster Carers

### Standard One - Safeguarding Children

#### Key Outcome

*Children feel safe and are safe. Children understand how to protect themselves and are protected from significant harm including neglect, abuse, and accident.*

(Standard 4 of National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services, 2011)

#### Channels and Choices Therapeutic Fostering expectations of foster carers:

*Managing Behaviour* - Foster carers use positive reinforcement and negotiation as the main methods of discipline e.g. noticing and praising good behaviour. If sanctions are applied they are clearly understood by the child or young person and of short-term nature and take into account the child or young person's previous experience of being parented. Discipline or methods of control should never be excessive or unreasonable. (Fostering Services Regulations 2011 13(2)(b)).

Foster carers do not engage in any form of corporal punishment in relation to any child or young person in their care. This includes smacking, slapping, punching and pushing and all other humiliating forms of treatment or punishment. (Fostering Services Regulations 2011 13(2)(a)).

Foster carers use physical restraint only where it is necessary to prevent likely injury to the child or other person's or likely serious damage to property (Fostering Services Regulations 2011 13(2)(c)).

Foster carers do not use threats of physical punishment, nor seek to control a child or young person's behaviour by physical intimidation.

Foster carers keep a record of all sanctions and punishments used and incidents involving the behaviour of children and young people.

Foster carers notify their Supervising Social Worker or, in his/her absence, the Director or Manager, of any breaches of this Standard i.e. use of unauthorised sanctions or physical restraint.

*Supervision* - All children are provided with an adequate level of supervision appropriate to their age and development. Foster carers follow the procedures for reporting any child or young person missing or absent from home. (National Minimum Standard 5)

*Abuse or Suspected Abuse* - Foster carers must report any allegation of abuse or neglect to a child or young person placed to their Supervising Social Worker or the Manager or Director immediately and keep a record of the allegation.

Foster carers must report any suspicions of an abusive situation occurring or developing within their own family or social network to their Supervising Social Worker or the Manager or Director.

Foster carers must report any suspicions of any abusive situation occurring or developing within the child's family to their Supervising Social Worker or the Fostering Manager or Director.

*Safe Caring* - Foster carers only engage in relationships with children or young people placed that are appropriate 'adult-child' relationships.

Foster carers and members of their household observe safe caring guidelines set out in the Safe Caring Guidance and the specific Safe Caring Guidelines agreed for their own home.

*Bullying* - Foster carers report any suspicions or incidents of bullying of a child or young person placed, to the local authority Social Worker and to their Supervising Social Worker or in his/her absence, to another Channels and Choices Therapeutic Fostering social work foster carers member. (National Minimum Standard 3)

No child or young person will be expected to assist foster carers with their outside business interests, or to assume level of responsibility for the running of the foster home in order that foster carers can pursue those interests.

*Exploitation* - Foster carers always consult with their Supervising Social Worker about situations which carry, or potentially carry, the risk of exploitation or abuse.

***Matters that foster carers must report immediately to their Supervising Social Worker and the child or young person's Social Worker:*** (Fostering Services Regulations Reg. 36 (1) and Schedule 7)

- Any serious illness, injury or accident
- Outbreaks of infectious diseases
- Any abuse or suspected abuse occurring within the foster home, involving the child's or young person's family, or foster carer's family or within the foster family's social network
- Allegation that a child or young person has committed a criminal offence
- Involvement or suspected involvement of a child or young person in prostitution
- Any serious incident which has resulted in Police attention
- Absconding of a child or young person
- Incidents of bullying
- Incidents in the home where restraint has had to be used
- Complaints made by the child or young person
- Any other significant event or change of circumstances

## Support available:

- Full information about the foster child and his/her family provided to enable foster carers to protect the foster child or young person and other children or young people in the family
- Training in caring for a child who has been abused, safe caring skills, managing behaviour and recognising signs of abuse and on ways of boosting and maintaining a child's self-esteem
- Child Protection Procedures
- Guidance on Managing Behaviour
- Safe Caring Guidelines are provided for each foster home
- Bullying Procedures
- Child or Young Person missing or absent from foster home procedures

## Standard Two - Providing a suitable physical environment

### Key Outcome

*Children live in foster homes which provide adequate space, to a suitable standard.*

*The child enjoys access to a range of activities which promotes his or her development.*

(Standard 10 of National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services, 2011)

## Channels and Choices Therapeutic Fostering Expectations of Foster Carers:

*Accommodation* - Foster carers ensure that their home can comfortably accommodate all who live there and inform their Supervising Social Worker in advance of any plans to accommodate additional children or adults.

The home is warm, adequately furnished and decorated and is maintained to a good standard of cleanliness and hygiene.

There is at least one communal room which can accommodate all household members comfortably, including fostered children or young people.

The accommodation arrangements reflect the child or young person's assessed need for privacy or for any specific need arising from a disability.

*Sleeping Arrangements* - Each child or young person has their own bedroom unless there are exceptional circumstances (e.g. siblings together, child or young person's fear of being on their own) and sharing arrangements have been agreed with the child's or young person's Social Worker.

Where a child has been abused or has abused another, no decision should be taken to allow sharing of bedrooms before an assessment of the child's or young person's needs and the needs of other children or young people in the foster home has been carried out.

*Children's Possessions* - All children or young people will be given storage space for their possessions, including clothing.

The possessions of children or young people placed will be respected by other members of the household.

*Health & Safety* - The home and immediate environment (including the garden and garage) is free of avoidable hazards that might expose a child to risk of injury or harm.

The home contains safety barriers and equipment appropriate to the child's age, development and level of ability.

Foster carers follow the Channels and Choices Therapeutic Fostering Health & Safety Guidelines and take prompt action to remedy any hazards identified arising from completion of the Health & Safety Checklist within the timescale agreed. Household members know what to do in the event of a fire.

Foster carers possess a first aid kit.

*Transport* - Foster carers hold valid driving licences. Vehicle insurance, vehicle road tax and MOT are all valid.

Any car used for transporting children is regularly serviced and maintained in a safe, roadworthy condition.

Vehicles used to transport children or young people are fitted with BSS approved restraints and carrycot restraints and these are used. Seatbelts are in working order.

*Pets* - There are safe and hygienic arrangements for the care of pets. Pets do not pose a physical threat to children and the sleeping and feeding arrangements are hygienic.

*Alcohol* - Foster carers take responsible steps to ensure that children are not able to access any alcohol within the foster home.

### **Support available:**

- Health & Safety Policy and Health & Safety Checklist.
- Safe Caring Policy.
- Guidelines for Foster Carers on HIV/AIDS.
- Hepatitis – what is it?
- Preventing the spread of infectious diseases.
- Safe storage and preparation of food.
- Training for foster carers on health and safety issues.

## Standard Three - Promoting a positive identity, potential and valuing diversity through individualised care

### Key Outcome

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

(Standard 2 of National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services, 2011)

### Channels and Choices Therapeutic Fostering Expectations of Foster Carers:

*Respect for child's background* - Foster carers recognise and address the child's needs in terms of gender, religion, ethnic origin, language, culture, disability and sexuality. They provide children with positive images of their background, history and culture and opportunities to keep in touch and learn more about them care which respects and preserves each child's ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic background. When foster carers are looking after a child of a different background from their own they find out about the child's background, customs, religious observances, food etc.

*Support in dealing with racism and discrimination* - Foster carer's support and encourage each child to develop skills to help him/her deal with all forms of racism and discrimination.

*Support for disabled children* - Foster carers help each child with a disability to access specific services and support to help him/her to maximise his/her potential and lead as full a life as possible. This may include appropriate equipment and where necessary and appropriate, adaptation of the carers home and/or vehicle.

*Positive and fair treatment* - Foster carers give each child or young person encouragement and equal access to opportunities to develop and pursue their talents, interests and hobbies and enhance the child or young person's confidence and feeling of self-worth by giving positive messages and by not being excessively or unhelpfully critical or negative. Foster carers are fair in applying the same house rules (including chores and pocket money) to fostered children as they would do their own. Foster carers are fair in dealing with disputes between their own children and fostered children or young people.

*Avoiding stigmatisation* - Foster carers ensure that children in their care are not stigmatised by wearing inappropriate clothing, inadequate hygiene, or breaching confidentiality. Where this standard is difficult to maintain because of difficulties outside a foster carers' control, they discuss the situation with the child's/young person's Social Worker.

*Helping children to understand their situation* - Foster carers help children in their care towards an understanding of why they are being looked after, their life history and origins and to plan for the future.

### **Support available:**

- Foster carers' preparation and ongoing training.
- Books, toys and videos.
- Information/guidance/advice from specialist organisations and from individuals with specific knowledge and expertise.

## **Standard Four - The child's wishes and feelings and the views of those significant to them**

### **Key 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.*

(Standard 1 of National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services, 2011)

### **Channels and Choices Therapeutic Fostering Expectations of Foster Carers:**

Foster carers understand the importance of listening to and responding to the views of children or young people.

Foster carers ask children or young people for their opinions and views on matters affecting them, including day-to-day matters, on a regular and frequent basis.

The views of children's families are taken into account in matters concerning the child's care and future in accordance with the child's Care Plan and Foster Placement Agreement.

Children with communication difficulties are helped as much as necessary to make their wishes and feelings known regarding their care and treatment.

Foster carers use children's preferred method of communication to help children express themselves.

If the use of an interpreter and/or translator is needed for a child or young person whose first language is not English, every effort is made to find a suitably qualified and experienced individual.

Foster carers ensure that children and young people know how to raise any concerns or complaints and know that they have access to Channels and Choices Therapeutic Fostering complaints procedures.

### **Support available:**

- Training in listening to children's views.

- Support from Supervising Social Worker and child or young person’s Social Worker.
- Training and support in communication with children and young people with communication difficulties.
- Channels and Choices Therapeutic Fostering Complaints Procedure – copies of/information about.
- Training in relation to Channels and Choices Therapeutic Fostering Representations and Complaints Procedure and its use by children or young people.

## Standard Five - Promoting good health and well being

### Key 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*

(Standard 6 of National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services, 2011)

### Channels and Choices Therapeutic Fostering Expectations of Foster Carers:

#### *Healthy diet and lifestyle*

Children and young people are offered a healthy and balanced diet and encouraged to eat at breakfast, lunchtime and in the evening.

Foster carers take into account children’s dietary needs e.g. vegetarian or special diet associated with religious or health needs.

Children and young people are encouraged and supported in not smoking or abusing alcohol and drugs.

Children and young people are encouraged to take responsibility for their own hygiene and health in a way that they can understand and achieve.

Foster carers give children and young people clear information and advice about their health needs appropriate to their age and understanding to enable them to participate in decisions about their health needs.

Foster carers ensure that children and young people have access to and understand their health record.

Foster carers help children and young people to access medical and other services.

Foster carers act as an advocate on the child or young person’s behalf.

#### *Medical care and assessments*

Foster carers ensure that children and young people are registered with a doctor, Optician and a dentist and have access to other relevant health services.

Foster carers seek appropriate medical care and treatment for any accidents, illnesses or injuries to a child or young person.

Foster carers notify the child or young person's Social Worker and their Supervising Social Worker of all accidents, illnesses or injuries to a child or young person and any outbreak of infectious disease (Regulation 36(1) and Schedule 7). In the absence of the Supervising Social Worker, the Manager is informed.

Foster carers take the child to any health appointments, including dental and optician appointments, when required.

Foster carers ensure that children have individual support, aids and equipment required as a result of any particular health needs or disability.

Foster carers ensure that children have an annual health assessment, which may include a medical examination and regular appointments with their dentist or optician, as required.

Foster carers inform the child or young person's Social Worker or line manager/supervisor in advance of any medical treatment prescribed for a child or young person (except in cases of emergency).

#### *Providing information about child's health needs*

Foster carers work with the child or young person's Social Worker to ensure that the child's health care needs are part of the care plan and reviews.

#### **Support available:**

- Information about the child or young person's health needs before the placement is made and a written health record provided by Channels and Choices Therapeutic Fostering.
- Clear information about procedures governing consent for the child or young person to receive medical treatment.
- Basic training on health and hygiene and first aid, with an emphasis on health promotion and practical information about communicable diseases.
- Help and advice in handling medical situations and accessing health services.



## Standard Six - Promoting educational attainment

### Key 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.*

(Standard 8 of National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services, 2011 and Regulation 17 Fostering Services Regulations 2011)

### Channels and Choices Therapeutic Fostering Expectations of Foster Carers:

#### *Contributing to the assessment of the child's educational needs*

Foster carers contribute to the assessment of the child or young person's educational needs and monitoring of his/her progress by involvement in planning and reviews.

Foster carers ensure that the cultural or religious background of the child or young person is given due regard in arrangements for the child's education.

#### *Supporting school attendance and children's participation in school*

Foster carers have regular contact with the school e.g. parent's evenings, open days, discussions with teachers as set out in Care Plan and Foster Placement Agreement. The Placement Agreement should specify the respective roles of carers and birth parents.

Foster carers establish an expectation of regular attendance at school, monitor attendance and liaise with the school over any difficulties that a child or young person might have.

Where a child or young person is attending specialist educational provision or support or is not in school, foster carers co-operate with arrangements for educational support and structured activities during school hours.

Foster carers, in conjunction with the child's Social Worker, ensure the child or young person is supported in attending school trips and after school activities.

#### *Providing an environment where education and learning are valued.*

Foster carers support the child or young person's education at home by giving encouragement, taking an interest in what the child or young person does at school, praising the child or young person's achievements and helping them through difficulties.

Foster carers are aware of school rules, uniform and other requirements and ensure that the child is properly equipped and appropriately dressed for school.

Foster carers provide a suitable, quiet place for the child or young person to do homework, ensure it is completed and give assistance when required.

#### *Employment and leisure activities*

Foster carers encourage children and young people to take part in leisure activities.

Foster carers assist young people who have left school with arrangements for education, training and employment.

#### **Support available:**

- Channels and Choices Therapeutic Fostering Supervising Social Worker.
- Arrangements (including financial) for the education of an individual child or young person as set out in the child's Care Plan and Foster Placement Agreement.

## **Standard Seven - Promoting and supporting contact**

### **Key Outcome**

*Children have, where appropriate, constructive contact with their parents, grandparents, siblings, half-siblings, families, friends and other people who play a significant role in their lives.*

(Standard 14 of National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services, 2011)

### **Channels and Choices Therapeutic Fostering Expectations of Foster Carers:**

Foster carers understand the importance of helping a child to maintain appropriate contacts with family and friends.

Foster carers consult with their Supervising Social Worker prior to making any form of contact with a child's or young person's family or friends (including overnight stays) which are not part of any existing plan.

Foster carers listen to the child or young person's views on contact arrangements and represent those views to his/her Supervising Social Worker if appropriate.

Foster carers support contact arrangements, including any arrangements for the supervision of contact, as set out in a Foster Placement Agreement.

Foster carers record the outcomes of contact and their perceived impact on the child and feed this information back to the child's Social Worker.

#### **Support available:**

- Channels and Choices Therapeutic Fostering policy for contact.
- Training on helping a child maintain appropriate contacts and skills to encourage and facilitate contact.
- Helping in dealing with any difficulties over contact.
- Financial support with transport and other costs where necessary.

## **Standard Eight - Promoting independence and moves to adulthood and leaving care**

### **Key Outcome**

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

(Standard 12 of National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services, 2011)

### **Channels and Choices Therapeutic Fostering Expectations of Foster Carers:**

Foster carers contribute to the planning and preparation for a young person leaving care or moving to independent or semi-independent living as set out in his/her Pathway Plan.

Foster carers can contribute to the assessment of needs of a disabled young person and help them through any period of transition from local authority services for children or young people to local authority services for adults. (UK National Standards for Foster Care Standard 12.8)

Foster carers provide young people with opportunities for learning independence skills such as managing money, cooking and domestic responsibilities etc.

Foster carers provide young people with support and guidance including encouragement to get appropriate help from the Connexions Service and other agencies.

Where possible, foster carers provide the same support as any parent would to their own child after the young person has left the foster home.

### **Support available:**

- Channels and Choices Therapeutic Fostering Training and Support.
- Guidelines on preparing young people for leaving care.
- Channels and Choices Therapeutic Fostering liaison with local authorities to secure Leaving Care Act funding.

## Standard Nine - Maintaining confidentiality and keeping records

### Key Outcome

*Records are clear, up to date, stored securely and contribute to an understanding of the child's life.*

(Standard 26 of National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services, 2011)

### Channels and Choices Therapeutic Fostering Expectations of Foster Carers:

Foster carers do not share confidential information about children or young people placed with them with anyone (includes friends, neighbours, extended family) unless agreed with the child or young person's Social Worker.

Foster carers do not share confidential information with other foster carers, although it is accepted that in supporting each other they may discuss issues relating to day-to-day management of children or young people in their care.

Written information is stored securely and is not shown to anyone except the child or young person or the child or young person's Supervising Social Worker unless agreed by the child's Social Worker.

Foster carers store written information about children or young people placed in a secure place and maintain records relating to the placement of a child or young person as required by Channels and Choices Therapeutic Fostering.

Written information is not photocopied without the permission of the child or young person's Social Worker.

Written information about a child or young person is returned to the child's Social Worker or Channels and Choices Therapeutic Fostering Supervising Social Worker at the end of the placement.

Foster carers understand what information they are expected to keep and what they are expected to pass on to the fostering service.

Foster carers encourage the child or young person to reflect on and understand their history, according to their age and ability and to keep appropriate memorabilia.

Foster carers record significant life events for the child and encourage the child to make such recordings, including photograph albums.

### Support available:

- Access to all relevant information on the child.
- Training and equipment to record significant life events for the child.

Training in record keeping and confidentiality.