

**Rewards Policy**

Whilst children bring their own values and behaviours to placements, staff play a key role in influencing children.

The culture of our service, generated by the adults working here is crucial.

A restrictive, unsupportive, discouraging and punishing culture will result in instability, hostility and possibly severe disruption.

Where children live in homes which have clear, fair boundaries, where they feel safe, encouraged and appropriately rewarded, they will thrive and do well. Such homes, like Lester House and 99a Lester House will also experience less instability and disruption.

It is for each person here to create a core culture, which should include:

1. Listen to and empathise with children and young people, respect their thoughts and feelings and take their wishes into consideration.
2. Look for things that are going well, or any step in the right direction, appropriately reward it.
3. Rewards should be used in a creative and diverse way, specific to children’s needs, capabilities and interests.
4. This may mean that children are rewarded with toys, games, activities or monetary rewards.
5. But all ‘tangible’ rewards should be accompanied by use of ‘non-tangible’ encouragement and support – by staff and carers demonstrating to children and young people that they have done well.
6. Such ‘non-tangible’ rewards include praising, smiling, touching and hugging children.
7. Children usually benefit, early on, from rewards which may appear to outweigh that which is expected. This is normal; over time rewards can be more relevant as children’s self-esteem and skills improve.

For example:

* Children who have few social or life skills and whose self-esteem and confidence is low may require forms of encouragement and reward which are intensive, frequent or even excessive in order to help/remind them that they are doing well and are appreciated.
* However, it should also be borne in mind that some children cannot tolerate praise as it undermines the low perception they have of themselves. For these children smaller more specific praise is needed.

1. Over time, as children achieve what is expected, such rewards should be reduced or children should be expected to achieve more for the same or similar reward.