

Fostering

Consultation and Participation

The Trust Board has granted the Chief Executive of the Sandwell Children's Trust the authority to approve this document.

Consultation and Participation

Regulations and Standards

The Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011

Regulation 11 - Independent fostering agencies—duty to secure welfare

Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards

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

Related Information

Participation Works

Hear by Right – National Youth Agency

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1. Introduction

Everyone involved in the receipt and delivery of services should be consulted about decisions, which may affect them.

This includes children, their parents, other significant family members and those charged with providing the service; including Managers, staff, carers and professionals or colleagues from other agencies.

2. Participation of Children and Young People

Participation of children and young people in decisions about their lives is an essential part of growing up and if done well it enhances children's safety and well-being and improves services designed to support and protect them. To be done well it requires a commitment at all levels of an organisation to reflect on and promote.

This includes:

- Positive attitudes to children and young people;
- Skills at communicating;
- Appropriate resources;
- Commitment to developing services which support children's participation.

The Agency is committed to ensuring children and young people are consulted and informed about decisions and processes that affect them. The Agency seeks to consider age, identity, diversity, culture, sexual orientation, language, and disability, in all its interactions with both children and adults.

All staff and carers are committed to seeking and recording the views of every child they work with. They will also record the decisions that are made and the influence that the views of the child/young person have had on those decisions. Where decisions are made that are different from or contrary to the views of the child or young person this will be clearly recorded with the reasons for the decision clearly explained.

Consultation should take place on a regular and frequent basis with those who need to be consulted and assumptions should not be made about the inability or lack of interest of those who should be consulted.

Consultation should be carried out with children in a form they will understand in either their preferred language or an appropriate method of communication. If as a result of the consultation change is not possible or is restricted for whatever reason, steps should be taken to ensure those affected and involved are informed of decisions as soon as practicable after they are made, and an explanation for the decision given. Methods of consultation may include postal surveys, group discussions or exit interviews.

3. The Role of the Manager

Managers must ensure that staff and carers have the time and resources available to them to ensure the effective participation of children and young people. This includes

Using supervision to consider issues relating to the voice of the child in on-going cases;

Review complaints or concerns raised by children and young people and what actions have been taken to address these;

Review compliments to build on these;

Consider how representative issues raised by children and young people are in relation to such issues as gender, culture, sexuality and disability;

Ensure processes designed to gather issues raised by stakeholders including children and young people are in place and are routinely being used, reviewed and assessed for their impact;

Ensure processes are in place to provide feedback to stakeholders including children and young people what changes have been made and if not why not.