

## **Fostering for Adoption Agreement**

The agreement dated \_\_\_\_\_ is between Telford & Wrekin Council and approved Fostering for Adoption Carer/s: \_\_\_\_\_

### **1. Terms of Approval**

You are approved as temporary foster carers by Telford & Wrekin Council's Agency Decision Maker to provide a placement for: \_\_\_\_\_ [child/ren's name/s] under **Regulation 25(a) of The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review [England] (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2013.**

### **APPROVAL DETAILS**

Both the terms of approval and this agreement will be subject to review within a maximum of 12 months. This will usually take the form of a foster home review meeting held at the foster home. The recommendations of the review, and any changes to the terms of approval that result, will be considered by the Fostering Panel. Carers are expected to achieve the Training, Support and Development Standards within 12 months of approval.

### **2. The Fostering & Adoption Services**

- 2.1 The primary aim of Telford & Wrekin Fostering Service and the Joint Adoption Service (Telford & Wrekin and Shropshire) is to ensure that the needs of children and young people experience family life in a suitable family, on a temporary or permanent basis, wherever possible.
- 2.2 It is essential that all parties are aware that being a Fostering for Adoption (FFA) approved Adopter and entering into an FFA approved arrangement does not secure the future permanent family for a child. The decision as to whether to grant a Placement Order to allow for a plan of adoption to be secured is based on all information available to the Court. This includes having recommendation for adoption endorsed by the Agency Decision Maker.
- 2.3 A service objective of the Council is to provide support networks and training for Carers. We will provide:
  - A named Social Worker from the Adoption Team whose role is to ensure supervision and support of carers, enabling them to provide safe care of a high quality for children who are looked after, for whom there is a potential for adoption.
  - A named Social Worker for the child who has primary responsibility for work with the child. The child's Social Worker should see the child alone.



- An independent Advice and Mediation Officer employed by The Fostering Network available to carers.
- Provision of financial support, paid promptly and reviewed regularly. At confirmation of match fostering payments will cease.
- Provision of essential specialist items of equipment to meet the needs arising from any disability the child may have.

2.4 Telford and Wrekin Council carries insurance cover for claims by carers arising from loss or damage caused by the actions of children placed with them.

### **3 Obligations of Carers when caring for children**

- 3.1 Carers are required to be responsible for the care in their own home of children placed by the Authority, and to work with the Council and all those involved in helping children fulfil their potential.
- 3.2 To take part in implementing the child's Care Plan, and support the child to achieve good outcomes specifically linked to their physical and emotional health, ethnicity, culture, behaviour and development, identity, self-care skills, social presentation, education, family and social relationships.
- 3.3 To promote contact with birth family members and other people important to the child as per their agreed care plan.
- 3.4 To ensure that children are looked after as if they were a member of the family.
- 3.5 To ensure children are encouraged in a positive understanding of their origins, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation and culture.
- 3.6 To ensure that children are kept safe from harm and abuse.
- 3.7 Not to administer any form of physical sanction or corporal punishment, including smacking, pushing or shaking.
- 3.8 To comply with the terms of the Placement Plan and Care Plan in respect of each child placed.
- 3.9 To notify Telford & Wrekin Council immediately of any serious illness or other serious occurrence concerning the child, including incidents where a child has to be restrained for their own safety or that of others, is being bullied, sexually exploited or goes missing.
- 3.10 To allow the child to be removed from the carers' home in a manner consistent with the welfare of the child and the carers by the responsible authority or (as the case may be) the area authority.



- 3.11 To allow the supervising Adoption Social Worker and child's Social Worker access to their home at any reasonable time.
- 3.12 To attend identified Post Approval training courses and complete learning and development activities relevant to placements and their own personal development.
- 3.13 To meet the needs of the child placed arising from his/her culture, race, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation and language, as far as is practicable. In the case where these differ from that of the carer, specific actions and plans will be put in place to meet, as far as possible, the child's needs.
- 3.14 All carers need to comply and co-operate with inspections undertaken by Ofsted who are an independent inspectorate for all Social Care Services in England.
- 3.15 All carers are to comply with Telford & Wrekin's policies regarding the protection of children from abuse or neglect during placements, acceptable measures of behaviour management, discipline and control, Safe Care and unauthorised absences of a child from a carer's home.
- 3.16 Carers are expected to take children to family events and on holiday unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- 3.17 **Taking out of school** - the education of children in the care of Telford & Wrekin Council is given the highest priority and as such children are expected to attend school regularly and on time. Any absence should only be as a result of illness. Any other exceptional reason for absence or intended absence from school should be discussed and agreed with the child's Social Worker

#### **4 Placement of children**

- 4.1 On the placement of children to be looked after, carers will receive:
  - Referral & Information Record and Chronology providing details of the child
  - Placement Information Record & Agreements and essential contact details
  - Information will be provided on any additional risks the child may pose, or be posed to the child by any other person(s).
- 4.2 The Placement Plan and Agreement will be completed between the Authority and carer at the point of placement. It will detail those decisions that will be delegated to the carer and detail any extra support available to meet the child's needs. The Care Plan Part 1 & 2 will also be provided.
- 4.3 When the Placement Plan highlights any significant risk to the child a risk assessment will be completed.
- 4.4 The Adoption Social Worker will complete the risk and fostering support plan at the point of placement.



- 4.5 At the time of placement the vulnerability and associated risks of a child going missing or absconding must be considered. Children who are known to behave in this way must have a risk assessment completed. This risk assessment will consider the need to involve the police or any other person in the search when children go missing.
- 4.6 Carers will be required to provide full details about the child including;
- Full description of the child including clothing
  - When the child was last seen
  - Family and friends addresses
  - Previous history of going missing
  - Legal status
  - Any circumstances which increase the risk to the child

If the appropriate documents and information have not been given by the time of placement the Carer should notify the Adoption Social Worker immediately.

## **5 Unplanned endings and disruption**

- 5.1 Telford & Wrekin is committed to maximising placement stability for children and young people who are looked after. The service is committed to learning from breakdowns and disruptions and using that knowledge to inform the care planning of looked after children, both now and in the future. Reflections on unplanned moves demonstrate the essential value of early intervention when issues begin to arise in placements in preventing these moves.
- 5.2 If it becomes apparent that a fostering for adoption placement is at risk of ending with an unplanned move the child's Social Worker will liaise with all those involved to set up a care planning meeting specifically to focus on placement stability. The aim will be to ensure that universal or targeted resources and/or specialist services are identified and put into place to prevent a change of placement where this is not in the child/young person's best interest.
- 5.3 The focussed care planning meeting will consider the nature and potential risks to the current placement and what needs to happen to support placement stability. There may be several meetings held during the course of a placement.
- 5.4 In some circumstances a care planning meeting can become a Placement Learning Review Meeting (disruption) during the course of the discussion. A Placement Learning Review Meeting will take place each time where either:
- An unplanned move has taken place prior to a Placement Stability meeting taking place; or
  - A focussed care planning meeting has been unsuccessful in maintaining a placement.

## **6. Notification**



6.1 Carers are to give immediate written notification to the authority, with full particulars of:

- Any intended change of address.
- Any change to the composition of the household, arrivals and departures.
- Any further request by carers to undertake Fostering.
- Any pending court cases, convictions, arrests, police interviews or cautions of any nature relating to any member of the household over 10 years of age, or anyone who is a regular visitor to the household.
- Any intended childminding.
- Any other changes in personal circumstances and any other event affecting the carer's capacity to care for any children placed, or the suitability of the carer's household.eg significant illness, bereavement or separation.
- Any disciplinary action by an employer.

## 7 **Confidentiality**

7.1 Normally, Telford & Wrekin will not divulge information about the carers outside of the authority without their consent. An exception may be made if this affects the safety of children and others.

7.2 Carers are to ensure that any information passed to them relating to any children placed, or their families, is not disclosed to any person without the consent of the responsible authority.

7.3 Carers are to treat as confidential the content of all meetings they may attend in relation to the children they care for.

7.4 Carers are to be familiar with the department's policies in relation to secure records as evidenced in the Foster Carer's Handbook.

7.5 **Conflict of Interest:** The Children Act 1989 Guidance & Regulations Volume 4 (5.35) allows for carers or a member of their household to work for the Fostering Service but care must be taken to avoid any actual or perceived conflict of interest

- Any interest from employees of Telford & Wrekin Council will be considered on an individual basis to determine whether there is a conflict of interest.
- In general terms anyone working within the Fostering/Adoption Service will not be considered to become a foster carer for Telford & Wrekin. Neither will staff working in a managerial, social work or other professional role within Children's Social Care (please refer to the Conflict of Interest Guidance).

## 8 **Allegations, Concerns and Complaints**

Information regarding allegations and concerns can be found on the Council's website on Tri.ex and can be found here:

[http://www.proceduresonline.com/shropshire/childcare/p\\_alleg\\_against\\_adopt.html](http://www.proceduresonline.com/shropshire/childcare/p_alleg_against_adopt.html)



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- 8.1 Any allegations that a carer has caused significant harm to a child in their care will be dealt with according to Telford & Wrekin, or Shropshire procedures. In the event that carers are not permitted to accept further placements pending investigation, the carers will receive written notification from the relevant Team Manager.
- 8.2 The Adoption Service will ensure that carers are provided with information and support in respect of any such allegations, including the assistance of the independent Fostering Network Mediation and Advice Service.
- 8.3 Carers with general queries, concerns or suggestions concerning the operation of the Fostering or Adoption Service are advised to speak to their supervising Adoption Social Worker, or their Team Manager, in the first instance.
- 8.4 Carers with comments or concerns in relation to the Care Plan for any child placed should contact the child's Social Worker, or their Team Manager in the first instance.
- 8.5 Carers who wish to make specific representations or complaints about Telford & Wrekin, or Shropshire, its staff or services will be directed to the Councils' Complaints Procedure.
- 8.6 Carers who choose to withdraw from the Fostering for Adoption arrangement are asked to submit their resignation in writing to the Team Manager (Fostering Service). Carers resignations will be presented to the Fostering Panel and a further letter will be sent following this
- 8.7 A carer may, at any point, give written notice that they wish to resign from the role; in which case their approval is automatically **terminated 28 days after receipt of the notice** by the Fostering Service Regulations 28(13). Given that the intention for a Fostering for Adoption placement will conclude with adoption, the Joint Adoption Agency anticipates that resignation will be exceptional.

**9 Carer Review**

- 9.1 The purpose of the Annual Review is to assess carers continued suitability to foster. Carer Review Meetings will be held at least annually as a minimum and whenever there is a significant change of circumstances. Each review meeting will consider the placements made, the outcomes for children that have been achieved, identified learning and development needs of carers and the extent to which these have been met. Any changes to the household will also be considered, as well as any amendments required to this Fostering for Adoption Agreement, or to terms of approval. The review will make a recommendation regarding carers continued suitability to foster.
- 9.2 Review meetings will usually be held in the carer's own home, and chaired by a member of staff from someone independent of the supervising Adoption Social Worker. The comments and views of social workers for young people placed, and any children of the carer's family will be taken into account.



- 9.3 All reviews are presented to the Fostering Panel, and the Agency Decision Maker who will decide on the ongoing suitability of the carers to foster, as well as the terms of their fostering approval. If your review recommended a change in your approval you will be invited to attend panel.
- 9.4 Following the panel recommendations being agreed by the Agency Decision Maker, a new Fostering for Adoption Agreement is provided which must be signed and returned.
- 9.5 Carers will be allowed 28 calendar days from receipt of the letter to consider any change of approval, as they have a right to reconsider this. The letter makes clear how to make representation to panel. If carers are unhappy with the change, they are able to contact their Supervising Social Worker to seek their guidance and they can arrange for a return to Fostering Panel to which the carer will be invited.
- 9.6 The names and addresses of all foster carers approved by Telford & Wrekin Council's Fostering Service, will be entered on the Telford & Wrekin Foster Carer Register.

## **10 Children/Young People away from the Placement.**

- 10.1 All looked after children should be encouraged, and be given the same opportunity for making and sustaining friendships as their peers. The 'care' status of a child or young person should not inhibit them from having overnight or short stays away from the foster home.
- 10.2 When the issues of unplanned stays arise, the carer is placed in a position of responsibility where the wishes and feelings of the child must be considered alongside the need to protect them.
- 10.3 The carer's discretion to give permission for short stays should be based on their knowledge of the child, their friends and the friend's family.

Unplanned stays could include;

- Sleepovers with friends
  - Going out for the day with a friend's family and will be back late
  - Going away with a friend's family for a few days
  - Child unable to return from planned day out due to emergency e.g. weather, car breakdown etc.
- 10.4 In all cases carers should report their decisions regarding unplanned stays to the:
- Child's Social Worker
  - Emergency Duty Team (E.D.T)
  - Adoption Social Worker
- 10.5 The placement plan will detail the delegated authority that the carer will be given in relation to each child they care for.

**11 Carers' Training and Development.**

- 11.1 All carers will have a Personal Development Plan (PDP) which will be reviewed annually as part of the annual review process. The plan will be produced in partnership by the carer and Adoption Social Worker.
- 11.2 Carers are expected to achieve the targets set within their PDP/Review.
- 11.3 All carers will be expected to undertake the core training programme as agreed within their PDP within 12 months of approval.
- 11.4 All carers are expected to undertake a minimum number of hours in training and development activities which will be specified in the PDP/ Review and should be no less than 24 hours annually. Such activities include attending adoption support groups, foster carer forums, briefings, events, training, E learning, guided learning, and reading.
- 11.5 All carers are expected to achieve the Training, Development and Support Standards for Foster Care within 12 months of approval, and will be expected to produce a portfolio of evidence that meets the areas of competency required.
- 11.6 All carers will be expected to keep their portfolio of evidence up to date.



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**I / We acknowledge our willingness to be bound by the terms of this Fostering for Adoption Agreement.**

**Signed  
(Foster Carer)**

**Date:**

**Signed  
(Foster Carer)**

**Date:**

**Signed on behalf of the Adoption and Fostering Service**

**Team Manager, Fostering Service**

**Date:**