



Foster Carer's Charter

"Your commitment to the child through
our commitment to you"



A child's relationship with their foster carer can make the biggest difference in the child's life.

- Our aim is to ensure that the children and young people looked after by our foster carers experience as full a life as possible
- We aspire to supporting children and young people to develop their own identities and reach their potential

And....

- Above all we want the children and young people living with our foster carers to feel as much a part of their foster family as possible

Park Foster Care's commitment to you to make this happen

- Working in Partnership with you
- Accurate information sharing
- Clarity about delegated responsibility
- Support for you and your family
- A clear learning and development pathway
- Fair treatment
- Communication and consultation

Here at Park Foster Care we recognise the enormous contribution you make as a foster carer. We value the skills, experience and knowledge that each of our foster carers brings to the role. Park's Foster Carers Charter is our pledge to support you in the amazing job that you do as a foster carer.

Commitment 1: Working in Partnership

At Park Foster Care 'Working in Partnership' is not just a phrase, it is an expectation of our working relationship with you. What you have to say is important and we will strive to ensure that you and the child are empowered to play an active role in the care planning decisions.

We will:

- Ensure that we and other professionals respect your role as a competent and essential member of the team around your foster child
- Value your skills and expertise equally to those of other professionals

Commitment 2: Information

Everybody has a story and for a foster carer the story of the child is invaluable. At Park Foster Care we will ensure that you are given accurate and comprehensive information relating to the child.

We will:

- Ensure that there is a 'Placement Agreement' drawn up in discussion with you and agreed with you in advance or immediately after a child is placed with you
- Ensure you have a copy of the child's most recent Local Authority Care Plan in addition to the child's placement request (and Child Permanence report if available)
- Support you by attending all statutory reviews with you, care planning meetings and any other relevant meetings



Commitment 3: Clarity about Decisions

We recognise that in order for children to live a full family life foster carers must be able to make decisions regarding the children they foster. Park Foster Care regard the issue of 'delegated authority' as a fundamental factor in reducing the sense of difference for foster children.

We will:

- Whenever possible make sure that the plans for your foster child are clear at the start of the foster placement so that you and everybody else knows who is responsible for what
- Support you to make reasonable, timely and appropriate decisions for your foster child in making sure that they are not disadvantaged for being in foster care
- Strive to ensure that the child's parents understand the role of our foster carers in a manner that does not exclude or encroach on their rights



Commitment 4: Support

We recognise that fostering can be an isolating and challenging task and appropriate and timely support makes all the difference to the fostering family and to the child in your care.

We will:

- Respond positively to requests for additional support;
- Provide you with high quality supervision visit you at least monthly increasing in response to need;
- Value and support your own children with support groups and advice;
- Formally review your progress, achievements and support needs every year giving you honest feedback;
- Provide you with access to 24 hour support from our Supervising Social Workers;
- Access to our Education Advisor;
- Prompt payment of allowances, expenses and fees;
- Ensure a monthly carers support group within your area;
- In more complex parenting situations provide you with access to our one to one consultations and / or psychological input



Commitment 5: Learning and Development

At Park Foster Care we are committed to your learning journey as a foster carer. Most foster carers already have the right aptitude and personal attributes that make them good carers. However we recognise that being a foster carer brings with it some very difficult challenges. We know that you are as committed as we are in getting things right for the children you are looking after and we will provide you with learning and development opportunities to reflect that commitment.

We will:

- Provide you and your family with appropriate and relevant training by trainers who understand the fostering task
- Invite you to attend a monthly Reflective Practice and / or Parenting Forum group at a venue accessible to you; providing a regular opportunity for carers to reflect upon their practice, sharing experiences and advice with each other and one of our supervising social worker's
- Provide one to one Reflective Practice sessions, where appropriate, to help you to develop your skills in responding positively to children with more complex emotional needs
- Support you to achieve your TSD (Training, Support & Development) Standards
- Provide a clear pathway for training that links with our financial reward programme for foster carers



Commitment 6: Fair Treatment

We recognise that foster carers have a right to be treated fairly, no matter what the circumstances.

We will:

- Consult with you before changing terms and conditions
- Ensure openness in all of our discussions and communications with you
- Ensure that you are treated with respect, kept informed and provided with support should you be subject to an allegation
- Provide a framework for dealing with allegations and adhere to our agreed timescales

Commitment 7: Communication, consultation and access

We believe that open and honest dialogue is the key to a good relationship.

We will:

- Ensure that we consult with you in a meaningful way on matters that affect you
- Give you timely feedback from consultations.
- Keep you informed of events and changes within the agency via our quarterly newsletter
- Access through complaints and compliments procedure
- Access to senior staff at any time

Park Foster Carers commitment to Park Foster Care

Commitment 1: Working in Partnership

We will demonstrate a high standard of care and conduct.

We will:

- Demonstrate our expertise and make use of our skills to the best of our ability
- Provide children with an experience of family life
- Attend meetings about the children and young people we care for
- Work with the agencies involved with the child such as school, health and religious establishments
- Show a willingness to work with birth parents, wider family and people significant in a child's life
- Meet the standards set out in fostering regulations and guidance and follow departmental policies and procedures
- Respect confidentiality

Commitment 2: Respect for the Child

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

We will:

- Respect and promote a child's religious, linguistic and cultural heritage
- Afford the same level of protection and care to a child as we would our own child in accordance with the national minimum standards
- Ensure the child has the right to make decisions regarding their own lives, as appropriate to their age and understanding

Commitment 3: Information

We believe that open and honest dialogue is the key to a good relationship.

We will:

- Inform our supervising social worker about changes in our household
- Inform our supervising social worker about any difficulties that arise for us

Commitment 4: Learning, Development and Support

We must be enabled to access learning and development opportunities throughout our fostering career. This will ensure we have the skills and knowledge we need, and allow us to develop our practice in order that we can help transform the lives of the children we foster.

We will:

- Be prepared to develop our skills throughout our fostering career
- Evidence that they can meet the seven standards of the TSD, within twelve months of approval
- Attend relevant training
- Take up opportunities offered to us
- Let you know if we are unable to attend
- Attend and contribute to support groups.

Commitment 5: Communication and Consultation

We believe that open and honest dialogue is the key to a good relationship.

We will:

- Respond to local consultations and discussion in order to inform the development of the service
- Meet with councillors, service managers and others in order to promote dialogue and a good working relationship

