



Trafford Foster Carers' Charter



This Charter sets out what is expected from the Trafford Children, Families and Wellbeing Service in terms of the services and support provided to all of its approved Foster Carers. The Charter also sets out what is expected from Foster Carers approved by the service.

Children Come First

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

Foster carers, Trafford Council and other professionals will work together to ensure that children come first by:

- Ensuring services are available to children and families to enable children to reach their potential, regardless of their background
- Ensuring that children and young people in foster care experience as full a life as possible
- Ensuring that children feel part of the foster family and do not stand out as Looked After Children
- Ensuring that children and young people are given every support to develop their own identities and aspirations, fulfil their potential and take advantage of all opportunities to promote their talents and skills
- Ensuring that children are listened to and their views are acted on
- Ensuring that children have a 'secure base' with their foster carers

To make this happen:

Family Placement Team's Responsibilities and Commitments:

Our Responsibilities:

The aim of the Trafford Children, Families and Wellbeing Service is to provide services to children, young people and their families within a safe and secure foster care environment where this is required.

Our Commitments:

- Provide the best quality **Placements and Matching**
- Provide on-going **Support to foster carers** to enable them to provide therapeutic parenting and have appropriate short breaks from caring
- Provide **Training and Development**
- Provide **Involvement and Support around Decision Making**
- Work in a **Professional and Respectful Partnership**
- To **Operate in an Accountable and Open Fashion**



Foster Carers' Responsibilities and Commitments:

Our Responsibilities:

As foster carers our aim is to provide a safe, healthy and nurturing environment for children and young people in care.

Our Commitments: We will

- **Respect the child/young person** in our care
- Be a **Positive Adult Role Model**
- Provide **Stability, Care and an Opportunity for Development**
- Be an **Advocate for all aspects of the Child's Development**
- Work in **Partnership with Key Professionals**

What Trafford Foster Carers can expect from Trafford:

Placements Information and Matching

The Trafford Children, Families and Wellbeing Service recognise that information is vital in order for appropriate matching and to enable foster carers to provide the best possible care and support. Trafford will therefore:

- Ensure all placements have gone through the relevant matching process
- Ensure that you have the correct and up to date Looked After Children documentation so that you can care for children safely and securely
- Make available relevant clear information with regards to all financial matters including allowances and fees
- Make available all relevant departmental policies and procedures



Individual Support

In Trafford we recognise that the role of a foster carer can be a challenging one and we understand that timely support can make a positive difference to your Fostering experience. Trafford will ensure that:

- All carers will have their own allocated Supervising Social Worker who will provide high quality supervision on a quarterly basis and advocate for you when required
- We respond positively to requests for additional support in a timely manner via a variety of methods of contact
- We provide opportunities to attend foster care support groups on a monthly basis
- We will provide honest and open feedback
- We provide fees and allowances that are competitive and that are paid on time
- We provide equipment as and when required (when assessed as a need)
- We will support placements that come under particular pressure ensuring placement stability by enabling you to get additional support where identified

Training and Development

Trafford Children, Families and Wellbeing Service believe that you should have access to training and development opportunities throughout your careers. We will support you to develop your skills and knowledge as a foster carer so that you can provide the best care for children placed with you. We will:

- Run **at least** three Skills to Foster training courses for fostering applicants each year. We can also access Skills to Foster training in neighbouring local authorities to ensure applicants do not experience delay in starting the initial training
- Work in partnership to develop your individual, personal and professional development. This would be developed through your regular formal supervision and reviews
- Provide you with a flexible training programme that will enable you to meet the needs of the child(ren) you care for and in line with statutory requirements for foster carers
- Provide you with other development opportunities which make the best use of your skills and expertise, such as mentoring or providing training or support
- Acknowledge the commitment shown by carers towards their own development through the payment for skills scheme



Involvement and Support around Decision Making

Trafford Children, Families and Wellbeing Service recognise that as Foster carers you must have a say in the decision making regarding the children in your care. We believe that an open and honest relationship is integral to this. We will:

- Ensure that a pre placement meeting takes place prior to any formal placement being made (except in emergency situations where the meeting will take place as soon as possible i.e. within 72 hours) and that your views are recorded accordingly in the child's plan
- Ensure that you have written confirmation of your delegated responsibilities and that wherever possible, you are able to make everyday decisions about the child/children in your care
- Provide professional supervision and access to support/focus groups
- Ensure that we consult you on matters relating to your role and responsibilities
- Provide opportunities for foster carers' representatives to meet with senior managers on a regular basis and for the outcomes of these meetings to be circulated

Professional and Respectful Partnership

Trafford Children, Families and Wellbeing Service recognise that you have the skills to make a difference to the everyday lives of children in care. As a team we will:

- Ensure that your skills are valued
- Respect confidentiality
- Treat you with respect and without discrimination as a professional who understands the care needs of the children in your care
- Ensure that the service we provide meets the statutory guidance, regulations and standards
- Recognise the wealth of knowledge carers possess about the children and take this into account when care planning and decision making
- Ensure any complaints are taken seriously and are dealt with fairly and promptly



Operate in an Accountable and Open Fashion

Trafford Children, Families and Wellbeing Service recognise that you have a right to be treated to a fair service. As a team we will:

- Consult with you at every opportunity
- Provide a framework for support
- Provide a clear procedure in respect of allegations, complaints and compliments, and adhere to relevant timescales
- Listen to you with sensitivity and have an understanding of your feelings acknowledging your emotional involvement
- Inform you of any decisions made in a prompt manner
- Consult you and seek your views
- Provide you with access to independent support should you require it

What the Family Placement Team can expect from Foster Carers:

Respect for the child/young person

As foster carers we will demonstrate that every child should be supported in achieving their individual needs: We will:

- Develop a meaningful relationship with the child
- Show a willingness to work with birth parents, wider family and people significant in the child's life
- Be committed to the children placed in our care
- Respect the children's wishes and feelings



Be a Positive Adult Role Model

As foster carers we will always act as a positive adult role model for the children in our care: We will:

- Set positive examples by promoting appropriate values, attitudes, and behaviours
- Develop a meaningful relationship with the children promoting a positive experience of family life and a 'secure base'
- Ensure that every child is safeguarded and treated fairly
- Promote contact with their birth family or identified others
- Be open and honest with the children in our care

Provide Stability, Care and an Opportunity for Development

As foster carers we will ensure that there is a stable environment to allow the children in our care to grow, develop and achieve. We will;

- Promote educational attainment working with the children placed in our care and other identified professionals
- Promote the identity needs of the children in our care, such as their religious and cultural beliefs



Be an Advocate for all aspects of the Children's Development

As foster carers we will always act in the best interests of the children in our care: We will:

- Advocate for the children's best interest at all times
- Support the children in our care to help them to counter possible bullying and discrimination as a result of their care status

To Work in Partnership with Key Professionals

As foster carers we will work in partnership with all professionals for the benefit of the children in our care: We will:

- Attend meetings about the children that we care for
- Work with the agencies involved with the child such as school, health and religious establishment
- Work to develop a therapeutic parenting approach
- Respect confidentiality
- Inform our supervising social worker about the changes in our household
- Inform our supervising social worker about any difficulties or concerns that arise
- Work to the National Minimal Standards and relevant local policies and procedures



Family Placement Team and Foster Carers would like to thank the children on the Children in Care Council who have contributed to the development of this Charter.