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Section 1. About Fair Ways Fostering
Statement of Purpose 2015-2016

Introduction

Aims and Objectives
Fair Ways Fostering aims to provide excellent care in a family setting. We have a commitment to a therapeutic model with a child–centred approach and to providing all children/young people with consistency and stability in order to enable them to reach their full potential. We work in partnership with children/young people, their parents, foster carers and local authorities. Anti-oppressive/discriminatory practice will permeate all aspects of our work, taking into consideration sexuality, gender, culture, faith and disability of both fostered children/young people and carers.

We will provide intensive support for our foster carers and young people. This will be underpinned by a commitment to meeting the learning and training needs of all our foster carers and employees.

Services Provided
At Fair Ways, we have capacity to offer placements to all age ranges, however the principle part of our work is for young people 0 – 18 years old. Though not the main part of our work, we can maintain placements beyond 18 years old, in line with the young person’s needs, as part of Staying Put guidelines and for those qualifying for adult services. We will seek to offer a continuum of care to children and young people and may link young people from our residential homes whom have been assessed and prepared for fostering. We will also plan for the independence of young people and where appropriate place within our own Post-16 homes. We also provide Parent and Child placements within the department and have capacity to link these in with Fair Ways’ own Residential Family Centre and/or provide full in-house parenting assessments to complement the service (there is no upper age limit for the parents in such cases). Though we seek to transition the young people in and out of our service in a carefully planned way, we understand that this is not necessarily possible and as such we will also offer emergency placements to local authorities.

Supervision and Support
All our foster Carers have an allocated Supervising Social Worker who has a case load of no more than 10 families. The Supervising Social Worker facilitates 4 weekly supervision to their carers, or more frequently should the foster placement’s or carer’s needs require this. All foster Carers will have an unannounced visit every 12 months.
We realise that many of these children with specific needs require a higher level of supervision and support. We have the resources available in Fair Ways Fostering to ensure that the needs of both the carers and looked after children are effectively met. We have access to experienced, skilled support workers and we will work together in an integrated, planned manner to ensure that the best possible packages of care are provided to all children placed with us. We offer a 24 hour Support Service to all foster carers, 365 days a year, providing emotional and practical support and advice.

We will assess and plan for the therapeutic needs of a child placed. We have a Head of Clinical Services and Therapeutic development (RMN) who is in post to ensure that we are able to complete where necessary, thorough assessments of therapeutic need to ensure that interventions we offer are specific and tailored to the young people placed. In addition, we will also provide professional therapeutic support to our foster carers as required. This will either be on an individual or group basis. At Fair Ways, we are committed to the belief that supporting and developing the carer will maximise the success of a placement and minimise the chances of disruption. In our experience, many foster care placements break down because the work with the child/young person is seen as totally separate from the work with the foster family. Professionals can often inadvertently contribute to these tensions, resulting in foster carers feeling distrustful and isolated. Within Fair Ways, we will seek to work with the child within the family context, helping to identify destructive and negative patterns of behaviour, and working holistically to develop strategies for changing these.

Duty Service and Matching Considerations
Upon receipt of any referral, the local authority will be asked to submit as much relevant information that they have on the child/young person. We give our foster carers the assurance that all information that we have in relation to a prospective referral will be passed on to them. When we have a detailed assessment of a potential service user’s needs, we will look to identify an appropriate placement through a careful matching process. If our identified carer(s) agrees to the matching, their assessment will be forwarded to the local authority social work team. A planning meeting will then be convened between the local authority social worker, Fair Ways social worker, the child/young person and their parents (where appropriate) to discuss and agree the care package that is required. Children are central to the placement process and engaging them effectively is crucial to the successful outcome of all placements. All Fair Ways Foster Carers will have prepared a “This is us” book that will wherever possible be shared with the child in the early stages of the matching process. We will use our skills and experience to ensure that children and young people’s views are listened to and respected in these early stages, and are held central for the duration of the placement. Wherever possible, we will have a planned introduction period to assist in achieving this aim. We will ensure that all children/young people have a care plan in line with CLA guidelines and that this is monitored and reviewed regularly within the looked after children framework.

Expectations and Responsibilities
Fairway’s supervising social workers will provide the local authority with updates on the progress of the child/young person. In conjunction with the foster carer, they will provide information for the
CLA reviews and will ensure that the carer and child are prepared for them, accompanying them to any statutory meetings or reviews.

All Fair Ways Foster Carers will uphold and maintain the standards outlined in the Fostering Agreement. This will be monitored and reviewed through the supervisory process and the carers’ annual review.

All Fair Ways Foster Carers will uphold and follow up any Complaints via the Complaints Procedures, using Fair Ways’ Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures. For more information, please refer to the complaints procedure within our Policies and Procedures document.

Fair Ways will uphold the regulations of the Care Standards Act 2000 and the Fostering Services Regulations for England 2011 (amended 2013), and in addition it will specify certain criteria in relation to its own practice. At least one carer in the household is identified as the primary carer. Their responsibility will be to ensure that the care, educational, health and leisure needs of any children/young people placed with them will be promoted and developed. It will also enable them to promote positive contact with the birth family where appropriate and possible and assist the child/young person in their care to have a greater understanding of their life history and present circumstances. We will liaise with the local authority to help ensure that any young person placed with us is prepared for adult life and is specifically equipped to deal with the issues related to leaving care. In agreement and negotiation with the local authority we would be able to provide an effective leaving care support package.

Recruitment and Assessment of Foster Carers

Fair Ways is committed to actively recruiting a diverse range of foster carers in order to meet the varying needs of children/young people referred to us. We have two dedicated recruitment managers who oversee and supervise the recruitment process.

We have a range of independent assessors as well as in house social workers that we utilise to undertake all fostering assessments. More so with our in house assessors, but all assessors have a solid understanding of the department and are able to offer valuable insight into the team, the ethos and the support available to prospective foster carers. When in house social workers are used, we may look to link them to the carers as their supervising social worker if they successfully pass panel, as the working relationship is already well established at that point. The chair of our panel is an independent member and is an experienced childcare practitioner. The other independent members on the central panel list are representatives of health and education. In addition we have an experienced independent foster carer and an adult who was looked after as a child/young person on the central list.

Service Structure

Fair Ways is the trading name of Fairways Care (UK) Ltd. Registered in England No 4460658 Fairways Fostering is a wholly owned subsidiary of the registered charity Fair Ways Foundation (Registration no. 1, 159, 854).
The charity’s objectives include:

- Address social inclusion
- Improve health and wellbeing
- Promote education and literacy
- Support vulnerable children and young people
- Support vulnerable people and families

Fair Ways Fostering is a division of Fair Ways, based in Fair Ways House, Mount Pleasant Road, Southampton, Hampshire. The Fostering service is organised, overseen and marketed by our Head of Fostering who also oversees the Recruitment Managers. The day to day running of the service is managed by our full-time Fostering Manager.

At present Fair Ways have over 40 active, full-time, trained foster carers (who are a mixture of couples and single carers) and there are over 43 children placed within these families. We also aim to have a small number of carers reserved for the provision of short breaks.

We are committed to employing experienced childcare practitioners who have a child-centred approach, are enthusiastic, self-motivated and are willing to undertake training to enhance existing skills and knowledge. We expect our staff and foster carers to adopt the PACE approach (Dan Hughes) which is the department’s preferred model of care. We provide an 18 week Nurturing Attachments course based on this (created and developed by Kim Golding) to all carers in order to help achieve this goal and promote resilient placements. This training programme provides our carers and staff comprehensive understanding of the complexities that exist in the relationships they have with those in their care, but also show how they can use that understanding to transform these relationships.

**The fostering team consists of:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Qualification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Toby Oakley</td>
<td>Head of Fostering Services</td>
<td>HSC Level 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natalie Harris</td>
<td>Registered Manger of Fostering</td>
<td>BSc(Hons), HSC Level 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claire Ghosh</td>
<td>Assistant Manager of Fostering</td>
<td>MSc SW, HSC Level 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paula Lewis</td>
<td>Recruitment Manager</td>
<td>BSc(Hons) SW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gemma Olden</td>
<td>Recruitment Manager</td>
<td>DIPSW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fey Audin</td>
<td>Foster Care Administrator</td>
<td>BA(Hons) QTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicola Wills</td>
<td>Supervising/Assessing Social Worker</td>
<td>BA(Hons) SW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vikki Mackinnon</td>
<td>Supervising/Assessing Social Worker</td>
<td>BA(Hons) SW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanya Highmore</td>
<td>Supervising/Assessing Social Worker</td>
<td>BSc(Hons) SW</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
All members of staff have been rigorously screened and have undergone enhanced DBS checks. All recruitment in line with DfES safer recruitment, NMS for Childrens Homes and Foster Care, and Fostering Services Regulations.

**Other Key Contacts:**
Managing Director and Responsible Individual for the service: Mac McHugh

Chief Inspector: Ofsted
Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann’s Square
Manchester
M2 7LA
Enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
0300 123 1231

This statement of purpose will be formally reviewed on an annual basis and will be updated and modified where necessary. If you have any comments or suggestions in relation to this document or the service please contact our Fostering Manager Natalie Harris by email natalie.harris@fairway.co
Section 2. Looking After the Child
Charter of Rights for Children and Young People

**General Rights**

- To give the best possible quality care, which promotes equality and rejects all forms of discrimination, including those based on disability, sexuality, race, colour, sex, religion, or ethnic or social origin.

- To family life, preferably with their own family, but if this is not possible then with a foster family.

- To develop and positively fulfil their physical, intellectual and emotional potential.

- To be free from all forms of abuse and exploitation.

- To be treated with fairness, dignity and respect.

- To be treated in a way that is appropriate for their age and level of understanding.

**Specific Rights**

- To have detailed knowledge of their personal and family circumstances and to be helped to come to terms with and accept the implications of this information.

- To be provided with a suitable environment in which their own culture, language and religion can be maintained.

- To be actively involved in all decisions made about their care, and to have their views and opinions heard and respected.

- To be helped to record events from their own perspective and for these accounts to be part of their records.

- To have access to high quality medical care.

- To be provided with a high quality education in an age appropriate manner.

- To know the contents of all reports that might affect the decisions made about them, dependent on their level of understanding and age appropriateness.
• To a complaints procedure - for hearing their complaints about aspects of their care that they are dissatisfied with. See Complaints Procedure.

• To be enabled and able to make complaints without fear of retribution.

• To be involved in the purchase of personal items like clothes and food.

• To space and privacy.

• To have independent time with Fair Ways’ supervising social worker, as well as their local authority social worker, to discuss issues and concerns about the placement.

• To be given a copy of this Charter of their rights along with the children’s guide and complaints procedure.

Furthermore, Fair Ways will actively involve looked after children/ young people in discussions about the Charter of their rights and will modify, add to and amend accordingly.
Code of Professional Conduct and Standard Practice of Fair Ways Fostering Foster Carers

Fair Ways is committed to a code of professional conduct and standard practice for their foster carers. This will help to ensure that every looked after child will be safeguarded against abuse, and their welfare secured and promoted. All Fair Ways Staff and Foster Carers will act in a professional manner, with a comprehensive training programme and an excellent support and supervision programme underpinning this. Each carer will be expected to keep a daily diary / recording of the day’s events, this will include day to day events, significant events, sanctions, medical treatment, accidents and anything else relevant to the child. The following standards will be monitored and annually assessed within the existing foster carers reviewing process to ensure continuing improvements in excellence.

Foster carers will protect their foster child from abuse or exploitation

- No foster carer will engage in any form of corporal punishment in relation to any child or young person in his/ her care. This includes smacking, pushing, slapping, and punching. They will also not use threats of physical punishment or use inappropriate exclusion. All Fair Ways Fostering foster carers will receive TEAM TEACH Training (see TEAM TEACH and behavioural management policies).

- They will undertake training in caring for a child who has been abused enabling them to recognise signs of abuse and depression. Through training and supervision we will give them management strategies enabling them to raise the child’s self-esteem and confidence. They will practice safe caring at all times (see TEAM TEACH and behavioural management policies).

- The supervising social worker will always be consulted before the child/ young person has an overnight stay away from the placement. Contact with birth family or friends will be agreed by all parties within the initial placement agreement plan. The use of babysitters is permitted providing the foster carer has made all appropriate checks that any reasonable parent would before leaving them in their care. Additionally, as far as possible foster carers will work with the ‘buddying system’ as a means of support and respite (see foster carers agreement).

- The foster carer will always act within the policies and procedures given to them by Fair Ways. They will provide adequate supervision and appropriate boundary setting etc. The foster carer will ensure that the child they look after is given security and protection, whilst promoting their well-being.

- If there is any suspicion of abuse the foster carer MUST act according to the child protection guidelines. (See Child Protection Policy, Foster Carers Agreement, and Allegations against foster Carers).

- The foster carer will uphold Fair Ways’ Code of Conduct at all times.
All children looked after by our foster carers will be treated fairly and with dignity and respect

- The foster carers are expected to role-model non-judgemental, anti-discriminatory, and anti-racist practice at all times and challenge any discriminatory statements or behaviour. Furthermore, the foster carers will show understanding and will gain knowledge of a child’s background so as to actively encourage them to maintain their cultural identity and practices, where possible.

- The foster carer must treat all children/young people equally, valuing, protecting and nurturing the child/young person as their own. If applicable and unless the care plan dictates otherwise, the same house rules will be applied equally to the foster child as to the foster parents’ own children, and should be age appropriate.

- House rules and the child’s boundaries must be clear and realistically set through negotiation, so that a sense of security is established. The foster carer will create a non-rejecting, non-threatening atmosphere, which allows mistakes to be made but also encourages responsibility for one’s actions.

- The foster carer must appreciate the importance of a foster child’s contact with their birth family and where appropriate, in accordance with the care plan, will encourage a warm and positive relationship. The foster carer will never criticise a child’s birth family, and will always offer understanding, and promote positive aspects of a child’s family.

- Foster carers will be positive towards a looked after child’s achievements both academically and recreationally. The foster carers will take a keen interest in a child’s progress at school, in their hobbies and in their social groups, as they would do with their own child.

- Fair Ways strives to equip it’s looked after children with the confidence to grow into independent young adults, knowledgeable about their past and secure in their identity. Foster carers have the key role in helping to achieve this through encouraging them to make informed choices and take responsibility for themselves, encouraging routine and self-discipline etc.
Fair Ways Foster Carers will act in a responsible and competent manner

- All foster carers must possess the parenting skills and relevant knowledge of child development and childcare practice to meet the above standard. They will ask for advice and assistance from their supervising social worker if they are unsure of the appropriate response, thus allowing them to fulfil their role efficiently. Ongoing training and supervision will ensure the development of their competencies. (see training policy + guidelines)

- All foster carers will take into account the foster child’s previous parenting experience. They will be provided with all available information on a child/young person.

- The foster carer will always be expected to know where the foster child is and what time they are expected home etc.

- It is the expectation that all under 6 year olds will be supervised constantly, and no under 14 year olds left in the house on their own unless in exceptional and unavoidable circumstances. All children will be supervised in an age appropriate way outside the home.

Fair Ways will offer the foster child placed with them a safe home environment in line with the health and safety standards. (See Health and Safety Policy.)

Foster carers will provide the foster child with a warm, comfortable home environment in which they feel safe and secure, in line with health and safety standards. (See Health and Safety policy.)

Health and Medical Care will be of utmost importance to the foster carer and will be in line with the standards under health and safety.

Fair Ways will support a child to maximise their full potential through access to Education, and productive planning for the future

- Fair Ways will be pro-active in ensuring that all looked after children will either receive education at school, through home tuition, or through alternative provisions. The carers will provide an environment in which learning and education is valued and will fully support each child’s participation in the educational process and help them to achieve their goals.
• The foster carer will be expected to contribute to the delivery of each child’s personal education plan. The foster carer will liaise with relevant professionals to maintain a consistent monitoring of the child’s education to ensure that their potential is being reached.

• It will be part of a foster carer’s responsibility to immediately inform their supervising social worker if a child is experiencing problems at school. If despite every effort this results in suspension/exclusion, all parties will endeavour to have a planned return as soon as possible.

• In the case of 16 years plus children, the foster carer will have an awareness of the opportunities open to them both in further education, modern apprenticeships and in employment. They will facilitate the involvement of the relevant professionals to contribute to a successful outcome. See preparation for independence policy.

**Foster carers will support children/young people to develop emotionally and intellectually to maximise the opportunity to fulfil their potential**

• All children and young people placed with Fair Ways Fostering will be treated as members of the foster carer’s own family. They will not be ignored or made to feel left out.

• Foster carers will be actively involved with them, spending time with them, and praising their achievements however small.

• Foster carers will provide a stimulating environment both within and outside the home giving them opportunities for new experiences.

• Where difficulties arise, carers will liaise with other professionals involved with the child to plan the most effective management techniques and strategies.
Placing a Child

Policy Statement
We believe that in order to promote the best chances of success when placing a child with carers, advance knowledge, information and preparation is crucial. This applies to all parties involved – the child, the carers, the placing authority and our agency. Lack of knowledge and planning around a placement can raise anxiety and/or leads to incompatible matches, which can put significant strain on the placement from the start.

Information shared by the local authority about the child enables initial preparation by providing Fair Ways and our carers an insight into the young person’s background, risks and presenting needs. Such knowledge enables carers’ to respond and prepare for the young person’s placement in a ‘needs led’ and child focused manner. It also allows Fair Ways to ensure all necessary support and services are built in to the placement.

Information on the carers and the agency helps reassure the Placing authority and the child that we are able to meet their needs.

Where possible we encourage a formalised transition process, where introductions to the carers can be made prior to placement, to occur to minimise the potential for worry and anxiety for the young person(s).

Process of preparing for a Placement

1. Identify local resources (The Child’s new world)

   All of our foster carers, during their assessment process, will have already identified areas of development in terms of their geographical location and would have explored what the approximate ages of children/young people they would like to foster. They would be aware of services that would enable development in all aspects of a child/young person’s life i.e.

   Education
   - Local Schools and Colleges
   - Education Welfare
   - Careers Office
   - Play Schools
   - Nurseries

   Health
   - General Practitioner
   - Clinics
   - Health Centres
   - Dentist
• Opticians
• Psychiatrist
• Psychologist
• Drugs Advisory Services
• Family Planning

Leisure

• After school activities
• Leisure Centres
• Sports Centres
• Sports Clubs
• Parks and Recreational areas
• Swimming Pools
• Drama Clubs

After foster carers have been appointed, in conjunction with the carers, Fair Ways social workers will initiate contact with the foster carers’ local educational and health services prior to placing children/young people. This will involve visits to schools, doctors, dentists etc. to make them aware that their services will play an integral part of a placed child/young person’s educational and health needs.

2. **This is us book**

All carers will be expected produce a “This Is Us” book prior to going to panel, which is to be shown to prospective children and placing authorities in advance of a placement commencing. The book is intended to give a visual reference of the carers, their family, and the home the child is being matched to and provide them with an idea of what living there is like on a day-to-day basis. Carers are encouraged to be as creative as they like when producing the book and the style should be representative of their personalities, characteristics and interests. Where possible, we ask that these are now completed digitally, or in a manner that a digital version can be easily made for electronic distribution.

Workshops are available through Fair Ways for carers on how to produce attractive and creative This Is Us Books. These sessions are run by carers experienced in this area.

3. **Carer Profile**

All carers will have a profile written on them once registered. This is a small document outlining the key information about the carer, including a snapshot of their family, their experience, a record of any relevant training they have attended and their terms of registration. This document is intended to be shared with the placing authority as part of the initial matching process.
4. **H&S check**
   The initial assessment as well as the ongoing support and supervision of foster carers must always take health and safety issues into account.
   Prior to going to panel our NEBOSH qualified Health and Safety Manager conducts a full risk assessment on the home to ensure it up to standard and where it is not, gives clear guidance on what work needs to be carried out in order to do. The risk assessment is reviewed every year by the supervising social worker, and then every third year by the Health and Safety Manager.

5. **The Child’s Bedroom**
   The Child’s Bedroom must be prepared and ready to use before the child is placed.
   Children’s bedrooms should be warm, comfortable and decorated/furnished in a manner which is age appropriate and where possible chosen by the child or young person. Children should be encouraged to personalise their space with their own toys, pictures, bedding and memorabilia. This may mean taking the child out to buy new soft furnishings, posters, bedding etc. soon after placing, but it is important the child feels their bedroom is their own.
   A child’s bedroom should be their sanctuary – a place of safety. Children need their privacy respected. They need their own space so that they can learn that they have the right to be safe and private. For some children it is important that they have somewhere to keep their possessions safe. Foster carers must understand how threatening it can be for a child who has been abused to have their privacy invaded.

6. **Placing Information**
   When a child is referred, the Placing Authority will send over information on the child in the referral document, which includes details of their family history, their placement history, any education provision they attend, placement aims/needs, any presenting behaviours and any associated risks. The Referral Document and Incorporated Risk Assessment inform the matching process, so it is imperative these are received before any decision can be made.

7. **Matching Children With Registered Foster Carers**
   We will only offer a placement to the Local Authority if we are satisfied that the identified foster carer is the most suitable placement for meeting the needs and interests of the child/young person, taking into account religion, racial origin, cultural and linguistic background.
   Referrals for placements are considered by the Fostering Manager and Foster Care Team. They will consider the above information and any other provided by the Placing Authority and ascertains whether any available carers can meet that child’s needs. The Fostering Manager will consider the comprehensive information about available carers, encompassing skills, competencies, location etc. Fair Ways will not compromise on keeping the needs and interests of the child/young person as the paramount consideration.
If Fair Ways does not have an available appropriate placement that offers a match for the child/young person referred, we will not offer a placement.

Where potential carers have been identified, information on the child will be shared and discussed with the carers, to enable them to make a decision on whether or not they wish to be put forward for that child. If the carers agree to take the child referred, then Fair Ways will send their assessment and Carer Profile to the child’s social worker. The Manager or Duty Social Worker will discuss the Fair Ways will never force a carer into taking a child. This process is underpinned by our confidentiality agreement.

If the placement identified already has a foster child in place Fair Ways Fostering would consult the first foster child’s local authority social worker prior to placing the second child.

When possible an introduction plan will be agreed, in which case the supervising social worker will meet with the child/young person and their Local Authority social worker to discuss placement family and share their ‘This is us’ portfolio. A transition plan will be devised where the child and carers are able to meet and begin building a relationship prior to the start of the placement.

Where a placement is likely to go ahead, the Duty Social Worker will complete a Matching Form that details all the compatible factors between the prospective carers and child as well as highlighting any areas of need or additional support. This is signed off by the Foster Care Manager before placing.

8. **Formal identification of needs/package prior to placing**

Due to the complex backgrounds of the young people that come into care with Fair Ways, it can be the case that additional services are required in order to support and best enable a successful placement. Where possible we will always seek to identify these prior to the placement commencing in consultation with the prospective carers and the placing authority. Typically, these are:

- Regular respite
- A Support Worker to carry out directed work with the child away from the family home
- Therapy
- Assistance with Family Contact
- Provision of Transport (beyond contractual expectations)

The frequency and limitations of each of these will be negotiated by Fair Ways and the Placing Authority. It can be helpful for the child to access additional professionals outside of the family home; however this should be kept to a minimum. Fair Ways will always seek to provide as much consistency as possible with those who work with the child, for instance where additional support is put in place, we will aim to keep this limited to one or (at most) two workers who regularly visit the child, so as to enable trusting relationships to build.
9. **Placing a child: Initial Placement Meeting and Paperwork**

Fair Ways Fostering will help ensure that the foster carers have copies of the below information:

- Delegated Authority
- Placement Plan
- Essential Info/Placement Information Record
- Medical/Dental Consent
- Core Assessment

It is key to the foster carers’ abilities to meet and understand the young people’s needs that have been placed with them. The Supervising Social Workers will liaise with the placing authority and have the relevant documents passed to the carers when the young person is placed. The local authorities have a duty to provide this information either prior to or on the day of the placement of a young person. This information is key to the foster carers understanding the needs of the young person and addressing any health issues that may arise, if this information cannot be guaranteed then Fair Ways Fostering has the right to refuse the placement of a young person with one of its carers.

There will be a placement planning meeting chaired by the local authority within the first 5 working days of the young person being placed. This planning meeting will be chaired by the placing social workers manager and the placement plan will signed by all parties attending and copies will be provided. The supervising social worker will attend this meeting to support the foster carer. By the end of this meeting the carer should have clear knowledge of their responsibilities within the placement as well as a full understanding of what decisions they do and do not have authority to make (dictated by the Delegated Authority Decision Tool and the Medical Consent).

The ethos of working in partnership is fundamental in achieving positive outcomes for children/young people. Fair Ways is committed to this aim by ensuring that communication and information sharing is open and honest and establishes positive and professional accountability in meeting statutory requirements.

To emphasise this, the identified Fair Ways supervising social worker will produce and send regular review reports to the child’s social worker prior to any CLA review, but also make additional contact when necessary.

10. **Visits, transitions and carers supporting young people in residential.**

Wherever possible, Fair Ways aim to provide the child/young person a transition into their new placement. We believe this can be crucial in enabling a smooth process where the child feels safe and empowered throughout.

Transitions vary in length, but involve a stepped process that proportionately increases the carers’ involvement with the child over a period of time, and allows time for reflection and a chance to resolve any concerns or anxieties before moving in. A transition may involve:
• A face-to-face introduction to the carer
• A day out
• A chance to visit the home (for instance coming for dinner)
• A chance to meet the rest of the family including any birth children
• An overnight stay
• A weekend stay

We aim to achieve as many of these as possible, but it is sometimes not possible due to quick breakdowns of previous placements and the resulting immediate need for a placement.

One of Fair Ways aims is to (where appropriate and safe to do so) transition children from our registered children’s homes into foster care. Where this happens, we facilitate a gradual and carefully planned transition over a period of weeks or months. The above stages are included, but preceded by the carer working with the child in the home.

When carers do not have a placement, they have the option of working in the homes as support workers. What this can enable is a relationship to build between naturally between the carer and a child without any associated pressures. If this is able to happen and the care plan for the child supports it, the idea can be introduced to the child and Fair Ways can negotiate a transition. We have evidenced consistently that this approach dramatically reduces the anxieties around moving homes for all involved, promotes success, and sometimes even opens up opportunities for fostering that were otherwise thought unachievable.

11. Contact

Fair Ways Fostering believes that the promotion and the maintenance of the relationship with a child and the members of their family is crucial to the positive development of their identity and to their long term well-being. Working within each child’s individual care plan and risk assessment in relation to contact, Fair Ways will support and practically and financially assist children in their care to have contact with their family wherever possible and appropriate. In addition, we can provide suitable premises where contact can take place, if appropriate.

• Social Services and foster carers have a responsibility to enable contact between children and families. There are various ways of keeping family relationships alive ranging from personal meetings and visits to letters cards and phone calls. Text messages and e-mails may also be used as methods of communication.

• Foster carers will play an integral part in these contact sessions either by transporting children in their care to them or if agreed in the care plan by enabling them to take place within their home environment. This is especially important in maintaining the relationship between siblings. Whilst the priority for local authorities is to place siblings together logistically this is not always possible. It is vital therefore that as a foster carer you welcome visits from the siblings of children
placed with you working with their foster carers to ensure that family links are maintained. It may also be that grandparents and other relatives of children placed with you may find it easier and be more inclined to have contact away from the previous family dynamics. It is important that you help them to develop their relationship to give the child a sense of their family history and identity.

- To ensure that contact remains positive for a child it is important that adult issues are not allowed into the contact sessions. On many occasions when determined by the child’s care plan contact will be supervised. Agreement will be reached between the local authority and Fair Ways as to who will take charge of these sessions. Fair Ways will ensure that any of their workers are given clear guidelines in relation to successfully carrying out this task as often information about these sessions may be used as evidence in court proceedings.

- Foster carers play an important role in emotionally supporting children through these meetings with their parents and family. You will need to ensure that you record these events in your daily diary. It is important that you share this information and your views about how that child reacted to contact with your supervising social worker. This will help to ensure that children are not subject to inappropriate emotional pressure from their family and that the safety and wellbeing of children in our care will always be the priority.
Record Keeping and Managing Information

1. Confidentiality: Managing Information
Fair Ways believes that all young people have the right to expect confidentiality. They also have the right to have all information held about themselves or their families in a secure place, which is unavailable to people who do not have a right to access. **It is the responsibility of the foster carers to ensure the young person’s confidential information is stored appropriately within their own home (such as within a locked cabinet) and Fair Ways Fostering to ensure the young person’s confidential information is stored appropriately within head office.** Guidance should be sought by the foster carers in regards to sharing information on the young people placed with them and external agencies/professionals etc.

Fair Ways’ Foster Carers are required to hold information for the young people in their care. This includes Local Authority paperwork, risk assessments, reports and the young person’s diary in which the carer will keep a record of the day’s events.

Any information regarding a placed child can only be shared with the carers’ own children with the child’s social worker’s consent, and if appropriate the child’s own consent. All children of the foster carer are expected to respect this confidentiality. One foster child’s personal information/circumstances should not be discussed with, or in front of another foster child.

Should the placement come to an end (i.e. either the placement is terminated or the foster carer(s) decide to leave the organisation), all paperwork pertaining to the child must be returned to Fair Ways. This paperwork is inclusive of the young person’s diary and any other recorded information pertaining to that child.

All of Fair Ways Foster Carers on appointment will sign a confidentiality agreement. This will ensure that they will protect the confidentiality of all children placed with them as well as those that may be discussed with them but subsequently not placed.

2. Writing appropriate records
All carers will be expected to write daily records on all children placed with them, detailing all significant events, which contribute to an overall picture of the child’s life. As part of their induction, carers undergo training on keeping clear, concise records that are relevant and easy to understand. The training clarifies the importance of ensuring records are free from judgement and clearly distinguish between fact and opinion.

Fair Ways believe that where possible and appropriate, the foster child should be aware of what is being recorded on them and should have opportunity to contribute to their records, whether that be writing their own account of events, or adding noted to the carer’s notes (this must be in addition to the carer’s records and not instead of).

Please also see the following related Fair Ways policies:

- Access to Records
- Data Protection
- Confidentiality
Safe Caring Policy

Policy Statement
Fair Ways firmly believes that it is always unacceptable for a child or young person to experience abuse of any kind and recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people, by a commitment to practice which protects them. Fair Ways is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects ALL staff to share in this commitment. Safeguarding children and young people is at the centre of our role and purpose and we are committed to ensuring that the children within our care are safe and feel safe.

We recognise that:

- The welfare of the child/young person is paramount
- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- Working in partnership with children/young people, their parents, carers, local authorities and other agencies is essential in promoting young people’s welfare

The purpose of the policy:

- To provide protection for the children and young people who receive Fair Ways services, including the children of adult members or users.
- To provide foster carers and staff with guidance on procedures they should adopt in the event that they suspect a child or young person may be experiencing, or be at risk of, harm.
- This policy applies to all staff, including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers and sessional workers, agency staff, students or anyone working on behalf of Fair Ways.

We will seek to safeguard children and young people by:

- valuing them, listening to and respecting them
- adopting child protection guidelines through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- recruiting staff, carers and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers
- sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training
- We are also committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.
Safe Caring Policy

Safe caring is the term used to describe how risk of abuse to children in our care or allegations against carers is minimised and how children can be safeguarded. Foster carers will write a Safe Care Family Plan in order to:

- keep the child safe from abuse by adults
- keep all children in the household safe from abuse by other children in the household
- keep members of the family safe from false allegations of abuse

It is recognised that males, both adults and young people, in a household are more vulnerable to allegations, as sexual abusers are more often male. Some children are more vulnerable to abuse because of their need for greater personal care or limited ability to communicate.

All Fair Ways will as part of their preparation have received training on safe caring. They will also all have been issued with The Fostering Networks book on safe caring.

It is an expectation that children placed with a Fair Ways will have their own risk assessment based on their individual circumstances and needs, which manages risk to an appropriate level. This would have been written and agreed with the child’s social worker at the placement agreement meeting, or at the earliest alternate opportunity. The risk assessment is a live document and as well as being regularly reviewed they are updated if and when there is new information attributed to the young person.

All personnel working with any young people are to make themselves aware of the most recent risk assessment before carrying out any work.

What is Safeguarding?

It might be difficult to accept, but every child can be hurt, put at risk of harm or abused, regardless of their age, gender, religion or ethnicity.

Safeguarding means:

- protecting children from maltreatment
- preventing impairment of children’s health or development
- ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children and young people to have the best outcomes

“The action we take to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm - is everyone’s responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and families has a role to play.”

Working together to safeguard children (HM Government 2013)
IT IS THE DUTY OF EACH MEMBER OF STAFF & FOSTER CARER TO SAFEGUARD YOUNG PEOPLE IN THEIR CARE

Children placed at or educated by Fair Ways have a right to and must be enabled by staff to feel safe and be safe. They need to understand how to protect themselves, feel protected and be protected from significant harm.

In order to achieve this Fair Ways will strive to place the utmost importance on adhering to our therapeutic ethos which places a strong value on making positive relationships with children and young people. This generates a culture of openness and trust and also ensures that staffs remain alert and aware of any signs that might indicate a child is in any way at risk of harm. This should develop an ethos that encourages children and young people to feel confident about themselves and be able to tell someone they trust about any concerns or worries they may have. Fair Ways values a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, both in individual decisions and the development of services.


To ensure that we comply not only with all the above legislation and guidance, in order to KEEP CHILDREN SAFE, we have our own in house policies. All staff in the company are expected to adhere to these policies at all times, and report immediately if they are being breached in any way. In order for effective safeguarding of children to take place then it is imperative that these policies are looked at collectively.

(a) Recruitment and Selection of Staff
(b) Bulling of Young People
(c) Risk Assessments
(d) Whistleblowing
(e) Notification of Significant Events
(f) TEAM TEACH Behaviour Management
(g) Safe Care, Concerns, Complaints and Allegations
**Initial Training**

Prior to any foster carer receiving a placement they will undergo the following training:

*Induction Training – This will include:*  
- Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of Children  
- Child Protection  
- Anti-Bullying  
- Anti-Racism  
- Intimate Care  
- Skills to Care for Children Who Have Been Abused  
- Internet Safety  
- Safe Practice / Conduct and Behaviour Expected of Staff and Young People.  
- Raising Concerns – How and With Whom  
- Disciplinary and Whistleblowing Procedures  
- Introduction to the Children Act 1989 and 2004  
- TEAM TEACH Behaviour Management Training.

**Risk Assessments**

Each young person will have an individual Risk Assessment which will be provided to the foster carer prior to placement. This risk assessment will be reviewed after any major incident or significant change to the presenting risk. All foster carers are to ensure that they are aware of the young person’s risk assessment and that they notify their social worker immediately when any events occur that significantly alter the risks presented.

In addition to the risks presented by the young person or people placed in the foster home, Fair Ways Health and Safety Manager will support carers by carrying out a regular assessment of their home. In the event that there is any changes to the physical layout of the home then foster carers should notify their supervising social worker who will if necessary arrange for a further assessment / visit from the Health and Safety Manager.

**Safe Care Family Plan**

The safe care family plan will incorporate the following factors and will allow the foster carers and professional network to set out specific guidance to promote the safety and wellbeing of the children within our care. Here is core guidance linking to the Safe Care factors:
1. In the home
   • All children/young people placed with Fair Ways will have their own bedroom. The only exception to this is where it has been agreed that siblings will share a bedroom. If siblings of mixed sex are to share a bedroom they both must be under the age of 10.
   • The children/young people in placement should not share beds and foster carers will be vigilant of the young people when they are in close proximity to each other to reduce the risk of inappropriate touch/aggression.
   • Bedrooms should only be entered when permission has been sought unless there are any Health and Safety Issues. Once permission has been gained the door should always be left open.
   • If children play together they should not be allowed to play behind closed doors or in bedrooms/rooms where you cannot easily keep an eye on them.
   • Do not allow them to play wrestling games. Play fighting and tickling games are not to be allowed between young people as well as young people with the foster carers.
   • All children/young people who are old enough and able to bath and wash themselves should have privacy in the bathroom.
   • If a child/young person needs help or supervision in bathing, this should be done by the female carer or both carers together, unless otherwise agreed in the care plan.
   • Older children needing supervision should be encouraged to wear a bathing costume in the bath.

2. Dress
   • Nightwear and dressing gowns should always be worn at bedtimes, by all members of the household.

3. Going Out
   • Arrangements for babysitting should be consistent with the attributes of good parenting. Therefore, children should only be left with sitters known to and trusted by the foster carer and who the child themselves knows.
   • All babysitters have to be police checked. It is preferable to use adults such as close family or close friends.
   • You should never stay out overnight without having discussed it with your supervising social worker.
   • Never arrange for a foster child/young person to stay anywhere overnight without having discussed it with your supervising social worker and the child’s/young person’s placing local authority social worker.
   • The sitter should always know how long the foster carer plans to be absent and who to contact in an emergency. Sitters should be made aware of and required to abide by the rules of the home and be informed of any special requirements for the child. No babysitter should be under 16 years of age.
   • Foster carers will be expected to pay for babysitting arrangements which are made for their own social or leisure purposes.
4. Photos/Videos
- Never take videos or photos of children/young people who are undressed or in a state of undress.
- Always ask permission before taking a video or photo of a child/young person, preferably this would be discussed in your placement agreement meeting.

5. Showing Affection
- A safe rule to follow is that no one touches another person’s body without that person’s permission. A child should always be asked if they want a hug, kiss or cuddle.
- Enable children to say no if they do not want any physical contact.
- Male carers should avoid physical affection towards a child unless a female carer is present.

6. Discussing Sex
- All discussions about sex and sexual issues need to have (if possible) been agreed with the child’s placing local authority social worker and the supervising social worker.
- All discussions about sex need to be age appropriate and language appropriate.
- Advice needs to be given appropriately to children who have different cultural or religious backgrounds to the foster carers.
- If a young person talks about issues that make you feel uncomfortable and you are unable to keep control of the conversation, suggest that you will help them to talk to someone in confidence about these issues. You must never respond in such a way that you damage their trust or take advantage of their situation.
- It is important that all incidents of a concerning or worrying nature are recorded in your foster carer’s daily diary. These should then be shared with your supervising social worker and discussed with the child’s placing local authority social worker wherever appropriate.

7. Carer Chronologies
- Chronologies should be updated daily by the foster carer. It will include a brief summary of the day with the young person (e.g. Activities engaged with, behaviour of the young person, correspondence from school etc.) and include any incidents of a concerning or worrying nature. As well as recording within the chronology, any concerning issues should be communicated to the supervising social worker as soon as possible.
- Chronologies are checked by the supervision social worker during supervision.

8. Reflective Journal
- In addition to the formal diary, foster carers can optionally complete a reflective diary. This will document the carers thoughts, feelings and reflections on issues raised due to caring for a young person.
- These journals will provide an excellent opportunity for critical self-reflection for the foster carer and enhances the potential for positive and productive supervision sessions with the supervising social worker.
- Ongoing development.
While the safeguarding and protection of the young people within our care is of paramount importance, it is also important that children are enabled to take age-appropriate risks to aid their process of self-development and to assist them in learning how to protect themselves. This identification of risk and age-appropriate risk must be worked on in partnership with the placing authority and those with parental responsibility.

**Promoting Safety at Point of Placement**

Fair Ways social workers on duty will work to ensure any placement offered to the placing authority is thoroughly matched in relation to the potential risks that link to that specific placement. The social worker on duty will study the child’s risk assessment and referral and make an assessment as to whether such factors including the family dynamic, cultural background, skills of the foster carer, presenting behaviours of the looked after child, needs of the birth children and locality have an impact on whether a placement with the foster carers is in the looked after child’s best interests and will allow for a safe environment for all members of the household.

This matching process is an important measure that is taken to safeguard any child before making any placement with a foster carer.

In addition to the matching process, information and safeguarding arrangements are discussed with the placing authority where the risk assessment and the plans recommended for minimising risk are openly shared during the initial placement meeting and this information informs the Safer Caring Plan.

**What do we mean by ‘Abuse’ and ‘Neglect’?**

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child either directly by inflicting harm, or indirectly, by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them; or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

There are four types of child abuse. They are defined in the UK Government guidance ‘Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010 (1.33 – 1.36) as follows:

1. Physical abuse
2. Emotional abuse
3. Sexual abuse
4. Neglect

Bullying is not defined as a form of abuse in Working Together but there is clear evidence that it is abusive and will include at least one, if not two, three or all four, of the defined categories of abuse. For this reason the issue of bullying will be addressed in this Policy.
Physical abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child’s emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or ‘making fun’ of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child’s developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child’s health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:
• provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
• protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
• ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or
• ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child’s basic emotional needs.

**Signs of Abuse**

Recognising child abuse is not easy. It is not your responsibility to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place or if a child is at significant risk of harm from someone. You do however, have both a responsibility and duty to act in order that the appropriate agencies can investigate and take any necessary action to protect a child.

The following information offered by the NSPCC should help you to be more alert to the signs of possible abuse.

**Physical Abuse**

Most children will collect cuts and bruises as part of the rough-and-tumble of daily life. Injuries should always be interpreted in light of the child’s medical and social history, developmental stage and the explanation given. Most accidental bruises are seen over bony parts of the body, e.g. elbow, knees, shins, and are often on the front of the body. Some children, however, will have bruising that is more than likely inflicted rather than accidental. Important indicators of physical abuse are bruises or injuries that are either unexplained or inconsistent with the explanation given, or visible on the ‘soft’ parts of the body where accidental injuries are unlikely, e.g., cheeks, abdomen, back and buttocks. A delay in seeking medical treatment when it is obviously necessary is also a cause for concern, although this can be more complicated with burns, as these are often delayed in presentation due to blistering taking place sometime later.

The physical signs of abuse may include:

• unexplained bruising, marks or injuries on any part of the body
• multiple bruises- in clusters, often on the upper arm, outside of the thigh
• cigarette burns
• human bite marks
• broken bones
• scalds, with upward splash marks,
• multiple burns with a clearly demarcated edge

Changes in behaviour that can also indicate physical abuse:

• fear of parents being approached for an explanation
• aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts
• flinching when approached or touched
• reluctance to get changed, for example in hot weather
• depression
• withdrawn behaviour
• running away from home

**Emotional Abuse**

Emotional abuse can be difficult to measure, as there are often no outward physical signs. There may be a developmental delay due to a failure to thrive and grow, although this will usually only be evident if the child puts on weight in other circumstances, for example when hospitalised or away from their parents’ care. Even so, children who appear well-cared for may nevertheless be emotionally abused by being taunted, put down or belittled. They may receive little or no love, affection or attention from their parents or carers. Emotional abuse can also take the form of children not being allowed to mix or play with other children.

Changes in behaviour which can indicate emotional abuse include:

• neurotic behaviour e.g. sulking, hair twisting, rocking
• being unable to play
• fear of making mistakes
• sudden speech disorders
• self-harm
• fear of parent being approached regarding their behaviour
• developmental delay in terms of emotional progress

People can also be taken advantage of in relation to financial abuse or labour exploitation. Such detrimental abuses of power are equally forms of significant harm and children need to be protected from such risks and educated as to how to minimize their vulnerability.

**Sexual Abuse**

Adults who use children to meet their own sexual needs abuse both girls and boys of all ages, including infants and toddlers. Usually, in cases of sexual abuse it is the child’s behaviour that may cause you to become concerned, although physical signs can also be present. In all cases, children who tell about sexual abuse do so because they want it to stop. It is important, therefore, that they are listened to and taken seriously.

It is also important to remember that it not just adult men who sexually abuse children – there are increasing numbers of allegations of sexual abuse of children against women and sexual abuse can also be perpetrated by other children or young people.

The physical signs of sexual abuse may include:
• pain or itching in the genital area
• bruising or bleeding near genital area
• sexually transmitted disease
• vaginal discharge or infection
• stomach pains
• discomfort when walking or sitting down
• pregnancy

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate sexual abuse include:

• sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour e.g. becoming aggressive or withdrawn
• fear of being left with a specific person or group of people
• having nightmares
• running away from home
• sexual knowledge which is beyond their age, or developmental level
• sexual drawings or language
• bedwetting
• eating problems such as overeating or anorexia
• self-harm or mutilation, sometimes leading to suicide attempts
• saying they have secrets they cannot tell anyone about
• substance or drug abuse
• suddenly having unexplained sources of money
• not allowed to have friends (particularly in adolescence)
• acting in a sexually explicit way towards adults

Neglect

Neglect can be a difficult form of abuse to recognise, yet have some of the most lasting and damaging effects on children.

The physical signs of neglect may include:

• constant hunger, sometimes stealing food from other children
• constantly dirty or ‘smelly’
• loss of weight, or being constantly underweight
• Inappropriate clothing for the conditions.

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate neglect may include:

• complaining of being tired all the time
• not requesting medical assistance and/or failing to attend appointments
• having few friends
• mentioning being left alone or unsupervised
These definitions and indicators are not meant to be definitive, but only serve as a guide to assist you. It is important too, to remember that many children may exhibit some of these indicators at some time, and that the presence of one or more should not be taken as proof that abuse is occurring. There may well be other reasons for changes in behaviour such as a death or the birth of a new baby in the family or relationship problems between parents/carers. In assessing whether indicators are related to abuse or not, the authorities will always want to understand them in relation to the child’s development and context.

Information acquired from the NSPCC guidance.

### How to respond to signs or suspicions of abuse

The child’s safety is of paramount importance, so take action if necessary, if children and young people are at risk report your concern immediately. If it is an emergency you should contact your local emergency service by dialling 999 and ask for the following:

- if your seeking medical attention then ask for an ambulance service
- if the child is in absolute immediate danger then the police have the power to intervene.

Additionally, it is important to understand where a carer’s position is in relation to allegations, disclosures and confidentiality. The legal principle that the “welfare of the child is paramount” is crucial when dealing with concerns that link to a child’s safety. Privacy and confidentiality should be respected where possible but if doing this leaves a child at risk of harm then the child’s safety has to come first. Remember:

- Legally, it is fine to share information if someone is worried about the safety of a child.
- Not everyone needs to know when a concern or worry is raised. This respects the child’s, family’s and/or staff’s rights to privacy. So only people who need to know will be told about it.
- It is fine to say that a concern has been raised and it is being dealt with in line with policy and procedures.

If you have any suspicions that your foster child is being abused or harmed in any way you should immediately contact Fair Ways, and speak with the supervising social worker or the social worker on duty. They are contactable on 02380 230400.

The supervising social worker will listen to and explore your concerns. From this they will contact the local authority involved with the young person and share the concerns raised with a member of their social services team. At this point the local authority responsible for the young person will take the lead and keep both Fair Ways and foster carer up to date with the actions they intend to make in response to this information.

### How to respond to a child telling you about abuse

Should a young person disclose information of any abuse or neglect it is very important to listen
attentively to them, utilize effective listening skills and notify the supervising social worker or duty worker immediately. Remember, foster carers are not trained to manage and investigate disclosures from young people. It is a complex skill which requires specific training to ensure an effective interview when linked to disclosures of abuse and this should be left to the professionals. Dealing with this insensitively and incorrectly may impact on the young person’s well-being and may jeopardise any future legal proceedings. Your role at this point is to support the young person emotionally, empathise with their position, listen to what they are saying and relay the information to the relevant professionals.

When a disclosure takes place, the young person should be reassured but told that it will be necessary for this information to be passed onto the other staff members (i.e. Unit Manager, Supervising Social Worker, relevant Director), and that such a conversation cannot be kept ‘confidential’.

Core Skills required in these situations are:

\[ \text{Listening} \quad \text{Enabling} \quad \text{Believing} \quad \text{Supporting} \]

WHEN A YOUNG PERSON DISCLOSES ABUSE:

a) **LISTEN** – remember that they trust you enough to share this with you.
b) **ASK** the young person what they would like to happen next, but **DO NOT** question them about the event/incident that they are disclosing. It is **NOT** your role to ask questions – rather to support and listen.
c) They may want to know what you think should happen, it is important to explain that some situations are too serious to be left and that you will need to tell your supervisor.
d) You are not in a position to promise confidentiality.
e) Without raising a young person’s anxiety, it would be helpful to be able to tell them about joint interviews (this does not need to be in depth).
f) It is usually acknowledged that if a young person chooses to disclose abuse, they have made a decision that they would like something done. It is a request for protection, understanding and support.
g) Let the young person know what you are going to do next – do not promise anything that you cannot fulfil.
h) Ensure the young person is aware of when you will see them next and check with them the way they would like to be supported.
i) Inform the Unit Manager, not tomorrow, not next week, but immediately.
j) Record the conversation with the young person as soon as possible:
   - What the young person said to you.
   - What you said to them.
   - This can be used in evidence and must be based on **FACT**, not assumption.

All child protection issues should be taken seriously and in no circumstances should they, or the disclosures, be taken lightly or ignored. These issues will be investigated according to the placing authorities Child Protection Procedures. Any concerns, complaints or allegations should be
recorded, as soon as possible, and the information needs to be shared with the supervising social worker or the social worker on duty as soon as possible. They are contactable on 02380 230400.

The supervising social worker will listen to and explore your concerns. From this they will contact the local authority involved with the young person and share the concerns raised with a member of their social services team. At this point the local authority responsible for the young person will take the lead and keep both Fair Ways and foster carer up to date with the actions they intend to make in response to this information.

Where any allegation or disclosure involves a member of staff then the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) for Child Protection will also be notified. Any concerns, complaints or allegations made by any young person must always be recorded and passed on to a Manager at the earliest possible opportunity.

**Local Safeguarding Children Boards**

In the event that you do not feel that your concerns have been listened to then you should contact the local safeguarding board in the area you are working. The local boards can be contacted at the following addresses: (4lscb.org.uk)

**Isle of Wight LSCB**

c/o Children’s Service Centre
Atkinson Drive
Newport
Isle of Wight
PO30 2LS
Tel: 02380 248180

**Southampton LSCB**

Floor 5, Marlands House
Civic Centre Road
Southampton
Tel - 02380 833803

**Portsmouth LSCB**

Civic Centre
Portsmouth
02392 688646

**LSCB Admin Support Officer**

Childrens Social Care
27 Slades Farm Road
Bournemouth
BH10 4ES
Tel: 01202 458873
Concerns, Complaints and Allegations

Fair Ways has a duty to investigate or to pass on to the local authority to investigate any concerns raised about the care provided to any child in our care or education. This is governed by the Fostering Services Regulations 2002 and amendments 2009 as well as by the National Minimum Standards, Working Together 2006 and the Local Safeguarding Board (LSCB).

The Principles of the Procedure:

- The Welfare of the child is paramount.
- Any concern about the quality of care must be fully explored.
- Investigations should be thorough, timely and consistent.
- All parties should be treated with dignity and respect.
- The investigation should be at the lowest level possible.
- All staff and children will be supported and treated fairly.
- Staff will have an opportunity to respond to concerns.
- Think the unthinkable – some staff do act inappropriately.

What is a concern, complaint or allegation?

A concern, complaint or an allegation can come from many sources. A child may say something; or their school, their parent, friend, doctor, support worker, their social worker or other professionals may express a worry about the child or their care. The issues raised may be of a formal or informal nature and may relate to current or historical issues.

The information, wherever it comes from, will be passed to the supervising social worker, team manager, to Fair Ways child protection officer and to the child’s local authority social worker. The local authority will make a decision on whether they will investigate and deal with this matter, or if they are happy for the matter to be dealt with internally by Fair Ways and the outcome reported back to them. The local authority will decide whether this issue is:

- **Concerns (Level 1)** will be discussed by young person’s social worker the member of staff’s Manager and normally dealt with by Fair Ways.
- **Complaint (Level 2)** will be discussed with the young person’s social worker, their Manager, and normally by Fair Way’s Manager and senior Manager.
- **An allegation (Level 3)** will be discussed by the young person’s social worker, their Manager and Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and a Fair Ways senior Manager and/or Director.

The LADO is independent of both the child and the carer.

Everyone recognises that the information may be malicious or inaccurate or it may have full or partial or no substance to it. Sometimes it is difficult to reach a full conclusion. It is in the interests of both carers and the child that it is looked into and conclusions determined wherever possible and in the shortest timescale.

- **Concern (Level1)**

These issues are usually related to the day to day management of the child in care. For example, they may be about the way a child is spoken to, inappropriate comments or low level behaviour.
management issues. This level can also be used if there has been an accumulation of lower level issues which don’t meet the criteria.

- **Complaint (Level 2)**

These issues are more serious and may relate to the parenting style or quality of care provided by the carer, for example relating to inappropriate sanctions i.e. withholding food. It may relate to the quality of the working relationship with professionals, or perhaps working to the child’s care plan. Other areas may be related to a breach of confidentiality or poor attitude to birth parents. Again it can also be used if there is an accumulation of concerns (Level 1) despite discussion, supervision or training etc.

- **Allegation (Level 3)**

At this level allegations may relate to potential harm caused to a child, for example physical, sexual, emotional abuse, grooming or neglect. A criminal offence may possibly have been committed but not necessarily. This can include an assault on a child. It also includes suggestions of behaviour that would imply the carer may be unsuitable to care for children. For example, looking at pornographic internet sites, exposing children to domestic abuse or misusing alcohol or substances in the presence of a child or the child is indirectly exposed to the behaviour. All of these examples would generally lead to a child protection investigation. If the carer is the subject of a police investigation which is of a nature that would suggest they are unsuitable to continue as a child care worker, this would trigger this procedure.

PLEASE REMEMBER – it is important to hold on to the fact that the Managers, social workers and potentially the Police, will not make any assumptions, conclusions or judgments about what is said at the outset of this process.

They have to follow a process (the procedures), which involves gathering information and working alongside other key people to reach a conclusion, balancing their responsibilities to both you as a member of staff and the young person.

Notifications: Any serious complaint about any foster parents approved by the agency and any instigation and outcome of any child protection enquiry involving a child placed with foster parents are events that will be notified to the relevant body in line with Schedule 7 of the Fostering Regulations (regulation 36.1).

**What is the next stage?**

The supervising social worker, the fostering manager and Fair Ways Child Protection Officer will discuss whether or not suspension is appropriate. This should be a rarity and only happen if there is considered to be a high level of concern or risk but this will depend on the circumstances. The rationale for any decision should be explained to the foster carer fully.

What happens next with each level?

- **Concern (Level 1)**
Usually with this level the Supervising Social Worker will meet with you to discuss matters. This should happen as soon as possible or at least at your next supervision. You will all try to reach agreement about what has happened and if anything further needs to happen such as training, support or any tasks for you to complete.

Your Supervising Social Worker will give feedback to their manager and often the matter will have been resolved; perhaps with some actions. A record of this visit will be held on both your file and the child’s file (if appropriate) and confirmed in writing to you by your supervisor.

Occasionally, if the managers are not entirely happy that everything is resolved, then it may be necessary to increase the concern (Level 1) to a complaint (Level 2).

- **Complaint (Level 2)**

A strategy meeting, with all of the key people, will be held within 48 hours of the complaint being made to consider the complaint itself, gather information and agree any actions and by whom within specified timescales.

Unless there are exceptional reasons you should be told within 48 hours about the complaint with as much detail as possible at that stage or an explanation about why this is not possible.

The chair of this meeting will usually be a company Director. They will write to you within 72 hours of the meeting explaining the substance of the complaint, who will be involved in the investigation, contact details, the process and the timescales and will confirm the support available – (your advocate), as well as any decisions about if your place of work will be restricted in any way.

Further strategy meetings may be necessary to complete the investigation and for the chair to reach a conclusion about the complaint. Your views will be fed into this meeting via your advocate.

The chair will write to you within 10 days confirming the outcome of the investigation. This will be kept on your file (and the child’s as appropriate).

A household review should follow the investigation, usually within 28 days of the conclusion of the matter.

The matter will also be referred to fostering panel. For more serious matters, of if there is a view that you should be de-registered, there is an expectation that you attend panel to conclude the matter. The panel have a responsibility to consider your approval as carers following such a matter. Generally speaking though, this is an opportunity for you, with your supervisor, to discuss how the process has been for you and have your views formally recorded and considered. It is not usually something to be worried about if the outcome of the investigation and the household review has been positive but the panel may pick up on different issues collectively or make other recommendations.

- **Allegation (Level - 3)**

Such issues and investigations will normally be led and investigated by the local authority. A strategy meeting with all of the key people will be held as soon as possible. The meeting will consider the
allegation, gather information and agree any actions to be competed and by whom within specified timescales.

Unless there are exceptional reasons you should be told within 48 hours about the complaint with as much detail as possible at that stage, or be given an explanation about why this is not possible.

The Chair of this meeting will be a Local Authority Service Manager or the Local Authority Designated officer for Child Protection. They will usually write to you within 72 hours of the meeting explaining the substance of the allegation, who will be involved in the investigation, contact details, the process and the timescales and will confirm the support available, as well as any decisions about the children in placement. Fair Ways will be advising you and supporting you throughout this process.

You will meet with your supervisor and the manager. This can be useful to build in some extra support and ensure that you are fully aware of what to expect when going through the process.

There is a likelihood that the Police will be involved with an allegation and the point at which they wish to speak to you will probably impact on what you can be told, or how much information can actually be given to you. The Police generally have issues about compromising an investigation but this is also for your protection. The Police may visit jointly with the social workers and the questioning may be informal or very rarely, for serious matters, you may be interviewed under caution or arrested.

Further strategy meetings may be necessary to complete the investigation and for the Chair to reach a conclusion about the complaint. Your views will be fed into these meetings via the Police or the social workers (dependent on any Police investigation), so it is important that you are able to express your views if it is in your interests to do so. Your known history in child care through supervision and reviews and training etc. will be included, to enable a balanced discussion. Fair Ways will ensure that your advocate is allocated regular time to meet with you as appropriate.

You will be kept informed of the timeframe and outcomes from the meetings, and ultimately the outcome of the investigation, as the chair will write to you within 10 days. This letter will be kept on your file (and the child’s as appropriate).

**Should I take legal advice?**

It is important to acknowledge that being the subject of an allegation of potential abuse is serious. It would be wise to take legal advice from a solicitor or trade union representative at the earliest possible stage and certainly if you are under arrest and the Police wish to question you. A solicitor can be provided via the Police Duty Solicitor System if you do not have one. Additionally, Fostering Network can provide independent legal advice for a carer who is subject of an investigation.

If you attend the Police Station voluntarily in order to assist the Police with their enquiries, but are not under arrest, you are free to leave the Police Station at any time. If the Police do not wish you to leave, then you can only be detained if you are placed under arrest.

**Records**

Some Foster Carers have expressed concern about records of unsubstantiated complaints being held on their files. This is not something about which there is compromise, as it is a regulatory
requirement but you should be sent letters confirming the progress and outcomes of any investigation which you are able to keep for your own records. You can also access your own file via the “access to records” process.

Making a complaint

If you are unhappy about the way that you have been treated, or the way in which any investigation has been conducted then you may wish to make a complaint using the Fair Ways complaints process. This is separate from the “appeal” against any decisions made by the Chair of any hearing or investigation. Essentially this only applies if you assert that the procedure or process was fundamentally flawed or if there was significant inaccuracy in the information relied up on by panel.

Following an investigation, what about me?

Some foster carers do feel as if they have completely gone through the proverbial mill and may be worn out and disillusioned by the system, the company or even angry about what has happened. On many occasions it may be that the investigation has been unsubstantiated or your feelings about the process are unresolved. This may cause distress for you and affect your practice.

Foster carers may sometimes worry about records of an investigation being kept on file if they are unsubstantiated. Fair Ways has to keep these records but you will get a letter detailing the outcome.

Some foster carers emerge from this process all the more confident in their role as a childcare professional and having learned from the experience.

It is true to say that some foster carers who have gone through the process go on to support other foster carers who may find themselves in the midst of an investigation.

Foster carers who have been in this situation often report that at the time they felt very isolated and alone and it is important that even after the event they get support.

What about my relationship with the child?

If you will be continuing to work with the child it is important to ensure that they remain feeling safe and secure.

Concerns, complaints and allegations may be raised by the child or others for many reasons and the majority are not malicious. It is therefore important that children do not feel blamed for events surrounding these matters. It is important to discuss any feelings or issues with the social workers and then, if appropriate, the child. Maintaining a positive and nurturing environment for the child is paramount. Your ongoing positive relationship with the child is fundamental to any placement stability, sense of belonging and emotional wellbeing.

If during the process the child has moved on, especially in an unplanned way, it may be very important for you and for them, dependent on their age, to recognise any feelings of loss, guilt,
anger or failure. You may wish to think about how this can be managed to achieve some kind of positive ending and perhaps allowing for any successes within the placement to be recognised. The social workers should be able to assist you with this.

**Conclusion**

No one can predict when things might go wrong with a placement but by keeping yourself safe and accessing all of the support, advice and information available you may reduce risks. If issues do arise it is possible to learn, develop and move forward in your fostering career and you would be encouraged to access all of the support possible.

**Assurances and Support to Foster Carers**

Even low level criticism can be difficult to accept and can be hurtful. Fair Ways recognises that having issues raised about you, at any level, can be distressing or frightening and especially so if it is of a serious nature. A significant complaint or allegation, or indeed a relatively minor issue, may make you feel as if your professionalism is being questioned, your job or reputation put at risk, or feel personally affected emotionally.

Information about the independent support service / counselling for foster carers can be found from your Supervisor, Manager or from Fair Ways H.R. department. This will be provided by Fair Ways Consultant in Therapeutic Solutions or another appropriate manager.

The amount of support available to you will depend on the circumstances and need identified. This professional support may be able to assist with:

- Information and advice about the process of enquiries and the rights and responsibilities of all parties.
- Emotional support for you in processing / managing the issue.
- Mediation – the process of an investigation can put a strain on the relationship between the member of foster carers and Fair Ways.
- Advocacy – some foster carers may wish their independent support to advocate on their behalf, for example in meetings.

**What, if anything, can I do to prevent a concern, complaint or allegation?**

There may be some practices which may help you to prevent issues being raised with you:

- Adhere to a Fair Way’s policies and procedures.
- Ensure that there is a completed risk assessment for every child not only at the beginning but also at regular intervals of their placement.
- Ensure that your recording is accurate.
- Be committed to training and development opportunities.
- Use supervision regularly, openly and honestly to share pressures and challenges and seek advice.
- Be a good communicator with the other professionals involved with you as well as with the child or young people in your care.
Sources of further information

Working Together to Safeguard Children
A copy of the Government’s statutory guidance which provides a framework for agencies to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
Website:  www.dfes.gov.uk

http://www.workingtogetheronline.co.uk/chapters/chapter_two.html#four

Independent Police Complaints Commission
Telephone:  08453 00202
Email:  enquiries@ipcc.gsi.gov.uk
Website:  www.ipcc.gov.uk
Internet Safety Policy

Bearing in mind the development of safe and secure relationships that is at the heart of the overall ethos of Fair Ways Fostering, we have produced guidelines to raise awareness of the potential dangers of the internet and how to keep young people safe online.

Young people today use the internet as part of their daily lives. As well as accessing it for information and entertainment, it is, for them, an accepted element of their social interactions with each other. It is therefore important that foster carers are equipped with information that can enable them to support the young person in their care to use the internet in such a way as to gain the most benefit from the opportunities it gives whilst minimising the risks to the young person’s physical, intellectual, emotional and social wellbeing that it may present. It is advisable that the foster carer becomes familiar with the internet by going online themselves, if they are not already familiar with it.

Having basic ground rules for the use of the computer, can be the first step in a discussion with a foster child about their specific computer use. In line with the delegated authority form and risk assessment specific to the foster child placement, these rules could include:

- Which websites are allowed
- The length of time allowed online each day
- Not giving out personal information without checking with the Supervising Social worker first.
- Having the main computer in one of the family rooms, rather than in private space such as bedrooms.

The following three areas reflect the most common online services that are used by children, according to the UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS).

- **Chatting** – Anything that allows users to communicate in conversation with each other. This could be in the form of text-based messages – mobile phones using SMS, Kik, BBM etc. and social networking sites such as Facebook or twitter; voice-based communication or video-based communication – e.g. Skype, FaceTime, Tango etc.

- **Sharing** - Anything which allows the user to upload data or information (such as pictures, videos, text location data) that can then be accessed by other users. This includes sharing within a controlled environment (e.g. sharing only with ‘friends’).

- **Gaming** – Anything which allows users to play games in an online environment against other users. This includes simultaneous play – e.g. in an online world; ‘turn by turn’ play – e.g. chess on a mobile phone app; and play that contributes to a published leader board – e.g. console online ranking systems.
To provide young people with the tools to keep themselves safe when using the internet, foster carers should follow the following advice:

- Talk to your foster child about who they’re talking to online and encourage them to think before talking to people they don’t know in person.

- Try to understand and guide your foster child’s online behaviour - negotiate and establish boundaries and discuss sensitively the issues around the concept of ‘friends’.

- Familiarise yourself with the chat programme your foster child uses. Find out more about its built-in safety functions and how they can be utilised.

- Ask your foster child if they know how to block someone who they don’t want to talk to anymore. If they don’t, help them to learn how to use the blocking feature.

- Use parental control software provided by your internet service provider, mobile phone network, online content provider or games console and consider using filtering options, monitoring and setting time limits for access to chat.

- If you discover misconduct between your foster child and someone online stay calm and inform your supervising social worker.

- As part of a wider discussion about sex and relationships, discuss with your foster child how people may use the internet to explore their sexuality. Discuss how this may include ‘sexual chatting’.

**Online Sharing:**

- Set up a family email address you can all use to fill in online forms.

- Set clear guidelines for your foster children about what information they can share about themselves and about your family – lead by example and explain what you have shared and why; be aware that comments posted by your foster children could impact on you and your family’s reputation.

- Talk to your foster children about how easy it is for people to assume another identity online.

- There are a number of ways that you can set your own lists of sites you want to block access to; activating your internet service provider’s parental controls, or those of another provider, can make this easy for you.
• Install reputable internet security software on your computers and mobile devices; keep this and operating systems up to date.

• Be aware that foster children can access the internet through publicly available Wi-Fi for example in shops, coffee bars and bus terminals; check whether your foster children’s devices have built in Wi-Fi connectivity and see if there are any tools to help manage access to inappropriate content.

• As part of a wider conversation about sex and relationships discuss how people may use the internet to explore their sexuality which may include sharing sexual images.

• Be aware that smartphones often contain location technology. This technology finds the mobile’s position and provides services related to where you are. Talk to your foster child about who they share this information with.

Online Gaming:

• Foster children should keep gaming friends ‘in the game’ – they should avoid sharing personal information with people they have met in games and avoid giving them their social networking profile details or email address. Also, ensure your foster child chooses a user name that does not reveal any personal information about them.

• They should use a strong and unique password for all of their online accounts – a combination of letters, numbers and symbols (and if they have ever shared a password in the past, change it).

• Foster children should learn how to block people they don’t want to be in contact with any more. If they experience any bullying, hacking and racism, save the evidence and report it.

• Remind foster children to always log out of a service properly after use, especially on a shared computer.

• Use the Pan European Game Regulations (PEGI) games ratings to guide you when making judgments about the games that your foster child is playing online, similarly you should use the PEGI ratings when buying games to be used on games consoles that your foster child may have.

**The PEGI system rates video games at various age levels (3, 7, 12, 16 and 18) and is designed to protect children and young teenagers from inappropriate content.

• Make sure your foster children are using games from reputable and legal online providers.

• Online gaming can be compulsive for some; be aware of the amount of time spent online and set boundaries around your foster child’s use.
• Games should be played as part of a healthy and balanced lifestyle; regular 5 minute breaks should therefore be taken every 45 minutes to an hour.

For further information please visit:


http://www.childnet.com/

INTERNET SAFETY FOR CARERS
Further guidelines regarding internet safety for carers and their own use of social networking sites

Any material that is work related or that could identify an individual - be that a foster child, other foster carers or any other colleagues within the company, must not be placed on a social networking site. This means that work related matters must not be placed on any such site at any time either during or outside of working hours and includes access via any computer equipment, mobile phone or other portable devices (for example PC Tablets).

Things to remember when using the internet, your reputation may be affected by:

• Information that you have posted online
• Information posted about you online
• Comments that you make, or conversations that you are involved in online
• Photographs of you that are posted online
• Posts and photographs that you are ‘tagged’ in

Remember, that once something is posted online, it is always ‘there’.

http://www.saferinternet.org.uk/
Health and Safety Responsibilities of Foster Carers

Fair Ways Fostering is committed to its responsibility to ensure that the health and safety of children looked after by us are safeguarded and promoted. The foster carers, the placing authority, other professionals and the child/young person share this responsibility. Fair Ways Fostering considers health and safety a crucial aspect of a child’s/young person’s well-being, as not only is it necessary in itself but it is paramount in promoting a safe environment.

The initial assessment as well as the ongoing support and supervision of foster carers must always take health and safety issues into account. Using the “health and safety” checklist form, the assessor will evaluate whether the applicant’s home reaches an acceptable level of hygiene. If the assessor has difficulties in reaching a judgement, then a second opinion will be required.

Prior to going to panel our NEBOSH qualified Health and Safety Manager conducts a full risk assessment on the home to ensure it up to standard and where it is not, gives clear guidance on what work needs to be carried out in order to do. The risk assessment is reviewed every year by the supervising social worker, and then every third year by the Health and Safety Manager.

Once appointed, foster carers will be expected to maintain these necessary standards.

The supervising social worker compiles and submits a health and safety report on the home to the health and safety manager each month detailing any concerns and action that has been taken to rectify the concerns.

In line with the health and safety standards the foster carer will have responsibility to ensure the following standards are continually met.

The Home
In line with Fair Ways Fostering and National standards the following criteria should be adhered to:

- Minimum temperature requirement. The home will be warm but not stuffy with good ventilation. Radiators must not be burning hot in the placement of young children. All fires must have guards etc. no gas heaters
- Each child/young person will have their own room, which they are encouraged and/or helped to help keep clean, according to their age. The room must have a window, be comfortable, safe and adequately decorated and furnished.
- Safety plug covers must be fitted when younger children are placed.
- Rooms should be well lit, with night lamps in bedrooms if necessary, and pull cord lights in bathrooms.
- Home communal areas must be big enough to accommodate the number living there.
- There will be safety locks on cupboards etc. Locks on bathroom doors. But there will be no locks on bedroom doors, as a child/young person should never be locked in their room.
When a child/young person is to be placed with an approved foster carer a special assessment of their needs will be carried out prior to them moving in, to ensure that their health and safety needs are met. The home should feel safe and welcoming to looked after children/young people. Every effort to maintain a comfortable home environment should be made.

Please also refer to Fair Ways Fostering’s Charter of Rights For Children and Young people.

**Fire Safety**
- Foster carers will be expected to take appropriate steps to minimise the risk of fire. Issues of fire safety will have been addressed with them in their assessment and subsequent support. If for any reason there seems to be a particular fire risk then the advice of the fire brigade will be sought.
- All foster carers will be required to have smoke alarms fitted.
- All foster carers will have the home fitted with the appropriate number of fire blankets and fire extinguishers.
- All foster carers will have a planned fire escape route, and will have conveyed this to all children/young people in their care. This will regularly be reviewed.

**First Aid and Medication**
- All foster carers will be expected to attend a first aid course on being appointed as a Fair Ways Fostering.
- It is the responsibility of all carers to store medicine safely in a locked cabinet.
- Advice will be given to foster carers as to when they can administer non-prescribed medication (see medical consent form and/or delegated authority). They will only administer prescribed medication according to the prescription.
- Any child/young person involved in a first aid incident will be treated in accordance with the safe caring procedure (see HIV/HEP) and the incident will be recorded and necessary action taken. Dependent on the severity of the incident the supervising social worker should be notified.

**Preventing Accidents**
- All foster homes will be expected to meet legal housing requirements.
- As part of their assessment the potential for accidents in their home will have been considered. The ‘health and safety’ checklist will be used by the supervising social worker to regularly monitor this.
- The ages and needs of the children/young people looked after will be taken into account during safety inspections. (Where fireguards and stair-gates are needed because of fostering then Fair Ways will provide these.)
- All hazardous and potentially harmful products, chemicals, medication etc. will be locked away, out of reach and sight of children.
• If any firearms and ammunition are to be kept in a foster carer’s home this will be fully discussed at all stages of the assessment. If a license is held this will be seen by Fair Ways foster carers and panel. All firearms will be kept in a securely locked cabinet.

• The foster carers’ home should offer a safe environment with no potential hazards. All effort should be taken to ensure that there are no sharp edges on tables or surfaces, no nails sticking out of furniture, no pulled up carpet, no loose wiring etc.

**Household Pets**

• Any workers involved in the assessment and support of foster carers will consider the potential impact pets would have on the children placed. This will be discussed fully with the foster carers.

• Fair Ways Fostering will ensure to maintain the safety of a placed child/young person with regards to any household pets. As a matter of course we will contact the foster carers vet to seek an opinion on any animal they have present within the home.

• If a foster carer keeps a dog deemed as dangerous under the Dangerous dogs Act, then professional advice will be sought.

• If the keeping of household pets has a severe impact on the hygiene of the home then Fair Ways Fostering will work with the foster carer to remedy the situation.

**Travelling by Car**

Foster Carer should ensure they are aware of the legal requirements for children who travel in a car. All children under the age of 10 years (and below a certain height) are required to use car seats and seat belts, appropriate to their age. When a foster carer travels alone with a child/young person in the car then the child/young person should sit in the back, but not behind the driver. Baby seats have to be used by law, and fitted correctly. (Please see [www.childcarseats.org.uk/law](http://www.childcarseats.org.uk/law) for further information).
Promoting Health

The responsibility for promoting the health of children/young people placed rests with the foster carers, Fair Ways Fostering foster carers, child’s social worker, other involved professionals and the child/young person themselves.

Fair Ways Fostering will expect their carers to carry out the following:-

- All children/young people will be offered a healthy and balanced diet.

- They will be encouraged to eat at breakfast time, lunchtime and in the evening.

- Whilst at school they will be provided with dinner money or a nutritious packed lunch.

- At least one prepared meal a day will be offered.

- Foster carers will meet all children’s/young people’s dietary needs, that is, vegetarianism, and diets necessitated by their religion. This is an important part of the child’s self-identity to be able to have this freedom of choice and foster carers will actively support them.

- Foster carers will encourage children/young people to have the right attitude to a healthy lifestyle through information, advice and positive role modelling.

- Foster carers will encourage children/young people not to smoke, primarily by educating children/young people of the dangers, supporting the young person to quit smoking by liaising with schools to see the school nurse and if required an appointment to see the young person’s GP. It is an expectation that foster carers will provide a healthy atmosphere within the home and if the adults do smoke, it will be ensured that it does not negatively impact on a child/young person. The issues around smoking will be addressed during the assessment process.

- Foster carers will ensure that every child/young person looked after is registered with a doctor, dentist and optician. The foster carer will take responsibility for regular check-ups with the dentist and optician, and visits to the Doctor when needed. They will also ensure that the young person has a health assessment, which may include a medical examination every year. Foster carers will need to ensure that all regular and special medical and dental appointments for the child are kept and, if the child is of pre-school age, you need to inform your health visitor and link in for all pre-school checks and advice and information with regard to the child. The child’s social worker will have gathered all the information about the child’s health, so you will be informed of any immunisations due, for example.

- Foster carers will work with other professionals to ensure that the child’s health needs are part of the care plan and subject to statutory reviews.
Emergency Treatment
All children suffer minor accidents/illness at times, but should a Looked After Child need hospital treatment, foster carers need to inform their Supervising Social Worker and the child’s Social Worker at the earliest possible opportunity.

Sexual Health
Every child has a right to be educated and receive advice on sexual health that is appropriate to their age and/or understanding. Typically, such information is provided at school, however carers must not assume that this is happening – particularly if a child has had interrupted school patterns or has been out of education entirely. Whether or not the child receives sexual health awareness at school, the carers should either reinforce or enable learning in this area, such as seeking guidance from health professionals or attending sexual health clinics/workshops.

As a young person grows through adolescence, as does their awareness of their own sexuality. Forming emotional and sexual relationships is a natural part of growing up, but can be a difficult time – especially for those who have suffered or witnessed abuse or exploitation. It is usual for young people to experiment and take risks and they will usually need support through this. Specific support may be needed for young people who are gender confused or identify as being gay, as well as young people with disabilities or learning difficulties.

Young people should be encouraged to maintain good sexual health. Self-esteem and appropriate assertiveness is as important as education on the risks and consequences around sex, in enabling young people to make positive informed choices.

The Sexual Offences Act 2003 dictates that the legal age for young people to consent to have sex is 16, whether straight, gay or bisexual. The aim of the law is to protect the safety and rights of young people and make it easier to prosecute those who pressure or force others into having sex against their will or without full consent.

Although the age of consent remains at 16, it is not intended that the law should be used to prosecute mutually agreed teenage sexual activity between two young people of a similar age, unless it involves abuse or exploitation.

Under the Sexual Offences Act young people including those under 16, or even under 13, still have the right to confidential advice on contraception, condoms, pregnancy and abortion. The Act does allow health professionals and any other people working with young people (including carers) to access confidential sexual health advice and treatment to under 16s without risk of prosecution providing they act with intent to:

- protect the young person from sexually transmitted infection
- protect the physical safety of the young person
- prevent the young person from becoming pregnant
- promote the young person’s emotional well-being by the giving of advice
As long as they do not act for the purpose of causing or encouraging activity constituting an offence, or the child’s participation in it. Nor does the exception apply if the person is acting for the purpose of obtaining sexual gratification.

Confidentiality can only be breached in exceptional circumstances where the health, safety or welfare of the young person or others would otherwise be at grave risk. The decision whether to breach confidentiality depends on the degree of current or likely harm, not solely on the age of the patient.

When aware or suspicious of illegal underage sexual activity, foster carers or Foster Carers should not only be acting to minimise risk of pregnancy or infection, but should also be working with the young person to minimise risk of emotional damage, and to enable the young person to stop the activity.

In all instances of underage sexual activity or even where it is suspected, carers must inform their supervising social worker at the earliest opportunity, who will share the information with the relevant personnel and advise on a course of action.

Your supervising social worker can give you guidance on how to access sexual health advice services.

Guidelines for Foster Carers on HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis B
Foster carers have an important role in the care, support and education around the issues in relation to these contagious diseases. These diseases need careful managing to ensure the safety of yourself and your family as well as the young people living with you. You will always be informed if it is known that a child/young person coming to live with you has any such disease, however as we cannot always be sure of the HIV status of a child/young person placed, health and safety guidelines should always be followed as a matter of routine.

The following procedures are common sense precautions, which will protect against a range of minor and major infections, which can be transmitted via blood and body fluids. Most of these infections such as Hepatitis B are far more easily transmitted than HIV. It is essential therefore that all foster carers are aware of these precautions and apply them at all times. Foster carers should maintain the same standards of hygiene for all of the children and young people that they look after.

- You and your family are advised to have yourselves immunised against Hepatitis B. This can be done by your own G.P’s surgery. Fair Ways will reimburse you for this.
- Cuts and sores on the hands should be kept covered with waterproof adhesive dressings.
- Hands should be washed thoroughly before and after carrying out first aid procedures involving external bleeding and/or broken skin. Where possible, disposable gloves should be used when carrying out first aid. Major wounds should be seen by a G.P. or in an emergency the young person should be taken to hospital for attention.
- Never share toothbrushes, flannels or towels, and make sure that personal items such as these are stored hygienically.
- Cuts or wounds which break the skin should be washed with soap and water and covered with waterproof sticking plaster or dressing.

- If blood or bodily fluids are splashed onto the skin, eyes or mouth they should be washed off immediately with water, and/or soap.

- Disposable items, which may have been soiled with bodily fluids, may be flushed down the toilet or burnt.

- Non-disposable items which have been soiled with blood or bodily fluids e.g. terry nappies, clothing, sheets, towels, should be washed in the washing machine at 80 degrees centigrade or boiled before hand washing.

**Smoking Policy for Foster Carers**

Fair Ways believes that a smoking environment should be avoided in the best interests of children who are to be placed away from home.

The main purpose of this policy is to reduce children’s exposure to passive smoking within our foster homes. As the effects of passive smoking are greater for younger children, a move to smoke-free home environments for these children is proposed.

A second purpose of the policy is to discourage young people from taking up smoking.

Whilst Fair Ways acknowledges the proven skills and abilities of many of our carers who smoke, it is our view that children’s health must be our primary consideration.

The National Care Standards for Foster Care and Foster Placement Services states that carers are assessed on their ability to promote the health, education and personal and social development for children in their care. All new fostering applicants who smoke will be advised from an early stage in the process that their smoking habits will be considered during assessment along with other health issues.

Any deviation from the principles of this policy needs to be justified as being in the best interest of the child or looked after children.

**Policy Guidance**

- It is important to note that no child will be moved from a placement where carers smoke providing the wellbeing and security of children in their care is evidenced and a full risk assessment has been carried out.

- Any child under the age of five years or a vulnerable child/young person with learning and/or physical disabilities, chronic respiratory problems (current or historical), heart disease or glue ear who requires a foster placement, will not be placed in a placement where foster carers or any members of the household smoke. These vulnerable children are regarded as the high-risk groups in respect of the effects of exposure to second-hand smoke. This policy applies regardless of whether foster carers or other members of the household smoke outside of the property.
• Foster carers caring for vulnerable children in the high risk groups should not use baby-sitters or any other day carer (including another foster carer) who smoke.

• Where applicants to foster do smoke, discussion will take place with them early in the assessment process on the dangers of passive smoking to the health and development of children.

• For those applicants or members of a household who are in the process of stopping smoking, they should be advised that to be classed as a non-smoker involves having given up smoking for at least 12 months. This does not imply that approval will automatically be withheld until 12 months after ceasing smoking. The approval will be determined and judged on the quality of the assessment and clearly documented.

• Approved foster carers need to know that if they smoke, placing social workers are more likely to choose non-smokers for preference. They should be advised about the smoking policy and asked to seriously consider giving up.

• Currently approved foster carers who smoke will be encouraged to create a smoke-free home. Smoking should only take place outside the home. Children in foster care should not be exposed to smoking when visiting friends and relatives or when other smokers visit the foster home. Carers should also be reminded not to smoke in the confined space of a car.

• It is advisable that foster carers do not smoke in front of children and young people. Carers will also be expected not to advocate smoking with Looked After Children, for example by ensuring that they do not provide cigarettes or tobacco, and ensuring that any cigarettes/lighters in the home are kept securely.

• Where foster carers are accommodating a young person with a smoking habit, clear guidelines must be agreed with the child’s allocated social worker and parents, when they are placed. This should be discussed at the placement agreement meeting and clearly documented. It should be clearly noted where foster carers decide that young people in their care who smoke cannot do so in the foster home, this may have implications for matching.

• Fair Ways will ensure that all applicants and carers know about the effects of passive smoking through preparation and training programmes, and foster carers who smoke will be encouraged to stop smoking.

• Smoking habits will be considered at a carer’s annual review of approval. Reports from social workers and discussion with carers should note any changes in smoking habits.

• If carers have recently stopped smoking, this must be recorded and documented on their file, and monitored through supervision.

• Birth parents should be asked for their views on their child living in a smoking or non-smoking household, and these views must be taken into consideration.

• Children from non-smoking birth families should not be placed with substitute carers who smoke.

• A child or young person should be able to veto a plan to be placed in a smoking environment.

• In all long-term fostering placements, the additional health risks to the child of being placed in a smoking household needs to be carefully balanced against benefits of the placement for the child. This assessment must be clearly documented.

**Alcohol, Drugs and Solvents**

No illegal substances will be permitted in the foster carer’s home.

Fair Ways Fostering seek to adopt a realistic approach in this area in terms of educating young people in recognising that social drinking is undertaken by the majority of the population. Fair Ways
Fostering therefore expects carers to be positive role models, and be mindful of their responsibility towards the child/young person in their care at all times, in regard to alcohol consumption.

Foster carers have a key role to play in showing children and young people how to drink responsibly. Children and young people should not witness drunkenness or binge drinking in their foster placement.

Carers must ensure whilst caring for any child that their parenting capacity is not impaired by alcohol. Foster carers need to understand that drinking alcohol can reduce concentration and impair responses and that this may lead to unprofessional conduct.

All alcohol should be stored away securely where young people cannot access it.
## Notifiable Incidents

The National Minimum Standards for Children’s Homes (Regulation 30(1) and the National Minimum Standards for Fostering 2011 Schedule 7; identify there are certain events that require relevant authorities to be notified. Should any of the following events take place, Supervising Social Worker, Foster Care Manager, or in their absence Fair Ways, 24 hour on call duty Social Worker is to be contacted on 02380 230400, who will co-ordinate the notifications as required:

### SCHEDULE 7 Events and notifications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>To be notified to:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chief Inspector (Ofsted)</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsible authority</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary of State</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area authority</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Care Trust</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death of a child placed with foster parents</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information is provided to the Independent Safeguarding Authority under any of sections 35, 36, 39, 41 or 45 of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006(1) in respect of an individual working for a fostering service</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serious illness or serious accident of a child placed with foster parents</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outbreak at the home of a foster parent of any infectious disease which in the opinion of a general practitioner attending the home is sufficiently serious to be so notified</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allegation that a child placed with foster parents has committed a serious offence</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement or suspected involvement of a child placed with foster parents in prostitution</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serious incident relating to a child placed with foster parents necessitating calling the police to the foster parent’s home</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A child placed with foster parents is missing from the placement</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any serious complaint about any foster parent approved by the fostering agency</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instigation and outcome of any child protection enquiry involving a child placed with foster parents</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Contact Policy

Fair Ways believes that the promotion and the maintenance of the relationship with a child and the members of their family is crucial to the positive development of their identity and to their long term well-being. Working within each child’s individual care plan and risk assessment in relation to contact, Fair Ways will support and practically assist children in their care to have contact with their family wherever possible and appropriate (subject to any limitations or provisions set out in their care plan and any relevant court orders). Family contact will never be used as a sanction, and will be promoted and enabled irrespective of behaviour or recent events by all representatives of Fair Ways, providing it is safe to do so. In addition, we can provide suitable premises where contact can take place, if appropriate.

Social Services and foster carers have a responsibility to enable contact between children and families. There are various ways of keeping family relationships alive ranging from personal meetings and visits to letters, cards and phone calls. Text messages, e-mails and social networking may also be used as methods of communication.

Foster carers will play an integral part in these contact sessions either by transporting children in their care to them or if agreed in the care plan by enabling them to take place within their home environment. This is especially important in maintaining the relationship between siblings. Whilst the priority for local authorities is to place siblings together logistically this is not always possible. It is vital therefore that the foster carer welcomes visits from the siblings of children placed with them, working with their foster carers to ensure that family links are maintained. It may also be that grandparents and other relatives of children placed may find it easier and be more inclined to have contact away from the previous family dynamics. It is important that the carer helps to develop their relationship to give the child a sense of their family history and identity.

To ensure that contact remains positive for a child it is important that adult issues are not allowed into the contact sessions. On many occasions when determined by the child’s care plan contact will be supervised. Agreement will be reached between the local authority and Fair Ways as to who will take charge of these sessions. Fair Ways will ensure that any of their workers are given clear guidelines in relation to successfully carrying out this task as often information about these sessions may be used as evidence in court proceedings.

Foster carers play an important role in emotionally supporting children through these meetings with their parents and family. Carers will need to ensure they record these events in the child’s daily records. It is important that you share this information and your views about how that child reacted to contact with your supervising social worker. This will help to ensure that children are not subject to inappropriate emotional pressure from their family and that the safety and well-being of children in our care will always be the priority. Fair Ways must ensure any adverse reactions that a child may have to contact arrangements or visits with any person are fed back to the responsible authority. As such it is essential that the carers keep the Supervising Social Worker abreast of these issues, should they arise.
Life Story Work

Having a consistent family upbringing is crucial in developing one’s identity and key to developing self-esteem. Children who experience multiple moves or spend long periods of time away from their families can often be missing key information about their past, which inhibits their social and emotional development, prevents the development of identity and can lead to significant self-esteem issues.

Life story work is a social intervention that is aimed at helping children and young people understand and attribute feelings to their past, their present and in turn their future. It is a delicate piece of work that takes a great deal of planning and consideration so cannot be attempted by just anyone. It should only be attempted by someone with a strong relationship with the child, at a time when the child is stable and supported in placement. A common technique in the documentation of this is the creation of a Life Story Book.

Ultimately, the child’s social worker is responsible for ensuring that children who are likely to be in long term care have a life story book, however Foster Carers are valuable to the process as they are positioned to capture and record significant moments, milestones and achievements as they happen on a day-to-day basis, which can contribute greatly to the work being completed.

Fair Ways do not typically request that Foster Carers carry out life story work, however do insist that document the child’s journey with them through a range of media, to assist with any Life Story work that may begin. From day 1, carers are expected begin collating photos, videos, souvenirs, certificates etc. and accompanying notes to collate together in a ‘Memory Box’. The memory box itself can be a unique and individualised piece, and as a project in itself should be an opportunity to further bond with the child in a mutually enjoyable exercise.

At the end of the placement, the memory box should go with the child as a reminder of their time and progress with the carer.
Behaviour Management Policy (including acceptable measures of control, discipline, sanctions and use of restraint)

Fair Ways believes that the basis for successfully managing a child/young person’s behaviour is in a team effort. It is not just within your own family, but it is a joint exercise between you, your family, the child/young person’s family, their social worker, your supervising social worker, teachers and other professionals. It is by working together that we can find solutions to the sometimes difficult and challenging behaviours of children within our care.

Managing behaviour is basically about finding ways for a group of people to live together, without hurting each other emotionally or physically. Many children/young people placed within our care will not have experienced caring and consistent discipline before. Some will have been disciplined so inappropriately or unpredictably that they will display fear or panic whenever the issue of discipline arises. It is crucial therefore that Fair Ways Foster Carers are clear about the use of sanctions and have knowledge and information on positive behaviour management skills and techniques.

This policy is intended to set out both what is not acceptable/permissible and also to give carers advice on what can be done.

Sanctions that are NOT permitted

Certain sanctions are prohibited by virtue of their prohibition within Care Standards Act 2000. Also all foster carers are required to agree not to use corporal punishment as a sanction with foster children. The Children Act 1989, and it’s associated legislations and guidance defines corporal punishment as “any intentional application of force as punishments including slapping, pinching, squeezing, shaking, throwing missiles and rough handling”. The following sanctions cannot EVER be used by any Fair Ways foster carers or carers:

- Corporal punishment as defined above
- Deprivation of Food and/or drink
- Children/young people must not be refused visits or communication from their carers, relatives or close family and friends as a punishment. There must be no restriction or delay in agreed levels of communication by telephone or post with a parent, those with parental responsibility, relatives or friends (some peer contact may be limited if agreed with social worker), social workers, solicitors etc.
- Children and young people must not be required to wear distinctive or inappropriate clothing as punishment.
- Withholding of medication, medical or dental treatment is completely unacceptable and is forbidden in all circumstances. Prescribed medication must always be given as directed by a medical practitioner.
• Intentional deprivation of sleep. This could seriously affect the physical health of the child/young person as well as causing psychological damage.

• Physically preventing a child from leaving the property is totally prohibited except in premises approved by the Secretary of State for use as a secure accommodation and under criteria set down in Section 25 of the 1989 Children Act and the Secure Accommodation Regulations 1991.

• Intimate physical searches should only be undertaken in exceptional circumstances by a registered medical practitioner, with the child/young person’s consent and the approval of a company Director or Fostering Manager.

• Excessively sending children to bed as a punishment. Bedtimes should be a pleasant experience for the child. Carers should discuss with their supervising social workers any use of sending children to bed.

• No child/young person should be kept in any form of isolation. If it is necessary for isolation to be used for other reasons, it must be with close adult supervision.

• There may be times, in extreme circumstances, when it will be the most appropriate course of action will be to involve the Police. Incidents, which involve extreme risk to yourselves, others or the child/young person, may necessitate this course of action.

How Behaviours Should be Managed – Acceptable Sanctions
The essential building block for the positive management of children or young people’s behaviour is the patience and persuasion to engage them and offer structure to their lives. The placement agreement meeting will discuss the types of behaviour that foster carers might have to contend with and will discuss methods for managing such behaviour. However, there will always be a range of situations where foster carers need to use their own judgment on where using a sanction is appropriate. We have a responsibility to advise our carers of acceptable methods of discipline which they can use. These would include:-

• “Time out” for periods to allow a child to calm down.

• A loss of privileges.

• “Grounding” not allowing a child to undertake a particular activity (N.B. not allowing contact with family is not acceptable punishment – Nor is physically enforcing the sanction).

• Docking of some of the pocket money to pay for damages etc.

• Levels of pocket money will be agreed at the placement planning meeting. Any withdrawal or docking of pockets money needs to be discussed with supervising social worker.

• Not being able to stay out with friends.

• Withdrawal of special treats e.g. a favourite television programme or other age appropriate sanction.
We would advise that any sanction that is used is **brief, used sparingly and has a time specified ending to it**. It should as quickly as possible follow the unacceptable behaviour, and should not be prolonged for any length of time.

Most foster carers will have experience of working with children and will have developed strategies of disciplining them. However, if in doubt, carers should discuss this with their supervising social work and the child’s social worker.

It is also important that before a sanction is imposed, children should be given the opportunity to make amends or apologise for their behaviour. Foster carers should always explain why the sanction is being imposed and, very importantly, what acceptable behaviour they would normally expect from the child. If a child or young person acknowledges that they were at fault, they should be asked what they think an appropriate sanction should be. This will enable them to start taking some responsibility for their actions and the consequences of these.

### Recording the Use of Sanctions

Foster carers should keep a daily record summarising any sanctions or punishments administered. This should initially be recorded in the foster carer’s diary but copies may be requested for the child/young person’s file.

Good recording of significant events is very important for the foster carer. It enables them to see the progress that has been made with a child/young person and the events that may have had an effect on the child/young person’s behaviour. Also recording and discussing methods of managing behaviour with your supervising social work will be useful to help you both analyse how useful or effective particular methods have been to modify or change the particular behaviour.

In order also to be clear about any sanction that a foster carer imposed, it is important to keep a record. This is for your own protection and should be kept for as long as necessary following the end of a placement. Children’s Services Departments keep records for young people who have been accommodated for 75 years. It is advisable that Fair Ways Foster Carers keep records of control and discipline for as long a possible. If you are unable for whatever reason to do this, you must ensure that they are logged on the child’s/young person’s file.
TEAM TEACH – Use of Physical Restraint

The policy of Fair Ways Fostering states that physical restraint should never be used as a punishment or as a matter of course and should be avoided whenever possible. Our agency embraces the Team Teach Training Policy that is based upon a proactive, preventative approach which in 95% of all cases should de-escalate the need for physical restraint.

As a general rule we do not expect our foster carers to be using physical restraint, however in exceptional circumstances there may be no other choice. (for example a young person physically harming another child etc.). If ever physical restraint has been used by a carer then their supervising social worker must be informed at the earliest possible opportunity, who in turn will inform the placing authority.

Foster carers have a legal and moral duty to protect children/young people in their care and to promote their welfare. This may result in rare situations where physical restraint may have to be used. e.g.:

- There is a clear or perceived risk that a young person is likely to harm himself/herself or others.
- There is a likelihood of serious damage to property and consequent risk to the safety of the young person and other.

The Team Teach training course that all Fair Ways Foster Carers will have to undertake will ensure that they will have a comprehensive understanding of all the issues involved in undertaking any physical restraint. The following points underpin the team teach philosophy:

- Physical restraint should **always** be a last resort.
- Physical restraint means holding a child/young person in a way which avoids any pain or injury to the child/young person. This excludes hitting, punching or any physical retaliation.
- Physical restraint should only be applied with the minimum force required to ensure the safety of the child/young person or others.
- Other children/young people should never assist in a restraint situation.
- If a lone carer is not confident they should never attempt to restrain without assistance. Ideally a second adult should be present whenever possible.
- Following an incident, and at an appropriate time, a life space interview should take place. (See Team Teach Training Manual)
- Foster Carers should immediately contact Fair Ways Fostering following the need to physically restrain a child/young person.
- A Fair Ways Fostering worker will visit the home and speak to everyone involved.
- A report of the incident will be sent to the placing Local Authority social worker.
# Managing Difficult Behaviour Through Positive Reinforcement Approaches

Many of the children and young people that we look after will display inappropriate, difficult or disruptive behaviour that can be very challenging for you and your family to deal with. The following chart gives some examples of the kind of behaviour that can result from interrupted emotional development.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Expected emotional development</th>
<th>Interrupted emotional Development could mean</th>
<th>Resulting behaviour may include</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Birth to 1 year</td>
<td>Trust begins to develop&lt;br&gt;Strong attachments to key people begins&lt;br&gt;Wariness of strangers</td>
<td>Insecurity&lt;br&gt;Mistrust</td>
<td>Being passive&lt;br&gt;Lack of response&lt;br&gt;Constant crying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 to 3 years</td>
<td>Self-confidence and sense of self develops&lt;br&gt;Needs to use primary carers as a base from which to explore&lt;br&gt;Trying to gain some control over world</td>
<td>Lack of trust in carer may result in child becoming very fearful of exploring – or too independent of adults and a danger to themselves&lt;br&gt;Inability to control anger and frustration</td>
<td>Return to baby behaviour (regression)&lt;br&gt;Being very clingy, dependent, wanting to be close to adults all the time&lt;br&gt;Being stubborn, very resistant to control, temper tantrums</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 to 6 years</td>
<td>Curiosity and eagerness for information – lots of questions&lt;br&gt;Sharing and co-operating with others&lt;br&gt;Enjoyment of company of other children and adults&lt;br&gt;Increasing self-reliance</td>
<td>Lack of curiosity&lt;br&gt;Social isolation&lt;br&gt;Feelings of being ‘bad’ and to blame for what has happened&lt;br&gt;Feelings of being out of control&lt;br&gt;Lack of control over own bodily functions</td>
<td>Lack of interest – acting as though ‘frozen’&lt;br&gt;Nightmare terrors&lt;br&gt;Extreme clinginess&lt;br&gt;Restless energy – hurtling around the room&lt;br&gt;Aggression towards self, other children, objects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 to 10 years</td>
<td>Beginning to see a sense of order in the world&lt;br&gt;Developing a clear sense of right and wrong</td>
<td>Being overwhelmed by a sense of grief and loss&lt;br&gt;Poor concentration at school – grieving takes energy and leaves little time to develop new skills</td>
<td>Feelings of sadness, anger, guilt and depression – ‘Why Me?’&lt;br&gt;Being very withdrawn or bossy with other children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 to 16 years</td>
<td>Finding it hard to make new friends</td>
<td>Difficulties in developing greater reasoning skills</td>
<td></td>
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<td>----------------</td>
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<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need to make important relationships outside the immediate family</td>
<td>Insecurity</td>
<td>Telling lies to cover up lack of skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trying to make sense of who they are and of strong emotional feelings including sexuality</td>
<td>Having a low opinion of yourself</td>
<td>Trying hard to ‘get in’ with older peers, acting streetwise</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questioning of adult values and changing views of the world</td>
<td>Greater intensity of emotions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploring from a secure base</td>
<td>Inability to make lasting friendships</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changing views about yourself</td>
<td>Identity confusion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establishing a clearer sense of identity</td>
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</table>

At Fair Ways we regard teamwork as being crucial to managing and modifying these behaviours. Our supervising social workers have extensive experience of different methods of behaviour management and will advise and assist you in implementing these. It often helps to have someone outside of the family who can see whether various approaches are working and who can help you to monitor changes in a child’s behaviour. We will also have access to a very experienced child and adolescent psychiatrist, who will attend your support groups on a regular basis.

Experience shows that positive reinforcement and praise are the most successful ways of changing behaviour, especially when applied consistently and over a long period of time.

The following are simple guidelines on positive reinforcement techniques:

- Ignore or play down the difficult or inappropriate behaviour. This does not mean that we are ignoring the child; we are simply not letting the behaviour annoy us. The important thing is that we remain in control and that we do not get into a debate or an argument with the child. However, a crucial proviso to this is that we don’t ignore anything where safety is a real issue. If ignoring is not the answer then some of the following strategies could be use:
Helping Children/ Young People to Express Anger and Aggression Constructively

Many of the children/ young people in our care have experienced some trauma in their lives that affects their emotional well-being. One of the many ways that this can express itself is through aggression and anger. This is further exacerbated by the steady onslaught of violent images that many young people are subjected to through television, video games, films and the internet. Often they come to believe that anger is the only way to solve a problem. However, there are various techniques that you as a foster carer can use to help your foster child to become calmer and to find more constructive ways to express their anger. The following are a few ideas that our training and your supervising social worker will help you to sustain and develop.
• One effective method of teaching children/young people is by teaching them through example. You can consciously model calmness for them. There are numerous occasions when all of us become frustrated and angry. For example, you have been given an estimate for having your car fixed, and you receive a telephone call saying the price has doubled. You can now offer the child/young person an “on-the-spot” lesson of ways to calm down. For example, you could calmly tell the child/young person “I’m really angry now” but then offer them another way of dealing with it, e.g. “I am just going on a quick walk so that I can get back in control”. The example you give the child of calmness is something that they can then copy.

• Possibly one of the most difficult parts of being a foster carer is when children address their anger towards you or your children. Anger can be very contagious and often you will find emotions aroused in you that you never knew you had. A good house rule to have that you should make the child/young person aware of from the start is that “in this house we solve problems when we are calm and in control”. It is important that this rule is applied consistently. A good approach to use is exit and calm down. If the child is angry and wants an immediate solution/response, you could say, “I need time out. Let’s talk about this later”. Don’t answer back but exit calmly. This can be very difficult to uphold when the child is particularly aggressive and has become used to power struggles. Far too often we end up in heated arguments. However, if you can remember this rule and calmly say to the child “You sound upset. Let’s talk when you’re in control” and then walk away. If consistently applied you will start to experience changes.

• Many of the children/young people we work with have never been given the opportunity to think of other ways of expressing their emotions. They often keep getting into trouble because they only know inappropriate ways of expressing their anger. You could help your child/young person to think about other more acceptable behaviours e.g. walk away, hit a pillow, listen to music, think of a peaceful place. Help the child to choose his/her own ‘calm-down’ technique and then encourage and support him/her in using the same strategy every time he/she gets angry. Repeating the same technique is the best way of it becoming a habit.

• Asking a child/young person “tell me how you feel” when they are displaying anger is unrealistic because often they have not learned the words to tell you how they are feeling. They display anger because they simply do not know how to express their frustrations any other way. Kicking, swearing, screaming, hitting, or throwing things are the ways in which they communicate. Helping them to acquire a ‘feeling’ vocabulary can often is helpful in this. For example, you discuss with them all the words they could use that tell other people they are angry, such as furious, mad, irritated etc. When that child then displays anger use the words so that he can apply them to real life. “You seem really irritated, do you need to walk it off?” or “Looks like you’re really angry. Do you need to talk about it?” Add new emotional words to the list as they crop up in everyday situations.

• It is important that as a foster carer you help the child/young person in your care to recognise and develop an awareness of the early warning signs. For example, when a child/young person is starting to get upset perhaps they talk louder, their cheeks get flushed, they
clench their fist etc. Once they are aware of them, start pointing them out whenever they start to get frustrated, e.g. “Your hands are in a fist now. Do you feel yourself starting to get angry?” Obviously anger management strategies are most effective when used early on because as we all know anger can escalate very quickly.

- Teaching children/young people new constructive ways of dealing with their anger is not easy, especially if they have only practiced aggressive ways of dealing with their frustrations. Research tells us that learning new behaviours takes a minimum of twenty-one days of repetition. If you take one skill that your child needs to be more successful and emphasise the same skill a few minutes every day for 21 days, it instantly becomes more realistic and more likely that the child/young person will acquire this skill and change a destructive, problematic behaviour into a more effective method of communication.

Managing Specific Difficult Behaviours

Truancy (See education policy)

Many of the children/young people in our care have often had very poor experiences of education. Many of them have been suspended and/or excluded from a number of schools. Due to a variety of factors their relationships with teachers can be problematic, and they may find it difficult to remain calm and concentrate in school.

In conjunction with Fair Way’s Education Policy each child/young person placed with us will have a PEP (Personal Education Plan), which will have been discussed fully at the pre-placement agreement meeting. This will clarify the known educational issues in respect of every child and the expectations of the professionals involved. However, the following are the basic expectations of Fair Ways:-

- You will make contact with the child’s school preferably before the placement begins or certainly early on in the placement. You will make yourself known to the child’s teacher and/or another link person with the school.

- You will ask the school to contact you if the child does not come into school, or if the school have any problems or concerns.

- You must always notify the school in advance if the child is not going to be in, so that they know what to expect from you.

- If you are informed by the school of the child’s absence, make a note of these dates. Also monitor that the days on which the school received an absence note from the child/young person match the dates you gave them one.

- If the child/young person has gone truanted from school, talk to them as soon as possible to try to find out the reasons why they have not attended. There may be reasons such as peer pressure or not feeling that they are coping. If truancy is caught early on it can more easily be positively resolved.
• If is important that you discuss any problems with education with your supervising social worker. You will have an opportunity to do this within your monthly formal supervision and during their weekly visits to you. Together you can plan the best strategy to try to prevent further truancy. This could include the following course of action:

  o Going into the school or into class to give the child support.

  o If truancy is more than a rare occurrence, it may be necessary to have a formal meeting with the school, the young person, you and your supervising social worker to work out a plan and ensure that everyone is working together to get the child/ young person back into school full time. Your child’s local authority social worker will be kept fully informed and may also be involved in this meeting.

Misuse of Alcohol and Drugs

Most young people like to experiment as a normal part of growing up. If they experiment with alcohol or drugs it is important not to overreact but also to ensure that they do not harm themselves through lack of information and ignorance. As a Fair Ways you will be given information and training about the different drugs and their effects. It is imperative that you share this with the young person making sure that they know what they are dealing with and do not make mistakes. We need to try and understand why the young person is involved with drugs or alcohol. For some young people this can be as a result of peer pressure or it may be that the young person takes drugs as a cry for help, or as an escape from the pressures that they are under either as a result of their experiences or from some other situation.

As a Foster carer for Fair Ways we expect you to undertake the following:-

• You need to ensure that you have relevant information about alcohol and drugs available at home. You also need to ensure that you are well informed about drugs and their side effects.

• You need to begin to talk informally to the young person about alcohol and drugs. Use news items or articles in newspapers to help you to do this in a natural, general way so that the young person begins to feel comfortable discussing this with you.

• You should never lecture the young person, as this is likely to alienate them even further.

• If you suspect or know that the young person is using drugs/ alcohol then you should try and gather information about this and discuss it as soon as possible with your supervising social worker.

• Together with the young person’s social worker, we can plan what we are going to do to try and resolve the problem.
• It is likely that either your supervising social worker and/ or a drugs and alcohol counsellor will undertake specific work with the young person to help them to understand the reasons for their behaviour.

• You will be kept informed of the progress of this work, so that we can work together and so that you can support the young person at home.

Bullying

Fair Ways Fostering believes that all young people have the right to be treated with dignity and respect. We fully endorse an anti-bullying ethos to which all carers, foster carers, children and young people are committed.

Most young people will attempt to use bullying tactics at some time and research suggests that children from dysfunctional or abusive home environments are more prone to becoming either a target or a bully.

“Objectives should extend to the fundamental right of any child to dignity and protection from harm”

Caring for Children Away from Home – DOH

We believe that young people can be helped to develop better ways of behaving, provided that:

• There is a whole-hearted anti-bullying ethos inherent in Fairway’s philosophy policies and practice.

• Everyone knows and understands what bullying is and why bullies bully

• Everyone knows and understands that bullying is unacceptable

• Incidents of bullying are immediately dealt with

• A bully is called to account in a firm but supportive manner (a child bully is usually unhappy and has very low self-esteem)

• A bully is supported in learning more appropriate ways of interacting with other young people

• All young people are encouraged and aided to be assertive

• All young people are helped to identify bullying and to report it

• All young people are empowered to help both the target and bully

Bullying can be either physical or psychological – both are equally distressing for the target.
Within peer groups, the most common reasons for being picked on can include being fat, thin, tall, short, hair or skin colour, wearing glasses, ear size, having different likes or dislikes, the ‘wrong’ clothes, unwillingness to use physical strength to defend oneself, or simply any perceived or fabricated ‘excuse’. The excuses have one thing in common – they are all irrelevant.

The reason for bullying has no validity.

We will expect our carers to be proactive in their approach towards bullying and address incidents immediately. Enabling a bully to look at their behaviour and the impact it has on others may be sufficient. This will be done in conjunction with the Fair Ways supervising social worker and with the knowledge of the local authority social worker. If appropriate we will work in partnership with the child’s/young person’s school to address this problem.

We are committed to resolving and preventing all forms of bullying.
Children and Young People Missing From Care

Policy Statement
Where a child is missing from care, Fair Ways expect that any foster carers or foster carer involved with that young person will demonstrate the concern that any reasonable parent would in such a situation and respond accordingly.

Children missing from care may place themselves and/or others at risk. The safety of the child is paramount, and as such the level of risk posed to the missing child must be quickly identified, shared and responded to. Each ‘missing’ episode has the potential to be serious. There can be many varied and complex reasons as to why a child may go missing and any one episode must not be viewed in isolation from their family circumstances or their experiences of care. Every ‘missing’ episode should demand proper attention from the professionals involved, who through partnership working, ensure the child receives a consistent and coherent response on their return. As such, Fair Ways expect that all carers and foster carers work in collaboration with associated agencies to maximise the chances of a swift and safe return to the foster home for the child in question.

Fair Ways will also ensure that any response is in line with respective local authority procedures and protocols for children missing.

Definition of a Child Missing From Care
A child is deemed to be missing if they are not where they should be at the time that they are expected to be, and are absent without permission from their carer and/or whoever has parental responsibility, whether or not their whereabouts are known or suspected.

Proactive Measures
Prior to a child being placed with any Fair Ways Fostering, the carer should be provided with a risk assessment on that child (if this is not the case, this should be requested) which should contain details the risk of and to the child absconding. At the placement meeting, or as close to as possible, a delegated authority decision tool should be completed by the child’s social worker, the Fair Ways supervising social worker and the carer, and signed off by whoever has parental authority. This document will contain details of timescales for action in the event of the child going missing (eg at what point the police are informed – immediately or after an agreed time has lapsed). This initial response to the child going missing will be reviewed regularly within the child’s individual risk assessment carried out by Fair Ways and signed off by the person who has parental authority (the most recent of which will supersede any response detailed in any previous document).

Procedure: Action to be taken when a Child is Missing:
The Foster Carer must immediately inform their supervising social worker (or duty Social Worker if their Supervising Social Worker is not available) and the child’s Local Authority Social Worker (or the respective team’s Duty Worker should the child’s Social Worker be unavailable). If a child goes missing out of office hours, or during weekends or public holidays, the Foster Carer must
immediately notify the Fair Ways on call service and the Out Of Hours Service for the respective local authority.

The child will need to be reported to the police as either absent or missing at the agreed timescale (as per the delegated authority decision tool and/or risk assessment). Dependent on which Local Authority the foster home resides in, the decision must either be made by the Police at the point of reporting (including Hampshire, IOW, Portsmouth) or in advance of reporting, in consultation with the child’s Social Worker and the Foster Carer’s Supervising Social Worker. In all cases, the following will need to be considered, discussed and shared in order to determine the category of report:

- The child’s age and/or understanding
- Any predetermined plan of action to be taken should a child be missing (including current Risk Assessment/Management strategies and Delegated Authority Decisions)
- Their physical and mental health
- Their Child Protection status
- Whether or not they pose a risk to themselves and/or others
- Their legal status
- Their knowledge of the area in which they have gone missing
- The prevailing weather conditions and clothing the child is thought to be wearing
- The immediate circumstances preceding and surrounding the child going missing
- Whether there appears to have been any premeditation (e.g. money, food, clothing missing, contact made with others).

**Categories**
The child is likely to be logged as a *Missing Person (MISPER)* if either:

a) The whereabouts of the child are completely unknown and they are not where they are supposed to be at a given time.

b) The child is not where they are supposed to be at a given time, but their whereabouts are known or suspected **and** there is cause for serious concern regarding their welfare.

As a MISPER, it is common practice for the Police to actively search for the child using a variety of resources.

1. The child is likely to be categorised as *Absent* if they are not where they should be, their whereabouts are known/suspected **and** there is no immediate cause for serious concern.

*When categorised as Absent, it is unlikely the police will actively search for the child, however will have the incident reported and logged on the system.*

It is universally expected that where possible/safe to do so, **prior** to reporting the child missing (unless previously agreed otherwise), carers should make efforts to search the home, surrounding areas and any known hangouts to try and locate the child. This may involve making contact with family, friends, or other places the child may have gone to, but carers should not subject themselves to any unnecessary or unmanageable risk by doing so.
It is usually the child’s social worker’s responsibility to ensure the Police are informed, however it may be decided through discussion that the carer or supervising social worker carry out this task.

Responsibility for informing the child’s parents (where appropriate to do so) lies with the Child’s Local Authority Social Worker. In some circumstances, it may be appropriate to use the parents to help search, however the decision to do so will be made by the Local Authority Social Worker/Team and not the carer or other Fair Ways personnel.

Any updates on the developing situation must be shared with all relevant professionals at the earliest opportunity (Carer, Social Worker, Supervising Social Worker, Police).

The Supervising Social Worker will provide daily updates to the Foster Care Manager and LA Social Worker until the child returns.

Should a child be missing for more than 72 hours, the Supervising Social Worker (or Duty Worker in their absence) will visit the Fostering Household as a means of additional support and to identify any further course of action that may need to be taken.

**Below is a checklist carers may wish to use to ensure that the most appropriate course of action is taken if a child/young person in your care goes missing.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Checklist for when a child goes missing</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.</strong> Were you given any reason to believe that the child/young person might run away? Have they taken any clothes, left a note etc.?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2.</strong> Have you tried to contact the child?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3.</strong> Have you checked with other members of your household often people forget to pass messages on?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4.</strong> Have you checked with people that they might be with e.g. known friends, birth family etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5.</strong> Have you any reason to suspect that the child/young person may be involved in abuse/prostitution?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>6.</strong> If you are still concerned and have not already informed your supervising social worker then do so now as together you can decide the next step.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>7.</strong> With your social worker you will agree to inform the police, placing authority and parents. If after 5.00pm or weekends, the out of hour’s emergency duty team will need to be informed. The police would need to know the following information. The full name, date of birth, ethnicity and gender. Their physical characteristics, such as height, weight, colour of hair, any distinguishing marks. You would also need to give the police the date and time of absence, your address, their home address, and their local authority social worker’s details.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>8.</strong> If the child/young person turns up then make sure that you contact everyone to inform them of this.</td>
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**Action to be Taken When a Child Returns After Being Reported Missing**

**Immediate response**
The child must always be welcomed back to the home with a warm and nurturing reception. The carer must ensure that the young person’s basic needs are met, ensuring that the child is warm, has eaten recently (or does eat soon after returning), can wash themselves and rest if necessary. It is important the child does not feel punished for returning and any sanctions or consequences to be imposed must only be decided through consultation with the other professionals involved.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behaviour Management Suggestions on their return</th>
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<tr>
<td>It is important that their basic physical needs are seen to. They could easily be cold, hungry, scared of the reception that they will receive, even if they do not present as such. It is very likely that you too will have experienced a range of emotions during this period. It is important that you show them that you care and that you are pleased and relieved that they are safe. Make them some food, run them a bath</td>
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<tr>
<td>If they want to talk then listen to them but do not get into any disagreements about why they ran away. Suggest that it may be better to talk about the issues properly at another time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Through discussions with your supervising social worker and the child’s social worker, you can address the reasons why they ran away and the agreed sanctions to be taken, also any changes that may be made to the placement plan. However this must be done at the appropriate time. You could also agree other strategies enabling them to take “time out” without having to resort to running away.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whilst they need to know the impact running away had on you, it is probable that this child/young person has come from a chaotic background where boundaries were either non-existent or very inconsistent. It is not surprising therefore that they are” testing” out the boundaries that you have given them. You will need patience, perseverance and skill to help them to deal with their problems in more effective ways than running away from them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remember that it is the role of your supervising social worker from Fair Ways to support you in this, and help you to develop effective strategies for managing this type of behaviour.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a professional foster carer it is expected that you will keep your young person safe, this will mean that if needed and safe to do so, you will be expected to collect them. This can be discussed with the on call supervising social worker.</td>
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**Follow up action**
In all cases it will be necessary to inform the relevant professionals/agencies mentioned above of the child’s return. The Out of Hours should also be notified. Police must be notified.

On their return, a professional independent of the home will visit the child to discuss the reasons associated with their absence and to verify their safety and well-being. This is usually carried out by the Police but may be the Child’s Social Worker or Fair Ways Supervising Social Worker.
Should a child frequently go missing over a short period of time, it is likely the Local Authority will call a multi-agency strategy meeting to discuss the child, their situation, any triggers, with mind to formalise a shared plan to reduce the frequency and minimise any associated risks. It may be that the Police are involved in this process.

Fair Ways will ensure a record of each missing episode is created in the child’s file detailing the following in line with National Minimum Standards:

- Name of child
- Category under which reported
- Date and time reported missing
- Actions taken by the Foster Carer
- Date and time returned
- The circumstances of the child’s return
- Any reasons given by the child for running away from the foster home and any action taken in the light of those reasons
- Brief details of follow-up action
Education Policy

Fair Ways Fostering will ensure with the local education authority that all children of statutory school age, living with a foster carer has access to education appropriate to their age, ability and level of attainment.

- At the point of referral the matching process will ensure that the educational needs of the child/young person are given the highest priority. At this point we will take into account statements of special educational needs, if appropriate. All Fair Ways foster carers will promote regular school attendance and take positive steps with schools to achieve educational continuity for the child/young person. It is our expectation that the foster carer and/or the support worker attached to the agency will provide support for schools in order to maintain the child/young person in education where necessary.

- This support could consist of ensuring a child/young person attends school, sitting in the classroom with the child/young person, or providing educational opportunities outside of the school environment whilst an educational placement is being arranged.

- Fair Ways will seek to provide learning materials and resource packs for carers appropriate to a child’s age and ability, to compliment any home tuition provided by the local education authority.

- With ‘looked after children’ education often poses huge problems that can result far too readily in disrupted placements. It is our belief that problems can be prevented or overcome by the preparation, planning and support from the point of referral. We will equip our foster carers through training, supervision and the provision of resources to ensure that the educational attainment of the children/young people placed within our agency is paramount.

- We will monitor and review the educational attainment of all children/young people placed in our care to promote them meeting national standards

- We will ensure that feedback on the child/young person’s education needs, progress and development is provided to the placing authority through the review reports supplied by Fair Ways Fostering.

- We will commission the services of an education liaison officer if appropriate to ensure that the educational care plans (PEP) are carried out, monitored and reviewed.
Overnight stays

A common complaint made by children in care is that they often feel they are treated differently to other children when it comes to wanting to stay overnight with their friends because their friend’s family have to be checked officially before approval is given.

Fair Ways Fostering has developed this policy and procedure to minimise risk in order to allow children to participate in social and leisure activities in the same way as their peers.

With this in mind, the current regulations for fostering state that “there is no statutory duty for Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) disclosures to be sought in relation to adults in a private household where a child may stay overnight or visit, or who the child may accompany on a holiday or on a school trip”. It also says that “CRB checks should not normally be sought as a precondition”.  

(The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations, Volume 4, at 3.22)

The Local Authority and Fair Ways have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children within our care.

Children looked after should be encouraged to maintain and develop friendships and relationships which all children should be able to experience. Decisions about children's social activities should be taken in partnership between the child, parent (where applicable), carer, and those with parental responsibilities. This decision should normally be undertaken within the placement planning meeting. Where possible a ‘delegated authority tool form’ should be completed.

The regulations offer some helpful points to consider when deciding whether to allow your foster child to stay overnight with a friend or to have a holiday with their friends or to stay with your relatives:

- Are there any restrictions in the placement plan or care plan?
- Whether there are any court orders preventing the child from staying overnight with a particular person, making a specific visit or going on holiday with someone
- Whether there is anything in the child’s past experiences or behaviour that would preclude a stay or visit or holiday
- Whether there are any grounds for concern that the child may be at risk of significant harm from anyone in the household concerned or from the proposed activity
- The age and understanding of the child who is asking
- The length of the stay and what is known about the reasons for the child wanting to stay or visit?

The child’s wishes and feelings should be considered when making a decision. If the answer is no, then the reasons should be fully explained to the child. Your decision to refuse permission should only be held for as long as the reasons for it to continue to exist. Your supervising social worker will be able to support you with this.
As a foster carer you must make sure you have up to date contact details of where your foster child will be staying. Fair Ways promotes foster carers to set a specific time with the foster child of when they should be returning the following day. We also promote that the carer drop off the foster child on the initial stay over to meet the parents or responsible adults of the home. This ensures the carers know exactly where the child is staying, and also allows for the opportunity to identify any risks or concerns that may become evident on visual inspection. The notification of the overnight stay to other parties (social services, parents, foster care agency etc.) should be line with that agreed at the Initial Placement Meeting and as set out in the delegated authority decision support tool.

If the overnight stay will exceed 24 hours, or is likely to become a regular occurrence, then the local authority will arrange for a suitable assessment of the responsible adult to take place, including a visit to the home and the completion of police checks.
Holiday Policy

Holiday
Fair Ways have a commitment to providing foster carers with 14 days paid holiday, per child, per year. The year commences from the day the young person is placed.

This holiday entitlement applies to each individual placement and is taken pro-rata, so the carer accrues a proportionate amount of their holiday for every day in placement. Carers do not earn holiday any day that they are without a placement.

Foster carers should discuss their holiday requirements initially with their supervising social worker, so that the needs of the foster carer and the young person can be taken into account and approval of the local authority sought where necessary.

Foster carers cannot take holiday in advance of accruing it.

Fair Ways acknowledge that each placement and foster care family is different and circumstances/need for holiday will vary accordingly.

Where foster carers are accompanied on their holiday or short break by the young person, and so in effect take no break from their caring role, they will receive their holiday pay in addition to their usual carer fee.

Where foster carers take a holiday or short break from their caring role and so respite for the young person is required, the foster carer will receive their holiday pay and their usual carer fee will be paid to the carer providing the respite.

Responsibility for arranging this respite care will be with the supervising social worker, based on the young person’s needs and availability of suitable alternative carers. Carers should provide at least 4 weeks’ notice before going on holiday to allow time to organise alternative carers and any other matters that need to be attended to.
**Disruption**

In an ideal world, all placement endings will be planned, with the primary aim being for the child/young person, and the foster carers to work towards a positive end in order to lessen the possible emotional turmoil.

However, there may be circumstances where this planned process does not take place and the placement is prematurely ended by unforeseen circumstances that neither the child/young person nor foster carers can control. In this situation Fair Ways will call an urgent disruption meeting to identify realistic timescales for the ending of the placement and to identify who needs to do what in terms of ensuring that the disruption to the child/young person’s care is minimised as much as possible. Fair Ways will also offer maximum support to the foster carers during this very difficult time. This may include emotional support or practical support such as the use of support workers or respite.

All our foster carers make a commitment, as part of their contract, to work openly and honestly with their supervising social worker at all times. All the way through placements, challenging situations will generally be worked through i.e. managing difficult behaviours. Foster carers will share their anxieties and concerns freely, which enables their supervising social worker to identify the causes and work proactively to resolve difficulties.

Very rarely there may be a situation that a foster carer does not feel able to continue to work through, without significant detriment for themselves, their family or the child/young person in their home. In these situations Fair Ways will explore a number of options. We respect that our carers may need to focus on personal issues and we will allow time for these issues to be addressed by offering a short respite break. Fair Ways has access to specialists who will work with carers and their families if that is identified as helpful.

In the exceptional event that difficulties cannot be resolved, after our range of support has been thoroughly utilised, a foster carer may wish to give notice to end the placement. In this event, Fair Ways will call a meeting with the Local Authority placing social worker to identify realistic timescales and explore any alternative placement possibilities.

In all cases, we expect foster carers to work closely with their supervising social worker to try to resolve issues and to avoid disruptions to a child’s placement. In some cases, all the relevant people involved will agree that the placement will need to come to an end, in which case the foster carers will be expected to issue at least 28 days’ notice.
Advocacy Policy

Any Looked After Child has a right to have access to an independent advocate. Although all young people in our care have access to a formal complaints procedure they may not feel comfortable complaining or they may simply want to talk to someone independent from both Fair Ways and from Social Services.

All young people will be made aware through our complaints procedure \ young person’s booklet that they can access an independent advocate should they chose to do so.

Fair Ways will assist the young person to contact an advocacy service in a manner that is appropriate to their own age and level of understanding. For example a sixteen year old may just be provided with the access to a telephone and the appropriate number, whereas a younger child with a lesser degree of understanding may be referred by Fair Ways.

The advocate will provide the following support to the young person:

- Listen to the young person
- Talk through their concerns with them
- Help them to understand their rights
- Help them sort out their problems in the way that THEY want
- Give them advice and support
- Help the young person make a formal complaint if appropriate
- Keep what the young person says confidential (unless the YP or someone else is at risk).

Advocacy Groups Within Fair Ways

Fair Ways facilitate a young person’s advocacy group for all fostered and birth children within the department. Run, by the fostering team the group meets during school holidays, provides a mixture of activities and workshops aimed at achieving the following:

- Empowering young people to have a voice
- Identifying areas of improvement in the service
- Identifying Positive aspects of the service
- Creating a sense of community
- Encouraging socialisation and forming of new relationships and peer groups
- Opportunity to monitor the wellbeing of young people
Appropriate Adult Procedures

There may be times when a young person placed with us gets into trouble with the police.

Under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (P.A.C.E), the Police are not allowed to interview a juvenile (anyone 17 years or under), or those over 17 years with mental health problems/learning difficulties, without a parent or an appropriate adult being present. Children under 10 years old cannot be charged with a criminal offence, but they can be interviewed.

If an appropriate adult is required for a young person placed in foster care, the foster carer or supervising social worker NOT involved in the alleged offence will attend the Police Station.

When acting as an Appropriate Adult it is our duty to:

- Ensure the young person understands what is happening to them and why.
- Give support and advice to the detained young person.
- Facilitate communication between the Police and the detained service user.
- Ensure Police interviews are conducted fairly and properly.
- Check health/welfare issues.
- Look at Custody Records to ensure they have been fairly treated.
- Make sure the young person understands the interview process.
- Delay an interview if it is felt necessary.

Foster carers will consider whether to seek legal advice from a solicitor prior to arriving at the Police Station, especially if the alleged offence is serious. If it is deemed necessary in the best interest of the young person for a solicitor to be present on or after arrival, foster carers acting as Appropriate Adult will request one.

Foster carers acting as Appropriate Adult will be present (with/without solicitor) throughout the interview, and even if a solicitor is present, will intervene if deemed necessary.

Foster carers will take notes during the interview which will later be shared with the solicitor and social worker of the placing authority.

Dependent on the outcome and seriousness of the alleged offence, bail may be refused. In this instance the placing authority will be contacted immediately.
Leaving Care Policy

The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 now requires all care leavers to have a Personal Advisor to work with the young person up until they are 21 (or 24 if they are in higher education) and to draw up a Pathway Plan as a statutory duty. This role is external to Fair Ways Fostering and is provided through the Placing Authority.

A Pathway Plan is basically the process whereby young people map out their future. The young person is central to drawing up their own plan, expressing their own aspirations and goals along the way to realising their ambitions. They will, with their Personal Advisor identify how the local authority can help them to reach their goals.

Fair Ways has strong links with Local Authorities and has access to a wide range of information to enable the foster carers meet the young person’s needs. As a foster carer, you will play an integral role in accessing information and providing opportunities for the young person’s goals to be realised. This will include finding accommodation, further education or training, independent living skills, personal support, family and social relationships, health and emotional needs, financial support, careers advice, job hunting.

For foster carers, many of these areas will have been identified and maintained as part of the child/young person’s care plan, so much of your role in supporting them as they leave care will be familiar, especially in long term placements.

Fair Ways will promote the identification and introduction of a young persons’ Personal Advisor before the young person’s sixteenth birthday and will work closely with the placing Local Authority to consider the provision of appropriate aftercare services.

Fair Ways Fostering (UK) will provide training on Endings and Transitions. This can be re-visited as and when needed.

Although Fair Ways does not have a statutory duty to provide aftercare once they have ceased to be accommodated, we do feel it is imperative that we advise, assist and befriend to promote the welfare of any young person when they cease to be accommodated. All supervising social workers will take the lead role in identifying roles and responsibilities in partnership with the placing Local Authority and provide carers with a comprehensive information package to assist the young person in the transition of leaving care.
Preparation for Independence and ‘Staying Put’

Policy Statement
Fair Ways Fostering promote and enable our young people to prepare for moving into independence effectively and with as minimal disruption as possible. In any stage of life, change presents challenges, so it is crucial to maintain as much stability and consistency as possible through transitional periods. As such, we aim to enable this preparation for independence to happen within the foster placement. Doing so affords the young person/adult a stable basis from which to develop, in terms of the consistency of key relationships, the on-going provision of emotional support and the security of a familiar environment. Approaching adulthood is a particularly unsettling and uncertain time for young people in care, so identifying needs early and formulating an appropriate plan is crucial to assist an effective transition. We aim to acknowledge the unique needs of each of our young people and to build upon their pre-existing skills, whilst also supporting them to identify and develop new skills.

For post 18 placements Fair Ways may look to negotiate a reduction in cost to the placing authority and in turn a reduced allowance to the carer. This acknowledges of the reduced level of care needs to a standard placement, however is not an obligation on the carer’s part and as such must be negotiated in advance.

Prior to transition:
As a young person comes into their teens, the foster carer along with the supervising social worker and in line with the local authority social worker may begin identifying areas of need. At this stage this is only an informal process which is opportunity led.

There is training available for foster carers around planning and supporting young people to prepare for adulthood, which can be accessed at this time.

Closer to the transition, a Pathways needs assessment will be carried out which informs the Pathway Plan and sets out the areas of need to prepare the young person for independence. At this stage the young person should have an active involvement in the planning process. The Foster Carer will actively support the targets of the Pathways plan and work with the young person on the needs identified in the risk assessment.

In some instances it may be appropriate to complete a Support Agreement and Young Person Contract at this point placement with young person and social worker.

During the Transition
The carer will provide a warm, accepting and safe environment, where the young person is supervised and guided in line with their assessed level of need.

Whist we aim to provide young adults with stability, consistency and acceptance, the emphasis has to be on the young adults being or working towards responsible for themselves. The role of the carer
at this point shifts towards supporting, advising and reporting, rather than telling or instructing. Again, this is carried out in line with social workers recommendation, the care plan, and/or the pathway plan.

The majority of the support will be provided by the carer with guidance from the supervising social worker; however, Fair Ways also has dedicated support workers trained in supporting young people’s transitions to independence that may be accessible at this time.

Fair Ways also have a large Post 16 residential department available as a resource or as part of a move on plan.

**Post Transition**

The relationship is the key element of all Fair Ways work with young people. As such, we aim to maintain relationships throughout and beyond any transition into independence. Foster Carers are encouraged to maintain links with young people once they have moved on, as would happen in many family homes. Support workers and other personnel (such as Play Therapist) will also be made available as an on-going support/outreach packages for the young person to best enable their success.

Fair Ways operate an open door policy whereby any young person is able to return for advice and support once they have moved on.
Section 3. Matters Pertaining to the Foster Carer
Annual Review process
As per Fostering Regulation 28, all carers will have their suitability for foster formally reviewed at least once every 12 months. The supervising Social Worker will compile the information including gathering feedback from the carer, any children who are in place, any placing authorities that have had children placed there within the last 12 months and where appropriate, the views of any birth parents.

Significant events and learning points will be highlighted and discussed along with any concerns and changes of circumstance, in order to make a decision about their suitability to continue fostering.

For the first annual review, the view of the Fostering Panel must be taken and Fair Ways insist that carers attend panel for this. Subsequent reviews do not necessarily require the involvement of the panel (See Fostering Panel Policy), however Fair Ways will usually do so for the purposes of best practice. In certain circumstances (beyond the first annual review), such as significant changes to circumstance, we may ask the carer to attend their annual.

Fair Ways Annual Review Panel will consist of agency employees and independent members who will have a diversity of knowledge and skills to ensure that quality decisions based on full and comprehensive assessments are made about the approval of foster carers. These assessments will have been undertaken by experienced, qualified, social workers, commissioned by Fair Ways.

Whilst the panel will have many functions within the context of the organisation, the overriding objective will be to ensure and promote the safety and well-being of the children/young people in our care, enabling them to realise their full potential.

Terms of Reference

Decision Maker

The Agency’s Decision Maker does not sit on panel. He (currently the Managing Director) will read the assessment and all related relevant information on the prospective carer and with consideration to the recommendation of the fostering panel, make a decision as to whether or not the prospective carers are registered. He will make his decision within 7 working days of receiving the panel recommendation and Minutes. The carers will be notified orally within 2 working days and in writing within 5 working days.

Panel Members

- Fair Way’s panel will consist of independent representatives from health and education. There will also be an independent, experienced foster carer and an adult who has previously been a looked after child.

- All panel members will have completed an application form and a self-profile, which will be made available to the independent chair informing them of the skills and expertise available. Criminal Records Bureau checks will have been undertaken on all panel members and personal references sought. No panel member will be allowed to sit on the panel until these
have been successfully completed. (See Terms & Conditions of Appointment for Fair Ways Panel Member – Appendix 1)

- Fair Ways will appoint a medical advisor to its panel.

**Role of Independent Chair and Panel Process**

- Fair Ways will have an independent chairperson and vice chairperson who will both have extensive childcare experience.

- The expectation is that the Fostering Manager who will act as panel advisor, will liaise closely with the Chair if any difficulties arise as part of the panel process. They will assist the panel process if the chair is aware of concerns regarding the applications prior to the panel meeting.

- At the beginning of panel time should be allocated to each case and issues to be considered.

- All questions for the independent assessor or prospective foster carers should go through the Chair. These questions will be agreed prior to meeting with the applicants/ assessor.

- Panel members should only ask direct questions to the applicants/ assessors with permission from the Chair.

- It is the expectation of Fair Ways that all applicants will attend panel with their independent assessor. They will be warmly welcomed and will have been given prior information on what to expect and the role of the panel. (See Guidelines for Foster Carers, Application Process).

- If there is any disagreement between panel members and the process of approval is not unanimous, the majority vote will prevail. If it is a hung vote, the independent Chair will have the casting vote.

- Whilst Fair Ways acknowledges that ideally all decisions should be undertaken by a full panel, in certain circumstances decisions have to be made quickly to ensure the safety and well-being of a child/young person. In these situations the protocol for the delegation of decision making outside of panel meetings will apply. (See Appendix 2).

- Fair Ways will provide training for all panel members, incorporating panel process and competency assessments. (See Panel Training Programme - Appendix 3).

**Panel Meetings**

- There will be a designated minute taker at each panel meeting.

- In relation to each individual case, panel’s questions to the assessors/ applicants and their answers given should be recorded.
• Each panel member should be asked to give reasons why they are making their recommendation.

• The recommendation of panel should be recorded with a set of collective reasons given by panel members. The terms of each applicant’s approval should be recorded in respect to age range, gender and number of children/young people.

• Any significant comments or dissent from any panel members should be recorded. As should any additional comments from the Chair.

• Panel meetings will be held at suitable intervals or as requested by Fair Ways.

• Minutes of previous panels will be circulated to all panel members.

• In order for Fair Way’s Panel to operate, there needs to be at least five of its members including the Chair or Vice-Chair, at least one of the social worker members employed by Fair Ways, and at least two of the independent members. The independent Chair will have the power to suspend a panel meeting if the representation is not diverse enough.

• The first 15 minutes of each panel convened will be dedicated to updating the panel on the business of the agency and any placements that have been made, or any disruptions or terminations of placements.

• The independent Chair, in conjunction with the Fostering Manager, shall produce an annual report of the panel’s work, which shall be considered by all panel members. It will be their responsibility to monitor the diversity of carers appointed by panel.

• All applicants who Fair Ways have not approved as a foster carer, and who wish to challenge this decision will be given the appeals procedure. (refer to page 100)

**Role & Functions of Fair Ways Panel:**

• After having reviewed all the information gathered during the assessment and ensured that it is complete, to consider each applicant for approval and to recommend whether or not a person is suitable to act as a foster carer.

• Agreeing the approval details, for example, age and numbers of children/young people. Fair Ways panel will inform the applicants of their decision at the panel meeting and will confirm this in writing within 48 hours of the panel sitting.

• Considering any changes in a foster carer’s approval.

• Deciding on a termination of approval, complaints and allegations made against foster carers.

• Panel will consider all initial annual reviews of foster carers.
• Fair Ways panel will have agreed the procedures for monitoring annual reviews of foster carers that are not seen by the panel, and will monitor the effectiveness of these.

• The Fair Ways panel will provide a quality assurance function to Fair Ways. This will be achieved by ensuring that there is a consistency in approach and standards of assessments undertaken. It will ensure that all applicants are treated in an anti-oppressive manner.

• Fair Ways panel will give advice and make recommendations on such matters or cases that Fair Ways refers to it.
Delegated Authority

Within the terms of this agreement the panel delegates authority for decisions outside of full panel meetings to:-

- The Chairperson or in his/ her absence the Vice-Chair of Fair Ways panel and the Fostering Manager of Fair Ways.

- Changes of appointment should only be made outside of the full panel meeting where the following criteria apply:-
  
  o To wait for a full panel meeting would result in Fair Ways being unable to provide a local authority with a more suitable alternative to the current care arrangements for a child/young person.

- To wait for a full panel meeting would seriously jeopardise a current placement arrangement.

- To wait for a full panel meeting would be putting the child/ young person in immediate or suspected risk.

Examples of the above criteria are:-

- Where a placement falls outside of the age range specified but matches in other respects.

- Where an EMERGENCY PLACEMENT falls outside of the approval range and is of a temporary nature.

- Where a placement needs to be extended and the foster carer has only been appointed for placements of a specified time-scale.

After consultation with the independent Chair, the agreement can either be made to:-

- Approve the changes of appointment until the next available panel meeting.

- Approve the changes of appointment for the duration of the placement.

Any permanent change must be presented to the panel at the next available panel meeting.
 Appeals Procedure for Foster Carers Policy

You may use the following appeals procedure if:-

• You have not been appointed as a foster carer for Fair Ways.

• You are unhappy with the outcome of your Annual Review.

• You are unhappy with a decision made by Fair Ways to terminate your appointment as a foster carer.

Procedure

In the case of an Annual Review you will have 14 days after receiving your review papers to make representation in writing, to the Reviewing Officer.

If a decision has either been made not to appoint you as a foster carer, or to terminate your appointment as a foster carer, the following procedure will apply:-

• You can appeal within 28 days of receiving written confirmation of these decisions, by writing to the Independent Chair of the panel.

• They will then appoint an independent social worker not previously involved, who will interview you and other relevant people.

• This social worker will submit a report to the Chair of panel within 14 days.

• If it is the independent social worker’s recommendation that you have been unfairly treated, the matter will be reconsidered by the next full panel meeting.

• You will be invited to attend this meeting.

• The decision of the panel will be given to you in writing within 14 days.

• The decision of the panel will be final.
Foster Care Terms & Conditions

Foster Care Agreement
Prior to the commencement of a foster placement, foster carers must sign the ‘Foster Care

Purpose of Agreement
The purpose of this agreement is to ensure that Fair Ways and you the foster carer are clear with regard to our mutual obligations and responsibilities. As a foster carer you will be self-employed but fostering solely for Fair Ways (foster carers are only permitted to foster with and for one provider/local authority)

Duration of Agreement
This agreement will last for a period not exceeding 12 months. Fair Ways will then review the agreement. Should Fair Ways consider that you remain suitable to continue as a carer a new agreement will be issued. Should Fair Ways consider that you do not; no new agreement will be issued.

The following persons are approved foster carers in accordance with Regulations 27, Fostering Services Regulations 2011.

1st Carer

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<th>Surname:</th>
<th>Forename(s):</th>
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<td>Date Approved:</td>
<td>Approval Status:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supervising Social Worker:</td>
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2nd Carer:

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<th>Surname:</th>
<th>Forename(s):</th>
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**Foster Carer’s Employment Status**
You are engaged to work with Fair Ways as a self-employed foster carer. You are obliged to pay your own tax and National Insurance Contributions.

Fair Ways will endeavour to secure a foster care placement for you but is under no obligation to place a foster child in your care.

You are under no obligation to accept any foster care placement that may offer you.

Should a foster placement be made with you, Fair Ways can give no undertaking as to the expected duration of the placement.

You agree that this agreement is not a contract of employment and that nothing within the agreement can give rise to a claim under employment legislation.

**Legal Liabilities**
You must inform your insurance company that you are working as a foster carer and make sure that your policy covers any accidental damage which may arise as a consequence of having a child placed in your care.

You must inform your insurance company that as a foster carer you will be transporting foster children in vehicles that you own.

Fair Ways will provide insurance in respect of liability which may be incurred by Fair Ways in respect of death, injury, public liability, damage or other loss.
Support
Fair Ways will pay you an agreed allowance and agreed expenses for each night that a child is in your care. The payments will be made on Fridays on a fortnightly basis. Allowances and fees will be reviewed annually and you will receive information about the allowances fees before a child is placed.

Fair Ways will provide a monetary gift on birthdays to carers, birth children and foster children.

Fair Ways will provide an additional allowance on birthdays and at festivities e.g. Christmas or Eid to support the purchase of presents etc.

You will be visited a minimum of every 4 weeks by a member of the Fair Ways foster carers or your supervising social worker and will be visited should you require urgent assistance as and when appropriate.

Your supervising social worker will give formal supervision on a 4 weekly basis.

Immediate advice and support 24 hours a day with the utilisation of our ‘out of hours’ service and duty service will also be available to you.

We will provide specialist advice and support as and when identified.

You will receive at least one unannounced visit each year.

When you do not have a child in placement you will continue to receive regular support.

Training
Fair Ways will provide you with core mandatory training and you will complete all training related to the training, support and development standards for foster care.

Training, support and development standards for foster care must be completed within 12 months of approval as per regulation 17 and 28 of the Foster Regulations 2011.

You will undertake any training identified by Fair Ways to compensate for gaps in your skills and knowledge as a foster carer.

You will make reasonable efforts to attend foster carers support groups established by Fair Ways. Fair Ways encourage our carers to provide feedback in order to enhance our existing services and polices.

You understand that attendance on training provided by Fair Ways is a condition of your continued approval and that the repeated failure to undertake training may lead to the termination of your approval as a foster carer.
Procedure for Review

You agree to attend any review when requested by Fair Ways.

Your review will take place not more than a year after approval and thereafter whenever Fair Ways considers it necessary, but at intervals of not more than a year.

Fostering Panel

Your first annual review will be presented to Fair Ways independent fostering panel. Subsequent reviews may be presented to the panel or internal panel.

Fair Ways will make such enquiries and obtain such information as it considers necessary, in order to review whether you continue to be suitable to act as a foster carer and your household continues to be suitable.

In conducting a review, Fair Ways will seek and take into account the views of:

1. You as a foster carer
2. Birth children
3. The foster child
4. Any authority which has within the preceding year placed a child with you
5. Any other feedback relevant to the review

At the review Fair Ways will prepare a written report setting out:

Whether you continue to be suitable to act as a foster carer and your household continues to be suitable

The terms of your approval continue to be suitable

Fair Ways will refer its report to the fostering panel for consideration.

Agency Decision

Taking into account any recommendation made by the fostering panel, that you and your household continue to be suitable and that the terms of your approval continue to be appropriate, we will give written notice to you of our decision.

If taking into account any recommendation made by the fostering panel, Fair Ways is no longer satisfied that you and your household continue to be suitable, or that the terms of your approval are appropriate, we will:

Qualifying Determination

Give written notice to you that we propose to terminate, or revise the terms of, your approval as the case may be, together with our reasons,
And

Invite you to submit any written representation within 28 days of the notice.

And

**Independent Review Panel**

Inform you that you may, as an alternative, apply to the Secretary of State for a review by an independent review panel of the qualifying determination.

However, you cannot do both.

**Written Representation**

If Fair Ways does not receive any written representation within 28 days it will proceed to make its decision.

**Independent Review Panel**

If you inform Fair Ways that you are applying to the Secretary of State for a review by an independent review panel, of the qualifying determination, Fair Ways will await any recommendation the review panel has made and that recommendation, along with that of Fair Ways’ fostering panel, will be taken into account.

**Agency Decision**

Fair Ways will then proceed to make a decision.

**Written Notice**

As soon as practicable after making the decision Fair Ways will give written notice to you, as the case may be-

(a) that you and your household continue to be suitable, and that the terms of your approval continue to be appropriate; or

(b) that your approval is terminated from a specific date, and the reasons for the termination; or

(c) the revised terms of your approval and the reasons for the revision

**Final Decision**

The decision now taken by Fair Ways will be final.

**Procedure in connection with the placement of children**

Fair Ways will only offer you a fostering placement where the terms of your approval are consistent with the proposed placement and you have consented to the proposed placement.

Fair Ways will share all available information about the child/young person being placed.

Where any other authority which already has a child placed with you, consents to the placement.
Where possible, a period of introduction will be provided prior to a child being placed in your care.

You will have full involvement in discussions and decision making for placements.

You will have full involvement in matters discussed and agreed in an individual placement agreement.

**Full particulars**
Fair Ways will require you to give full particulars of:

(a) any intended change of your address;
(b) any change in the composition of your household
(c) any other change in your personal circumstances and any other event affecting either your capacity to care for any child placed or the suitability of your household;
(d) any request or application to adopt children,
(e) or any registration applied for to provide child minding or day care.

**You agree to the following**

To not administer corporal punishment to any child placed with you.

To ensure that any information relating to a child placed with you, to the child’s family or to any other person, who has been given to you in confidence in connection with the placement is kept confidential and is not disclosed to any person without the consent of Fair Ways.

To comply with the terms of any foster placement agreement

To care for any child placed with you as if that child were a member of your own family and to promote his welfare having regards to the long and short term plans for the child.

To comply with all and every policy and procedure of Fair Ways

To register the child/young person with a General Practitioner and Dentist within 1 week of placement. To Consult a doctor, dentist, optician etc. whenever appropriate and promote a healthy lifestyle through giving information, advice and positive role modelling.

To comply with the arrangements for giving consent to the medical or dental examination or treatment of a child

To notify Fair Ways limited immediately of any serious illness or accident, or other serious incident that affects that child/young person.

To actively promote the child/young person’s: positive self-identity: self-esteem; personal and physical growth and development; and religious and cultural beliefs.
To promote agreed contact between placed child/young person and their families, friends and significant people.

To promote educational attendance and attainment through encouragement, liaison with teachers and supporting the child/young person to meet the targets set in their personal education plan (PEP) etc.

To co-operate as reasonably required with Ofsted and in particular to allow a person authorised by Ofsted to interview you and visit your home at any reasonable time.

To keep Fair Ways informed about the child/ Young person’s progress and to notify it immediately of any significant events affecting the child.

To comply with the policies and procedures of Fair Ways issued under regulations 12 and 13 Fostering Services Regulations 2011.

To allow any child placed with you to be removed from your home if the responsible authority considers such a removal to be in the best interest of the child.

The Procedure available to foster parents for making complaints

Fair Ways will provide an opportunity for informal resolution of the complaint at an early stage.

No person who is the subject of a complaint takes part in its consideration, other than, if the Registered Person considers it appropriate, at the informal resolution stage only.

Should Fair Ways receive a complaint from you, the Registered Person will consider the complaint and make a decision.

You will be informed of that decision in writing within 28 days.

Should the decision made by the Registered Person fail to satisfy you, the Registered Person may consider requesting that the HR department review the complaint and the decision made.

However, the notification to HR is at the absolute discretion of the Registered Person and the Registered Person is under no obligation to notify HR or to uphold any recommendation made by the HR department.

The Registered Person will make his decision and give reasons to you for his decision within 28 days.

At this stage the decision of the Registered Person is final and no further appeal is permitted.

Complaint about the Registered Person

Should Fair Ways receive a complaint from you about the Registered Person that complaint will be considered by a company director.
The company director will make a decision about the complaint within 28 days and provide reasons to you for the decision he has taken.

The decision taken by the company director will be final and no further appeal is permitted.

**Termination as a foster carer**

You agree to give Fair Ways 28 days’ written notice should you wish to no longer act as a foster carer, whereupon your approval is terminated with effect from 28 days from the date the notice is received by Fair Ways.

**Please note**, once a written notice of resignation is received by Fair Ways, it cannot be retracted. As set out above, your approval will automatically terminate 28 days later. It is best to discuss your plans to leave before submitting notice.

**Termination of a Fostering Placement**

You agree, were practicable, to give Fair Ways 28 days written notice if you wish to end a fostering placement.

**Duty of Good Faith**

You agree to act at all times with a duty of good faith towards Fair Ways, its clients and its foster children. You agree that should it be the view of Fair Ways that you have breached this duty of good faith, your approval as a foster carer will be reviewed and such a review may decide that you are no longer a person suitable to act as a foster parent.

**The Fostering Services Declaration**

1. We the undersigned agree to the Terms & Conditions of this agreement between (Fair Ways) and ourselves.
2. This is a legally binding document.
3. We/I undertake to read and abide by the Fair Ways policies and procedures:

   1st Carer Name: 
   1st Carer Signature: ___________________________ Date: ___________________________

   2nd Carer Name: ___________________________
   2nd Carer Signature: ___________________________ Date: ___________________________

   Name of the Fostering Service Decision Maker: ___________________________
   Signature of Fostering Service Decision Maker: ___________________________ Date: ___________________________
STANDARD SERVICES

Fair Ways Fostering Limited Carers provide/support the following services within their standard weekly fee:

24 Hour Care and Accommodation
- Accommodation, food and safe care that meets the Child or Young Person’s needs.

Basic clothing and school uniforms (Summer and Winter)
- School uniform, general sports activity clothing and other general clothing.
- Any replacement clothing including special requirements, e.g. unusual sizes or for children or young people with disabilities.

Equipment and resources
- Individual sports or hobby tuition and equipment.
- Stationery, calculators, school books, drawing instruments, school bags, additional materials to support school or education activities including but not to arts and crafts materials and foodstuffs to support domestic science lessons (Financial support, accessed through the Personal Education Planning process may provide additional support if assessed as beneficial).
- Children and Young people of school age shall have access to a computer in the home for education, homework and recreational purposes. It shall be connected to the internet (unless assessed as inappropriate) and be appropriately safeguarded against the use of inappropriate material.
- Resources relating to religious needs
- Ensuring appropriate safeguarding measures for all resources and equipment, including future developments with changing technology e.g. wi-fi.
- Equipment requirements in respect of Children and Young People with additional needs, for example disabled children.

Glasses and contact lenses, hearing aids and other physical aids
- Provision of glasses, contact lenses, hearing aids and other physical aids if required, including replacement in the event of accidental damage or loss.

Holidays for Children and Young People
- Children and young people will accompany their Foster Carers on family holidays. Where this is not possible, Fair Ways Fostering will seek the provision of alternative short-term break arrangements with another suitable carer. This has to be pre-approved by the Local Authority.
- Any family outings.
- The cost of any day trips as part of the Child or Young Person’s schooling.

Where additional holidays, such as school activity holidays, are requested for the Child, a written application can be made to the Local Authority. The Local Authority will consider making additional funding available to fund such trips but each application will be dealt with on an individual basis.
Contact
- Where appropriate and agreed, Fair Ways Fostering or their carers to facilitate, transport and promote contact with siblings, parents and relatives as specified in the Child or Young Person’s contact arrangements, following risk assessments.

Respite
- Up to 14 days per year respite care (holiday entitlement, pro rata to the length of placement). Depending on the level of need, additional respite may be funded by the Local Authority subject to assessment.

Insurance
- It is the responsibility of the Fair Ways Fostering and their Foster Carers to be appropriately insured for any loss or damage to vehicles or property arising from providing foster care. The Local Authority is unable to provide insurance or insure against these risks and so will not be liable for any such payment, or separate charge for associated premiums or policy excesses.

Pocket money, birthday and festival gifts to Children and Young People
- Pocket Money, Birthday, Festival allowance and Gifts. Fair Ways Fostering will also provide additional finance as a gift on Birthdays and at Christmas.

Schooling
- Costs associated with homework assignments and extra-curricular activities.
- The cost of caring for a child who is unable to attend school (whether because of illness, exclusion or other reasons) for any consecutive period of up to two weeks.

Telephone calls
- Calls to family members and friends or the Local Authority are to be included in the cost of care.

Toiletries and Cosmetics
- All toiletries, including skin and hair care products.
- The cost of a regular haircut.

Transport
- Day to day travel and transport (whether by car, train, bus or other form of transport) up to 280 miles per week averaged out over the invoice period (e.g. up to 1120 miles over an invoice period of 4 weeks). This includes (but is not to) transport to and from school or other educational establishment, and transport to and from contact visits.

Life Skills and Preparation for Independence
- Support each Child or Young Person to develop life skills and where applicable prepare for independent living.
- Teach and support the Child or Young Person to develop their life skills and ability.
- Setting up bank accounts for all Children and Young People.
- Assisting the Child or Young Person to manage their finances appropriately.
- Assistance in looking for suitable jobs, further training and education.
- Support the Young Person to find suitable accommodation when leaving care, working with the Local Authority to do so.
• Support placement transition to supported lodgings or other arrangement once Young Person turns 18 years.

**Savings for Children and Young People**

Allocate a weekly allowance to be deposited into a savings account for the Child or Young Person in accordance with the Local Authority’s agreed savings protocol for Children or Young People in care. This is often £9 a week. Fair Ways expect savings to commence within 3 weeks of a young person being placed. Fair Ways offer a separate savings account for all young people, and arrangements can easily be made to automatically deposit an agreed savings amount from the young person’s element of the fostering allowance.

**Festive Allowances**

• Foster carers, birth children and foster children will receive a high-street shopping voucher worth £10 on their birthday.

• Before the foster child’s birthday, an additional £50 will be added to the carer’s pay to help support with the birthday gifts and/or plans for the foster child.

• Special Birthdays: On a foster child’s 16th birthday they will receive a high-street shopping voucher worth £20. On a foster child’s 18th birthday they will receive a high-street shopping voucher worth £50.

• For other festive celebrations, such as Christmas or Eid, an additional £100 will be added to the carer’s pay to help support with the gifts and/or plans for their foster child.
### FOSTER CARE ALLOWANCES (2015/16)

#### QUALIFYING LEVEL
Inexperienced, new foster carers
Has completed Skills to Foster Training and Induction Training

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LEVEL 1
In addition to previous level has completed TSD Portfolio and Skills to Foster Workbook
Attends required number of training sessions per year as per training appraisal

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LEVEL 2
In addition to previous level, has completed Nurturing Attachments course and Level 2 Effective Listening/Working with Parents

Attends required number of training sessions per year as per training appraisal

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LEVEL 3
Already holds Level 3 HSC qualification (or higher relevant qualification)
In addition to previous levels, has completed Level 3 Effective Listening/Working with Parents
Attends required number of training sessions per year as per training appraisal

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Training Pathways and Pay Levels for Carers
The chart below shows the current training options in relation to the pay levels of our carers.

Training is appraised each year through the Annual Review process and forms one of three components that are considered when assessing which level a carer qualifies for, which are:

1. Training undertaken and completed. Not only the option listed below, but also attendance at role enhancing training courses and support groups throughout the year.
2. Carer performance against role-specific competencies, as per the job description. This forms a base level of achievement that must be met across key aspects of the fostering role.
3. Carer’s individual fostering and child care experience. This is a discretionary factor, but will consider:
   a. The range of placement types and work environments a carer has had.
   b. The longevity of placements and durability demonstrated.
c. Compliance with fostering regulations and organisational/contractual expectations.
d. Length of continued service for Fair Ways.

Completing all training in each category does not therefore guarantee a carer will progress to the next pay level, as all 3 elements must be satisfied in order to progress.

We may also take into consideration other professional or educational pathways being followed externally (for example a degree in Youth Counselling).
Financial Aspects for Foster Carers

Employment Status
As a carer with Fair Ways, the Inland Revenue will regard you as a self-employed person; therefore you are responsible for the completion and return of an annual self-assessment tax return.

It is your responsibility to inform the Tax Office of the income you receive as a foster carer and you will be liable for tax and National Insurance contributions.

You will need to retain receipts if you wish the Tax Office to take into account all the costs incurred in caring for a child. For example, if you were to redecorate a room, purchase special equipment, as well as everyday items such as household bills, travel, entertainment etc.

It is advisable to seek advice and clarification from your accountant. If you have not got your own, please feel free to approach the Fair Ways Accountant with any queries you have. We will arrange for our Accountant to address all carers following their appointment.

Allowance Paid To Carers
At Fair Ways we believe the true cost of caring must be met and professional foster carers are given the opportunity to receive payment for their time, experience, skills and “stickability”.

Your allowance as a carer is made up of a fee as a professional foster carer, plus an allowance for the care of the child placed. This basic allowance adequately covers food, clothing, pocket money, a proportion of household bills, personal items, transport expenses, leisure activities, birthday presents, Christmas presents and holidays. It is our expectation that you will provide a good quality standard of care within the level of allowance.

As a rough guide only, the figures below advise percentages of allowance expenditure. These are in line with the Fostering Networks and BAAFS

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>5-10</td>
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<td>(26%)</td>
<td>(7%)</td>
<td>(11%)</td>
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<td>(100%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>11-15</td>
<td>(29%)</td>
<td>(26%)</td>
<td>(11%)</td>
<td>(13%)</td>
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<td>(100%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>16++</td>
<td>(26%)</td>
<td>(26%)</td>
<td>(9%)</td>
<td>(21%)</td>
<td>(18%)</td>
<td>(100%)</td>
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</table>

Clothing
Included in the allowance is an amount to cover the cost of clothes/shoes for a child/young person in your care. Fair Ways expects you to provide a quality standard regarding purchasing and replacing clothing from this allowance, and to treat each child as you would your own.

Equally, additional clothing may be needed to start or change schools etc. This will also be discussed at the Placement Meeting.
Pocket Money
Included in the allowance is an amount to cover the cost of pocket money for a child/young person in your care.

- Equality within the foster carers own children and the child/young person placed.
- What is expected within realms of pocket money i.e. (activities, toiletries, magazines) or solely pocket money?
- Age significance. A young person preparing for independence may need to learn budget skills and negotiations/expectations may need to be part of independence package. A very young child may need to learn the very concept of money.
- Pocket money should be discussed at your placement planning meeting and must be discussed with your supervising social worker

Mileage
Included in the allowance is an amount to cover the cost of necessary travel incurred in respect of the child/young person placed with you. This would cover e.g. taking a child to school, clubs and family contact etc., and the inclusive amount has been set at 280 miles per week. However, a claim for mileage over and above the 280 inclusive miles can be made only if one of the following circumstances arises:

- A necessary journey exceeds the inclusive weekly 140 miles. By necessary, Fair Ways means family contact, educational, medical or therapeutic appointments.
- Claims such as these must be agreed by your supervising social worker and countersigned by them prior to submission to Fair Ways.

Educational Expenses
Included in the allowance is an amount to cover the cost of either a nutritious packed lunch or payment for school meals. Unless otherwise agreed, foster carers are expected to pay fares to and from school.

Most school trips are within the remit of the allowance, and we would encourage you to budget for this accordingly.

Telephone Calls
A percentage of the allowance is an amount to cover household bills, including the telephone bill. Foster Children should be allowed access to the phone within reason, young people should not be denied contact with their birth family unless specified in the placement plan.

Holidays
Fair Ways Foster Carers are entitled to two weeks paid respite a year they will receive the extra fee and allowance for the child if this happens. As Foster Children should be treated as part of the family it would be preferable that the child comes on holiday with you.
Notice Periods / Payments / End of Placement Policy

This policy confirms the contractual commitments of the new regional contract for all foster care providers in Southampton, Portsmouth, Hampshire, Bournemouth and West Sussex regions.

When placements are being terminated there is an expectation that all parties involved work together in the interest of the child to ensure a smooth transition.

Notice Given By Foster Carer

In the event of a foster carer wishing to give notice to end the placement then normally Fair Ways will ask for a “cooling off” period of 48 hours for all parties to reflect and consider options. This may or may not involve the young person being temporarily moved in order to give all parties respite.

On completion of this cooling off period a meeting will be convened either with the supervising social worker and or with the foster care team manager in order to discuss whether any resolution can be reached or whether notice is to be served on the placement.

There is a contractual expectation that the foster carer see out a notice period with the child remaining in placement. This should be up to 28 days. In some circumstances it may not be safe or appropriate for the child to remain in placement for the full 28 days however this should be the exception rather than the norm. (See section on immediate termination).

Notice Given by placing authority or Fair Ways to the foster carer

In the event that notice is served on the foster carer the placing authority or by Fair Ways then the following periods of notice will be given:

1. One Day - If the child has been in placement for less than seven days
2. Seven Days - If the child has been in placement for between seven days and twelve weeks
3. Fourteen Days - If the child has been in placement for between twelve weeks and twelve calendar months.
4. Twenty Eight Days - If the child has been in placement for more than a year

The placing local authority may also terminate the placement by giving seven days’ notice to the foster carer following absence for a continuous period of seven days, regardless of how long the child has been in placement.

Seven days’ notice may also be served at any time should Ofsted rate any part of the service as below “Satisfactory”.

Immediate Termination of Placement

The placement of a child may in some circumstances need to be terminated with immediate effect. The two primary reasons for this would be as follows:
1. A risk assessment has concluded that significant risk cannot be adequately managed within the placement.

2. The placement’s continuation puts the child, or any other child or person at risk of harm.

Other reasons in the Local Authority ‘Core Terms’ are:

a) If a court decides that a child should be placed elsewhere
b) It is agreed in writing by the parties that the child’s needs safety or welfare can no longer be met by the placement and/or arrangements have irretrievably broken down.
c) Where the child discharges themselves from the placement/care at the age of 16 or above
d) Seven days following the death of a child.

Any placement of a child may be terminated with immediate effect by the placing authority should they deem that Fair Ways or the foster carer are in fundamental breach of the fostering contract and/or the Individual Placement Agreement. (IPA).

**Placement Disruption / Temporary Move of placement**

In some circumstances it may be necessary to move a young person to an alternative placement for a short period of time. For example if a carer was admitted to hospital, or in order to complete an investigation in to an allegation.

In the case of an allegation being made, the decision on whether a child should be temporarily moved will be made in conjunction with the Fair Ways Fostering manager, the local authority children’s services department and if necessary the Local Authority Designated Officer for Child Protection (LADO)/local police. Not all cases will require that the child be moved – this will depend upon a number of different factors.

In the event that it is deemed appropriate to move a child this will be done without prejudice – meaning that it does NOT assume guilt or in any way imply any wrongdoing, rather is done to protect one or more parties either from harm, or from further allegations whilst the investigation is carried out.

**Amount paid to foster carers during notice period / placement ending / placement disruption**

Fair Ways are only able to pass on payment to foster carers for the periods that the local authorities are contractually committed to pay Fair Ways. The amount paid will vary dependent upon who serves notice, under what circumstances, and how long the child has been in placement.

Normal weekly payment to foster carers is in two parts. The first is a carer allowance – in effect the wage to foster carers and the second part is a “maintenance” element. The maintenance element is payment given in order to cover expenses such as food, clothing, activities, pocket money birthday presents etc.
Carers will only be paid the maintenance element for the times when the child is placed with them. In the event that they are placed elsewhere for any reason then this payment will be transferred to cover the cost of their care elsewhere.

In the event of notice being served by any party, the carer will be paid both the carer allowance and the maintenance allowance for the duration of the placement.

In the event of a child / young person refusing to return to their carers, missing for less than seven days, going on family contact, staying overnight at a friend’s etc., the carer will continue to receive both their allowances in full.

If there is an immediate termination of any placement IPC (regardless of the reason) the carer (and Fair Ways) will cease to be paid completely.

In the event that Fair Ways move a young person to another placement for a short period (i.e. placement in crisis / allegation / illness etc.) then both carers will receive the carer’s allowance, however only the carer looking after the child will receive the maintenance allowance.

This exceptional circumstances payment will be to a maximum of one week duration and to a maximum of twice per calendar year for each fostering household.

If a young person is on respite/holiday for longer than 72 hours in any one pay period, then the carer will not receive the maintenance allowance for that period.
Foster Carer Support

Policy Statement
This policy is underpinned by Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards 2011, Standard 21 – Supervision and support of foster carers and Fostering Services Regulations 2011, Regulation 17 – Support, training and information for foster parents.

All foster carers can expect the support and supervision they need in order to help meet the needs of the children and young people placed with them. The nature and level of the support provided by Fair Ways (Foster Care) is outlined below.

Supervision

Functions of Supervision
The purpose of supervision is to ensure that foster carers and carers are properly managed, supported and developed, in order that services are delivered competently and effectively. It also ensures that standards are maintained and developed. Supervision offers assurance to both service users and placing authorities that Fair Ways is accountable for the working practices of their foster carers and carers. Supervision has three main purposes. These are:

Support needs

- Emotional support – recognising the demanding aspects of the role
- Awareness of personal and professional boundaries
- Management of any specific dilemmas/problem solving
- To take reasonable measures to safeguard one’s own health.
- To enable self-reflection on the tasks and responsibilities of being a foster carer

Training & development needs

- To enable the carer to keep up to date with national and local legislation and organisational policies and procedures
- To review and promote the carer’s professional and personal development and identify any training needs
- To develop the carer’s awareness of their role and responsibilities
- To review how corporate training is meeting individual’s needs.
- To provide feedback in all aspects of performance.

Managerial and administrative

- Workload management
- Monitoring/quality assurance – ensuring practice is in line with Fair Ways policies and procedures and National Legislation/guidance. Ensuring each child’s individual placement plan is being adhered to and specified targets being worked towards.
- To identify, agree and record timescales for specific tasks to be completed.
- Exchange of ideas pertaining to the provision of care.
- Record keeping – ensuring this is completed fully and shared accordingly.
- Health and safety – review risk assessments, share any concerns and ensure health and safety is promoted.
- To give constructive feedback to carer.

**Types of Supervision**
Supervision is a continuous process. It takes place in a variety of settings and different arrangements fulfil different functions.

**Individual Supervision**
Individual supervision (one to one) should be scheduled at least every 6 weeks. Both supervisor and supervisee share responsibility for making it quality time to explore the stated functions of supervision. These sessions will be recorded in writing and signed off by all attendees (See Supervision Record Sheet below).

The following types of supervision should support the effectiveness of individual supervision.

**Immediacy/Impromptu Supervision**
Immediacy supervision is offered by the Fostering Manager and/or supervising social workers on a 24 hr basis. This usually takes place, often as a result of a particular incident/crisis. This is seen as a valuable tool for the development and support of Foster Carers through a sometimes traumatic issue.

**Practise Skills Sessions**
Practise skills sessions are facilitated by Dr Sandy Burnfield (retired Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist) and carers are able to attend 3 times a year. They take an informal format, held as part of the training calendar to provide the opportunity for the carers to look together at practices, strategies and methods for reaching objectives with carers and children/young people.

**Reflective Groups**
Reflective group sessions take place once every 2 months for carers and are facilitated by our in house therapist Jane Martin. Fostering can be an isolating task and one of the aims of these meetings is to provide a forum for peer support and the building of sustainable professional and supportive relationships within the extended fostering team. Carers will be encouraged to reflect on their own practice and the practice of others within this confidential group and explore the feelings associated with caring for a young person. The group members are encouraged to acknowledge and appreciate each other and anyone within the team for helpful practice, but also discuss anxieties and concerns early enough to prevent them developing into significant issues by bringing recommendations for change.
Expectations around Supervision

Confidentiality
Issues raised by the supervisee will remain confidential between the supervising social worker and foster carer unless an issue arises that requires the supervisor to share. If this happens then the foster carer will be notified in advance.

Frequency
A structured supervision session (one-to-one) will be scheduled to take place every six weeks.

Record-keeping
Notes recording individual supervision sessions will be taken by the supervising social worker, who will aim to type and return these to the foster carer within a maximum of seven days. This supervision record needs to be signed by both supervising social worker and foster carer, representing their agreement to the summary of issues discussed and of any resulting actions. If email is used to send the supervision record, and the foster carer in turn uses email to confirm the record is an accurate account of their supervision, then their email response will be accepted in place of a signature.

Group sessions are not minuted, however follow up action or sharing of information with people outside of the meeting may be necessary and will be agreed on a case by case basis within the group.

Preparation
Supervising social worker and foster carer to have thought beforehand about young person, their care plan and goals and how the placement is progressing to meet these.

Honesty
There is an expectation that social worker and foster carer will approach supervision in an honest way, open to constructive challenge and a willingness to explore difficult or emotive areas.

Ranges of Support

Supervising Social Worker
Each foster carer is allocated a supervising social worker who undertakes supervision and provides a point of contact for support on an ongoing basis. The role of the supervising social worker is to ensure the foster carer is informed of, accepts and understands and operates within, all regulations and standards and with policies and guidance agreed by Fair Ways and the placing local authority. The supervising social worker will support the foster carer to make reasonable and appropriate decisions within the authority delegated to them within the delegated authority form.
The supervising social worker is contactable by email, mobile or landline throughout office hours. If unavailable, the role will be covered by a duty social worker, contactable on 02380 230400.

**Out-of-hours 24hr On-Call Support**
Outside the business house of 9am – 5pm, foster carers can access advice and support via the on-call service provided by Fair Ways, (telephone 023 80 230400). The on-call service is for concerns and issues with immediate impact and/or where any Schedule 7 local authority notification or involvement is required, for example reporting a child as missing.

**Fostering Network**
The Fostering Network is the UK’s leading charity for foster care and provides a range of advice and support services to foster carers. For general information about accessing Fostering Network’s services, please refer to [www.fostering.net](http://www.fostering.net).

**Emergency Support**
In some circumstances it may be necessary to arrange respite care or support for a young person at very short notice. For example, this may be because of foster carer illness, bereavement or to help with resilience in placement during difficult times, for example when a young person is excluded from school for a lengthy period. This type of support would be explored and arranged according to the circumstances of the placement and the needs of the foster care and young person. Foster carers should discuss this with their supervising social worker, or duty social worker, in the first instance.

**Therapeutic Support**
Our in house Therapist Jane can be available for impromptu or planned support to carers and young people in need. Many have a perceived stigma associated with ‘needing help’ and all too often people are reluctant to access therapeutic support. However, reflective Practice is promoted throughout the organisation, and knowing when to ask for support is extremely important. As such, it is Fair Ways’ view that the acknowledgement of the need for such support and subsequent engagement is seen as a strength and not a weakness.

**Coffee Mornings and Workshops**
Throughout the year, Fair Ways will host informal coffee mornings and/or workshops for carers to attend. These can be facilitated by the fostering team or by carers as needed and will be based around a current relevant theme. At least one member of the fostering team will usually be present so as to answer any questions and offer guidance if needed.

**TDS Standards**
It is Regulation that Foster Carers completer their TSD standards within the first Year of approval.

Many carers struggle with the expectation that they will have to re-engage with academic work to do this role. For many carers they have not engaged in any studying for many years and the thought
of undertaking training and education can be a real demon. Though we put a huge emphasis on training and achieving relevant child care qualifications, we understand though that being a good carer has no direct correlation with academic ability - as such help is at hand.

Fair Ways will provide individual support and group workshops to help carers and support workers complete their TDS standards. Whether on a 1:1 basis or in small informal groups, the emphasis will remain on the carer to complete the work, but help making sense of each module or putting the tasks in context is provided through discussion.
Policy on ‘Children Who Foster’

Based on research findings and professional experience Fair Ways strongly believes in the rights and importance of the birth children of our foster carers. We agree with the common view held by children whose parents foster that they are also carers alongside their parents. Research by the Fostering Network has shown that birth children did not think that social workers were interested in them. Moreover, the birth child/young person often saw the placed child/young person’s social workers “as the enemy or not seen at all”.

Children who foster can face a number of problems. They can be introduced to illegal or other practices of which previously they had no knowledge. They can be accused of abuse or be abused. Birth children can be traumatised by the comings and goings of difficult foster children, especially if the endings are unsatisfactory or unexplained.

In light of the above, Fair Ways will uphold and practice the following principles in relation to birth children:-

- We will ensure that they are actively involved in the assessment process.
- Our assessors will meet with them separately and explain and discuss the fostering tasks and the impact and implications it will have for them.
- Our basic criteria that each foster child must have their own room will ensure that the birth child does not have to share their room with a foster child. Moreover, this will assist in the safe caring process.
- Birth children will be given the opportunity to meet with Fair Ways’ supervising social worker on a regular basis. They will be encouraged to share and voice their concerns or complaints. Their views will be treated with respect and dignity. Fair Ways can speak to your children about these issues.
- Birth children will be provided with ‘fun’ opportunity, outings etc.
- Training in an age appropriate manner will be provided and will cover the following issues.
  - Beginnings and endings of a placement. Welcoming and saying goodbye.
  - Confidentiality
  - Contact
  - Safe caring
  - Sharing
  - Understanding of foster children/young person’s behaviour
- All of the above will operate within the context of openness and honesty and the belief that communication, the key element to a family fostering successfully, will be promoted.
Ongoing Review and Monitoring of placements

All placements are monitored carefully and consistently to ensure the child receives the best possible standard of care in line with company policies, procedures, National Minimum Standards, Fostering Regulations and the child’s individual Placement Plan. We aim to be as transparent as possible in our approach to reviewing, monitoring and subsequent reporting, with mind to improve the service by identifying, challenging and resolving poor practice.

There are a number of ways in which the organisation monitors and reviews the service:

Individual Supervision

All carers and child care foster carers are supervised (see supervision guidelines within the Support Policy) every 6 weeks. The Managerial/Practice function of carer supervision ensures that practice is reviewed and challenged where necessary. The development/training function of it provides a forum for identifying how a carer can be supported to improve the service they provide. The carer and Supervising Social Worker discuss the progress of each child placed and look to review the Placement Plans and Risk Assessments for all children in place at regular intervals.

Supervising Social Workers in turn review each of the cases on their caseload through their own supervision with their Line Manager and report any areas of need. The progress of Placement plans for all children on their caseload are reviewed regularly through the supervision and any high risk areas are communicated.

Monitoring forms

Supervising Social Workers will complete formal placement monitoring forms as part of each supervision (see appendix). These monitor adherence to standard requirements of the provision of foster care and inform Practice and Development discussion for foster Carers.

Unannounced visits

At least once every year, the supervising social worker will conduct an unannounced visit of the foster home. This is a legal requirement and is intended to allow the social worker to see the natural course of the placement.

Monitoring visits to birth children

Every 12 weeks the supervising social worker will ensure they meet with any birth children within their caseload on a 1:1 basis, away from the carer. This is usually over a hot chocolate or milkshake etc., to enable them to freely discuss their feelings about being a child that fosters and the realities of having someone else in their home. They will be encouraged to share and voice their concerns or complaints. Their views will be treated with respect and dignity. Fair Ways can speak to your children about these issues.
Monitoring visits to foster child
Every 6 weeks the Supervising Social worker will visit the foster child. As with birth children, they will aim to see the child away from the foster parents, for instance, by taking them out for a soft drink where they will be encouraged to give feedback on the placement as well as voice any anxieties or concerns.

The supervising social worker will write this up and put it on the child’s record. It will inform feedback to the placing authority, foster care manager and to the carer.

H&S checks
All carers have a household risk assessment carried out by our NEBOSH qualified Health & safety Manager prior to approval. This is reviewed on a yearly basis by the Supervising Social Worker, with every 3rd year reviewed by the Health & Safety Manager.

The Supervising Social Worker also compiles a Health & Safety report each month on the home, detailing any high risk areas associated with the placement and any actions to resolve/reduce these. This report is submitted to the Health & Safety Manager.

Foster carers attending Statutory Reviews, Professional Meetings and Visits.
Fair Ways view its Carers as professionals and encourages that view to be shared by all external agencies. As such, we promote that carers attend as many meetings about their foster children as is reasonable (alongside the Supervising Social Worker), and ensure they are present for statutory visits wherever possible. This promotes a transparent process with one of the benefits of this being that they are able to receive first hand feedback on the progress of the placement from relevant external agencies.
Section 4. Organisational Policies & Procedures
Access to Records Policy

Policy Statement
Fair Ways operates an open access to information policy encompassing the belief that all individuals have a right to access information held about them, other than information that is marked as confidential or originates from a third party.

All records are kept securely and access is restricted to those that have appropriate authority. Special consideration is given to documents marked as confidential and extra measures are taken to limit access to these to those on the original circulation index, unless by specific agreement with the author of the report.

All information held on computer by Fair Ways will be subject to the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998.

Secure Electronic Database
As of 14th March 2013, all records are kept on a secure password protected electronic database with hierarchic security levels that restrict access of information to those with authority to view. Information specifically marked as confidential can be digitally encrypted requiring a further password to view.

At the point of 14th March 2013, all records for active placements and carers were scanned as images and uploaded to the electronic database as whole folders and indexed by folder section, rather than as individual documents.

All records pertaining to previous, closed placements and carers were scanned as whole entities and archived to CD.

Children/Young People records
Placing Local Authorities will be responsible for ensuring that all confidential information is marked as such. Information not headed as confidential will be filed in an ‘open’ file and be available on request to the child/young person placed.

We will produce and contribute to reports on children/young people and hold these in separate files and store in a safe, secure place. Any child/young person can make a formal request to have access to their file. We will support each child/young person in sharing information held, due to the possible nature of the information held on an open file. We will share any requests from a child/young person to have access to their file with their placing local authority social worker. Any queries or objections raised by the child/young person will be recorded and clarification from the source of that information will be sought. This may be through any professional whose services have been previously or currently used i.e. Placing Local Authority social worker.
**Foster Carer’s Records**

Children/young people are actively encouraged to contribute to their records and reports. Carers will keep a diary and will make daily entries, distinguishing between fact and opinion, for the duration of the placement.

Carers will offer the opportunity to their placed child/young person to contribute in their own book, so they can share their feelings and experiences with their birth family and/or social workers if they wish to do so.

Carers are expected to contribute in written form during assessments, annual reviews, in addition to planning meetings and any other meetings they attend. Carers will be given information and have access to relevant sections of minutes of foster panel meetings where it may concern them.

The information held on file concerning carers will include all the application and assessment process, letters, meeting notes, telephone contact and anything that does not directly concern a child/young person. Any queries or dissatisfaction by a foster carer will be recorded and in addition, details of any investigation and/or outcomes.

Any concerns in regard to a carer will be recorded in the confidential section of the file. Carers have the right to access information held in their file, except in the confidential section. They must give advanced notice prior to gaining access.

Any allegations of abuse/neglect will be recorded in a separate book. It will state all details of the allegation, details of investigation and outcomes/action taken. This will be held in a safe, secure way at our head office.
Safeguarding Policy

Introduction

IT IS THE DUTY OF EACH FOSTER CARER TO SAFEGUARD YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES IN THEIR CARE

Children and families placed at or educated by Fair Ways have a right to and must be enabled by foster carers to feel safe and be safe. They need to understand how to protect themselves, feel protected and be protected from significant harm.

In order to achieve this Fair Ways will strive to place the utmost importance on adhering to our therapeutic ethos which places a strong value on making positive relationships with children, young people and families. This generates a culture of openness and trust and also ensures that foster carers remain alert and aware of any signs that might indicate a child is in any way at risk of harm. This should develop an ethos that encourages children and young people to feel confident about themselves and be able to tell someone they trust about any concerns or worries they may have.


To ensure that we comply not only with all the above legislation and guidance, but to keep children and families safe, we have our own in house policies. All foster carers are expected to adhere to these policies at all times, and report immediately if they are being breached in any way. In order for effective safeguarding of children and families to take place then it is imperative that these policies are looked at collectively.

(h) Recruitment and Selection of Foster carers

(i) Child Protection

(j) Bulling of Young People

(k) Safeguarding adults

(l) Whistleblowing
2  Child Protection Policy

2.1  Rationale
The previous life experiences of children in care may make them more susceptible to risk factors in the community. When they are placed in care they should receive support and protection from potential harm and receive the best possible standards of care available to them. Safeguarding children living in Children’s Homes, Foster Care, Family Centres or Post 16 provisions can be particularly challenging and requires those caring for them to be aware of the need to provide robust protection and to know what action to take if a child has suffered or is likely to have suffered significant harm.

All staff and foster carers for Fair Ways are accountable for the way in which they care for, manage risk and protect those for whom they are providing a service. They have a duty to keep children safe and take all reasonable steps to protect them from sexual, physical, emotional abuse and neglect.

2.2  Definitions
While it is acknowledged that Fair Ways offers support to young people over the age of 18, for the purposes of this policy, a child is any person under the age of 18. The term worker or staff member refers to any employee or Foster Carer for Fair Ways.

2.3  Types of Abuse

2.3.1  Physical Abuse
is the deliberate physical injury to a child, or the wilful or neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering. This may include hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, confinement to a room or cot or inappropriately giving drugs to control behaviour.

2.3.2  Emotional Abuse
Is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on a child’s emotional well-being and/or development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve a child to frequently feel frightened or in danger or the exploitation or corruption of a child.

2.3.3  Sexual Abuse
Involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities. The activities may involve physical contact or non-contact activities such as involving children in watching pornographic material or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

2.3.4  Neglect
Is the persistent failure to meet a child’s physical, emotional or psychological needs; likely to result in significant harm. It may involve a carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing; failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment; lack of stimulation or supervision.

2.3.5  Institutional Abuse
Is abuse by adults working in a position of trust in an organisation that has responsibility for children. Institutional abuse is the mistreatment of children brought about by poor or inadequate care or support, or systematic poor practice that affects the whole care setting. It occurs when the child’s needs are sacrificed for the smooth running of a group, service or organisation. It may also occur where an organisation has a culture of secrecy or lack of transparency regarding the care it provides.

Children living away from home in Residential Care or Foster Care may be at increased risk of abuse from peers or other members of society. It may involve sexual, physical, emotional abuse or any form of bullying. It is the responsibility of Fair Ways to safeguard children accessing services from us from abuse and if this does occur to take whatever action may be needed to protect them from further harm.

2.4 Action to be taken by foster carers if abuse has occurred, is alleged or suspected
Assess if the child is in immediate risk and take whatever action is necessary to ensure their safety. These decisions may be made in consultation with the relevant Manager or On-Call Manager.

To report and advise colleagues on shift and the relevant Manager of any incidents. Make a written record by completing the appropriate case recording sheet/SIR as necessary. The relevant manager will be responsible for ensuring the Social Worker/out of hour’s team are informed; this communication should be completed as soon as possible and within 24 hours. It is the decision of the Local Authority to decide whether to initiate a Child Protection Investigation.

When a decision is made to commence a Child Protection Investigation, a strategy discussion must be held within 24 hours, this will be co-ordinated and facilitated by the case holding Social Work Team.

Foster carers will ensure that relevant information is shared and passed on in both written form (case notes, handover sheet, incident reports) and verbally.

If a child makes an allegation of abuse by a member of foster carers from Fair Ways, then the relevant Manager must notify the designated Safeguarding Officer as soon as is practicable. This must also be recorded on an ‘allegations against foster carers’ form on ClearCare. The HR team must also be notified and appropriate action will be taken to safeguard both parties.

2.5 Dealing with Disclosures
Many Children admitted to care will have experienced abuse prior to placement. A new placement in a Children’s Home or Foster Care may provide a child with an opportunity to disclose past abuse. Foster carers and Carers should aim to create a safe environment where past abuse and current abuse fears can be disclosed. Foster carers and Carers should be aware of the possibility of disclosures and feel comfortable dealing with such a discussion. Foster carers and Carers have a supportive role following a disclosure and not an investigative role. The duty to investigate lies with the host Local Authority.

The child should be made aware that the Foster carers Member/Carer cannot keep the disclosure confidential or ‘secret’ and will need to share the information with their Line Manager and the child’s Social Worker.
2.6 Recording Disclosures
The discussion should be recorded promptly, accurately and any questions should only be to seek clarification. When recording the conversation the Foster carers Member/Carer should state exactly what was said by the child to avoid ambiguity, record what the child said in their own words.

The child should be re-assured that they did the right thing by making the disclosure.

2.7 Promoting a safe environment
Key to creating a safe environment is effective and consistent supervision of the children by foster carers. When required foster carers should monitor the children outside of the home by keeping in contact with them by phone or carrying out regular face to face checks with them.

It is recommended that foster carers provide a high level of supervision to the child during the first week. This will allow the child to become familiar with the day to day routine of the home and get to know the foster carers and other children placed. This promotes the child’s safety and protection and enables foster carers to gain a more informed assessment of the child. A thorough induction to the home must be completed including the provision of a welcome booklet and information on complaints process and fire safety.

2.8 Monitoring concerns of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
Where a risk of CSE has been identified or suspected, the following may assist the Fair Ways team/carer in pro-actively collating intelligence, information and evidence to prosecute or disrupt perpetrators:

- Obtain as much information as possible to identify associates and those who pose a risk to children and young people. Good information includes full names, nick names, telephone numbers, addresses, car registrations etc.

- Note whether unaccounted goods enter the home.

- Check bins for receipts of goods which may identify bank / card details of perpetrator

- Maintaining details of social sites used

- Keeping a record of friends / people visiting the home

- Collect information on any ‘hotspot’ locations identified through debriefing missing children (via the return interview). These locations may include night time economy venues, hostels, food outlets, taxi ranks/companies, hotels, outside schools, addresses frequented by missing children or other venues where perpetrators may prey on victims.

2.9 E-Safety
E-safety is the process of limiting risks to children and young people when using Information and Communications Technology (ICT). E-safety is primarily a safeguarding issue not a technological
issue, which relates to the use of all ICT fixed or mobile; current, emerging and future ICT. ICT is used daily as a tool to improve teaching, learning, communication and working practices to the benefit of our children and young people and those that work to support them.

The use of ICT is recognised as being of significant benefit to all members of our community, in personal, social, professional and educational contexts. However alongside these benefits, there are potential risks that we have a statutory duty of care to manage, to ensure they do not become actual dangers to children and young people in our care or for employees. E-Safety Risks & Issues E-safety risks and issues can be roughly classified into three areas: content, contact and conduct.

The following are basic examples of the types of e-safety risk and issues that could fall under each category.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commercial/Contact/Conduct</th>
<th>Commercial (Child as recipient)</th>
<th>Aggressive</th>
<th>Sexual</th>
<th>Values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Adverts</td>
<td>Violent/Hateful content</td>
<td>Pornographic or unwelcome sexual content</td>
<td>Bias/Racist/Misleading info/advice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact</td>
<td>Trafficking</td>
<td>Being bullied, harassed or stalked</td>
<td>Meeting strangers</td>
<td>Self-harm/Unwelcome persuasions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct</td>
<td>Illegal downloading</td>
<td>Bullying or harassing another</td>
<td>Creating and uploading inappropriate material</td>
<td>Proving misleading info/advise</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Commercial
  - Adverts
  - Spam
  - Sponsorship
  - Personal Information

- Contact
  - Trafficking
  - Harvesting personal information

- Conduct
  - Illegal downloading
  - Hacking
  - Gambling
  - Financial scams
  - Terrorism
4.6 What is malpractice, abuse or wrongdoing?

Malpractice, abuse and wrongdoing can include a whole variety of practices. This is not a comprehensive list but is intended to illustrate the sort of issues which may be raised under this policy.

- Swearing, inappropriate language/jokes toward or in the presence of a service user
- Inappropriate expressions of anger or frustration
- Meeting or arranging to meet with a service user outside of work
- Sharing personal information which compromises professional working relationships
- Any form of contact via social networks (Facebook)
- Buying presents/gifts for service users that are given from specific individual foster carers
- Giving money/cigarettes/alcohol to service users
- Sharing personal information about other service users
- Negative or derogatory comments about the organisation or other foster carers

Any issues of alleged malpractice will be addressed with consideration to the company Disciplinary Process.