

# **Sutton Foster Carer Charter**



# **The Foster Carers' Charter**

## **Children come first**

- Children in foster care deserve to experience as full a family life as possible as part of a loving foster family with carers who can make everyday decisions as they would their own child and without the child feeling that they 'stand out' as a looked after child.
- Children must be given every support to develop their own identities and aspirations, fulfil their potential, and take advantage of all opportunities to promote their talents and skills. Above all, they should be listened to.

## **Local authorities and fostering services must:**

- Recognise in practice the importance of the child's relationship with his or her foster family as one that can make the biggest difference in the child's life and which can endure into adulthood.
- Listen to foster carers and their foster children in decision-making and planning.
- Provide foster carers and their foster children with full information about each other.
- In making placements, be clear about the continuing care or support there will be (including for the child into adulthood), be sensitive to the needs of the foster carer and the child in making and ending placements, and have contingency plans should the placement not work.
- Treat foster carers with openness, fairness, and respect as a core member of the team around the child and support them in making reasonable and appropriate decisions on behalf of their foster child.
- Ensure that foster carers have the support services and development opportunities they need in order to provide their foster child with the best possible care, including liaising with local foster carers groups and seeking to respond to problems and disseminate best practice.
- Make sure foster carers are recompensed on time and are given clear information about any support, allowances, fees, and holidays they will receive, including in cases of dispute with the service or during gaps in placements.

## **Foster carers must:**

- Provide positive adult role models, treat the foster child as they would their own child, and be a "pushy parent" in advocating for all aspects of the child's development, including educational attainment and physical and emotional health and wellbeing and co-operate fully as part of a team with other key professionals in the child's life.

- Support their foster child and do all they can to make the placement work. Take part in learning and development, use skills and approaches that make a positive impact, and enable the child to reach his or her potential.
- Support their foster child to help them to counter possible bullying and discrimination as a result of their care status.

#### **Sutton Fostering Service will:**

- Value your diverse skills, knowledge, and expertise as a professional member of the team around the child, as you know them best.
- Respect the contributions you make to discussions and plans for the children in your care, as you know them best.
- Provide you with regular supervision and support and give guidance with various challenges you are dealing with.
- Provide learning opportunities for you and your family to increase awareness and ongoing commitment to fostering.
- Listen to you where you have concerns about any aspect of fostering and try to resolve these by taking appropriate action.
- Match foster children/young people to foster carers who are able to provide appropriate care with particular reference to their ethnicity, culture, language, and another specific needs.
- Make sure you are up to date and made aware of changes with regard to legislation, national, and local policies and procedures.

#### **The Foster Carer will:**

- Maintain and build upon your experience and knowledge of caring for vulnerable children and young people.
- Respect your foster child and share information as appropriate about their developing needs in the most efficient and effective way.
- Meet all the requirements set out in the Regulations, Guidance and National Minimum Standards for foster care, and comply with Sutton's policies, procedures and guidance.
- Respect and support children's diverse needs in terms of their language, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexuality, disability, and any other specific needs.
- Provide a well maintained and comfortable environment to promote the child's emotional, physical, social, and intellectual development.
- Seek to resolve issues with the fostering service in a professional way, ensuring to maintain effective partnership working at all times.

In signing this charter, the fostering service, child's local authority, and foster carer agrees to reflect the spirit and intentions of the Charter in their actions.

**The London Borough of Sutton**

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**Foster carer/s**

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