

LONDON BOROUGH OF SUTTON

Foster Care and Supervision Agreement

Fostering Service Regulations 2011 Regulation 27 Schedule 5



1. Introduction:

The Fostering Services Regulations 2011 and National Minimum Standards 2011, Care Standards Act 2000, Care Planning, Placements and Case Review Regulations 2010.

It is expected that the approving authority, London Borough of Sutton, enters into a written agreement with the foster carer(s) at the time of approval.

This Foster Care Agreement and Supervision Agreement sets out the obligations and expectations in relation to legislation and practice between the foster carer(s) and the London Borough of Sutton. This is renewed annually or when terms of your approval have been changed.

2.

Foster Carer 1:	
Foster Carer 2:	
Address:	
Telephone number(s):	
Email address:	
Date of original approval:	
Date of re-approval:	
Terms of current approval (number of children, age, gender, and type of placements:	

The Fostering Service has a statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of looked after children and where it is decided it is necessary to provide them with accommodation and maintenance with an approved foster carer(s).

2a. The foster carer(s) obligations are:

Confidentiality and Data Protection

The foster carer must ensure compliance with London Borough of Sutton's procedure on confidentiality and the Data Protection Act 1998. Information in relation to children placed, their families, or any other person must be kept confidential and secure. This information must not be disclosed to anyone without the local authority's consent. The supervising social worker (SSW) will check these arrangements during supervision, assessments, and at each annual review.

Under the Data Protection Act 1998, there are obligations in relation to securely holding and passing on any confidential information. Foster carers are in a unique position of needing highly sensitive information in order for them to properly care for children who are placed with them. This information might relate to health, a child/young person's background, information relating to others, or a child/young person's parents.

Such information is highly confidential and sensitive and should only be disclosed and passed on to professionals who have statutory obligations towards the care and welfare of the child/young person e.g. social worker, GP, health visitor etc.

It is expected that all material relating to the child must be kept securely. When the child/young person leaves the placement, the foster carer must ensure that all paper or electronic materials related to the child/young person is confidentially removed from the household, to include shredding the paperwork, deleting files, or taken to Sutton Civic Centre/confidential waste centre.

Behaviour Management (Regulation 13 FSR and NMS2011)

The foster carer must not administer any physical punishment to a child/young person in their care under any circumstances. This includes smacking, slapping, shaking, and all other humiliating forms of treatment or punishment, including withholding food.

The foster carer must be made aware of Sutton's Child Protection Procedure and will comply with this and other policies relevant to the care of foster children. The foster carer will notify the local authority immediately of any significant event affecting the foster child/young person, including serious illnesses. If the child/young person is missing or runs away, the carer must notify the SSW, the allocated social worker for the child/young person, the Police, and the emergency duty social worker (EDT) when out of hours.

Insurance

It is expected that all foster carers have vehicle, household, and contents insurance policies and will notify their insurance company when they have been approved as foster carers. The foster carer will be required to provide evidence of insurance. For more details, see procedures or seek advice from The Fostering Network.

The foster carer needs to ensure they obtain building and contents insurance that covers damage deliberately caused by a foster child/young person.

Where the foster carer's insurance does not cover a claim from the policy, Sutton Fostering Service will, in exceptional circumstances, consider providing financial

assistance if the issue is directly attributable to the foster child/young person, and there is evidence that the foster carer had tried to obtain the fullest insurance cover when approved. However, the service is not able to cover the cost of damages to a foster carer's car.

Notifiable Changes (Schedule 5 FSR and NMS 2011)

The foster carer must notify the Fostering Service about **any** change in their personal circumstances or household members. The following list includes examples, but is not an exhaustive list. If in doubt, please notify the Fostering Service.

- Change of address
- Change in composition of the fostering household
- Separation, divorce, or new relationship
- Change in employment
- Change in accommodation, any intended change of address, including holidays
- Serious/long term illness e.g. terminal, mobility, etc
- Any new pets
- Criminal investigations, arrests of anyone in the fostering household
- Application for a Residence Order, Special Guardianship Order, or Adoption Order in respect of any child
- Any application to register as a childminder, or to provide day care
- Any changes or personal issues that may have an impact on your fostering tasks and responsibilities

Ofsted Compliance

Inspections will audit compliance with relevant Legislation such as the Children's Act 1989, 2004, Children and Young Person Act 2008, Care Standards Act 2000, Leaving Care Act 2000, Fostering Services Regulations and National Minimum Standards 2011, Sutton Policies and Procedures. The foster carer is required to cooperate as reasonably required with Ofsted, to allow a person authorised by Ofsted to interview them, and to visit their home at any reasonable time.

Placements (CPR 2010 Regulation 22)

The foster carer will allow any child/young person placed with him/her to be removed from the home if Fostering Regulation 28, 2011 applies i.e. where it appears the local authority or area authority feel it would be detrimental to the welfare of the child/young person to remain in that placement.

It is agreed that placements will not be terminated without prior consultation and reasonable notice being given on either side, except where:

- I. Child protection procedures are involved
- II. A member of the foster family is deemed to be at risk if the placement continues
- III. The London Borough of Sutton believes there are other reasons that the placement is no longer the most suitable way of providing for the child/young person's needs.

Reasonable notice in this context means 28 days notice, the notice period will commence on an agreed date.

Placement Plan (NMS 31 and Regulation 9 FSR 2011/CPPR 2010)

The foster carer will comply with the details of the Placement Plan and Delegated Authority and care for the child/young person as if he/she were a member of the family. They should ensure the child/young person's welfare is promoted in consideration with the Placement Plan.

Protection of children (Regulation 12 and Standard 4 FSR and NMS 2011)

The foster carer has responsibility to protect and safeguard children/young people in their care from abuse and neglect. If an allegation of abuse or neglect is made about the foster carer, the Fostering Service is required to comply with the London Borough of Sutton's Child Protection Procedures as outlined in the Foster Carer Handbook.

Supervising social workers will explore the foster carer's awareness of the signs and symptoms of abuse through supervision and mandatory training. There is an expectation that foster carers record all incidents, and they should make their SSW aware of any concerns/incidents immediately or within 24 hours.

A supervising social worker may undertake a visit with the allocated social worker for the child/young person in placement to assess the situation and how it will be managed. This could involve increasing the level of placement visits, unannounced visits, and completing a risk management plan.

2b Foster Carer Review of Approval (Regulation 28 FSR 2011)

The approval of foster carers will be reviewed at least annually. Additional reviews may be held in the event of a change of circumstance, allegation, or complaint.

The supervising social worker will consult with the foster carer's birth children, children in placement, allocated child's social worker, IRO, and any other professionals involved. Relevant checks such as local authority, NSPCC, DBS, medicals, etc. will also be updated at this time.

In the first year of approval, the supervising social worker will present the annual foster carer review to the London Borough of Sutton Fostering Panel for consideration and recommendation. After considering the recommendations of the panel, the Agency Decision Maker will consider the review documentation and panel's views in order to make a decision.

The local authority will give notice of its decision to the foster carer stating either;

- a) The foster carer and their household continue to be suitable and the terms of their approval continue to be appropriate
- b) The approval is terminated from a specific date and the reasons for the termination.
- c) Revised terms of the approval and the reasons for the revision.

If the foster carer does not agree with the decision, the local authority must receive written notification about their disagreement within 28 days. The local authority shall re-refer the case to the London Borough of Sutton's Fostering Panel or to the Independent Review Mechanism (IRM) for further consideration and recommendation.

The Agency Decision Maker will reconsider the decision having taken into account the recommendations of the Fostering Panel or IRM.

2c Making a Placement (CPR 2010) and the Placement Plan (Schedule 2, Regulation [9(1)])

Prior to making a placement, a Placement Coordinator will ensure children are carefully matched to a foster placement, to the foster carer, and to others living in the household.

Full information will be provided to the foster carer wherever this is possible, and if this is not prior to placement, immediately after the child is placed, or in the case of an emergency placement, then no longer than 2 working days later. Wherever possible, the child/young person be given the profile of the foster carers and be able to visit the home prior to the placement being made.

Once the placement has been agreed, a Placement Planning Meeting before the placement is the expectation will be arranged for the allocated social worker of the

child/young person, fostering supervising social worker, and relevant others, to take place within five working days.

A Placement Plan and delegated authorities will be agreed to help everyone concerned understand what to expect from the fostering placement and to ensure the placement will provide optimum opportunities for the child and young person to reach their full potential and live as normal life as possible.

3. Supervision and Support of Foster Carers (FSR 2011 standard 21 and Regulation 17)

We really value the contributions of foster carers and treat them as partners in the professional team. The expectation is that the foster carer will receive supervision at least every 4 to 6 weeks. When agreed, supervision for long-term and stable, as well as short-breaks placements will be at least every 10-12 weeks. Supervising social workers will also be conducting unannounced visits to your home.

The below supervision agreement should be reviewed to ensure that all parties are clear about the expectations of supervision.

- The foster carer is expected to work with the supervising social worker in coordinating these visits and will comply by agreeing for the visits to take place within the expected time frames.
- The foster carer is expected to comply with unannounced visits.
- Discussions during supervision visits will be done in a professional and respectful manner.

Sutton Fostering service will ensure that training courses are available to foster carers to enable them to develop competencies in their work. All carers will be supported to participate in on-going skills development in line with Training, Support, and Development Standards for foster care and to have completed 30 hours learning and training each year.

Sutton Fostering Service provides a range of post approval training formats appropriate to the circumstances of foster carers. Assessment of the attendance and impact of foster carers training and development will be an integral part of the foster carer annual review.

Each foster carer will have an allocated supervising social worker and will also be working in partnership with the allocated social worker for the child and young person.

Additional support for the foster carers will consist of the following:

Finance. Foster carers are paid a potentially taxable fee. In addition to the fees, there is a weekly non taxable allowance that is paid to the foster carer for the child/young person in placement. Foster carers will be informed if there are changes made to the child allowances. Payments are made by direct transfer on a regular basis. Foster carers are expected to be accountable about how they spend the allowance, and The Fostering Service will monitor that the child's allowance is being used appropriately. Foster carers are expected to set aside savings for the child/young person in placement. There is guidance in the Foster Carer Handbook around how the allowance should be spent and the savings that is kept for the child/young person.

Equipment. Provision of specialist equipment for a foster child may be provided. The required equipment will be identified during the assessment or review process and subsequent to a change of approval. Foster carers are expected to replenish general equipment for a child/young person.

Foster Carers Support Groups. Support groups are essential in providing additional support to foster carers. Foster carers will be encouraged and expected to attend. Foster Carers in their first year of approval will attend an Induction Group run by the Fostering Team to ensure completion of all Training and Development Standards and Sutton's procedures and policies. All Sutton Foster Carers have a membership to Fostering Network and also to the Sutton Foster Care Association.

Telephone Support. Supervising social workers will provide ongoing support to foster carers during normal office hours. In the absence of their allocated supervising social worker, another supervising social worker or Fostering Manager will respond to the call.

A foster carer will have access to an 'out of hours' support service provided by Sutton Children's Emergency Duty Team (CEDT).

Smoking Policy

Foster carers must never buy cigarettes for children and young people in their care, and cigarettes must never be used as a reward for good behaviour.

Foster carers should take full responsibility for implementing any changes in their household that mitigate against the risks of poisoning, burns, and household fires caused by smoking.

Foster carers' household rules should include expectations about smoking, and these should be made clear to young people (of appropriate age) in placement.

Foster carers must make it clear to a child/young person that smoking in bedrooms is not tolerated as it carries a very high fire risk and endangers the whole family. All household members who smoke must do so outdoors.

Foster carers must never smoke in the household or car when children are present and must not smoke with children/young people. The smoking policy should be discussed and included in a child/young person's Safe Care Plan.

Foster carers who smoke will not be matched with children under 5 years of age, children with health issues, or children with disabilities.

The effective step to minimise exposure to tobacco smoke is to ban smoking. Where appropriate, foster carers should work with children and young people in their care who smoke to understand the health risks they face and to access smoking cessation programmes.

Complaints and Representations. CA 1989 SS.26(3) to (9) & 59(4), CA Representations Procedure (England) Regulation 2006 (s.1.1738) & Regulation 18 Fostering Regulations 20011.

A copy of Sutton's complaints procedure is available on request. The Foster Carer Handbook and the Children and Young People's Guide will also give details of how to make a complaint and the formal stages for resolution.

Useful Contacts:

Out of hours/Children's Emergency Duty Team (EDT): 02087705000

Sutton Foster Carer Association: <http://suttonfca.org/>

Fostering Network: <https://www.thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/>

Signed:

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| 1. | Foster Carer: | Date: |
| 2. | Foster Carer: | Date: |
| 3. | Fostering Team Manager
London Borough of Sutton | Date: |

