



SMOKING POLICY FOR FOSTER CARERS

[Version 1. 07 May 2014]

City of York Council statement

The City of York Council Fostering Service appreciates the skills, experience and commitment of foster carers and wishes to work with them to promote positive health outcomes for the children we care for.

We are working towards being able to place all looked after children in a non-smoking household, to reduce a child's exposure to passive smoking within the foster home and to minimise the impact of smokers as negative role models.

City of York Policy 2014

All foster carers:

1. All existing approved foster carers and applicants under assessment will be expected to sign the City of York smoking policy declaration.
2. Foster carers must be mindful that their behaviour provides a role model for the children in their care, therefore foster carers should not smoke in the presence of looked after children.
3. The foster home should be a smoke free environment whilst a child is in placement with the Foster carers .
4. Foster carers will ensure that visitors to the foster home are not permitted to smoke in the home or in the presence of looked after children.
5. Foster carers must not take a looked after child into an environment where smoking is permitted unless the area is well ventilated.
6. Foster carers should work with children in their care who smoke to highlight the risks posed to their health and to support them in accessing smoking cessation programmes.
7. All foster carers should be aware of the risks and legal position and must not buy cigarettes for children and young people.

8. Foster carers must not give cigarettes as a reward for preferred behaviour.
9. This policy applies to all vapour/electronic substituted equipment due to the lack of knowledge around health related concerns associated with these devices.
10. City of York Council will provide support and information to encourage existing foster carers to stop smoking. If relevant this issue will be discussed by the supervising social worker during supervision and foster carer review meetings.
11. Breach of smoking policy declaration will result in a review of the foster carers approval and return to fostering panel.

Foster carers for children under 5

12. City of York Council will only undertake fostering assessments for applicants who want to foster children between the ages of 0-5 if they are non-smokers and live in a non-smoking household.
13. Ex-smoker applicants will only be considered for assessment when they have given up smoking and have been smoke free for at least 12 months. (Relapse rates in the first 3- 6 months are high; after the 6 months the risk of relapse is less and after 12 months most people will be permanent non-smokers - BAAF practice note 51 – 2007)
14. Should any member of the fostering household for children under 5 take up smoking the fostering approval will be reviewed.

Specific Information:

- In connected person the additional health risks to the child of being placed in a smoking household need to be carefully balanced against the available benefits of the placement.
- Children from non-smoking birth families will not be placed with foster carers who smoke.
- Disabled children with respiratory problems, heart disease or glue ear will not be placed within smoking households.
- Older children who are able to express a view, will be given the choice to be placed with a non-smoking family when possible

The context of the policy

Children, young people, parents and foster carers have individual values and beliefs and a right to their own views and preferences, all of which are respected within legal and professional boundaries. However, the welfare and health of the child or young person within our care is paramount.

‘The overriding priority in foster care must be the welfare of the child. Foster care provides a positive environment for children, helping to improve their chances of being happy and healthy as they grow older. A foster carer who smokes is no less able to provide this care. However, second hand smoke presents a serious risk to a child’s health and an adult role model who smokes significantly increases the likelihood that a child will smoke. It is in the interest of all children to be raised in a smoke free home’

(The Fostering Network, 2009)

‘Social care professionals who make placement decisions on behalf of vulnerable children must give a high priority to the present and future health of these children. This is especially true for looked after children who frequently come into the care system with neglected or impaired health’ (BAAF practice notes 51)

‘In the UK, 17,000 children under the age of five are admitted to hospital every year with illnesses resulting from passive smoking.’ (BAAF practice note 51:3)

‘Through the implementation of the Health Act 2006, virtually all enclosed public places and workplaces are smoke free, including pubs, clubs, membership clubs, cafes and restaurants. www.dh.gov.uk

‘Whilst a foster carer’s home is not a workplace, legislation recognises that smoking in any enclosed spaces can be detrimental to the health of both smokers and those around them.’ www.fostering.net

‘As corporate parents, all public authorities have a duty to promote healthy living in line with Government policies. Reference to the National Safety Council (NSC) (2004) provides practical steps to minimise exposure to tobacco smoke.’ [National Safety Council \(NSC\) \(2004\)](#)

Legal framework for the policy:

Health Act 2006

Fostering regulations 2011

National minimum standards for fostering services 2011

Children Act 1989

Children Act 2004

Care planning, placement and case review March 2010

Additional sources of guidance

Fostering network brief on smoking – Nov 2009

BAAF practice note 51 – 2007

City of York Council Fostering Service

Smoking Policy Declaration

I agree to abide by the City of York Council smoking policy:

Signature foster carer/applicant: _____

Print name: _____

Signature foster carer/applicant: _____

Print name: _____

Address: _____

_____ Post code _____

Date: _____