



Corporate Parenting Committee 20 July 2022

Report from Strategic Director, Children and Young People

Brent's Updated Foster Carers' Charter 2022

Wards Affected:	All
No. of Appendices:	Appendix 1 – Draft Foster Carers' Charter 2022
Contact Officer(s): (Name, Title, Contact Details)	<p>Nigel Chapman - Operational Director, Integration and Improved Outcomes nigel.chapman@brent.gov.uk</p> <p>Onder Beter - Head of Looked After Children and Permanency Onder.beter@brent.gov.uk</p>

1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide information to Corporate Parenting Committee (CPC) regarding engagement and involvement of foster carers in the revision/updating of Brent's Foster Carers Charter.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 CPC is requested to review/comment on the contents of this report and approve the charter.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 In March 2011, the Government issued guidance to local authorities requiring them to set up a Foster Carers' Charter. The Fostering Network produced additional best practice guidance on how to make charters meaningful and effective in ensuring that foster carers are regarded as integral members of the team, working together to support children in our care.
- 3.2 The Brent revised Charter sets out clear expectations for how Brent foster carers should be treated, trained and supported. The charter helps to build a better understanding between foster carers and those involved in delivering care and support to children and young people, promoting a more collaborative approach based on "team around the child" principles.

3.3 The Charter also aims to emphasise the status of Brent foster carers as “professional partners”, thereby helping foster carers get the recognition they deserve and need in order to provide children and young people with the best possible outcomes.

3.4 The Charter was developed applying key principles set out within the Fostering Network Guidance. A consultation process took place in April 2022 in which supervising social workers met with foster carers to review the Charter, share their thoughts and provide feedback. Further engagement/consultation took place in June 2022 involving the Service Manager and 21 foster carers from Brent Foster Carers’ Support Group. Overall feedback has been positive, they like the fact that:

- there is a clear commitment to Brent carers as “professional partners”
- the charter is both aspirational and valuing of carers skills and abilities in achieving good outcomes for children
- Brent has placed high importance on carers’ learning and development needs

4.0 The Charter’s Impact on Brent Carers

4.1 Foster carers are valued and respected team members and form an integral part of our frontline team in delivering good outcomes for children.

4.2 The foster carer support group is held monthly and acts as a reference group to inform service development and improvement of Brent’s fostering service. The group is seen as a valuable resource for newly approved carers starting their career in fostering.

4.3 They play a vital role in marketing and recruitment of prospective carers

4.4 They provide expertise and advice in the appointment of supervising social workers

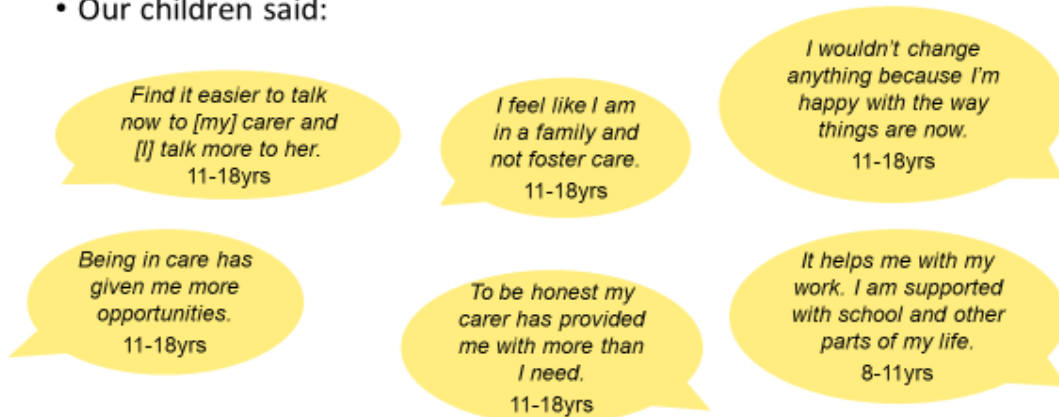
4.5 There are good examples of carers having worked in partnership with SSWs and CSWs in Staff Forums/events, presenting “good practice” case study examples of direct work with children and birth families.

4.6 A quarterly report on fostering is presented to the Council’s CPC which has corporate oversight on the fostering service and corporate parenting. Foster carers have attended and/or contributed to the council committee, sharing personal experiences and offering their professional perspective on practice and support of looked after children.

5.0 A Charter Informed By the Views of CYP: 2021 Your Life, Your Care Bright Spot Survey

Our children feel happy with their foster carers

- Our children said:



5.1 The charter was informed by the views of Brent children and young people involved in the Your Life, Your Care Bright Spots Survey. The survey captured the views of looked after children in terms of their well-being, their relationship with carers and what can be improved.

5.2 The survey concluded that Brent children and young people generally felt happy about their carers and experiences in foster care.

5.3 The feedback reflects the impact Brent Foster Carer Charter is having on both foster carers and the lived experiences of children and young people in foster care.

6.0 Further Consultation and Mechanism for Evaluating Progress

6.1 A key action arising from the engagement/consultation event held in June 2022 was to schedule a further meeting with foster carers in six months to review progress made in embedding core values expressed within the Charter and assess impact and outcomes

6.2 This would include identifying areas where the Council is achieving positive change for Foster Carers e.g. where more carers were expressing feeling valued and supported. Also, use the event to reflect on areas requiring further improvement and for both the Council and foster carers support group to be accountable for acting on the views of carers through joint action plan.

6.3 Next steps will be to organise and co-facilitate a feedback event in December 2022 to include representatives from the foster carers support group and managers/frontline staff to review progress against the Charter.

Report sign off:

Gail Tolley

Strategic Director Children and Young People