



Phoenix Community Care Ltd Foster Care Agency Policy & Procedure

0219 - Participation and Consultation of Looked after children and Young People

Version	Written	Updated/ Reviewed	Scheduled Review Date	Author/ reviewer	Approving Body	Date Approved
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Scope

This policy applies to all children and young people cared for by PCC Foster Care Agency foster carers and all of the agency's employees, including:

- The Registered Person
- Foster Panel Members
- Permanent staff
- Voluntary staff
- Placements and Work Experience
- Temporary staff

Purpose

To ensure that all children and young people who are cared for by PCC Foster Care Agency know that their views, wishes and feelings are taken into account in all aspects of their care; are helped to understand why it may not be possible to act upon their wishes in all cases; and know how to obtain support and make a complaint.

Furthermore, that the views of others with an important relationship to the child are gathered and taken into account.

Introduction

PCC Foster Care Agency is committed to seeking and listening to the views of children and young people who are placed with its carers. It is also committed to ensuring that children of families that foster have a voice. This commitment will lead to the empowerment of young people and children and also improve services and increase social inclusion thus promoting self esteem and self development.

PCC Foster Care Agency is committed to fulfilling its duties and responsibilities in regard to the participation and consultation of the children and young people that the agency cares for as outlined in:

- Foster Service Regulations 2011 (Section 11 & 18)
- Children Act 1989 (Section 22, 61 & 62)
- Foster Services: National Minimum Standards 2011 (Standard 1)
- The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 (Article 12)

The continual development of strategies and creation of a culture where the views and wishes of children and young people are valued and sought is an on-going aim for PCC Foster Care Agency. Furthermore, children and young people will be supported to participate in the decision making process in a manner appropriate to their age, circumstances and ability. Foster carers will be supported to act as advocates for the children and young people they care for in meetings and decision-making forums.

Listening to Children and Hearing What They Say

PCC Foster Care Agency believes that children have a right to be listened to and be heard. A child's views, however communicated, should always be respected and taken seriously.

Children should have access to clear and simple procedures which allow them to express their opinion and, if necessary, to complain about the quality of the service they are receiving. This includes the provision of foster care by The Foster Care Co-operative.

If children are unhappy with the outcomes of any representation they wish to make about a service, they will be made aware of and helped where necessary, to activate an established appeal procedure.

Parenting

PCC Foster Care Agency recognises the discrimination and rights of natural parents to remain involved in the Care Plan for children looked after by the local authority and their right of contact where deemed appropriate. The Agency will ensure that foster carers and staff promote contact with birth and extended family where appropriate.

However, PCC Foster Care Agency has a duty to ensure that children have the right to expect to be protected and kept safe from all forms of neglect, harm and exploitation. The agency also recognises the responsibility of its foster carers to promote the emotional, mental, physical, and spiritual care of the children placed with them and to realise the potential of any child on placement in line with the 'Every Child Matters' agenda.

Consultation

Children and young people placed in the care of PCC Foster Care Agency will have their views, wishes and feelings acted upon, unless this is contrary to their interests or adversely affects other members of the foster care household.

How adults have taken children's views into account will be discussed with them and, where a significant request, wish or concern is not acted upon, this will be explained to them and the reasons why. PCC Foster Care Agency foster carers are skilled at communication with children, including listening to the child and responding to them as appropriate.

PCC Foster Care Agency will make available and known to the children an independent qualified Social Worker to act as a 'Children's Champion'. They will be available to talk to any young people or children and offer support and advocate on their behalf as appropriate and needed.

Children placed with PCC Foster Care Agency foster carers are encouraged to share their views on all aspects of their care and support. The particular needs of a child or young person with a disability, special educational needs or complex needs are

recognised and taken into account where consultation and decision making are required.

Children who foster are encouraged to share their views and concerns and where these are not acted upon, they too will be helped to understand why.

PCC Foster Care Agency regularly seeks the views of the child in placement, the child's social worker and the relevant Independent Reviewing Officer regarding the care of the child. This is done through evaluation reports and questionnaires for the carer's annual review; feedback forms at the end of a placement; attendance at all meetings concerning the child; consultation events.

Every child or young person also receives a Guide at the start of the placement in which these important phone numbers can be found. Help is given to children who may have difficulty in accessing these. The Guide will also have the child's Independent Reviewing Officer's name and contact number.

Children will receive prompt feedback on any concerns or complaints. These are logged by the Team Manager/Registered Person and monitored, both in regard of the individual carer and the service the agency provides. The Agency has a Complaints Policy and any child or young person wishing to make a complaint will be assisted in understanding the procedure.

The wishes, feelings and views of children and those significant to them are taken into account when reviewing the performance of PCC Foster Care Agency foster carers and when considering the development of the service that the agency delivers.