

## Transitions To Adulthood Policy

Soundly Fostering aims to have a holistic approach to childhood and growing up. Part of this involves planning and preparing for the transition to adulthood. Helping children and young people build skills and self-confidence, not only to do things independently, but to ask for help and form a network, allowing for interdependence in adulthood. Our families and staff will work closely with Local Authorities to ensure that young people transitioning into adulthood have the support they need.

Soundly Fostering, staff and carers remain alert to the additional vulnerabilities young people face at times of transitions and change and will continue to report any safeguarding worries to the young person's personal advisor if noted.

### Regulations and Standards

#### **The Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011**

**Regulation 11** - Independent fostering agencies- duty to secure welfare.

#### **Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards**

**Standard 12** - promoting independence and moves to adulthood and leaving care.

#### **The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000**

**Care Leavers (England) Regulations 2010** - Regulation 7

#### **Children and Social Work Act 2017**

### Other Relevant Guidance

#### **The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations**

**Volume 3:** Planning Transitions to Adulthood for Care Leavers

### Preparation for Independence

Regardless of the age of the young person living with our foster carers, the development of life skills, so that they can become as independent as possible, should

be borne in mind. With the help of their foster carers and the support around them, children and young people should be encouraged to take on responsibilities when they can do so.

Foster carers are expected to give the young person opportunities at appropriate times to practice independence tasks such as cooking, washing and ironing, within the foster home.

Young people should, from time to time, be involved in supermarket shopping with the carers and should be helped to compare the value for money of different items. They should be helped to understand the relative expense of convenience foods and of fresh foods.

Foster carers should help children learn to prepare food and drinks, from making tea and coffee, to preparing cold and later hot snacks, and on to preparing simple meals. Sometimes, a camping, caravanning or self-catering holiday can provide a fun opportunity to develop these skills.

Children should be encouraged and supported to set up a long- term savings account. Foster carers have a responsibility to help children develop money management skills.

As the child matures, they should gradually be given responsibility for paying for certain of their own needs from their pocket money. Examples could include comics or magazines, leisure activities, toiletries and mobile phone vouchers.

Foster carers should use the ordinary course of events within their household to make children aware of the process of paying bills, and of the ease with which debts can build up. Young people should be helped to understand the dangers and consequences of this.

Foster carers will form part of the network for children growing up. Children and young people will understand that being independent also means you can ask for help and guidance and that you do not have to do everything alone. Knowing who you can ask and being able to gain support is a key skill of interdependence.

## Leaving Care

The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 introduced new requirements on local authorities to plan for looked-after children so that they have the support they need as they make their transition to the responsibilities of adulthood.

Soundly Fostering will actively support and participate in preparing and reviewing the young person's Pathway Plan and, as part of this, the foster carers should support the Personal Adviser to identify how they can provide practical, financial and emotional support to young people as they become independent.

The Pathway Plan will cover some of the following key areas:

- Health
- A plan for education, training or employment.
- Support to develop and keep appropriate family, social and sexual relationships.
- A programme to develop practical skills to live independently.
- Budgeting and money management.
- The young person's accommodation needs, including any adaptations for a young person with a disability.
- What is needed to provide the young person with support.

In addition, all local authorities are required to publish a 'Local Offer' for care leavers, advising them of the support and assistance that they provide up to the age of 25.

For children in year 9 and above, it would be helpful for foster carers to have familiarity with the opportunities and support available, particularly from the respective Responsible Authorities, and be able to discuss these with the young person when appropriate. Be mindful also that the Local Offers will change and develop over time.

## **Staying Put**

The agency will support the work of the local authority in their duties to help young people to 'Stay Put', including the possibility of a young person continuing to live with their former foster carer when they turn 18, and up to the age of 21 years. This is called a Staying Put arrangement.



If it is proposed that a young person stay with the agency foster carers beyond the age of 18, the foster carers will be assessed in terms of their ability to meet the young person's needs into adulthood.

Please see our Staying Put Policy for further details.

Soundly Fostering encourages foster carers to maintain a relationship into adulthood, where appropriate, with children and young people who have been part of the fostering household.

Soundly Fostering endeavours to keep in touch and invite young people who have moved to independence to our social days out, and also to give them some moving-out gifts or support.

