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1. Introduction

Many children and young people who are 'looked after' have experienced traumatic situations. Such experiences will impact upon their ability to communicate and express their needs appropriately. At times they may present with challenging behaviours which reflect their sense of frustration; anger; confusion; anxiety; loss and hurt. Behaviour that may be viewed as 'naughty' is often an expression of past hurt and abuse.

In order for foster carers to provide homes in which children are happy, healthy and safe they will need to set boundaries and have measures in place to maintain these.

It is important that foster carers build up a positive relationship with the child as a way of managing behaviour and the first way of doing this should be the use of praise and reward for good or acceptable behaviour which helps to build a relationship with the child.

Foster carers should act as good parents and manage behaviour in the way they would if the child was their own.

This policy sets out the guidance for foster carers on acceptable ways of managing a child's behaviour and the procedure they should follow if they have to use physical intervention.

The policy will be given to carers on approval and should be shared and made clear to placing social workers, children and their families.

2. Legal Framework

The Fostering Services Regulations 2011.

Regulation 13 requires a fostering provided to have a written policy on acceptable measures of "control, restraint and discipline" of children placed with foster parents. The provider must ensure that

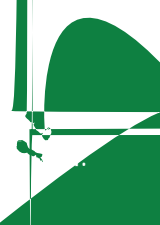
- no form of corporal punishment is used on any child placed with a foster parent,
- no child placed with a foster parent is subject to any measure of control, restraint or discipline which is excessive or unreasonable, and
- restraint is used on a child only where it is necessary to prevent injury to the child or other persons or serious damage to property.

Fostering Guidance 2011 and the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services (2011)

Sets out the expectation that foster carers will be expected to create an environment that "promotes, models and supports positive behaviour in which children can take responsibility for their behaviour, develop positive relationships and practice how to resolve in C3ryp5T/Stive l(.)p handserious daryfote3riryp6panus .917

3. Household Safer Caring Policy

As part of the assessment process for foster carers they will complete a household safer caring policy. They



5. Support to Foster Carers

5.1 Training

Understanding and managing behaviour is part of the Skills to Foster Course in additional further training is available post approval.

The Understanding Behaviour course should be completed in the first 12 months post approval and seeks to develop an understanding of the context of children's behaviour and help carers to respond effectively to a range of behaviours.

WCFF uses an attachment model when working with foster carers. Supervising social workers will support carers to understand the challenges of parenting developmentally traumatized children and the importance of creating a secure base for them. Foster carers are supported to use the secure base to develop a relationship with children where they experience acceptance even when their behaviour is challenging.

WCFF commissions training to support foster carers learning and development in managing behaviour and supervising social workers should discuss the need for this in the fostering households Learning and Development plan. (WCFF's Learning and Development for Foster Carers)

WCFF will also commission specialist training such as Team Teach when this is required.

5.2 Safer Caring \Risk assessment

At the time of placement an individual safer care\risk assessment should be drawn up and this should include information on what measures the foster carer should take especially if the young person has been subject to physical intervention or restraint in a previous placement. This should be updated after any incident of restraint.

Where there is a series of incidents where children are putting themselves at risk because of their challenging behaviour the supervising social worker should discuss with the child's social worker whether there is a need for a multi-agency Management of Risk meeting.

5.3 Supervision

If foster carers are experiencing difficulties in managing a particular child or young person's behaviour they should discuss this with their supervising social worker and the child's social worker as soon as possible. This is good practice and means where there can be discussion regarding possible techniques which could be useful and foster carers should not see this as a weakness regarding their skills.

Supervising Social Workers should read foster carer records and discuss any issues regarding managing behaviour in supervision. If there are patterns of challenging behaviour from a child a meeting should be arranged with the social worker of the child or young person.

If a foster carer has needed to use physical intervention they should inform their supervising social worker as soon as possible or, if out of hours on the next working day. The supervising social worker should arrange to speak to the foster carer either by phone or face-to-face to discuss the incident and the circumstances around this. Supervising Social workers should also discuss this in supervision sessions to ensure that foster carers are provided with all the support that they require to manage the situation and also an opportunity to talk through their own feelings and emotion.

6. Touching and Holding

Physical contact is an important aspect of human relationships and is a normal part of the relationship between good parents and their children. Nothing in this policy should preclude a foster carer for comforting or reassuring a child or returning a hug when this is instigated by the child. Foster carers need to be led by the child about the level of contact they are happy with.

Foster carers should be cautious if they are aware that the child has experienced abuse or if they think that the child is seeking inappropriate physical contact and should discuss this with their supervising social worker and the child's social worker and record any incidents they are concerned about.

There will also be situations when foster carers will hold children to keep them safe. For example, they may hold a younger child's hand if they are walking down or crossing a road or prevent a child from touching something which may harm them. This is what good parents do and should not be considered restraint.

7. De-escalation

Wherever possible, rewarding acceptable behaviour should be the preferred and usual method of reinforcing and encouraging acceptable behaviour. If possible, foster carers should try to defuse the situation before it escalates and their knowledge of the child will help them to know what is likely to work although the following suggestions provides some guidance.

- Ignore the particular behaviour (if safe to do so) and address it in a positive way at another time
- Acknowledge that they are becoming upset and that you have noticed that they are finding something hard but that you have also noticed how hard they have tried to control their temper/behaviour and think they have done a good job
- Divert attention
- Be calm, reasonable and reassuring both verbally and in body language
- Establish eye contact
- Work on any positives, confirming any positive statement or behaviour from the child
- Try to involve the child in solving the problem/situation
- Help the young person see there is a way out of the situation
- Offer a compromise if this is appropriate and can be delivered.
- Give personal space
- Provide empathy for the child in an active way
- Look at what the child is doing rather than just what they are saying
- It is important for foster carers to remember that the child or young person's comments are not to be taken personally – they are more likely to be a measure of the frustration and anger that the child or young person is feeling
- Re-frame what is happening by trying to make it positive: i.e. a child may be on the verge of flying into a temper when they could not achieve a task, be positive about how far they did get and suggest they try

8. Using Sanctions

There are a wide range of sanctions, which are permitted and available for use by foster carers when disciplinary measures are needed to control children's behaviour.

Research shows that discipline is more effective when coupled with empathy for the child's feelings. E.g. "You must have been feeling really angry to do that, but you know that throwing things is not allowed, and you could have broken the window and been hurt. We can talk about how you feel, but you know that what you did was

safe place to be alone? For older children the foster carer might ask them to go outside, for space, but this will not be safe for little ones. Foster carers may also have to consider the needs of other children in the home.

- » Foster Carers should also give some thought to the child's previous history of rejection. If the

9. 9.Recording

It cannot be stressed too much; foster carers must record, on their recording sheets, and where appropriate on an incident sheet, when sanctions are imposed and why. (please see WCFF's Recording for Foster Carers). Foster carers must ensure that their supervising social worker, and the child's social worker see the recording and are fully aware of the sanctions being used.

As a foster carer, it is vital that you follow WCFF's recording policy for carers. This will ensure that you can demonstrate the following:

- That you are using only permitted sanctions
- That you are fair and consistent in your use of sanctions
- That you are following the Placement Plan.

Clear and careful recording will also enable the foster carer to review with the social workers (supervising and the child's) the effectiveness of the strategies they are using to manage aspects of a child's behaviour, or to promote their health and development. It will also greatly assist the foster carer if any of their actions are queried, or if an allegation is made against them.

10. Physical Intervention and Restraint

Physical restraint is defined as the positive application of force with the intention of overpowering the child to protect the child from harming him/herself or others or seriously damaging property. It should only be used in exceptional circumstances as it can pose a risk to the looked after child and the foster carer

Though the law does permit the use of restraint to prevent injury or harm to a child or others and to property, it should never be used as a form of punishment or to humiliate, distress or degrade a child. Wherever possible it should be avoided, as a means of control, by foster carers.

There is a range of physical interventions short of restraint that can be applied to de-escalate potentially violent or aggressive situations.

non-verbal child when picking the child up or holding him/her back from the brink of a dangerous situation is the most appropriate course of action. If a young child is about to run into the road, and the foster carers judgement is that the best course of action to prevent this will be to run after them and pick them up out of harm's way, then this is age appropriate restraint and is acceptable. Foster Carers should record any event of age appropriate restraint and ensure they discuss this with their supervising social worker and the child's social worker.

10.2 Physical Restraint - where a degree of force is used

WCFF recognises that there will be rare occasions where carers cannot "talk down" a situation and physical

Each decision will be, at least, in part, a risk assessment. That assessment may need to be made rapidly. It should be based on the following factors:

NB: It is unlikely that any carer will be able to sit down and read this list, at the time of an incident, but it is important that carers are aware of it, and to check it after any incident where restraint has been used.

- The age and understanding of the child
- The likely impact of the child's intended actions on themselves or others
- Whether the foster carer will be able to apply restraint successfully - will it achieve the desired result
- Whether the foster carer can apply restraint without hurting the child
- Whether there are sufficient adults present to deal with the whole situation; to restrain the child concerned and cope with the actions of any other children present
- Other children should never be asked to help in restraining a child,
- Whether all appropriate defusing and preventative techniques have been exhausted
- Restraint should be used for the least time possible, and the child released as soon as it is judged safe to do so
- After restraining a child, check that no first aid or medical treatment is needed, by the child or by the carer

There may be some circumstances when a child's behaviour is so dangerous that the emergency services need to be involved. If possible the foster carer should discuss whether this is needed with WCFF, the child's social worker or EDT. However, in situations where there is a risk of serious harm to the child or others this should not delay calling the emergency services.

It is important to deal firmly and sensitively with the aftermath of an incident requiring restraint. Forcibly restricting a child's liberty and invading personal space may have a significant impact on his/her wellbeing. Foster carers need to ensure that time and space are created, that the incident can be talked through. The child needs to talk through their feelings about it. Both the foster carer and child need to be able to agree on the next steps. The foster carer who has restrained the child may not be the right person to see through the whole of this process. It is important to consider who is the best person to undertake this task.

The foster carer may also need to find someone to whom they can "debrief", and in most instances this should be their supervising social worker. It is important that foster carers are supported to deal with their feelings about what has happened as well as the child

10.3 Damage to Property

Your own insurance or WCFF insurance should cover the costs of any damage that may have been caused. Where this is not the case, it is likely that an ex gratia payment can be made, unless there has been any negligence, or other circumstance that would preclude this. Foster carers are strongly advised to put any very precious possessions and photos in a safe place, where they will not be damaged if a child loses control.

The only time when it is acceptable to use physical restraint in relation to property is when there is likely to be resulting harm to the child or others as a consequence. Where property is involved carers need to assess:

- Will there be any significant harm to the child or others e.g. broken glass?
- Is there any significant risk to others in the household e.g. if a child is running through a house where only you and the child are present, then no one else can be hurt (unless the child is about to attack you, of course), but if other children are present, they could be hurt?
- The degree to which the child has lost control and the consequences of allowing it to continue i.e. is it likely to escalate to a point where someone will be hurt.
- The age and understanding of the child. If the child is pre-verbal there may be no other way to defuse or stop the situation. This would be especially so with young or some disabled children: where escalation of the behaviour may lead them to harm themselves. e.g. the child running about with a box of matches, who does not respond to requests to hand them over.

10.4 Action required after a Restraint

Every incident of restraint must be reported by the foster carers to their supervising social worker and the child's social worker as soon as possible. WCFF monitors the use of restraints by foster carer and the supervising social worker will complete a notification form which is seen by the relevant team manager and the Registered Manager (please refer to WCFF's Recording for Foster Carers).

If it is out of hours foster carers should consider whether it needs reporting to be must be reported to the Emergency Duty Team. Social workers will need to ensure that the child and the foster carer are safe and decide whether any immediate action is needed.

Foster Carers must record the incident, including what lead up to it and what the aftermath was, as soon as they possibly can, and whilst it is fresh in their memory. If a second carer was present, each carer should write out a separate account their supervising social worker will need to have this recording, ideally on the next working day.

Following an incident of restraint, the foster carers supervising social worker should discuss the incident with the foster carers. As with the foster carer's record the discussion should cover



