



**Service Policy: PODPOL14 Fostering Policy**

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**Document Control:**

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February 2018	April 2028			

**Amendment History:**

Version	Date	Author	Reasons for Change
New	Feb 18		New Policy
1.1	Apr 19		Annual Review
1.2	March 20		Annual Review
1.3	April 2022		Annual Review
1.4	April 2023		Annual Review
1.5	March 2025		Review and update contact details
1.6	March 2026		Annual Review

**Equalities Impact Assessment:**

Initial	Full	Date	Reviewed by	Comments
	X		ED&I TEAM	LOCATED ON PORTAL

**Civil Contingencies Impact Assessment:**

Date	Reviewed by	Comments

**Related Documents:**

Doc. Type	Ref No.	Title	Location
SI	0657	Flexible Working	POD portal pages
SI	0654	Adoption	POD page portal
SI	0655	Career Breaks	POD pages portal

**Distribution List:**

Name	Position	Department

**Sign-Off List:**

Name	Position

**Target Audience:**

All MFRS	Principal Officers	Senior Officers	Operational Crews	Fire Safety	Community Fire Safety	Support Staff
X						

**Ownership:**

FOI exemption required?	Yes	URL
	No	X Reason

**Legislation:**

Title
Equalities Act 2010

**Contact:**

Department	Email	Telephone ext.
Time & Resource Management		

## PODPOL14 Fostering Policy

### 1. Policy Introduction and Background:

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority work towards being an employer of choice and a role model in the community.

It is recognised that foster care aims to provide stability to vulnerable children who need it and may provide them with improved educational outcomes and better health care opportunities as they do not move between educational establishments NHS authorities; and improve their social skills through the ability to build strong supportive networks.

An employee who fosters develops a positive identity, has raised self-esteem and develops skills which are transferable in the work place.

For MFRS it encourages the retention of employees, builds employee engagement, reflects our commitment to work life balance policies and encourages the contribution to a vital community service. MFRS are committed to support their employees who make a positive difference to our community by engaging in foster caring.

### 2. Policy Explanation:

#### Types of foster care

There are a number of different types of foster care provisions.

- Emergency care where children need somewhere safe to stay for a few nights,
- Short term care provision for a few weeks while plans are made for longer term solutions,
- Remand care after a court order
- Short breaks for families of disabled children to enable them to have a break from caring duties
- Specialist therapeutic fostering
- Long term care. This is care normally for a minimum 6 month period and is defined as being a situation in which;
  1. Children and young people are in a placement that encourages them to feel that they belong and have a sense of family membership
  2. Where they are able to develop relationships that are expected by all concerned to last after the children have grown up or moved on
  3. Fostering for Adoption where a child is placed with carers who may become their adopters.

#### Who can foster?

Local Authorities do not need people with qualifications to become a foster carer and rate life experiences and personal qualities and the ability to love and care for a child as much more important.

Lots of different people can foster. There are very few circumstances that will rule someone out, but an prospective foster carer must be:

- Over 21 years of age. There is no upper age limit.
- In reasonably good health, and fit and well enough to care for children, although children under 5 will not be placed with people who smoke.
- Able to offer a secure home with a spare room, or rooms if the wish is to foster more than one child.

In addition,

- Children can be placed with carers from a different ethnic background.
- Minor convictions may not be relevant,
- Being disabled may not exclude a person.
- Foster carers are welcome whatever their sexual orientation.
- People can foster if they are single, divorced, co-habiting or married.

### **3. Policy Implementation:**

#### **Foster care leave**

Employees who are foster carers are eligible to receive up to a maximum of 5 days per paid leave year per child for the purposed of attending training events, statutory reviews with the local Authority, and other meetings related to their foster care responsibilities.

Requests for leave must be made in advance with reasonable notice of the intention to take leave to Attendance Management using the discretionary leave form FS38B. A copy of the documentation supplied by the Local Authority must be attached to the request.

Any additional time off should be utilised by annual leave, PH, unpaid parental leave or unpaid time off, self-rostering arrangements or flexi time all of which may be granted at the discretion of the Authority taking account of Service exigencies and in line with our flexible working policies.

While there is no specific Employment Law to support foster carers they have the statutory right to request flexible working to care for a child under the age of 18. Please see [SI 0657 Flexible Working](#) for further information regarding Flexible working.

Employees may also consider requesting a career break to provide them with time away from work to enable the child or young adult to settle in. Please see [SI 0655 Career Breaks](#) for further information regarding career breaks.

### **Fostering for Adoption**

Fostering for adoption places a child during the period of temporary local authority care with foster carers who are also approved as adopters. If the court agrees that the child should be adopted and the adoption agency approves the match between the carers as adopters and the child, the placement becomes an adoption placement. For further information contact your local authority or current social worker on the details below. Please see [SI 0654 Adoption](#) for further information regarding adoption leave and pay.

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All Policies can be found on the [Website](#)

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POLICY