

## **PROTOCOL FOR THE MOVEMENT OF CARERS BETWEEN AGENCIES**

This protocol is based on the acceptance that Foster Carers have the absolute right to freedom of movement between approving Fostering Services. It is also based on the Children Act Principle that, in all circumstances, the welfare of any child in placement must be paramount.

Each Fostering Service will include in their contract with Foster Carers a clause which makes it clear that no Foster Carer may join another Fostering Service (either Local Authority or I.F.A.) whilst they have Looked After Children in placement, unless arrangements for the continuing management of such placements are made to the satisfaction of both the placing Authority and existing Fostering Service.

The contract will also make it clear that the Foster Carer must inform the existing Agency in writing when they are considering such a move and that under no circumstances should an assessment by another Fostering Service begin before such notice is given.

When a Foster Carer has informed their current Fostering Service of their wish to move, and when Looked After Children are in placement, a meeting should be convened between the Fostering Services concerned and the placing Authority.

This meeting should consider: -

- How such a move may affect a Looked After Child in placement
- How the Looked After Child's plan will be maintained
- The ongoing arrangements for the management of this placement by the existing Fostering Service
- The protocol by which the new Fostering Service may use any future placements with the Foster Carer
- The continuing arrangements for Approval of the Foster Carers
- The views of the Looked After Child, Parent or any other interested party

The meeting must agree that the terms of the move are in the Looked after Child's best interest and specify the particular management arrangements that will govern the transfer and/or maintenance of the existing placement.

Where such arrangements are agreed to the satisfaction of the placing Authority and existing Fostering Service, the new Fostering Service may commence the assessment and will request a proper reference from the placing Authority, approving Authority and existing Fostering Service. The Fostering Service that the Foster Carer is leaving has a responsibility to provide a reference upon request.

Where such agreements cannot be reached, the Foster Carer will remain with the existing Fostering Service until any placements reach their natural end. At this point the Foster Carers will be free to undertake the transfer.

Transfer will only be completed following a full assessment of the Foster Carers, including sight of the Foster Carer's File.