



## **FOSTERTALK CUSTOMER SERVICE CHARTER**

FosterTalk is an independent, non-profit organisation focussed solely on providing high quality professional support services to foster carers and fostering services across the UK.

### **Our services include:**

- A comprehensive range of telephone and email advice and information support services.
- A face to face support service for foster families facing difficult situations such as an allegation or complaint against them.

### **FosterTalk works to a set of values and beliefs, and they encompass the following:**

- Meeting the support needs of our members
- Acknowledging the diversity and individuality of all people
- Ensuring the professionalism of our staff
- Promoting effective communication
- Guarding client confidentiality
- Ensuring the protection of children, young people & vulnerable adults
- Listening and acting on your feedback on our services
- Maintaining our approachability

### **This Customer Service Charter sets out our commitment to you, and includes:**

- To maintain a same or next working day response in handling enquiries
- Maintain hours of operation at times that reflect customer need and at a cost that is suitable and acceptable to our customers
- To continue to publicise our opening times and availability of services openly and effectively
- Provide responsive and reliable services using qualified advisors that meet the expectations of customers
- To continue to improve the methods of communication we use with customers whose first language is not English and for those who are hard of hearing or have any other difficulty in communication
- Provide a consistent, co-ordinated and proactive service
- Treat our customers with respect, courtesy and friendliness, being receptive to customer feedback
- Maintain confidentiality in all aspects of our communication with you \*
- Enable customers to provide feedback easily, through online and postal customer feedback surveys
- Ensure our employees are skilled and able to provide high-quality customer care
- Work with our client organisations to achieve a joined-up and seamless approach to service provision
- Ensure that equal treatment is offered to all service users, and not discriminate on the grounds of age, disability, gender, religious belief, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic in line with our equality and diversity policy
- Record incoming enquiries onto our secure database system and protect all personal information in line with the Data Protection Act and our Data Protection and Confidentiality policy.

**FosterTalk, 10 The Court Yard, Buntsford Gate, Bromsgrove, B60 3DJ**

**01527 836910 (local office number) email: [enquiries@fostertalk.org](mailto:enquiries@fostertalk.org) website: [www.fostertalk.org](http://www.fostertalk.org) FosterTalk**

<p><b>By telephone:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We provide a Freephone telephone number for members to access our services as well as a local rate number</li> <li>• We will respond to all telephone calls within the same or next working day</li> <li>• We provide an answerphone facility out of office hours which reminds callers of the 24 hour services number if required</li> <li>• We will aim to answer all telephone calls within 3 rings, and when answering staff will identify themselves to you.</li> <li>• Whoever answers your call will aim to transfer you quickly to the right person, or we will take your details and ask someone to call you back promptly</li> <li>• When returning your calls, staff will clearly state their first name and their reason for calling</li> <li>• When returning your calls, if you are unavailable a voice message will be left wherever possible</li> <li>• If we are unable to provide you with a service, or meet your request, we will advise you of the reasons for this and suggest alternative appropriate sources of advice and support</li> </ul>	<p><b>Online:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We aim to respond to all emails and web enquiry forms received within the same or next working day</li> <li>• Emails addressed to individual staff members will be responded to fully within three working days, unless you receive an 'out of office' notification to your email advising that the staff member is unavailable. The notification will include contact details for urgent enquiries and a date when the staff member will be available to reply.</li> <li>• Social media message posts on our Facebook and/or Twitter accounts will be responded to within the same day or next working day.</li> </ul>
<p><b>By letter:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you contact us by letter we will try to respond fully within three working days unless, for example, your query is complex or involves several service areas.</li> <li>• In this case we will acknowledge your letter within three working days of receipt and let you know who is looking after your query, what action we are taking, and when a reply can be expected.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Safeguarding:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All communications with FosterTalk are confidential, unless we become concerned of a potential safeguarding issue concerning children, young people or vulnerable adults; in which case we are obliged by law to pass on the relevant authority. We will discuss this with you in the first instance.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Complaints/Issues raised:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We work to a company Representations and Complaints policy and procedure which is readily available on request</li> <li>• We aim to acknowledge any complaints/service issues raised within three working days and we will also let you know who is dealing with your complaint and when we will reply</li> <li>• We aim to resolve any complaints within 10 to 20 working days. If we need longer, we will tell you why.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Obtaining your feedback:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We are committed to developing and continuously improving our services and obtaining customer feedback is crucial for this</li> <li>• We conduct an annual membership satisfaction survey of members and responses are used to inform membership developments.</li> <li>• The findings of our most recent members' satisfaction survey are available on our website.</li> <li>• We email and post our satisfaction questionnaires to every customer who refers to or has received our face to face support service.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Subject Access Requests:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will supply information requested by way of a subject access request within 40 working days, except in exceptional circumstances.</li> <li>• In such circumstances, we will contact you to let you know why it is going to take longer than 40 days to collate the information requested, or if there are reasons why it is not appropriate to release all the information requested.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Translation and interpretation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If English is not your first language and you need some help in using our helpline services we can arrange for telephone translation. If you are receiving face to face support we will negotiate with your fostering service in order to arrange face-to-face language interpretation services.</li> </ul>