

**SERIOUS
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Equality and Diversity in Fostering Services

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Equality and Diversity in Fostering Services

About this document

Title	Equality and Diversity
Purpose	Promotion of equal opportunities and promotion of diversity within the fostering service
Updated by	Rosemarie Cronin, Training, Development and Compliance Advisor (Fostering)
Approved by	Children in Care Workstream
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Version Control

Date Issued:	Version	Summary of Changes	Created by
March 2016	3	Addition of training expectation that all carers should complete on equality and diversity	Rosemarie Cronin
March 2016	3	Updated information to include the Children in Care and Leaving Care Partnership Strategy	Rosemarie Cronin
March 2016	3	Included the Essex Care Leavers Charter	Rosemarie Cronin
August 2019	4	Updated information from Essex County Council approach to Equality and Diversity	Rosemarie Cronin
August 2019	4	Updated training courses for foster carers	Rosemarie Cronin

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Introduction and ECC approach to Equality and Diversity

Essex County Council is committed to equality and diversity in both principle and practice. The Fostering Service endorses this commitment in relation to staff, foster carers and the children and young people that are looked after.

Essex County Council celebrate difference and work to ensure no one is disadvantaged when accessing services, employment or public life in Essex. The [Equality Act 2010](#) sets out our duty in this area.

We provide information about how we comply with our equality duties each year and review our equality objectives at least every 4 years.

Our objectives are:

Tackling the causes of disadvantage, ensuring residents can access good jobs and excellent education regardless of their background.

Removing obstacles holding residents back, tackling inequalities between children and supporting older people to live independently with dignity.

Helping people travel across Essex, bringing communities together and connecting them to services, employment and learning opportunities.

Employing a diverse workforce, drawing on the different values and experiences that reflect the communities we serve.

More information regarding our approach in Essex is found on the Essex County Council website or follow the link below

<https://www.essex.gov.uk/equality-and-diversity>

Children and Young People

In addition to the Essex County Council general policies regarding equality and diversity, the commitment to this is reinforced specifically for the children and young people that we look after.

The Children in Care and Leaving Care Partnership Strategy lays out the priorities for children in care with key objectives. The document is supported by a number of organisations including Essex County Council and the Essex Foster Carers Association.

The Essex Pledge to children and young people in our care which was written with the help of children and young people also states that “Essex will do its best:

- To do everything we can to make you feel cared about, valued and respected as an individual
- To make sure you have a social care worker who will spend time with you and get to know you

- To make sure you have the opportunities to succeed
- To help you keep in touch with your family, brothers and sisters and friends when you come into care
- To fully involve you in decision making so your views are listened to and to explain when we make a decision that you may not like or agree with
- We will ensure that the Children in Care Council arrangements and the Pledge are promoted with all children and young people and ensure they are supported to attend participation events
- We will ensure that all those working with children and young people in care work to and know if we have kept to our promises in the Pledge. If this is not the case partners are proactive in challenging practice
- We will make opportunities to consult with children and young people in care to seek their views on the improvement of services to meet their needs and improve outcomes

Essex County Council have also signed up to the **Care Leavers Charter**, a national set of promises made by councils across the country. In it we promise:

- To respect and honour your identity, beliefs, values, relationships and help you to become a valued member of your community;
- To believe in you, recognise your strengths and will support you in your aspirations, even when you have lost faith in yourself;
- To listen to you, respect your point of view and if we disagree, we will explain why.
- To inform you, provide you with information, including information on your legal entitlements; and the information we keep about you will be accurate and we will let you know how you can see it.
- To support you and provide advice, practical, emotional and financial help, help you learn from your mistakes and will not judge you.
- To find you a home and do everything we can to ensure you are happy and feel safe, and secure, when you move to independent living.
- To be a lifelong champion, help you break down barriers and help work with the services you need, including housing, benefits, colleges and universities and employment providers and health services. We will not forget about you and will remain your supporters in whatever way we can, even when our formal relationship with you has ended.

Full version can be found at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/264694/Care_leavers_charter.pdf)

Foster Carers

The Fostering service is committed to working within the Essex County Council's policy and commitment to equality and diversity and would encourage staff, foster carers, children and young people to challenge any form discrimination.

Foster Carers are asked to sign to show their commitment to working within an anti-discriminatory framework when they are approved as foster carers.

Foster carers are expected to evidence equality, inclusion and anti-discriminatory practice as part of the Training, Support and Development (TSD) induction standards.

In addition, foster carers are expected to complete training on Equality and Diversity and this will be expected of all mainstream foster carers and Short Break Carers from April 2016. This is a face to face course for main carers who are expected to complete entitled Equality and Diversity in Foster Care. There is also an e-learning course named 'Equality and Diversity, Advanced level, which secondary carers are able to do as an alternative to the face to face course.