

## Charter for brothers and sisters

In the recent publication *Beyond Together or Apart: Planning For, Assessing and Placing Sibling Groups*, Shelagh Beckett considers what a 'sibling-friendly' service might actually look like from the perspective of children. She developed the Charter below to draw attention to practical steps that can help: each of the actions or explanations focus on children's needs and how social workers and foster carers can work together to best meet the needs of sibling groups.

### Charter for brothers and sisters

In foster care any explanations for separated brothers and sisters in foster care are crucially important. A quality service from the perspective of children might helpfully include the following:

- \* I know why it wasn't possible to place us together.
- \* I know where my brothers and sisters are living.
- \* I know how I can contact my brothers and sisters.
- \* I know when I will see my brothers and sisters.
- \* I have photos of my brothers and sisters.
- \* My social worker has talked to all of us about why we are in foster care.
- \* I sometimes have/have had life history sessions that include my brothers and sisters.
- \* My foster carer knows important details about my brothers and sisters.
- \* I know that I can talk to my foster carer and social worker about my brothers and sisters – including any mixed up, confusing feelings that I might have.
- \* I know that my foster carer and social worker will help me to maintain links with my brothers and sisters.
- \* My social worker has written down the dates of my brothers' and sisters' birthdays and given these to me.
- \* I know that my foster carer knows how to contact the foster carers of my brothers and sisters.
- \* I know that my social worker thinks carefully about how to help me and my brothers and sisters and wants to make the best plans for all of us.
- \* I know that my social worker and foster carer will try to help if I have problems or fall-outs with a sibling.
- \* I know that my social worker works in a department that thinks relationships between brothers and sisters are really important – not just now but for when I'm older.

And similarly, in permanent placements

- \* I know the reasons why I am not living with all my brothers and sisters.
- \* I have information and explanations in my life story book about my brothers and sisters.
- \* I have met the family who care for my brothers and sisters.
- \* I know that my family met my brothers and sisters and have photos of us all together.
- \* I receive news about my brothers and sisters and how they are doing.
- \* I have recent photos of my brothers and sisters.

- \* I know when I will see my brothers and sisters (or why I cannot see them).
- \* I know that I can talk about and ask questions about my brothers and sisters.

See *Beyond Together or Apart: Planning For, Assessing and Placing Sibling Groups* (Beckett, S, CoramBAAF, 2018) for many more ideas and suggestions.