

**CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD
1ST DECEMBER 2005**

**SMOKING POLICY AND GUIDANCE
FOR MIDDLESBROUGH FOSTER CARERS**

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PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1. The purpose of this report is to present the Corporate Parenting Board with the Policy and Guidance relating to prospective and approved Foster Carers who smoke.

BACKGROUND AND EXTERNAL CONSULTATION

2. The Policy outlines the Department's aim to provide a smoke free environment for children in its care, whilst the Guidance gives some basic facts about the impact of smoking upon the health of children. Approved Foster Carers received the Policy and Guidance draft in September 2004 and were invited to comment.

OPTIONAL APPRAISAL

3. The Policy will ensure Foster Carers are aware of the Department's need to protect children from the harmful effects of smoking and their role within this. It will also reinforce the respective roles of Assessors, Panel Members and Supervising Social Workers in providing a smoke free environment for children looked after.

FINANCIAL LEGAL AND WARD IMPLICATIONS

4. There are no financial, legal or Ward implications arising from this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

5. It is recommended that the Corporate Parenting Board advise the Executive to approve the Smoking Policy and Guidance for Middlesbrough Foster Carers.

REASONS

6. Elected members should be aware of the aspirations (and limitations) of the Children, Families & Learning Department in terms of providing a clean and healthy living environment for our children. Their recommendation to the Executive of the approval of this policy will help identify Middlesbrough's stance on smoking and child health.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

7. The background papers used in the preparation of this report are outlined in the Policy itself.

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**SMOKING
POLICY AND GUIDANCE FOR
MIDDLESBROUGH FOSTER CARERS**

The Policy

Middlesbrough Children, Families & Learning Department aims to provide a healthy, smoke free living environment for the children and young people who it looks after, in keeping with the Department of Health Guidance 2002 which promotes healthy outcomes for Children Looked After. Foster Carers, therefore, will be:

- advised of the dangers of smoking and the specific dangers of passive smoking to babies and children.
- assessed in terms of their capacity to care for children and this assessment will include the number of cigarettes smoked daily.
- discussed at the Family Placement Panel where consideration will be given to the impact of their smoking upon children as part of the approval process.
- expected to maintain a smoke free environment for children in their care.

This Policy is written in accordance with:

- The Children Act 1989.
- The Department of Health Guidance 'Promoting the Health of Children Looked After' 2002.
- The Royal College of Physicians' Charter 'Children's Right to Freedom from Tobacco'.

Information and Guidance

Value Statement

Children and young people need to be protected from the harmful effects of cigarette smoke.

The Royal College of Physicians' Charter 'Children's Right to Freedom from Tobacco' states that 'one of the greatest hazards to human health today is smoking. The majority of smokers begin in childhood' and

'Children have a right to:

- be free from the effects of tobacco when in their mother's womb.
- be brought up in a home that is smoke free.
- expect that doctors, teachers and all those caring for them will set a good example by not smoking.
- schools, youth clubs and public places that are smoke free.
- be taught about the impact of smoking on health and wellbeing. Be taught how to recognise and resist pressures to smoke.
- not be sold cigarettes and other tobacco products.
- be helped to remain non-smokers by the high cost of cigarettes.
- be free from any form of tobacco advertising and promotion.
- live in a community where non-smoking is the normal way of life for all age groups.

Middlesbrough Council's Stance

- Middlesbrough Council operates a 'no smoking' policy in all its work places and buildings and Council employees are prohibited from smoking on Council property.
- This ban does not extend to Foster Carers' homes but Foster Carers are responsible for promoting the health of children in their care and therefore for provision of a smoke-free home environment.
- Foster Carers who smoke should do so well away from children, outside the home or at least in a separate room.

Why Do We Take This View?

- Passive smoking can worsen health problems such as Asthma, Bronchitis and allergies. As only 15% of the smoke from a cigarette is inhaled by the smoker the other 85% is a direct threat to others.
- Babies and children who cannot avoid smoke in their play or living environment are at particular risk.
- Babies whose parents/carers smoke are much more likely to be taken to hospital with chest complaints in their first year of life than are those of non-smokers and will have more chest, ear, nose and throat problems as they grow.
- If children are exposed to smoke, it is more likely that they will develop breathing problems as adults.

Want to Give Up?

Contact Quit Helpline on 0800 002200 on the national 'Don't give up Giving Up' free phone helpline 0800 1690169. For more local advice on smoking and smoking cessation, contact Laura McGuinness, Tobacco Control Officer, Middlesbrough Public Protection on 01642 245432. A useful web address is www.givingupsmoking.co.uk

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