

# Fostering: our policy on smoking

## Introduction

Thank you for the interest you've shown in fostering and for choosing to enquire with us at Torfaen County Borough Council.

We hope that this factsheet will provide the information you need to help you decide whether fostering is for you.

Torfaen County Borough Council is committed to promoting the health and well-being of all Children Looked After.

This means that when we place children and young people with foster carers, we must be certain that they will remain safe and healthy in their home environment.

The harmful, long-term effects of smoking – and passive smoking – on an individual's health have been well-documented and are medically proven.

Smoking also poses more immediate risks to a child/young person, for example, the increased risk of fire and poisoning.

The only way to reduce a child's exposure to these risks and to the risk of passive smoking is by ensuring that they live in smoke-free environments.

Torfaen County Borough Council wishes to move to a position where Children Looked After are placed only in smoke-free homes.

## Foster carers and smoking

As a foster carer, you have a responsibility to look after your own health and the health of the children/young people in your care. It is important to remember that they are likely to see you as a role model and by smoking, you are normalising the habit.

**Therefore, there is an expectation that foster carer's homes and cars are smoke/vape free.**

**If you do smoke, you must not smoke in front of children/young people in your care, regardless of the age of the child/ young person. You should also request that any visitors to your home do not smoke in front of the children/young people in your care.**

**You must not advocate or assist the young people in your care to smoke/ buy them cigarettes/vape liquid or use cigarettes/vape liquid as a reward for good behaviour.**

**Foster carers must not smoke in an enclosed space/outbuilding in the garden if this area is used by the children/young people in their care.**

## Electronic cigarettes

All references and policies relating to smoking also apply to the use of electronic cigarettes/vaping.

Electronic cigarettes are not cigarettes in any meaningful sense. They are nicotine delivery systems that do not contain tobacco. The nicotine is delivered orally to the user in the form of vapour, rather than in the form of smoke. Therefore, they are much closer to other non-tobacco licensed nicotine products, such as sprays, patches and gum, than they are to cigarettes.

Nicotine is an addictive drug that can be toxic in relatively low doses. However, by far the greatest harm caused by cigarettes is from other toxic ingredients of cigarette smoke<sup>1</sup>.

Smoking an e-cigarette still models smoking and is therefore not an appropriate behaviour to role model to children and young people.

Foster carers must not use e-cigarettes/vape in front of children and young people.

Foster carers must not vape in an enclosed space/outbuilding in the garden if this area is used by the children/young people in their care.

### Shisha

Smoking a Shisha is when specially prepared tobacco is heated, it bubbles through a bowl of water and is inhaled through a pipe. Like cigarettes, shisha can contain nicotine, tar, carbon monoxide and heavy metals such as arsenic and lead. Smoking Shisha is not permitted around Children Looked After due to the risks of passive smoking and inappropriate role modelling.

**Our Policy on Cigarette/Vape smokers: if one or both foster carers smoke, or there is another person residing within the home who smokes, we will NOT place the following:**

- children under the age of five
- disabled children who are physically unable to play outside
- children with respiratory problems, for example, asthma
- children with heart disease
- children with glue ear.

**We would need to be satisfied that any former smoker has not smoked/vaped for at least 12 months prior to consideration being given to any of the above children/young people being placed.**

### Our policy on kinship foster carers and smoking:

In certain circumstances, there may be occasions when the children/young people who are identified above may be placed with with Kinship or Connected Person's foster carers who smoke. The views of parent/child/young people will be taken into consideration.

### Giving up smoking

If you are a smoker and would like support to give up, please contact Stop Smoking Wales:

[www.helpmequit.wales](http://www.helpmequit.wales)

If you are caring for a child/ young person who is a smoker, we will expect you to actively encourage the young person to give up smoking and not allow smoking within your home. Again, support is available.

### Further information

In determining this policy, Torfaen County Borough Council has made full reference to the British Association for Adoption and Fostering Practice:

- Reducing the Risks of Environmental Tobacco Smoke for Looked- After Children and Their Carers.
- ASH | The Fostering Network joint briefing on foster care, adoption and electronic cigarettes June 2015

### Our contact details

If you need more help, please contact us.

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