

Statement of Purpose



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FosterCare^{UK}
Make a Difference



“

Putting children and young people at the centre of what we do: FosterCare UK provides high quality, child centred services and invests in positive outcomes.

”

Contents



Introduction	5
1 Status & Constitution	6
2 National Legislative & Policy Framework	7
3 Policy Statement	7
4 Core Aims	8
5 Core Objectives	8
6 Principles & Values	10
7 Commitment to Equality & Valuing Diversity	10
8 Quality Standards	10
8.1 Quality Assurance	10
8.2 Monitoring Performance	10
8.3 Child Protection Procedures	11
8.4 Confidentiality & Conflicts of Interest	11
8.5 Children & Young peoples' Guide to foster care	11
8.6 Policies & Procedures	11
9 Management Structure & Staffing	12
10 Recruiting, Selecting & approving foster carers	17
10.1 Assessment Process	18
10.2 Fostering Panel's	19
10.3 Foster Care Agreement	19
10.4 Foster Carers Handbook	20
10.5 Foster Carer Annual Review	20
10.6 Training and Development	20
11 Services	24
11.1 A range of placements	24
11.2 Our Therapeutic Framework	24
11.3 Protecting Children from harm	24
11.4 Provision of Health Services	25
11.5 Support for Children and Young People	25
11.6 Provision of Educational Support Service	25
11.7 Provision of Leisure, Sport, Cultural and Religious Activity	25
11.8 Social work support and supervision	26
11.9 Matching	27
11.10 Financial	27
11.11 Emergency support & On Call	27
11.12 Supervisory Visits	27
11.13 Unannounced Visits	27
11.14 Outcomes trackers	27
12 Statistics	28
12.1 Foster Carers	28
12.2 Children and Young People	29
13 Complaints & Outcomes	30
14 Why We Are Different	30
15 Ofsted	30
16 Contact FosterCare UK	30



Introduction

This Statement of Purpose has been developed in accordance with Standard 1 of the Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards (2011) and the Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011.

It is a requirement of the Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 and National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services (2011), that each fostering agency produces a statement of purpose, including its aims and objectives, a description of the services it provides and the facilities that are provided and how outcomes for children and young people will be achieved.

This Statement of Purpose gives an outline of those requirements and also how the service is managed and its fitness to provide fostering services. It shows the policy and performance framework that underpins our work and shows how the welfare of children will be met and good outcomes achieved. It also demonstrates the policies and procedures that we have set in place to recruit, train, supervise and support foster carers.

The Statement of Purpose links with the Children and Young People's Guide to Fostering which are provided to all children and young people, subject to the child's age and understanding at the time of placement.

This Statement of Purpose is available to all members of staff, foster carers, prospective foster carers, children and young people who are placed with FosterCare UK, their parents, carers and colleagues from other agencies and Local Authorities.

A copy of this Statement of Purpose is available online, via our website www.fostercareuk.co.uk and is sent to Ofsted.

FosterCare UK is committed to meeting, and where possible, exceeding the requirements arising from:

- The Care Standards Act 2000
- The Children Act 1989
- The Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011
- Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards (2011)
- UK National Standards for Foster Care (1999)
- Care planning, placement and case review (England) Regulations 2010

This Statement of Purpose is reviewed and updated at least annually by the Board of Directors and more frequently as necessary by the Responsible Individual and Registered Manager.



We can produce this document in alternative formats and/or languages. Please contact FosterCare UK on 0844 800 1941 or email enquiries@fostercareuk.co.uk for further information.



1 Status & Constitution

FosterCare UK Ltd, an independent fostering service, is a private limited company registered under the Companies Act 1985 (company number 6139705).

In accordance with the Companies Act 1985 and 1989, FosterCare UK Ltd has produced a Memorandum of Association and Articles of Association. FosterCare UK Ltd has a Board of Directors.

The Board of Directors meets regularly and is responsible for the corporate governance of the company, as well as determining and reviewing the company's:

- Strategic vision, direction and forecasting of the organisation
- Culture, values and principles
- Annual business plan
- Training and development programmes
- Performance targets
- Policies and procedures
- Financial management and expenditure
- Legal compliance
- Quality assurance

In doing so, the board meet the statutory duties and responsibilities as Directors of a registered company and ensure that all matters are reviewed regularly and in a planned way.

FosterCare UK Ltd is regulated and inspected by Ofsted. (Registration No: SC363485)

FosterCare UK has organisational membership with:

- Fostering Network (Membership No: 1077)
- Information Commissioners' Office (Registration No: Z99353130)
- National Association of Fostering Providers

FosterCare UK is a:

- London Care Placements Contractor
- Preferred Provider to eighteen Local Authorities
- Investor in People Gold organisation



2 National Legislative & Policy framework

FosterCare UK Ltd is managed in accordance with the principles outlined in the:

- Children Act 1989
- Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011
- Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards (2011)
- Children Act Guidance and Regulations Volume 4: Fostering Services (2011)
- The Care Standards Act 2000
- Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations 2010
- The Disability and Equality Act 2010
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Children (Leaving care) Act 2000
- Department of Education - Training, Support and Development Standards for Foster Care (2007)
- UK National Standards for Foster care (1999)
- Assessment and approval of foster carers: Amendments to the Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 4: Fostering Services July 2013

All policies, procedures and guidance relating to FosterCare UK are designed to complement the above primary legislation, and reflect and support the key elements of this statement of purpose.

3 Policy Statement

FosterCare UK believes that every Child Looked After should be able to enjoy the same quality of life and opportunities as all children.

FosterCare UK works to a clear vision, which states: **“We want all children and young people that are placed with our service to be happy, healthy, safe, successful and free from the effects of poverty.”** We will make sure that every child and young person has the opportunity to achieve their potential because every child matters. We will work to narrow the gap so that every child has the chance to succeed regardless of their background and the barriers they face.

We want to make sure that every young person has the highest hopes for their future and the support to fulfil them. FosterCare UK recognises that a child’s needs are best met by a nurturing family and is committed to placing children who are not able to remain in their own family in an appropriate alternative well matched family placement.

FosterCare UK is a dedicated and comprehensive fostering service that actively works to meet the quality standards required and the diverse needs of the children and young people who become looked after and are referred to our service for a fostering placement.

We are committed to placing children and young people with local foster carers in order for them to maintain contact with families and friends, to continue at the same school and thrive within their community wherever possible.

Each child and young person will have access to services that recognise and address their needs in terms of gender, religion, ethnic origin, language, culture, disability and sexuality. Placement decisions will consider the child or young person’s assessed racial, ethnic, cultural and linguistic needs and match these as closely as possible with the ethnic origin, religion, culture and language of the foster carer(s).

Children’s safety and welfare will be actively promoted in all fostering placements and they will be protected from abuse and other forms of significant harm.

4 Core Aims

The core aim of FosterCare UK is to provide safe, high quality foster care placements for children and young people that value, support and encourage them to grow and develop as individuals.

As well as promoting their health and general well-being the service is committed to ensuring that foster carers are encouraged, trained, supported and supervised to help children and young people to reach their maximum educational ability.

Foster carers will provide excellent parenting for all children who are looked after and children will be consulted and encouraged to actively participate in their care and family life. We are committed to ensuring that the service offered is based on statutory requirements, sound principles and good practice and works within the principles of "Best Value".

Our service is committed to multi-agency working and develops partnerships and protocols with organisations that can progress the needs of the children and young people in our care and ensure positive outcomes are achieved.

We provide safety and stability for children in family placements that closely match their individual needs and in doing so, create the opportunity to form secure attachments.

5 Core Objectives

FosterCare UK core objectives are:

- To provide high quality foster care placements where each child will have the opportunity for stability, security and a warm, safe caring environment within families that best match their identified needs
- To recruit carers from all backgrounds in order to meet the racial, cultural and religious needs of children and young people referred to FosterCare UK
- To recruit carers with the greatest potential to provide the high quality care needed by the children and young people placed with FosterCare UK
- To carefully match the needs of children and young people with the skills of foster carers
- To take proactive steps in supporting children and young people to achieve the 44 nationally agreed outcomes for all children in care
- To ensure a plan for the child's future is acted upon within the timescales at each review
- To ensure all foster carers have access to training, guidance and the support of a fully qualified, designated Supervising Social Worker at all times
- To ensure a child's physical and emotional health care needs are met and a positive lifestyle is encouraged
- To ensure that the cultural and diversity needs of each child are met
- Work in close partnership with Local Authorities to promote and safeguard the best interests and welfare of the child or young person
- Retain foster carers and staff through a strategy that ensures they are appropriately supervised, supported, rewarded and developed
- A focus on continuous improvement, quality assurance and high quality service provision

Our way

Why we are here

We exist to ensure that every young person has the highest hopes for their future and the support to achieve them. We believe that every child in care should be able to enjoy at least the same quality of life and opportunities as all children and young people

Our Destination

To be recognised as a specialist therapeutic fostering service with "preferred provider status" with all local authorities within which we have a presence in the UK

Our Journey

We value, support and develop our foster carers and staff, ensuring a major impact and outstanding outcomes for all of our children and young people. We are proactive and innovative, ensuring that sustainability remains at the forefront of our actions

Our Values

**Ethical | Outcomes Driven | Solution Focused | Socially Responsible
Accountable | What we do, we do well**

How we get there

Being adaptive & responsive

Striving to be at the forefront of our sector

Being a great place to work where people are inspired to be the best they can be

Consistently delivering our commitment to children and young people in care

Work Smart

Act with urgency and Integrity

Remain responsive to change

Have the courage to challenge when required

Work professionally and efficiently

6 Principles & Values

The work of FosterCare UK is underpinned by the following values and beliefs:

- Most children and young people are best cared for within their own families. Where this is not possible, for whatever reason, most children and young people are best looked after within family-based placements which will encourage and promote continuing links with their birth families
- Children and young people are entitled to be treated with respect and within an environment where diversity and difference are valued and enjoyed
- A child or young person's sense of identity and self-respect needs to be actively promoted through particular awareness of, and attention to, issues of race, culture, religion, gender, ability and sexual orientation
- Foster carers have a unique contribution to make to a child or young person's growth and development; they should be regarded and respected as professional colleagues
- Foster carers are entitled to receive training and support to enhance their skills and personal development and should be expected to demonstrate those skills in their work with children and young people
- FosterCare UK promotes the profile of children and young people's rights and we work collaboratively to empower them
- FosterCare UK operates within an open culture which demands co-operation, collaboration, communication and challenge from everyone

7 Commitment to Equality & Valuing Diversity

FosterCare UK is committed to providing holistic services that embrace diversity and promote equality of opportunity. Our goal is to ensure that these commitments, reinforced by our values, are embedded in our day to day working practices with all children and young people, foster carers, colleagues and customers.

We will provide equality of opportunity and will not tolerate discrimination.

8 Quality Standards

8.1 Quality Assurance

FosterCare UK has a strong commitment in continually striving to achieve Best Quality in all its fostering services and as such reviews its policies practices and procedures on a regular, on-going basis. Under the guidance of Fostering Regulations and statutory legislation, we have clear procedures for monitoring and controlling our fostering services and ensuring quality performance.

Aims & Objectives

The aims and objectives of our quality assurance programme are as follows:

- Provide a quality service in which service user feedback and self-evaluation is a consistent and valued process
- Ensure that accurate information is available to inform the work of the service and secure the successful delivery of aims and objectives of the service

Our Objectives are to ensure that:

- All foster carers provide high quality care that meets the assessed needs of children and young people placed with them in line with the care plan or the other identified plans
- Managers and Supervising Social Workers monitor the work of FosterCare UK services
- Directors and Managers are aware of the demands being made on FosterCare UK services
- Managers are aware of the resources available and needed to meet actual and projected demands
- Resources are used effectively to meet the demands placed on the service
- The work of the service continues to meet; its aims and objectives, the requirements of children needing foster placements, requirements of the appropriate Fostering Services Standards and associated Regulations.

8.2 Monitoring Performance

The performance of FosterCare UK is monitored at a number of levels and in a number of ways:

- Ofsted will inspect regularly to ensure that FosterCare UK complies with legislation and standards (this may be annually or every 3 years dependant on compliance)
- Activity will be monitored at a strategic level against the objectives, performance indicators and tasks as contained in the continuous improvement plan
- Completion of monthly management monitors
- Completion of monthly Regulation 35 reporting
- Monthly auditing and status checks of Charms management system

8.3 Child Protection Procedures

FosterCare UK Child Protection Procedures lay down a clear format for the reporting of any child protection matter to the Registered Manager. The overriding aim of guidelines and procedures is to ensure the protection of children. On receipt of an allegation, FosterCare UK seeks instruction from the child's placing Authority and also liaises and consults with the area Authority in which the foster carers reside.

In addition to this, we have incorporated the Warner principles and the Bi-chard enquiry recommendation for recruitment and selection of staff and, as such, have appointed centre administrators who are responsible for the co-ordination of DBS checks, local authority checks, medicals, references and all employment safeguards.

8.4 Confidentiality & Conflicts of Interest

Foster carers are provided with full information about the child or young person placed with them, and expected to observe high standards of confidentiality. As an agency we maintain records on carers and looked after children, who are subject to National Standards and Data protection legislation. Staff and foster carers are expected to declare any potential conflicts of interest.

8.5 Children & Young peoples' Guide to Foster Care

FosterCare UK has produced a Children's Guide to foster care for under 11 years and a Young Person's Guide to foster care (11-18 years).

Subject to the child's age and understanding, FosterCare UK ensures the child receives the Children's Guide or Young Person's Guide at the point of placement and that the foster carer(s) ensure this content is accessible and well explained. The Children's Guide and Young Person's Guide includes a summary of what the fostering service sets out to do for children and young people, how they can find out their rights, how a child or young person can contact their Independent Reviewing Officer, the Children's Rights Director and Ofsted if they wish to raise a concern or complaint.

8.6 Policies & Procedures

FosterCare UK has developed a comprehensive but easy to understand foster carer policies, procedures and practice manual. It is issued to every approved foster carer. The manual contains information on financials, fostering law, health and safety matters, assessing the needs of children and young people, care planning, health, education, complaints and grievances, training, child protection, record keeping, outcomes and expectations.

The manual is reviewed throughout the year and updates are issued via individual Charms accounts to foster carers annually or more regularly as required.

9 Management Structure & Staffing

FosterCare UK is managed by a Responsible Individual/Managing Director and Registered Manager who are supported by the QA Director, Social Work Manager and Senior Practitioner.



Responsible Individual is:

Jonathan Toomey

Jonathan can't remember a time when he wasn't surrounded by fostering. He grew up in a house with his brothers and sisters and up to five foster siblings, some staying days and others for years. This introduction to the world of fostering clearly informs his approach to work in every way. His parents fostered many young people over a period of more than 30 years, and in March 1989 set up the Fostering Support Group (FSG), the second independent Fostering Service to be established in the UK.

Jonathan joined the family business in 1991, undertaking various roles while gaining experience and undergoing management training. From 2002, Jonathan undertook the role of Operational Director, and from February 2005 until he left the company in 2007, he was the Responsible Individual and Managing Director.

Jonathan established FosterCare UK in April 2007, and performs the strategic planning and direction of the service. He specialises in business development, contracting and commissioning, partnership working and modelling and the setting of service standards.

What makes me passionate about the work I do is ensuring we instill consistent standards, make a difference, challenge inequality and advocate for children and young people where nobody else does. I also don't accept anything else but the best. I try to approach issues by asking myself the question 'if it was one of my children who was unfortunate enough to have to entered the care system, what would I want for them?' This usually leads me on the right path for the young person involved.



The Agency Decision Maker and QA

Director is: Sophie Barton

Sophie qualified as a social worker in 1998 and since then has worked in a variety of settings. Initially as a social worker in a child health team, then within a child assessment and duty team, before she moved to The Children's Society to set up an advocacy project for looked after children. This experience and insight into the practices within some children's homes in the early 2000's led her to pursue a regulatory role within the Commission for Social Care Inspection (latterly NCSC and then Ofsted) where she began her inspection career with a view to raising standard within children's services – she specialised in the regulation and compliance of children's homes and fostering services.

In 2009 she joined an independent fostering agency, becoming the Registered Manager and then the Managing Director and Responsible Individual. She led this agency through three Ofsted inspections where they were rated Outstanding in all areas. While in this role Sophie was also instrumental in the development and growth of it's Therapeutic Fostering Service – delivering exceptional practice and outcomes for traumatised children.

Sophie has previously been a panel chair for Newham Local Authority as well as undertaking the ADM role for her previous agency. More recently, Sophie has set up her own consultancy business to support others in delivering excellent services to children.



The Registered Manager is: Danni Starley (BSc. Hons)

Danni completed her Early Years training in 1993 but quickly moved into the Social Care sector. Danni worked in a specialist therapeutic residential provision for children and young people with severe emotional damage as a result of childhood trauma and abuse.

Danni has experience of working for a Local Authority undertaking Child Protection enquiries whilst working jointly with specialist police officers to conduct Achieving Best Evidence video interviews. Danni has also worked for Cafcass as a Family Court Advisor/Guardian carrying out assessments of the child's needs and presenting these both in writing and verbally to the court.

Qualifications: Diploma in Social Work, BA (hons) Specialist Practice in Social Care, Practice Educators Award, City and Guilds Level 5, Leadership and Management in Care Services, Achieving Best Evidence (ABE video interview Level 3), NVQ 3 Children and young people + Foundation Degree in Therapeutic Child Care.

Danni has a wealth of knowledge and experience of working with children and young people who have suffered trauma. She combines her experience of safeguarding and therapeutic interventions to ensure solid social work practice with a strong focus on good outcomes for children.

It's all about promoting the family experiences of children in care, and positively affecting their later life chances. By tapping into the talents and creativity of children they can then use these skills to heal their own trauma. I really believe in advocating for young people to ensure they are receiving the services they need to really develop to their full potential. Taking all the hope and optimism of newly approved carers and supporting their development into skilled and knowledgeable carers.

Contributing to the ethos within FosterCare UK whereby children are supported to learn to 'risk assess for themselves, rather than by providing lives which are 'risk adverse'.

What makes me passionate about the work I do is ensuring we instill consistent standards, make a difference, challenge inequality and advocate for children and young people where nobody else does

Jonathan Toomey,
Responsible Individual





The Social Work Manager is: Sue Bartholomew (MA.SW)

Social Work Team Manager is Sue Bartholomew. Sue worked for the Local Authority as a Learning Support Assistant, working in a primary school with 68.4% of the children stated: mainly social difficulties impacting on their ability to learn. And then completed an Access to Teaching Course followed by a BA in Religious Studies; working part time for a local ecumenical project focused on families in an area of high deprivation. Her intention was to qualify as a teacher, however, a job offer from Ashford Social Services Children and Families and Sue joined as a Social Work Assistant later completing her Masters in Social Work.

As a qualified Social Worker, Sue initially remained with Ashford Children and Families in the 'Long Term' Team. She worked with young people who often experience many more transitions than their peers. She has worked within the Independent Fostering Section since 2008 and feels passionate about supporting and educating foster carers to understand how children and young people internalise their trauma and how this manifests in their behaviours.

Most recently Sue has been accredited as a trainer for the nationally recognised Fostering Changes Program as well as a facilitator for Positive Management of Challenging Behaviour. Sue provides a crucial and invaluable link between management and the Social Work Team. Sue describes her move to FosterCare UK 'as an easy transition' with the company's ethos and child-centred philosophy very much in line with her own.

Away from the office Sue remains children-focused as she dedicates much of her own time to The Girl Guides and enjoys getting out and about with her grandchildren.



I love working with young people and I'm committed to ensuring they achieve positive outcomes

Sue Bartholomew
Social Work Manager





The Senior Practitioner is: **Teresa Scott (MA.Hons)**

Teresa started her career in the leisure industry, working in the deprived area of the Isle of Dogs in the Docklands, East London and focusing on youth engagement in sport long before sustainability and the legacy of an Olympic Games in the area was dreamt of.

Teresa then returned to Kent and spent 6 years as a Teaching Assistant for children with learning difficulties, working specifically with children who had social and communication difficulties and a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder.

Teresa graduated from the University of Kent with a BA (Hons) in Social Work and joined the local authority as a Child Protection Social Worker where she worked directly with families in the court arena and young people entering foster care. She has the national qualification to work with victims of abuse, also in conducting Achieving Best Evidence Interviews (video interviewing) with the police.

Teresa has worked for Foster Care UK for the past three years as Supervising Social Worker and is pleased to be continuing to work directly with foster carers and young people in her new role as Senior Practitioner. She is passionate about direct work with children and young people and working in a way which will support and enable them to develop positive identities from often challenging and difficult beginnings. Teresa has a particular interest in Life Story Work and advocates for its importance in helping young people to understand their journey and previous experiences. Teresa recently completed a Masters Degree focusing her research dissertation on young people who exhibit harmful sexualised behaviour. Teresa enjoys supporting foster carers in achieving the best outcomes for their young people and in facilitating their professional development through nationally recognised trainings such as 'Fostering Changes'. Teresa values and advocates for the importance of working closely with multi agency colleagues for the benefit of the service's young people.

Teresa considers reflective supervision to be the bedrock of good social work practice and is looking forward to developing this area in her new role as Senior Practitioner. She is Foster Care UK's Champion in the area of Health for young people in care, and has a particular interest in child and adolescent mental health.

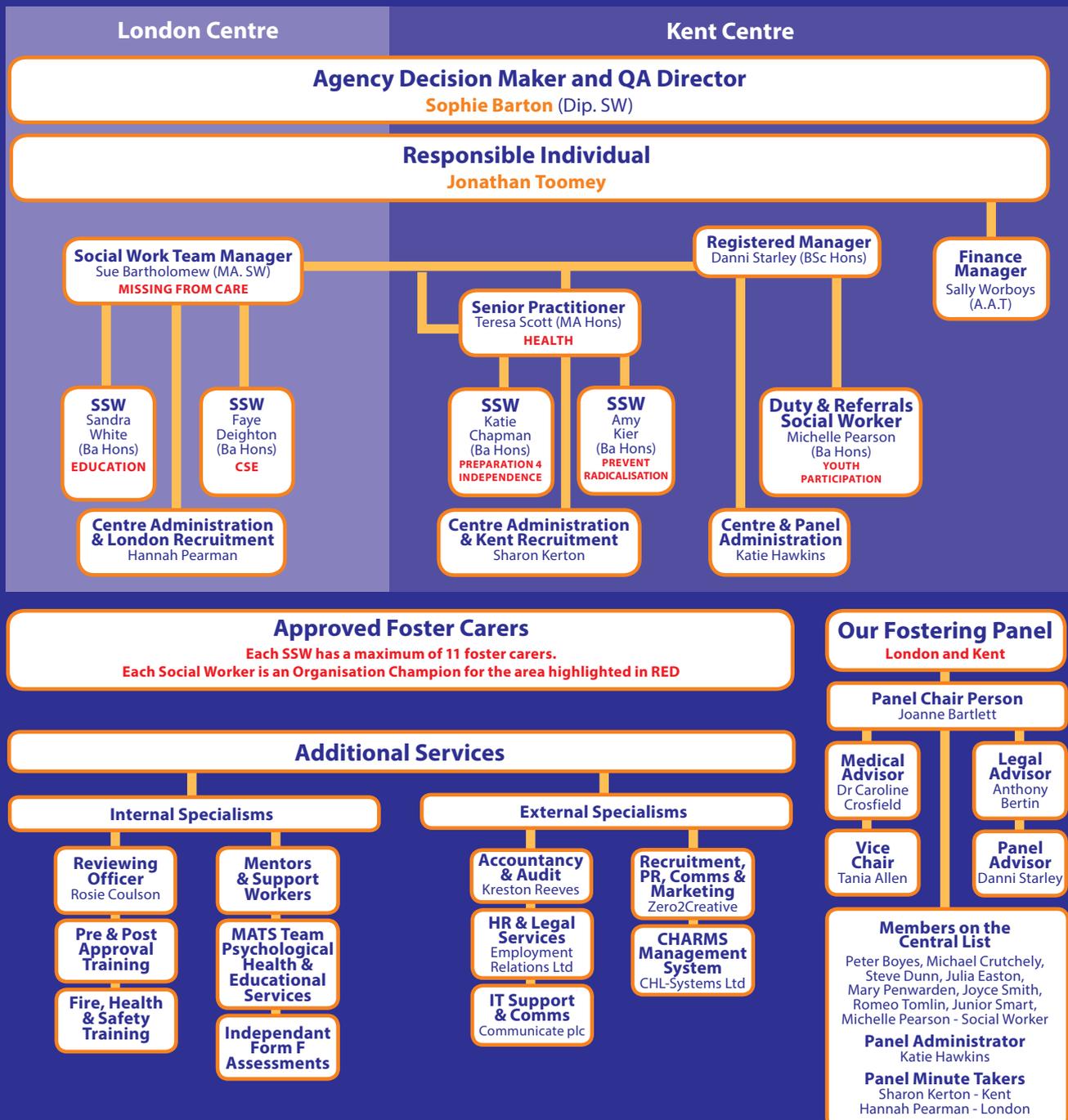
Qualifications: Dip. Supporting Young People with Autistic Spectrum, Disorder, Christ Church University Canterbury 2007, BA [Hons. 1st class] Social Work, University of Kent 2011, Achieving Best Evidence, Kent County Council and Kent Police 2012, MA [Distinction] Advanced Child Protection, University of Kent 2015, Fostering Changes, Kings College London 2016

In addition, FosterCare UK employs Qualified Social Workers as Supervising Social Workers. The SSWs are responsible for providing support and supervision to foster carers and all have an appropriate social work qualification e.g Ba Hons/DipSW/CSS/CQSW and are registered with the HCPC (Health Care Professions Council).

Supervising Social Workers are supervised and supported by the Social Work Manager and Senior Practitioner, who are supervised and supported by the Registered Manager. Foster carers are responsible for providing a safe, caring and nurturing environment, promoting the welfare of children and young people entrusted in their care.

We employ centre administrators to conduct statutory enquiries regarding foster carers, maintain policies and procedures, and establish systems to maintain full information and records regarding foster carers and children in placement. Appropriately qualified financial personnel at FosterCare UK also undertake financial services, including invoices and payments. A qualified Social Worker is responsible for all referrals and duty matters. The Registered Manager, Social Work Manager, Team Manager and Supervising Social Workers co-ordinate and take their share in the management of the 24 hour out of hours service. All Managers and Social Workers are responsible for a champion role. Champions attend training, workshops and conferences on subject such as; education, health, CSE, Safer Care, Youth Participation, Preventing Radicalisation, Missing from Care and Preparation for Independence.

Organisational Structure

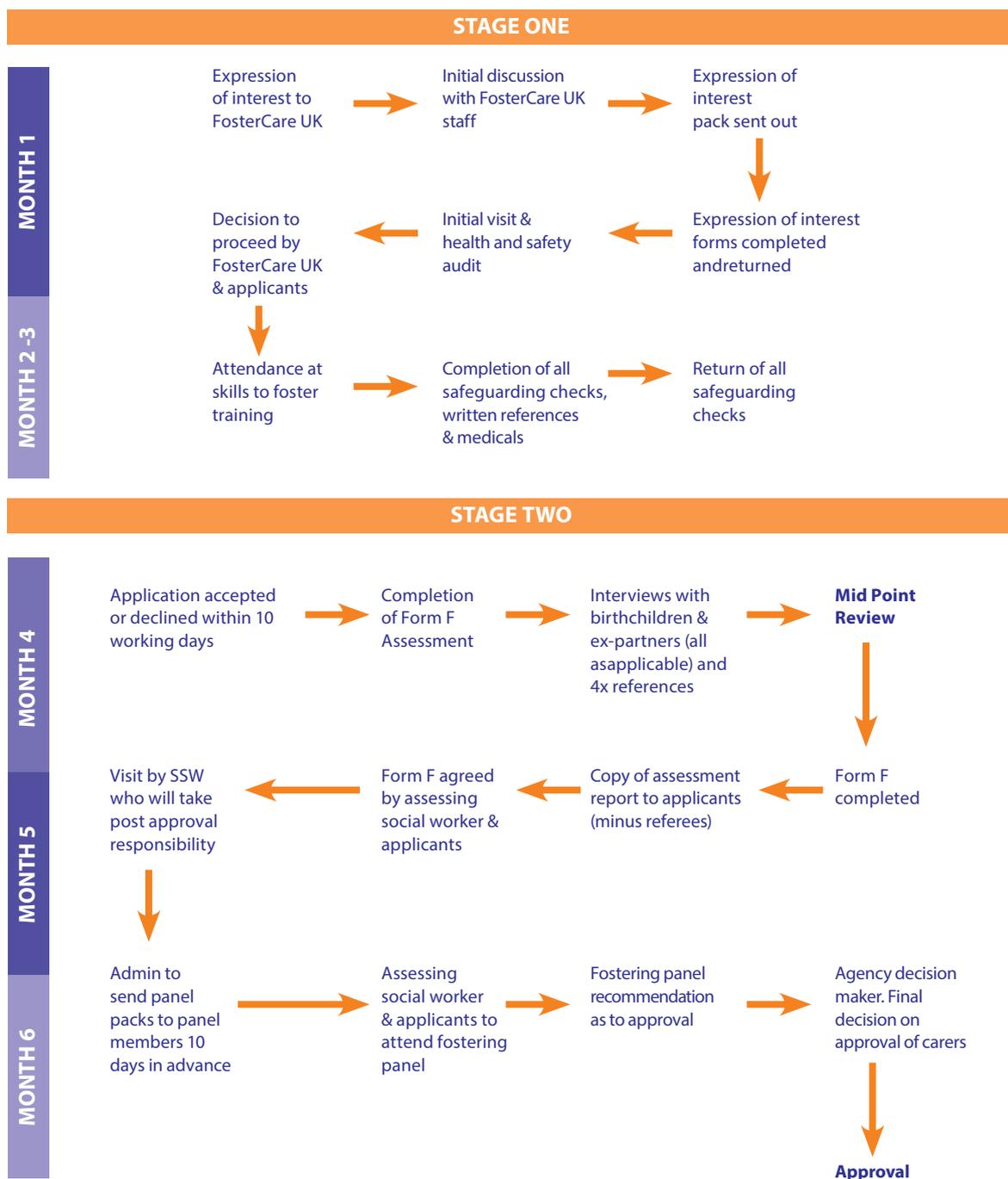


10 Recruiting, Selecting & Approving Foster Carers

10.1 Assessment Process

FosterCare UK is committed to the recruitment of foster carers who can meet the needs of children and young people, through the provision of high quality care. All prospective foster carers who make an enquiry are subject to the following process:

- FosterCare UK requests detailed information and forwards information brochures and a miniature version of this statement of purpose, giving full details about the work of the agency, along with application and consent forms
- On receipt of a completed application form and subject to management review, a Manager or SSW undertakes an initial visit and health and safety audit at the applicant or carer's home



10.2 Fostering Panel's

FosterCare UK hold fostering panels at our London Centre and Kent Centre on a monthly basis. Membership of FosterCare UK fostering panel's (the "Central List") consists of people with the relevant qualities, skills and experience. They are independent and ensure a positive but rigorous contribution.



Our Panel Chair is: Jo Bartlett

Jo Bartlett, has over twenty years' experience in the education sector, working as a teacher, manager and quality improvement consultant across all sectors from primary to higher education. Jo has acted as a cross-college safeguarding officer and the cross curriculum manager responsible for overseeing pastoral support for children in care and care leavers at a large FE college. Within her role, Jo has completed the BAAF training for panel chairs, as well as training in understanding high risk behaviours, information governance and child sexual exploitation. In addition to this, to enhance her role with FosterCare UK, Jo has undertaken the Certificate in Childhood and Youth Studies, as well as updating her safeguarding certification and completing a course in safer recruitment. Most recently Jo has completed a Masters degree in education, specialising in individualised learning design, which puts the student's previous personal and educational experiences at the centre of curriculum design and approaches to facilitating learning. Jo continues to work as an improvement consultant supporting educational institutions across the sector with post-Ofsted improvement plans, as well as teaching within the further and higher education sectors, and is a member of the Society of Education and Training professional body.

Our Panel's include individuals with knowledge and experience of:

- Being a foster carer for a Local Authority or independent fostering service
- Living in foster care
- Assessing and supporting foster carers
- Care planning for looked after children
- Education of looked after children
- Being a son or daughter of a foster carer
- Health and wellbeing of looked after children

FosterCare UK has a list of persons who are considered suitable to be members of our fostering panel's (the "Central List"). In addition, there are four non-voting members:

- Panel Advisor
- Panel Administrator
- Panel Medical Advisor
- Panel Legal Advisor

Regulations require that the fostering panel should consist of no more than six members. FosterCare UK Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policies have ensured that membership is gender balanced and from a range of cultural backgrounds and sexual orientations.

Legal Remit of our Fostering Panel's

- 1 To consider applications for approval and recommend whether or not a person is suitable to act as a foster carer, and if so the terms on which they should be approved – e.g. number and age of children to be placed
- 2 To consider the first review of newly-approved foster carers, and any subsequent reviews referred to it by the fostering service, and recommend whether or not they remain suitable to act as foster carers, and if the terms of the approval remain appropriate
- 3 To oversee the conduct of assessments carried out by the fostering service
- 4 To monitor and advise on the procedures for undertaking reviews of foster carers
- 5 To give advice and make recommendations on any other matters or cases referred to the panel by the fostering service

Panel's act independently in respect of comments, complaints and compliments about the service. They also oversee the conduct of fostering assessments and make recommendations on matters or cases, as the fostering service requires.

The FosterCare UK panel's can only make recommendations - an Agency Decision Maker (A.D.M) makes the formal and final decision. (The Agency Decision Maker is a qualified social worker) This process can take up to 21 days from the date the panel made their recommendation.

It is FosterCare UK policy that:

- All fostering applicants attend a fostering panel and can bring along a 'supporter' i.e. family member, friend, colleague
- All Assessing Social Workers attend a fostering panel
- All foster carers' first annual reviews are presented to a fostering panel
- All alternate foster carer annual reviews are presented to a fostering panel
- The Panel Chair presents a quarterly, six monthly and annual report to the Board of Directors
- The Panel Chair completes a tri-meeting report to the Senior Management Team
- The Panel Chair completes an annual review report and presents to the Senior Management Team.

Performance of panel members

All members appointed to the "Central List" are informed in writing of their performance objectives, including participation in induction and training, and safeguarding the confidentiality of records and information.

Panel members' performance against these objectives are reviewed annually; and the service's A.D.M and Registered Manager reviews the performance of the Panel Chair. Views about the chair's performance are sought from other panel members and from those who attend panel meetings, such as fostering applicants and independent social workers who present reports.

For all other panel members, the Panel Chair and Panel Adviser (as per BAAF good practice guidance) conducts their Annual Performance Review. Payments to members of the fostering panel are reasonable, and include expenses incurred when attending panel meetings.

10.3 Foster Care Agreement

Foster Care Agreements are completed and signed following approval and are in compliance with The Fostering (England) Regulations 2011. All foster carers are issued with a foster carer's handbook containing details and guidance on:

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| • Standards of care | • Insurance provision |
| • Support and supervision | • Confidentiality |
| • Annual carers review process | • Child protection procedures |
| • Complaints and representations procedures | • Behaviour management policy |
| • Training and development | • Financial matters |
| • Legal matters | • Expectations and requirements |

Foster carers also complete an undertaking to confirm that they will:

- Care appropriately for children and young people in placement, as identified in the foster placement agreement
- Inform FosterCare UK of any relevant significant changes to their household or details
- Follow the agency's policies, procedures and good practice guidance within the Foster Carer's Handbook



10.4 Foster Carers Handbook

All foster carers have a handbook that provides factual information about the service. This includes safe caring issues, the role of social workers, and procedures in a condensed format. The foster carer's handbook is provided as a hard copy and signed to confirm receipt. Annual changes are given to all foster carers who are required to sign to acknowledge their receipt of the document.

10.5 Foster Carer Annual Review

FosterCare UK has a detailed procedure for completion of reviews of foster carers that reflects the statute law, regulations, National Minimum Standards and good practice guidance. In addition to the requirements to conduct annual reviews, the FosterCare UK procedure clearly sets out other situations in which completion of a foster care review would be appropriate, e.g. following a serious complaint or incident.

The review procedure focuses on the core competencies for foster carers that appear in the BAAF Form F assessment format and this includes an appraisal of training and development needs. It also audits the five Every Child Matters outcomes.

As set out in the Children Act 1989 and the Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 and Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards (2011), all foster carers undergo an Annual Review. The main aim of the Annual Review is to determine whether approval should be renewed and whether there should be any change in the terms of approval.

The review will include written reports from the carer's Supervising Social Worker, Senior Practitioner, Registered Manager, the local authority Social Worker, children and young people in placement, children of the household/carers and the foster carers themselves. Once completed it is signed by the carers and their Supervising Social Worker.

The Annual Review is an opportunity to look at progress in meeting targets set for the improvement of skills, to set new goals and action plan for the forthcoming year. Training and development needs are assessed and commitment to further training agreed.

Foster Carers are required to attend the Fostering Panel on a three yearly basis as a minimum. It is FosterCare UK's policy to review and update all Foster Carers Form F Assessments on a five yearly basis.

10.6 Training & Development

PRE-APPROVAL TRAINING

Foster carers are expected to undertake preparation training that is based on a programme devised by the Fostering Network known as Skills to Foster.

Experienced carers who have had specific training with Fostering Network, and managers, staff and young people from FosterCare UK facilitate this training.

The preparation programme is linked to the assessment of a foster carer. The material in the programme is designed to help raise awareness about fostering issues. People on the programme are asked to give feedback about how they experienced the training. The facilitators presenting the programme give verbal and written feedback about their views of each person attending the programme.

FosterCare UK facilitates Skills To Foster training at each centre on a bi-monthly basis.



DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION (DfE) TRAINING, SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS (TSD)

The DfE has produced a set of standards, "Ordinary people doing extraordinary things – the Training, Support and Development Standards for Foster Care". All foster carers have their own copy of the guidance.

The TSD standards are:

- **Standard 1:** understand the principles and values essential for fostering children and young people
- **Standard 2:** understand your role as a foster carer
- **Standard 3:** understand health and safety, and healthy care
- **Standard 4:** know how to communicate effectively
- **Standard 5:** understand the development of children and young people
- **Standard 6:** safeguard children and young people (keep them safe from harm)
- **Standard 7:** develop yourself

Following approval, FosterCare UK will provide opportunities for foster carers to demonstrate that they reach the standards as laid out in the TSD workbook. For new carers these need to be completed within one year of approval.

FosterCare UK provides a range of learning opportunities that can be linked with the standards. Workers in the team are also helping carers in groups and on an individual basis to identify any learning needs or to find ways of evidencing their skills and knowledge.

Supervising Social Workers assist carers in providing the opportunities and evidence to show that they meet the standards. They will identify training and development needs and help carers in planning training for the year in monthly supervision meetings.

Once the evidence for the completion of the standards is collected it will be 'signed off' by the Registered Manager. The Certificate of Completion will be forwarded to the foster carers and evidenced on file.

POST APPROVAL ONGOING TRAINING

Foster carers are expected to undertake a minimum amount of core and specialist training each year in order to meet the Fostering Service Standards.

FosterCare UK is strongly committed to promoting training for foster carers and to developing more training opportunities available to carers. A training programme is sent regularly to all foster carers.

A wide range of training is offered to foster carers. Some of this training is specific for foster carers. Some courses are alongside other people involved in promoting the needs of children in care. An annual training plan is produced by FosterCare UK and distributed to carers in March of each year for commencement in April.

In addition foster carers can request alternative courses, or their Supervising Social Worker could recommend them to attend a course that would be particularly relevant for their circumstances and approval.



CORE TRAINING

- First Aid
- The role of Attachment Theory in Therapeutic Fostering
- Safeguarding (formerly Child Protection)
- Safer Caring
- Recording and preparing for/attending meetings
- Positive Management of Challenging behaviours (PMCB) including restraint techniques

Specialist training may be more relevant to some carers and not others. For example carers who look after very young children may be more interested in attending some joint training about adoption issues, rather than the Care Leavers training.

All foster carers have their own Personal Development Plan. A record of training is also kept on the foster carer file, and will form part of their annual review. Foster carer training forms part of the discussions that carers have with their Supervising Social Worker within monthly supervision sessions and will also be discussed at support group meetings.

SPECIALIST TRAINING

These courses provide an opportunity to develop what has been learnt from the Core Training Programme.

Foster carers work within a vast range of areas to meet the needs of children, young people and their families and the following specialist training offers the opportunity to understand in more detail the complexities of some of the issues that may arise.

- Fostering Changes (12 week course)
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Internet Safety / Social Media
- Therapeutic Behaviour Management
- Long Term / Chronic Neglect - LT Contract
- Domestic Abuse - The Childs Perspective
- Fostering Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Young People
- The Adolescent Task
- Parent and Child Training

FOSTERING CHANGES

The Fostering Changes Programme was established in 1999 by the Conduct Disorder, Adoption and Fostering National and Specialist Team at the Maudsley Hospital. Following the increasing request from Foster Carers for more practical solutions to the problems they were experiencing with their Looked After Children to manage behaviour and avoid disruptions, the team developed and trialed a course which is now formally known as Fostering Changes. This is an evidence based programme that gives carers confidence of the foundation theories and constructs of its development. A course supported by DCSF and noted in Care Matters as a premier course for Foster Carers. A programme that ensures Foster Carers gain real skills in behaviour identification and management. This course supports the longevity and stability of placements.

It's been such a pleasure working with you and seeing the wonderful care you are providing. I really admire your thoughtful and tolerant approach to the challenges you have been presented with.

Child and Adolescent Mental
Health Services, Islington

The Fostering Services Regulations (2011) and the National Minimum Standards (NMS) also outline exactly what fostering services are expected to have; the standards specific to carers' training needs are listed below.

NATIONAL MINIMUM STANDARDS (NMS) FOR TRAINING

There is a set of minimum standards for fostering. The standards shown below refer to training.

- **NMS 19.7** Joint training between fostering service staff and foster carers is held on a regular basis
- **NMS 23.1.** The fostering service ensures that foster carers are trained in the skills required to provide high quality care, and meet the needs of each child or young person placed in their care
- **NMS 23.2.** Pre-approval and induction training for each carer includes opportunities to benefit from the experience and knowledge of existing carers. All new foster carers receive induction training
- **NMS 23.3.** All training fits within a framework of equal opportunities, anti-discriminatory practice and is organized to encourage and facilitate attendance by foster carers, for example by including convenient times and venues and by providing childcare and reasonable expenses
- **NMS 23.4.** Where two adults in one household are approved as joint carers, both successfully complete all training. Each foster carer is trained in identified key areas prior to any child being placed in his or her home. Attention is given to the training needs of particular groups, e.g. male carers
- **NMS 23.5.** There is an ongoing programme of training and self-development for foster carers to develop their skills and tackle any weakness
- **NMS 23.6.** Appropriate training on safe caring is provided for all members of the foster household
- **NMS 23.7.** Specific consideration is given to any help or support needed by the sons and daughters of foster carers
- **NMS 23.8.** Each carer's Annual Review includes an appraisal of training and development needs, which is documented in the review report
- **NMS 23.9.** The effectiveness of training received is evaluated and reviewed annually

Carers are extremely positive about the learning and development opportunities provided by the agency

Investors in People



11 Services

11.1 A Range of Placements

FosterCare UK has a Duty and Referrals coordinator who is the first point of contact for Local Authorities making referrals or enquiries about placement choice, availability and matching. All placements are appropriately and professionally assessed with a detailed process that matches the needs of children and young people with the skills, competence and experience of foster carers to meet them.

FosterCare UK provides a wide range of placements for children and young people of all ages and needs, these include:

- Parent & child placements
- Long term placements
- Short term placements
- Sibling groups
- Placements for children who are disabled
- Respite placements
- Unaccompanied Asylum seeking children (UASC)
- Therapeutic Fostering Placements
- Bridging placements
- Emergency placements
- Solo placements/complex needs

All placements made with foster carers are undertaken and monitored in accordance with the Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011.

Therefore:

- Individual 'Foster Placement Agreements' are prepared either before or at the point of placement, which include essential information sharing and care plans
- Wherever possible, pre-placement planning is undertaken, including introductions between foster carers and children and the welcome pack of the identified family being given to the child or young person. In the case of emergency placements, immediate care planning is given timely attention
- A Placement Agreement Meeting is held within 7 days and issues relating to 'Delegated Authority' are agreed.
- A Placement Plan is agreed

11.2 Our Therapeutic Framework (MAT's)

We currently offer a number of Therapeutic Fostering packages under a range of frameworks. We have a clinical team of experts in place to make a difference. Packages include individual therapeutic treatment plans, clinical support to foster carers and a Team Around the Child (TAC) approach. A detailed service specification is available.



Our Clinical Lead is: **Mary Penwarden**

Mary has over 20 years' experience of working within the NHS in Kent's Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service. She has been Lead Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychotherapist for Kent and Medway, with managerial and supervisory responsibility for Child Psychotherapists working within Kent and Medway NHS.

Mary's particular interests are the assessment and treatment of looked after children presenting with complex mental health issues. She is skilled and experienced in supporting foster carers and contributing positively to the multidisciplinary and multiagency network in place to support looked after children. Mary has been a member of FosterCare UK's Panel since 2013.

Mary's professional interests include undertaking comprehensive initial mental health assessments, multiagency liaison, individual assessment of children and young people's states of mind and the provision of comprehensive reports for use by professionals in education and social care to help them plan for a young person's needs by providing clear recommendations for appropriate therapeutic interventions. She also offers support to foster carers and clinical leadership of FosterCare UK's Multidisciplinary Assessment and Treatment Service.

Mary is undertaking doctoral research at the University of Exeter into the placement needs of looked after young people and identifying an evidence base for the recruitment and support of their foster carers.

11.3 Protecting Children From Harm

FosterCare UK operates a safe recruitment process for all staff employed by the agency following recommendations from the Bichard Enquiry. In addition, there is a rigorous vetting and assessment process undertaken with all potential foster carers. Enhanced DBS checks are repeated every 3 years for all carers and staff and medicals are repeated every 2 years.

FosterCare UK has policy and guidance underpinning our service on safer caring; health and safety; bullying, management of behaviour and foster carer agreements. Our processes and procedures will ensure that any concern is addressed and monitored by the senior management team and will inform service developments.

11.4 Provision of Health Services

FosterCare UK is committed to ensuring the health outcomes for children and young people looked after continually improve. We supervise and support our foster carers and work in partnership with local authorities to promote healthy living and eating and we assist in the tracking of children's dental health and annual health assessments.

11.5 Support for Children and Young People

All children and young people in placement with FosterCare UK are visited regularly as part of the role of the Supervising Social Worker. In undertaking this, due consideration is given to the role and involvement of the local authority social worker, so that there is clarity between the roles and responsibilities of each agency and social worker.

The Supervising Social Worker will ensure that the best interests of the child and/or young person is being safeguarded and promoted, and identify further services that are appropriate to promote their physical, mental and emotional welfare.

FosterCare UK works with a number of qualified, accredited and experienced educational and therapeutic professionals to provide educational and psychological support and interventions to children and young people in placement. This support extends to foster carers and Supervising Social Workers as required - refer to Therapy Team selection on our website.

FosterCare UK also employs Mentors and Support Workers to assist children and young people in offering additional support when and if required.

11.6 Provision of Educational Support Service

FosterCare UK works in partnership with a number of professionals to ensure an immediately available educational team. Jointly, we look at improving the attainment attendance and exclusion issues and to improve partnerships with schools and further educational services.

FosterCare UK recognises the need to improve children and young people's attendance at school. We work closely with our foster carers in addressing this issue resulting in a significant improvement in attendance in recent years. Within FosterCare UK we have an expectation that holidays will not be taken in term time and that children are not routinely taken out of school. We work together with our colleagues to ensure that this only occurs in exceptional circumstances and not as a rule.

FosterCare UK works alongside and supports educational initiatives for looked after children by promoting children's educational needs to our foster carers. All carers are expected to attend Personal Education Planning Meetings with the young people and, where possible, the Supervising Social Worker will also attend.

11.7 Provision of Leisure, Sport, Cultural and Religious Activity

Foster carer training and supervision promotes the importance of leisure provision for looked after children and young people, and the expectation that carers will seek out and support new experiences, hobbies and activities to enhance children's self-worth, social development and independence.

We support all young people in their religious and cultural beliefs and customs. We ensure that information is available to provide understanding of different cultures and religions. We provide resources that may be needed to ensure young people are able to practice their beliefs and customs.

We are committed to directly challenging racism and discrimination and ensure that all children and young people who access our services are aware of our policies in relation to anti-oppressive practice and anti-racism. We ensure that all people are treated equally, regardless of age, sex, sexuality, ethnicity, disability or religion. Our Supervising Social Workers support and guide foster carers with issues with trans-racial placements.

11.8 Social Work Support and Supervision

In addition to the child's social worker, a qualified Supervising Social Worker is allocated to support and supervise every foster carer.

The Supervising Social Worker:

- Maintains regular contact with the foster carer and children in placement through monthly placement visits (minimum), and daily/weekly telephone calls (minimum)
- Makes at least three unannounced visits to the foster home per year
- Provides advice, guidance and support to the foster carer on their care of children in placement
- Participates in the Out of Office Hour's management and support service to carers and Local Authorities
- Investigates and co-ordinates other support services that may be appropriately identified
- Liaises with other professionals and contributes to reviews and formal meetings in respect of care planning
- Provides formal supervision and identifies and responds to foster carers training and development needs
- Completes and outcomes tracker for each young person per month
- Keeps accurate electronic and written records and provides at least monthly updates, to the local authority social workers of the young people in placement and the placements team

FosterCare UK employs Supervising Social Workers who are suitably qualified and experienced to undertake the role. Every effort will be made to match children with families that reflect their religious, cultural and diversity needs. Issues around child protection will be dealt with immediately, in line with agreed policies and procedures.

School attendance and academic achievement is promoted and recorded for all children and young people. Electronic daily logs on each child or young person are maintained and provided to placing authorities, on request.

Corporal punishment will NOT be used in any circumstances. Guidance is provided on the use of sanctions and a written record kept of any implementation.

FosterCare UK and its foster carers will maintain vigilance and confidentiality. Foster carers will have continuing training, including Diploma level 3 and TSD standards, specialist training and regular support group meetings. FosterCare UK ensures each foster carer and foster home fulfils all health and safety and risk assessment requirements and these inspections are undertaken by internal staff that are IOSH qualified. FosterCare UK undertakes annual gas and five yearly electrical inspections by qualified personnel. Foster carers will work to an agreed care plan and within the terms of the placement and foster carers agreement. Foster carers promote agreed contact with the children's families unless this is considered detrimental to the child or young person.

Foster carers receive regular support and supervision visits (at least once a month) from Supervising Social Workers and regular telephone contact (weekly or daily, dependent on need). An Out of Hours support service is provided to foster carers by experienced, qualified social workers, with management support as required.



11.9 Matching

All children and young people's placements are closely matched to ensure their needs are met by the skills and experience of foster carers. Many of our foster carers have a wealth of experience or specialise in areas including those who have been abused, have challenging behaviours or for children who may have a specific medical requirement or require a transition from residential care.

FosterCare UK has a dedicated Referrals Coordinator, who is the first point of contact for enquiries about placement availability and liaises closely with Managers, Supervising Social Workers, foster carers and Local Authorities to ensure the best possible and appropriate match for the child or young person and foster carer. All children and young people's needs are unique and therefore all placements are uniquely matched. Where more than one young person is due to be placed in the same family, a matching Risk Assessment form is completed by the SSW to consider the potential impact of competing needs and demands.

11.10 Financial

Foster carers receive an appropriate weekly fostering allowance, which is paid directly into their bank accounts via BACS transfer on a monthly basis. In addition, foster carers also receive three weeks paid respite per child, per year (additional respite support is provided as and when identified).

Detailed financial information and guidance is supplied to foster carers within Policies and Procedures and the Foster Carers Handbook. Local Authorities may contact FosterCare UK for details pertaining to charges and fees. FosterCare UK operates an age related charging structure. The current charging structure is banded into children and young people aged 0 – 10 years and 11 years +. Parent and child placements, remand placements, residential transition placement, therapeutic fostering placement and other specialist placement are charged following detailed discussion and assessment of need and requirements.

11.11 Emergency Support & On Call

At weekends, during the evenings and at night, foster carers are provided with an immediate and responsive on-call service, which is staffed by Centre Managers and SSW's.

Foster carers are encouraged to contact the 'on-call' service for support and guidance. Telephone numbers are diverted to the Out of Hours Supervising Social Worker. In addition, the Registered Manager or a Director is also always available for additional guidance and support.

FosterCare UK also provides a 24 hour referrals and placement service to Local Authorities in the event of an emergency placement of a child or young person requiring an emergency placement. All out of hours referrals are managed and matched in line with the daily procedures. FosterCare UK also provides an out of hours email service - oohs@fostercareuk.co.uk.

11.12 Supervisory Visits

Supervising Social Workers are responsible for ensuring that the care provided to children and young people living in a foster home is of a high standard, including safe and excellent caring practices and assisting carers to achieve evidenced outcomes for the children and young people in their care.

Supervision meetings are a good opportunity for all parties to raise issues of concern and also allow for the opportunity to discuss placement progress and complete outcomes monitors. The Supervising Social Workers also have a primary responsibility for assisting in the career development of carers, establishing training needs with them and making plans to meet these needs and supporting them in their personal development path.

11.13 Unannounced Visits

Part of the monitoring of the work of the foster carer is at least three unannounced visits by the supervising social worker per year. These visits are not intended to be intrusive in any way and far exceed the requirements of the NMS and Fostering Regulations 2011.

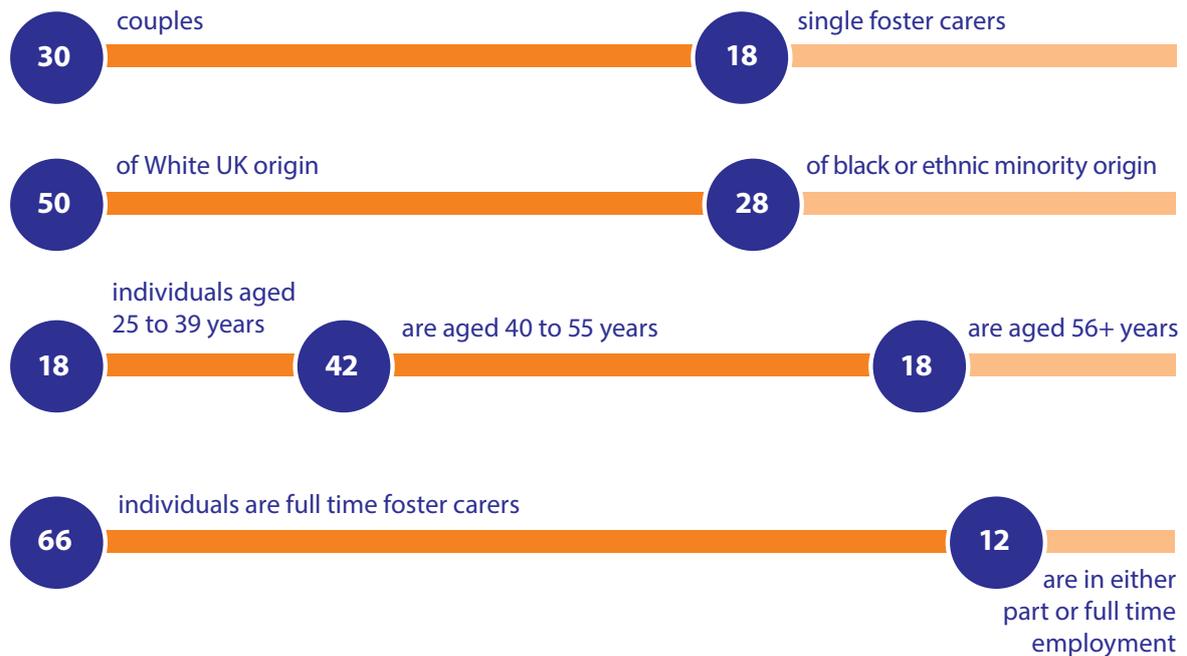
11.14 Outcomes Trackers

At the commencement of placement, SSW's complete an online Outcomes Tracker, noting the 44 national outcomes. This document is reviewed and updated monthly to inform progress and anticipate trends.

12 Statistics

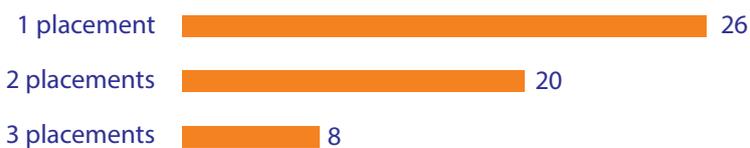
12.1 Foster Carers

FosterCare UK has 48 foster carers approved to take a range of children aged between 0 – 18 years. This includes placements that cater for a range of ethnic backgrounds, children with physical and learning disabilities, children who present challenging behaviours, parent and child placements, young people on remand and young people who have moved from residential care to foster care or require a therapeutic fostering placement.



APPROVAL:

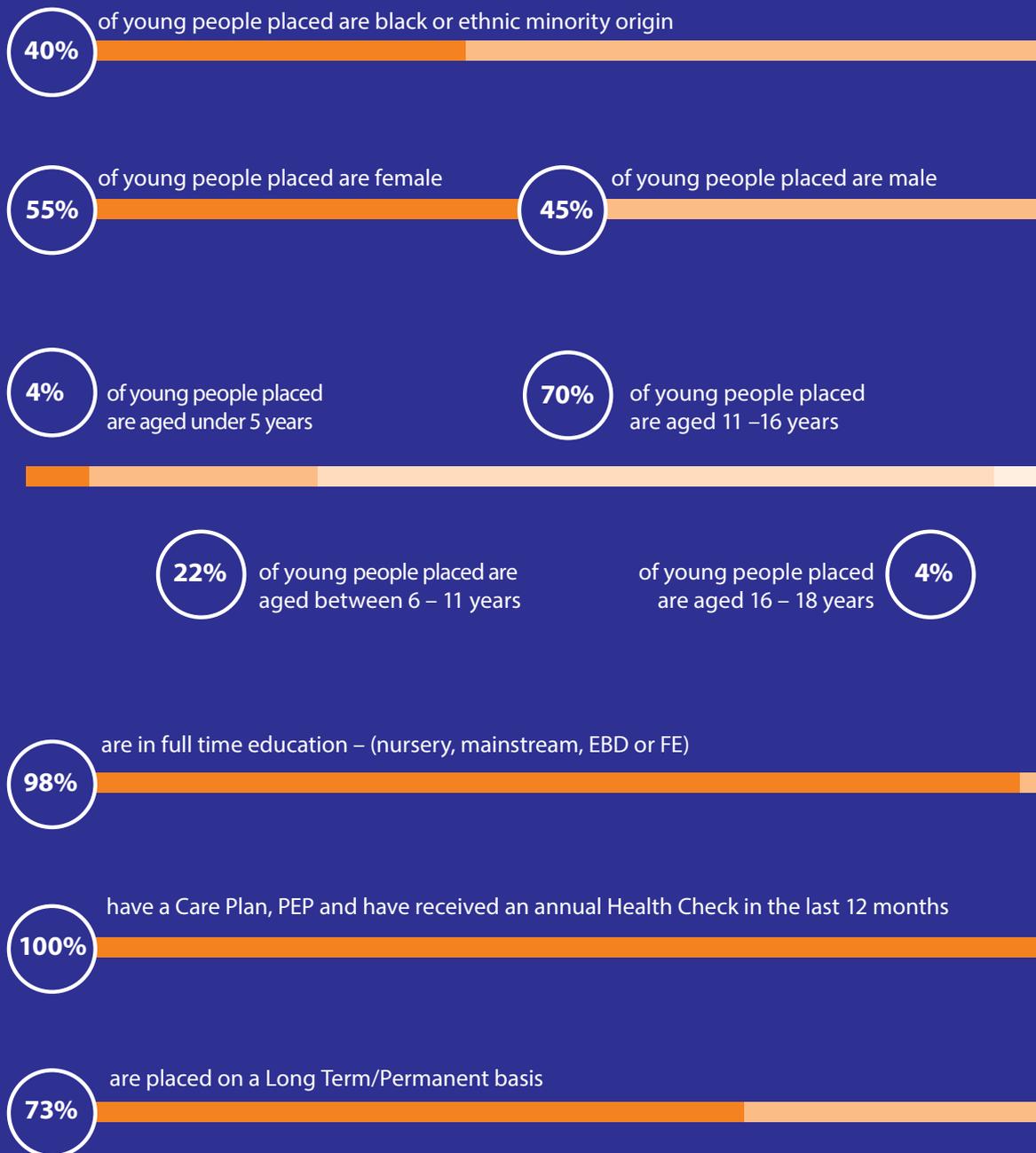
Households approved for:



Within the above approvals, FosterCare UK can offer a total of 90 specialist fostering placements to children and young people in need of our services

12.2 Children and Young People

There were 58 children and young people placed with approved FosterCare UK foster carers.



13 Complaints

The FosterCare UK Complaints Procedure places an emphasis on resolving complaints at a local level i.e. Stage 1 informal problem solving. Records of investigations and outcomes of complaints resolved informally are held on file for inspection by Ofsted and other regulatory bodies.

All children and young people placed with FosterCare UK foster carers are informed of the complaints procedure via the Children's Guide and Young Person's Guide to Foster Care and an individual complaints leaflet, which sets out a clear process of how to complain. Children and young people are also provided with the Statement of Purpose. Foster carers, staff, children and young people's social workers are also provided with information about FosterCare UK complaints procedures.

Stage 2 complaints are those where resolution at **Stage 1** has not been possible or where a complainant has elected to invoke **Stage 2** of the procedure direct. Complaints of this nature are dealt with by the Registered Manager, and if appropriate independent Social Workers are appointed to carry out formal investigations.

If dissatisfied by the response in **Stage 2**, FosterCare UK's Complaints Procedure allows the matter be referred to the Responsible Individual – **Stage 3**. Summary details of complaints and outcomes are filed confidentially and can be provided upon request.

14 Why We Are Different

Basically, we are good at getting the important things right. We;

- Are well organised and have efficient systems and procedures
- Recruit and train only the best foster carers
- Provide carers with excellent training and support
- Recruit and train experienced, qualified, competent and experienced staff
- Create bespoke services to meet the needs of children and young people
- Have a collective attitude to deliver success
- Communicate regularly and have a no-blame culture
- Work hard to provide the highest quality service to the children and young people in our care
- Work hard to provide the best service to our Local Authority partners which means they come to us first
- Are well-established with a reputation for innovative and flexible providing quality care for children and outstanding support to our foster carers

Our careful approach to matching children with foster carers and the volume of referrals that we receive supports our efforts to always achieve a good match between carers and children that in practice promotes our carers success and continued positive outcomes.

15 Ofsted

Ofsted is responsible for regulating, inspecting and monitoring fostering services provided by both Local Authorities and independent foster care providers, under the provisions of the Care Standards Act 2000. The outcome of FosterCare UK's latest Inspection under this legislation can be found at **www.ofsted.gov.uk** and also **www.fostercareuk.co.uk**.

Contact Details:

Ofsted • Piccadilly Gate • Store Street • Manchester • M1 2WD
Tel: 0300 123 1231 • Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk • **www.ofsted.gov.uk**

16 Contact FosterCare UK

Please email us should you require any further information to:

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Email: ds@fostercareuk.co.uk





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 WeAreFosterCareUK



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