



the
Fostering
Foundation

Laying Foundations for the Future

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**This statement is reviewed on an annual basis and approved by Geoffrey Lewis
(Responsible Individual)**

01 January 2018

1. Introduction

The Fostering Foundation's (The Foundation) Statement of Purpose has been developed in accordance with the legislation and statutory regulations that govern the management of fostering services. These include:

- The Fostering Service Regulations (2011)
- The National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services (2011)
- The Care Standards Act 2000

The statement provides information about The Foundation, the provision of the services and facilities that are offered by the agency to children, young people, foster carers, staff members and professionals who work alongside the agency.

In accordance with regulations The Foundation provides copies of this statement to Ofsted; it is available to view on The Foundation's dedicated website and available on request to:

- Any person working for or on behalf of The Foundation
- Any foster carer or prospective foster carer of The Foundation
- Any child or young person placed with a foster carer in The Foundation
- Any parent or guardian of a child placed with The Foundation

The philosophy of The Foundation is that caring for young people who require a substitute family is a worthy and worthwhile task. There is an ongoing demand from local authorities for the provision of suitable family placements for children who present with a variety of individual needs and requirements.

The Foundation strives to meet the demand for fostering placements by ensuring the provision and delivery of a high quality fostering service that focuses on achieving the best possible outcomes for children. The Foundation always endeavours to offer value for money to the local authorities using its services whilst not compromising the quality of the care being delivered.

2. The Aims and Objectives of our Service

From its inception in 2000, the vision and philosophy of the service has been very distinct. The Foundation has been able to create a sense of 'family' in the development of local services, ensuring children remain at the core of its provision.

The aim is to ensure the efficient and effective delivery of the daily operational systems and to identify and modify at the earliest opportunity any operating weaknesses so as to be able to deliver a service that is exemplified by:

- Innovation of organisation and service
- Best Practice
- Safety and security

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- Carer support
- Education and training
- Flexibility
- Reliability and value for money
- Statutory and regulatory compliance

The Foundation strives to work at all times to provide children and young people who are placed with the organisation's foster carers, the highest level of opportunity to reach their full potential. We aim at all times to work with, consult and involve all those associated with The Foundation; foster carers, staff members, children and young people, local authority colleagues, independent professionals and panel members. We have open lines of communication and an openness of approach, with the ability and desire to be innovative in delivering relevant, cost-effective services to meet identified needs. This attitude is continually being reinforced by our Team Managers and Supervising Social Workers and will be maintained as The Foundation continues to expand.

Strategic growth has been and will be achieved by a combination of:-

- The recruitment, training and support of foster carers who are able to respond to the specialist and current needs of local authorities and
- The utilisation of operating cash surpluses to fund expansion through the establishment of new services

The Foundation's registered office is in Tavistock, Devon and there are two local offices in Bristol and Tiverton (Devon) The Foundation's objectives for service provision are:

- Child centred provision offering children and young people the opportunity to live within an environment of warmth, stability and consistency, in which they feel supported to achieve the best outcomes for their immediate and long term futures.
- High quality individualised training and development programmes for staff and foster carers, with an ongoing commitment to identify and support new learning opportunities which lead to the achievement of best practice when supporting and looking after children and young people.
- Foster homes that provide a safe, secure and nurturing base from which children and young people can grow to become confident adults who benefit from and contribute to society.
- The provision of a reliable and responsive professional 24 hour on-call service for all who use the agency.
- A flexible and responsive provision for local authorities that offers high quality care and delivers best value, at all times.
- An organisation that is committed to the core value of equality and opportunity, placing equality at the forefront of service delivery and policy making, ensuring we

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are committed to identify, understand and eradicate the prevention of access to services, information and opportunities for all.

- An organisation that complies with the statutory and legislative remit which governs fostering services.

3. Organisational and Management Structure

A Board of Directors, comprising the Executive Chairman, the Registered Manager, the Director of Social Care, the Finance Director and relevantly experienced Non-Executive Directors, is in overall executive control of the company and monitors all aspects of the service provision.

Each local office provides a base for staff, foster carers and young people. Training and meeting rooms are available within the offices.

Day-to day management and development of services is vested in the Registered Manager who is a qualified social worker, experienced in social work with children and families.

Reporting to the Registered Manager are three Team Managers, based in the local offices. Team Managers supervise a number of Supervising Social Workers (SSWs) who are all qualified in social work and registered with HCPC. SSWs have a range of post qualifying experiences and are supported by The Foundation to add to their academic and professional qualifications to enhance their practice. The SSWs are responsible for visiting foster carers on a regular basis, undertaking supervision, identifying training and development needs, writing annual reviews and supporting foster carers at meetings as well as spending time with the children and young people in placement as appropriate.

In addition to supporting foster carers each SSW participates in recruitment activity, undertakes assessments of prospective foster carers and, together with the whole team, organises support groups as well as activities and events for children and foster carers.

Training programmes for foster carers are developed annually, based on assessment of individual need and delivered through a combination of internal and external training providers.

The social work staff complement on 01 January 2018 comprises:-

- X1 Registered Manager
- X3 Team Managers
- X8 Supervising Social Workers

The Foundation also has a complement of specialised support staff, either contracted or independent. These individuals are qualified within their own field and work alongside the

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SSWs to support and enhance the provision of the service offered to foster carers and to children and young people.

The Foundation is a guaranteed limited company (Company Number 06445595)

The Registered Responsible Individual is the Executive Chair of the Board

All financial matters are dealt with at The Foundation's Finance Office in Surrey.

The Foundation has its own Fostering Panel that meets regularly to make recommendations for the approval of foster carer candidates as well as to receive annual reviews. The panel also consider other matters that are brought to them by the social work team.

The Foundation employs independent social workers (IRSWs) to review the annual approval of all foster carers.

Staff training is co-ordinated centrally and delivered by a mixture of internal training courses and specialised external courses. The Foundation also works with a number of universities to offer Student Social Work placements.

4. *Services we provide*

By working in partnership with local authorities The Foundation can be responsive to the needs of the local community. We endeavour to provide a varied range of placement types that meet the needs of children and young people inclusive of the following:-

Emergency Fostering Placements, where specific carers are able to offer a foster home at short notice and varying amounts of time. This service provision is available 24 hours a day.

Short Term Fostering Placements, where children and young people are matched in with a foster carer who supports them for maybe days, weeks or months whilst decisions are being made in respect of the young person's long term future.

Long Term/Permanent Placements, long-term foster care is one route to permanence for children in care. With long-term foster care (also called a permanent placement) carers make a long term commitment to a child, and the care plan is for them to stay for the rest of their childhood and into adulthood.

For some children in care who can't return home, social workers may not be able to find an appropriate match with an adoptive family; in some cultures adoption is unacceptable; and some children in care may not want to break their legal link with their birth family, whether or not they live with them. In these situations, a permanent foster care placement can give a child the security and stability they need, enabling them to live with their carers, without changing the legal relationship with their birth parents.

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A foster carer can request to be assessed as a long-term carer for a child if it's become clear the child won't be returning home. Foster carers with The Foundation are also assessed by Local Authorities for permanency – this is at the request of either the placing social worker or the child themselves – by achieving permanency LA statutory social work visits and reviews are reduced.

Where long-term foster care or permanency is agreed to be the best option for the child, and a care plan for a permanent placement is agreed by the fostering panel, foster families may mark the moment with the child in the same way that adoptive families might celebrate a child's 'adoption day'.

With long term and permanency foster care, like other types of foster care, the child remains legally 'in care'. The foster carer is not granted parental responsibility and continues to have regular reviews, keep records, and be supervised and supported by a SSW although visits from social workers will be less frequent in the case of permanency. A long term foster carer is still paid fees and allowances but has more areas of delegated authority within the child's placement plan, reflecting the long-term nature of their placement and relationship with their foster carer.

Staying Put Placements; a staying put arrangement is not the same as a foster placement. The young person must be a former looked after child but is no longer a looked after child. They are a young adult and a care leaver. They are entitled to support as a care leaver and will be allocated a Personal Advisor. The foster carer is no longer acting in the capacity of foster carer for that young adult. They are their 'former foster carer'. The foster placement becomes a 'staying put arrangement' and is not governed by Fostering Services Regulations. The 'former foster carer' offering a staying put arrangement may at the same time be offering foster placements to children who are looked after. Such placements will continue to be subject to provisions of the Fostering Services Regulations. The former looked after child will, in this circumstance, require a DBS check as they become a member of the fostering household

Bridging to Adoption placements, where children are supported and cared for during a process where adoption has been identified as the best option for their long term care. These foster carers support the transition plan and undertake specific pieces of work with the child or young person over a more flexible period in order to ensure a successful outcome.

Specialist placements, are often bespoke placements for specific assessment work, drug rehabilitation, parent and baby placements and placements for children with special needs and physical disabilities. These would also include such specifics as day care which is arranged by negotiation in circumstances where a child may be excluded from school. The support workers employed across the Foundation provide an increasing range of therapeutic and activity based programmes for children and young people placed with our foster carers which can further enhance the support we offer within both mainstream and specialist placement provision.

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The age range catered for by The Foundation covers the whole spectrum from birth up to 18 years, inclusive of parent and baby placements where the parent may be either older or younger than 18 years of age.

5. Recruiting and Assessing Foster Carers

We are committed to ensuring that our recruitment process enables us to attract prospective carers, who with support and ongoing training, are able to offer the highest levels of care and nurture to children and young people. The Foundation is rigorous in its assessment of prospective foster carers and is constantly in search of those who feel able to dedicate themselves to this demanding role.

Different avenues are used for recruitment including, advertisements in the local press and on local radio, organising events and days at local enterprises, shows, shopping centres or festivals, and by any other means that are deemed effective. The Foundation has foster carers who represent diversity in culture, race, religion, age and gender. The Foundation is enhancing its presence within social media to reach a wider and more diverse audience.

The Foundation's website provides information for prospective foster carers as well as more general information about fostering.

The assessment process with The Foundation adheres to the Fostering Regulations, is completed within the 8 month time frame and consists of:-

- Initial home visits, following a candidate's response and completion of an application form.
- Formal checks with the Disclosure and Barring Services.
- Medicals along with an independent medical advisor's comments.
- Local Authority checks.
- References, inclusive of any previous partner's comments where applicable.
- Multiple interviews with candidates and other household members.
- Health and Safety assessments.
- Stage Two: full Form F assessment and secure base assessment if a need has been identified.
- Mandatory attendance at a specific training course for prospective foster carers.
- Personal presentation of candidates by the assessor at the Fostering Panel.

The appropriate Team Manager ensures that each fostering household is allocated a Supervising Social Worker and The Foundation works hard to ensure that no social worker has a case load larger than 12.

6. Training and development

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The Foundation offers a comprehensive, up-to-date professional training programme for both its staff and foster carers.

The training is matched to a careful analysis of the needs of staff and carers and they are involved in identifying what type and level of training is required.

Staff and foster carers are also consulted about the development of new training programmes within the organisation. The Foundation is aware that in order to continue to be a provider of the best quality care services, the whole team (staff and foster carers) need to be trained and prepared to the highest possible standards.

We offer training directly to our children and young people, either as part of a group activity session or to address a specific learning need.

Regular support groups for foster carers and events and activities for children and young people are organised on a localised, geographical basis.

Foster carers are aware of the requirement to complete the Training, Support and Development standards (TSD) and do so within the first twelve months of approval. Foster carers must undertake mandatory courses along with additional courses that have been specifically identified to assist with learning and development in their first and subsequent years.

7. Complaints and outcomes

The Foundation has a robust Complaints Procedure which is widely available in differing formats for all who are associated with The Foundation.

During 2017 The Fostering Foundation received 0 complaints from Local Authorities in relation to its staff or practice.

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8. Contact details

The Foundation Registered Office

Tavistock Office

1st & 2nd Floor
46- 47 Brook Street
Tavistock
Devon, PL19 0HE
01822 618068

Bristol Office

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01179 673744

Wessex Office

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Swallow Court
Devonshire Gate
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01884 211816

Website: - www.fosteringfoundation.co.uk

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