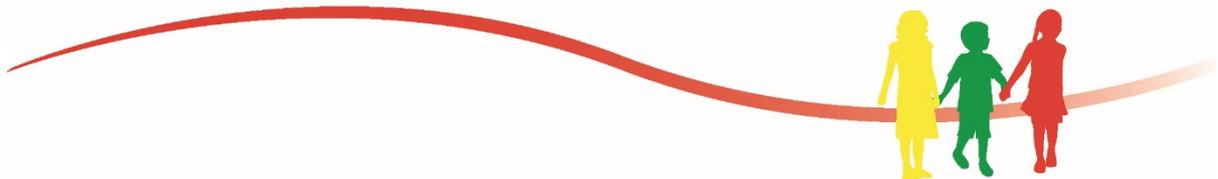


# Foster Careline



## STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

2017-2018

AN INDEPENDENT FOSTERING AGENCY

MAKING POSITIVE CHANGES

TO IMPROVE OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN

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## Introduction

This Statement of Purpose for Foster Careline has been developed in accordance with the aims to meet the requirements arising from:-

Children Act 1989; National Minimum Standards 2011; The Fostering Service Regulations (England) 2011; The Children Act 1989 - Guidance and Regulations Volume 4; The Childrens Bill 2013 - Volume 2: Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010 and the statutory guidance of UN Rights of the Child

This Statement of Purpose is reviewed and updated annually by the Board of Directors and more frequently as necessary by the Service Manager.

Foster Careline is a company based in the North West of England. It is our aim to provide the highest quality family placements and related support services on a local level to children and young people. Foster Careline aims to provide a safe nurturing environment in which children and young people are valued and empowered in order to achieve their potential and improve their outcomes in order to lead fulfilling lives in the community.

Foster Careline aims to provide a service which is designed to meet a wide range of needs for children in care. In addition, comprehensive support is provided to Foster Carers, Children, Young People and their Families through an extensive network of locally based resources and multi-disciplinary teams of child care professionals. We aim to provide quality training to our Foster Carers and Staff.

Foster Careline works in partnership with Local Authorities, Education, Health and Social Care Trusts and relevant independent Services in order to achieve the best possible outcome for the children in our service.

## Aims and Objectives

- To provide high quality care in a safe family setting (via careful matching) for Children and Young People who are placed with Foster Careline Foster Carers
- To apply a person-centred approach to Children and Young People, listen to their views, wishes and feelings by obtaining feedback via forms and visits from our social workers, support workers and specially appointed independent visitor.
- To provide stability and security in the lives of Children and Young People to enable them to reach their full potential and improve their outcomes.
- To promote respect for and promotion of the racial, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds of Children and Young People, by ensuring that resources and services that they require are sourced and obtained

- To be committed to and provide positive regard for the gender, sexuality, disability of fostered Children and Young People when making placement decisions
- To promote a positive identity through individualised care as identified by the care plan
- To advocate on behalf of all Children and Young People to benefit from the education system
- To actively promote good health and wellbeing by ensuring that the Children and Young People's physical and emotional needs are met
- To encourage and facilitate contact with birth family and significant others in line with the care plan
- To ensure that staff and carers are clear about the care plan for the child and ensure that it continues to work in the child's best interest.
- To provide a sensitive, structured approach to behaviour issues, adhering to the policy of no corporal punishment
- To deal immediately with issues of Child Protection in line with policies and procedures and ensure that all staff and carers are trained to understand their roles and responsibilities.
- A commitment to the recruitment of Foster Carers from diverse backgrounds to ensure that the culture and diversity of each child is met
- To provide continuous monitoring and evaluating in order to improve our services
- To ensure that all Foster Carers and staff have access to quality training, supervision and support
- To provide 24 hour support and guidance for foster carers, children and young people
- To provide a workforce of managers, practitioners and support staff who are appropriately qualified, registered with their professional regulatory councils, and supported in continuous professional development
- To source therapeutic services when required
- Research and access community based services for children and young people
- To ensure Fostering Panels are robust
- To ensure Senior Managers give support and show strong leadership for foster carers and staff

# Service Provision

Foster Careline ensure that:

- Foster Carers assessments are undertaken by suitably qualified staff and ensure that Foster Carer's homes comply with health and safety requirements.
- Foster Carers complete all core training and have a training plan for further development.
- Foster Carers receive regular support, supervision, and have access to regular support groups.
- Foster Carers are reviewed annually.
- Robust Safeguarding systems and delivery of safe child centred care.
- Children are matched to families who meet the child's needs including cultural, ethnic and religious.
- Children and young people have access to and participate in education and foster carers and FCL staff promote and support attainment of appropriate qualifications to assist them in their future.
- A child has their own bedroom (unless the child is placed with a sibling and it is deemed appropriate for them to share a bedroom).
- Promote and to facilitate appropriate contact as identified in the child's care plan.
- Daily written records maintained on each child in placements
- The objectives of Child's Care Plan and Placement Plan are met by Foster Carers and Foster Careline.
- Fostering Services Regulations are fully complied with

## Provision of Placements

Foster Careline offer a range of placements for children and young people.

The type and duration of placements vary and include,

-  Emergency
-  Task Centred,
-  Permanent,
-  Short Break,
-  Respite,
-  Assessment,
-  Enhanced and step down
-  Parent and child

-  Children and Young People with Disabilities
-  Solo
-  Sibling Group
-  Parent and Child

A diverse range of foster carers are recruited by Foster Careline to meet the various needs and support of children placed.

## Status and Constitution

Foster Careline is an independent fostering agency and registered under the Companies Act 1985 (Company Number: 06703132) as a private limited company. The Company was registered in 2009. The Board of Directors meet on a regular basis and are responsible for the overall strategic direction and all corporate and financial responsibility for the company.

### **Our Staff/Workers**

Foster Careline's staff consists of a Senior Management Team, Director of Fostering, Responsible Individual, Service Manager, qualified Supervising Social Workers, Fostering Support Workers, Counsellor, Independent Reviewing Officer and Administration Staff, Agency Decision Maker, Fostering Panel Chair and Panel Members; Medical Advisor and Legal Advisor.

All social workers are required to hold a recognised social work qualification and be registered with the appropriate social care body. They have vast experience of child care/child protection work and have experience of working for public and private organisations including Local Authorities, Health Service, Charities, Voluntary Sector and Independent Agencies.

All staff and self-employed workers are required to hold appropriate qualifications and experience in their relevant field. Foster Careline carry out enhanced DBS Checks (Disclosure and Barring Service) on all staff and workers where appropriate. To ensure the welfare and safeguarding of children and young people.

### **Equality and Diversity**

Foster Careline is committed to equality and value diversity and the following Acts are amongst those followed when recruiting all staff; Equality Act 2010, Employment Rights Act 1976, Race Relations act 1976 Trade Union and Labour Relation (Consolidation) Act 1992, Asylum and Immigration Act 1996.

# Recruiting, Assessing, Approving, Training, Supporting and Reviewing Foster Carers

## Recruiting Foster Carers

Foster Careline recruits foster carers in various ways and these can be through advertising in local newspapers, posters, leaflets, word of mouth, exhibiting at shows and the website.

Enquiries/applications to Foster Careline can be received by post, email, web, telephone or face to face. A Social Worker from Foster Careline will telephone the enquirer to discuss fostering and answer any questions.

## Assessing Foster Carers

There are two stages in the Assessment of Foster Carers;

- 1. Initial Home Visit** a social worker will arrange a visit to discuss the applicant's interest and suitability. This visit will be recorded on an Initial Visit Form.
- 2. Fostering Preparation Training Groups** Following the initial visit with the Social Worker, should the potential Foster Carer decide to proceed and we are happy for them to proceed, they will be invited to attend one of our Training Groups. This consists of six sessions held on full days and evenings. After training if both parties are in agreement the applicant will be given an **Official Application Form**.
- 3. When the application is screened and accepted** an Assessing Social Worker will be assigned to the potential Foster Carers to begin the Assessment.

### Stage 1

- 4. Checks carried out:** The Assessment process will require several **checks including:-**
  - Enhanced criminal record checks for the applicant\* and any adult member of the household (extended family and friends who may offer support to the children placed with them may be required to undertake an enhanced check after approval of applicants)

- Medical with their own GP (which is reviewed by the Panel Medical Advisor)
- 4 References - two personal plus one family member and a current or last employer
- Local Authority checks
- Previous partner checks

\*Applicants with any conviction of a serious offence against a child or adult or any serious breach of trust will not be considered

5. Once all the checks and references have been undertaken and these are satisfactory, the assessment will begin. If the checks are not satisfactory then the applicant will be advised that we will not proceed within 10 working days from all stage 1 information being collected

## **Stage 2**

1. **Assessment begins;** this consists of several visits by the potential Foster Carer's allocated Assessing Social Worker. The potential Foster Carer and their Assessing Social Worker will prepare a report about them and their family and ascertain what they can offer to fostering. The applicants will then be given the opportunity to read the completed assessment form and discuss any amendments if necessary. Then the report will be presented to the Fostering Panel.
2. **Assessment Report is presented to Fostering Panel:** The potential Foster Carer's completed Assessment Report is presented to the Fostering Panel (which is made up of various professionals and independent people including Foster Carers) for recommendation of approval. Applicants will be invited to panel with their Assessing Social Worker.
3. **The Panel's recommendation:** The Fostering Panel then makes the recommendation about the suitability of the applicants to the Agency Decision Maker who will make a decision based on any reports available and the Panel's recommendation.
4. **The applicants are then informed verbally and in writing of the decision within 5 working days.**

At any time throughout this whole process, the potential foster carers may decide to withdraw their application. It may be that they want to delay their application for a while. This will not affect any future application they would wish to make to the service.

During the whole approval process, we are here to support and guide potential foster carers.

The assessment process takes an average of 4 months. All the information gathered about prospective Foster Carers is securely stored under lock. References which are provided in confidence cannot be accessed without the consent of both the subject and relevant referees.

### **Training provided for Foster Carers**

Foster Careline ensures that Foster Carers are trained in the skills required to provide high quality care and meet the needs of each child/young person.

Foster Carers are initially offered three induction training days during pre-approval and on an ongoing basis post approval

Foster Carers are expected to attend regular training as part of their continuing professional development. They will also be expected to complete all modules in the evidence work book provided by TSDS within one year.

The Foster Carers training will be monitored and regularly supervised by their Supervising Social Workers and further training as identified will be offered.

### **Supporting Foster Carers**

Foster Careline believes that supporting and valuing Foster Carers is paramount to ensure a successful placement.

Foster Carers will:-

- Have access to a member of staff of Foster Careline 24 hours a day 7 days a week
- Be encouraged to access peer support
- Will be visited by the Supervising Social Worker at regular intervals for supervision and support
- Receive paid respite and/or holidays after a qualifying period

- Receive continuous training programme throughout the time
- Receive a fair and rewarding financial package
- Be provided with a detailed Foster Carers Handbook which among other information will include Policies and Procedures
- Undergo annual reviews which will identify future goals
- Be given full training in keeping records for the children which should be factual, objective and unbiased reports

### **Reviewing Foster Carers**

A review of Foster Carers will take place annually and will be carried out by an independent person. A report will be prepared by the Supervising Social Worker and the views of carers, child's Social Worker and children placed, parents and other interested parties will all contribute to the report. Any recommendations from the review will be taken into consideration by the panel and will be sent to the Agency Decision Maker after the review for the decision. The Foster Carers will be advised of their continuing suitability, or otherwise, in writing, together with the terms of the ongoing approval.

## **Quality Assurance**

### **Our Assurance**

Foster Careline is committed to delivering the best quality service possible. We aim to review our practices, policies and procedures on a regular basis. We regularly research new ideas to improve our practice. We have procedures in place for monitoring all aspects of our Service, thus ensuring that the service is quality controlled. We work in accordance with the Fostering Standards and Regulations, Care Standards and the Children Act.

### **Our Promise to Listen**

Information regarding the complaints procedure is provided to all Children and Young People, Foster Carers and Staff.

Children will be given an age appropriate guide to fostering which will explain to them that their voice matters and will be listened to. It explains that if they are not happy

about anyone or anything to do with foster care that they must tell someone they trust. The guide will be discussed verbally with the child and the complaints procedure will be explained in a child friendly manner. Children old enough to use a telephone or write, will also be able to access one of the help lines to include the Children's Commissioner. Details are written clearly in the guide.

## Complaints Procedure

The Care Standards Act 2000 and Fostering Service Regulation National Minimum Standards require that a fostering agency shall have procedures in place to consider complaints and representations made by or on behalf of children or by any other individual who is unhappy with any aspect of the service provided by the agency or its staff.

We encourage our Carers and staff to be receptive at all times to dissatisfaction or representation and complaints made about our service. No individual or organisation is perfect, and we can always learn from what people have to say about us. To fail to respond sympathetically to a complaint in its early stages can lead to serious problems at a later date. We therefore regard these procedures in a positive light, and see them as an important tool whereby we can monitor and evaluate the standard of services we give to our children and their families.

The Fostering Services Regulations 2011 clearly envisages three stages which Foster Careline adhere to in the procedure:-

- i) Informal problem solving
- ii) Introduction of an independent element
- iii) Appeal to a Panel consisting of three persons at least, one of whom is independent of the agency

There are three stages to our complaints procedure;

### **Stage 1 - Informal Problem Solving /Investigation by a Senior Manager**

Carers, staff and anyone associated with Foster Careline are encouraged to pay attention at all times to those expressing dissatisfaction with the service in the foster home or, in any other area associated with their care. They are asked to seek, where possible, to resolve matters as part of their normal daily routine and duties, but where they are unable to do so, they are instructed to make the Complainant aware of these procedures and assist them in pursuing the complaint.

In the event of a carer or other staff members receiving a complaint which they are unable to solve themselves, they are required to encourage the complainant to pursue the complaint procedure and to ensure that a child or young person has a copy of the Complaints Procedure. They are asked also to advise him/her of their rights to have independent advice on the issue which concerns them. If required they will assist the Complainant to put his/her complaint in writing and ensure that it reaches the Designated

Officer. Not all complaints will be dealt with in the same manner. Depending on the nature of the complaint, different responses will be required. An initial screening process will be undertaken by the Designated Officer to decide which route is appropriate.

## **Stage 2 -**

In circumstances where the Complainant or Carer is not satisfied with the outcome of the above internal procedure, an Investigator totally independent of the Agency will be appointed to further consider the complaint. Any such appointment will be discussed and agreed with all parties prior to the commencement of this independent investigation. Local Authority Social Workers will be informed of the progress of the investigation and its outcome.

The Independent Investigator will report to the Designated Senior Person in writing within 48 hours of completing his/her investigation. A copy of his/her report will be sent to the Complainant, the Social Worker and if appropriate, other relevant parties.

## **Stage 3**

Where a Complainant remains dissatisfied with the response at Stage II, they may request that an Appeals Panel be set up to reconsider the complaint.

## **Fostering Panel**

On completion of an investigation, a report of the complaint and its outcome and any recommendations will be placed before the Fostering Panel. Panel will take any necessary action.

## **Designated Senior Persons Responsibilities**

Their responsibilities are:-

- To oversee the investigation of complaints that cannot be resolved informally
- To inform the relevant authority of any complaint made by or on behalf of a child who is “looked after” and to determine when it is more appropriate to use that authority’s procedures
- To ensure that the Complainant is aware of the avenues of complaint open to him/her
- To ensure that the relevant parties receive copies of the Investigator’s report
- To establish a register to record complaints and the details and results of the investigation. To collate such information as is available to incorporate in the Agency Statement of Purpose
- To inform OFSTED of all complaints and their outcome

# Details of Ofsted and the Children's Commissioner

## **Ofsted**

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

Tel: General Enquiries: 0300 123 1231

About Concerns: 0300123 1231

Email: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

Web: <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk>

## Children's Rights Commissioner

Anne Longfield OBE  
The Office of Children's Commissioner  
Sanctuary Buildings  
20 Great Smith St.  
London  
SW1P 3BT

Help at Hand, is the advice service for children in care, living away from home or receiving social care services, visit [Help at Hand](#) or Freephone **0800 528 0731**.

Foster Careline OFSTED registration no. SC408585