



The Fostering Team

GROW | DEVELOP | SHINE



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Our Vision

The Fostering Team is an organisation built upon core values that impact on everything we do. We work hard to support, help, and nurture children and young people who have experienced trauma, in all its forms. We believe that with the right people around them, and in a loving and supportive environment, all children can recover from their early experiences and flourish.

We achieve this by recruiting, training, and supporting top quality foster parents to provide a loving home and trauma-informed care to vulnerable children. We offer our carers comprehensive training and wrap around support so that they are confident and prepared to provide the best possible environment for the children in their care.

Our Values

At the core of our mission is a commitment to prioritising children and young people, as outlined in our 'GROW DEVELOP SHINE' promise. These values serve as the compass guiding the behaviour and actions of every member within our organisation. Each day, we strive to provide the best care for children and young people, complemented by round-the-clock, high-quality support for our foster carers. Our pursuit of excellence ensures a nurturing environment where children and young people can thrive, and foster carers receive the comprehensive support they deserve.

Grow, Develop, Shine

GROW

We work in partnership with others, to grow and deliver improved foster care, in the right place, at the right time.

Caring is our passion, constantly growing in pursuit of excellence in the hope for a better future for all children and young people.

DEVELOP

We support the development of children, young people and foster carers delivering safe, effective and high-quality care.

We aim to create opportunities for children and young people to develop so that they can make the very best of their abilities and reach their true potential.

SHINE

We believe in and support children so that they can shine in their own unique way.
We have a single, shared definition.

Management and staff

Managing Director & Responsible Individual – Dr Mica Douglas

Mica brings integrity, values, and a standard of training to fostering that is second to none. Her experience as a Social Worker, an ethical manager, a UKCP Registered Psychotherapist and as a Child and Adolescent Psychotherapist, gives her a unique combination of skills to lead the company.

Over the last 17 years, Mica has been leading the way for foster carers to gain qualifications in enhanced fostering and will help The Fostering Team staff and carers to continue to be recognised champions of fostering. Mica is well known in fostering circles for her skill in helping foster carers to achieve more than they knew was possible with children and young people in their care. Her hallmark is in developing potential.

Registered Manager – Anthony Turner

Anthony started in Social Care in January 1993. Anthony qualified as a Social Worker in December 2003. Since qualifying, Anthony has achieved other social work and various management qualifications as per Ofsted requirements. Anthony is registered with Social Work England.

Anthony has worked in various social work environments such as residential child and adult care, a local authority initial social work response team and further experienced working in a long term residential social work team as a Senior Residential social worker. Anthony has worked in the independent sector since 2004. Anthony has held various management and senior positions with other Independent Fostering Agencies and has a strong knowledge of the associated fostering regulations and standards that underpin good practice, and which Independent Fostering Agencies are guided by and adhere to.

Anthony has been involved previously with fostering inspections led by Ofsted and has a clear understanding of the inspection framework which Ofsted uses.

Anthony is passionate about developing foster carers' training and development, which ensures that the best possible outcomes for children and young people in foster care are achieved and can be strongly evidenced.

Anthony has a clear understanding of delivering a highly supportive fostering service to foster carers and children and young people placed with them.

In previous roles, Anthony has been a fostering panel vice chair and an independent panel member.

Anthony has been the Designated Safeguarding Lead for Children and Young People in previous services he has managed, which has given him the knowledge regarding dealing with potentially difficult situations in a sensitive and timely manner and where appropriate following the necessary procedures. Anthony is the current DSL for the fostering service.

Quality Assurance Manager/Panel Advisor – Helen Dwyer

Helen holds an MA Social Work; BA (Hons) Applied Social Studies and is also qualified as a Teacher in Further Education (Certificate of Education post 16).

Helen has a wide range of experience, previously working as a Lecturer at a sixth form college with, teaching social sciences; A Levels, GCSE, Adult return to Education Learners and undergraduate students.

Helen gained her MA Social Work in 2008 and has worked in several Independent Fostering Agencies as well as the Adult Mental Health sector. Helen started as a Supervising Social Worker for a large independent fostering agency and worked with a variety of carers and children when in this role; within the same agency Helen progressed to Senior Practitioner and oversaw Recruitment and Assessment of foster carers. This included taking the lead in Quality Assurance and supervising staff members. Helen has attended specialist fostering forums and has taken a lead role for the agency within this. Helen has led a variety of training courses for foster carers and is a Skills to Foster Trainer; she has also undertaken staff training.

Helen held the role of Senior Supervising Social Worker with The Fostering Team since 2016 before commencing her role in quality assurance. Helen is responsible for the quality assurance and sign off for all reports that are to be presented to our independent review and fostering panels and is passionate about The Fostering Team and the support and care our foster carers give to the children they look after.

Senior Supervising Social Worker – Kelly Winter

Kelly is a qualified Social Worker with a BA Hons (1st class) which she achieved in May 2018. Since then, Kelly has worked as a social worker for a Local Authority, within both the Children with Disabilities Team and later the connected carers team. Kelly then joined a large Independent Fostering Agency, before she joined us as a Senior Supervising Social Worker in 2023. Prior to her qualifying as a social worker, Kelly worked in several social care settings, for example, in housing support, as a mental health support worker and as a youth mentor.

Kelly is passionate about advocating for children, being care-experienced she brings a unique perspective to the fostering role and a clear understanding of the needs and welfare of children. She understands what makes a good foster carer and strives in her role to ensure the carers she supervises reach their full potential in order to give the children they look after the best possible care. Kelly is clearly child-centred in her approach to her role and is keen to promote positive outcomes for children

Senior Supervising Social Worker - Rebecca Woods

Rebecca has completed her BA Honours Degree in Social Work and has held the role of Supervising Social Worker for three years now. She previously undertook her final year placement within a large fostering organisation, holding her own complex caseload and successfully delivering high quality support and supervision for foster carers to ensure the stability of placements and nurturing relationships for both children and fostering families.

Rebecca is a confident advocate for children to ensure their individualised needs are being met in order to achieve their fullest potential. Rebecca has a clear child-centered approach to ensure a child's or young person's wishes and feelings are being heard. Rebecca is especially keen on securing positive outcomes for children and advocating on their behalf, she is particularly proud of her relationships with her fostering families which support all members of the household.

Rebecca takes a keen interest in upskilling and developing new foster carers including delivering training and supporting through supervision and therapeutic sessions to ensure fostering families can access the right resources that equip them to undertake the role of caring for a vulnerable child.

Senior Supervising Social Worker - Katie Fletcher

Katie holds formal qualifications in B.A.(Hons) in Sociology and Cultural Studies and also has her Post Graduate Diploma in social work in 2010.

Katie has a wide range of experience across service user groups including mental health, residential work with children and fostering since 2010. Katie completed her final social work placement within a fostering team and subsequently was offered a position on a permanent basis in 2010.

Since becoming qualified as a social worker Katie has undertaken a Supervising Social Worker role and independent work as a Form F Assessor. She has covered all aspects of the fostering role including recruitment, assessment, supervising carers and placement making.

Katie's area of interest lies in engaging children and young people plus recruitment of fostering households and positive placement matching. Katie enjoys the challenge of helping others to make positive changes and is child centred in her approach.

Supervising Social Worker – Kayleigh Woodbridge

Kayleigh is an experienced social worker having previously worked in a statutory setting within a duty team. Kayleigh has experience of completing holistic assessments, child in need and section 47 investigations. She has experience of chairing child in need meetings and building effective working relationships with families, enabling partnership working.

Kayleigh has experience of working with children in the care system and this has also supported her to work with foster carers in varied capacities.

Kayleigh has recently re-joined the Fostering team after working for a Local Authority undertaking Kinship care assessments on children and young people's family members. Kayleigh has a broad range of knowledge and experience within social work practice which are invaluable skills to bring to the role of supervising social worker. She has a keen interest in ensuring children and families are safe whilst supporting the continued development and resilience of children in the care system.

Kayleigh has been trained in The Solihull Approach which supports both her and her fostering families to care for children and young people who are on an enhanced package of support and have complex behaviours.

Apprentice Social Worker – Lisaan Khawaja

Lisaan recently began her Social Work degree apprenticeship. She will be working alongside our team of social workers to gain the skills and knowledge to complete her course. Lisaan has worked in various roles within the fostering team and has 7 years of experience in Health and Social care.

Lisaan comes from a legal background and has previously completed her LLB (Hons) in Law and Business Management. After taking a break from this she joined a residential care company and worked within the referrals team. This sparked her passion for social work. Her ambition is to become a therapeutic social worker and to work with children and support them to achieve positive outcomes.

Office Manager – Christine Hadfield

Christine has extensive experience spanning over 20 years within the fostering sector and has undertaken specific panel training, as well as relevant fostering training, safeguarding advanced training, HR and administration work within his role. Christine holds NVQ Level 4 in Management which supports her role.

Christine oversees all functions of office management starting from an applicant applying to foster through to being approved at panel and beyond. As part of the senior leadership team, Christine supports the social work team and is integral in the day-to-day operational services of the organisation.

Christine previously was involved in running a business and retains a specific interest in working with foster carers. She was raised within a fostering household thus giving her unique and personal insight into fostering which supports fostering family members. Christine has a flair for organising fostering events and enjoys meeting up with foster carers and children. Her role involves compliance management and panel minute taking alongside managing the office across the organisation. Christine has a key function in supporting the registered manager and working closely with the quality assurance manager.

Carer Liaison Officer - Michelle Brown

Michelle has over 35 years' experience within a variety of customer service and administrative roles, offering support and creating solutions to meet customers satisfaction and help achieve desired outcomes.

Michelle's role as the carer liaison officer enables her to focus upon the recruitment of foster carers, supporting them through the application process prior to being presented to our fostering panel.

Michelle is proud to represent The Fostering Team as the first point of contact for foster carer enquiries and is eager to support the future marketing and recruitment of much needed fostering families to support the demand for children requiring a fostering placement.

Michelle particularly enjoys interacting with people, especially on a face-to-face basis. Michelle enjoys the opportunity to offer a friendly face alongside a compassionate nature to support and guide existing and future foster carers through their fostering journey.

Michelle has a wealth of experience in customer service and administrative roles which are key to the smooth running of the recruitment process and ultimately to succeed in the very best outcomes for all the children, young people and fostering families.

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Organisational Overview

Inspections

OFSTED have a legal responsibility to inspect all Independent Fostering Agencies to monitor the quality-of-service provision and levels of care provided, ensuring compliance with Legislation and the National Minimum Standards and Fostering Regulations 2011.

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Manchester
M1 2WD
Tel. No: 0300 123 1231

The Fostering Team's historical Ofsted Inspection Report can be accessed via the following link:

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report>

LSCB – Local Safeguarding Children Board

A Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) is a multi-agency cluster based within every local authority. The role of the LSCB is to:

- Monitor and manage what is completed by each member of the LSCB to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in their governing area.
- To ensure that each organisation is efficient in their role.
- To publish policies and procedures pertaining to child protection within their area.
- To represent organisations such as the police; health services; probation services and the local youth offending team as well as CAFCASS (Children and Family Courts Advisory and Support Service).

The Fostering Team's LSCB is Stockport Safeguarding Children Partnership, the following link pertains to this.

<https://live-iag-static-assets.s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/Safeguarding/Children/Stockport+Children+Safeguarding+Arrangements.pdf>

REVIEW OF STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:

It is a requirement under The Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 3. (1 a-b) (2 a-d) (3a) (5) that the Statement of Purpose is fit for purpose and Regulation 4 (a) requires the Statement of Purpose to be kept under regular review.

At The Fostering Team, we ensure this is undertaken on a minimum of an annual basis. When it is appropriate to revise the Statement of Purpose we must do so and send HMCI (Ofsted) a copy of the revised document within 28 days.

In order to comply with the Fostering Regulations 2011, each fostering agency is required to have a Statement of Purpose.

Business Description

The Fostering Team delivers a regional and nationwide catchment service to children and young people who have faced adverse childhood experiences that have led to acute trauma and attachment needs. Our offering is underpinned using an enhanced model which leads to informed solutions that are intended to support, contain and ultimately enhance the lives of children in our care. The Fostering Team offers holistic support to children and young people by way of providing care and enhanced led support.

Individualised care - Children and young people will receive care and support that is tailored to meet their specific needs.

Dignity and respect - The Fostering Team will ensure children and young people have privacy when needed and appropriate, are treated as equals, are given appropriate support to help them to be independent to fulfil their potential, and to be involved in their respective local communities.

Equality - The Fostering Team is an inclusive organisation that works hard to ensure that children and young people are safeguarded and have the same protection regardless of age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. The Fostering Team is committed to anti-discriminatory practice. In so doing, The Fostering Team recognise the additional needs of children from minority ethnic groups and disabled children including the barriers they face.

Safety - The Fostering Team will ensure that appropriate safeguarding practice is in place so that children and young people do not receive unsafe care or treatment or be put at risk of any potential harm. A robust risk assessment strategy will be in place to minimise harm during activities and delivery of care and support. The Fostering Team will ensure children and staff have the appropriate knowledge, qualifications, experience, competence, and skills to keep children and young people safe through appropriate learning and development opportunities.

Safeguarding from abuse - Children and young people have an absolute entitlement to receive care and support without suffering any form of abuse or improper care. This includes disproportionate restraint, unnecessary or inappropriate restrictions on freedom, bullying, neglect and remain free from abuse from their peers, carers and all professionals involved in their care.

Complaints - The Fostering Team will ensure that the systems in place for handling complaints are followed by staff to make sure that all complaints are monitored and considered seriously and are responded to sensitively. Complaint investigations will be comprehensive and conducted in a timely manner including informing the complainant about the outcome of their complaint. Any areas for learning will be identified and discussed so that appropriate improvements can be actioned.

Whistleblowing - The Fostering Team have a robust whistleblowing policy and staff have a duty of care to raise and report concerns. This is known by all staff and is supported by staff training. The Fostering Team encourage the active reporting of any concerns raised by our staff, our children, and young people and third parties and we ensure that all such concerns are addressed in a timely manner. Any learning from such reports will be embedded into continuing professional development and will inform professional practice.

Good governance - The Fostering Team has a quality assurance manager who works closely with the registered manager and responsible individual to ensure that a robust governance framework is in place, including scrutiny and oversight of internal and external service audits. Good governance will help to improve the delivery of services, as well as identify and minimise risk to children and young people's health, safety and wellbeing.

Legislative framework - The Fostering Team will ensure that it complies with regulatory standards, regulations and government guidance that underpins its service relating to the fostering service.

Staffing - The Fostering Team will ensure that our staff comply with these essential standards through appropriate levels of support, culturally appropriate training and supervision that is reflective, empowering and insightful to effectively assist them in their role.

Fitness to practice - The Fostering Team will seek to recruit and retain staff that can evidence their competence, knowledge and professional practice to provide safe and appropriate care in line with their roles and responsibilities.

These core values and essential standards form part of our recruitment, on-boarding and retention strategy as we firmly believe that all staff employed by us should share our values and essential standards and hold each other accountable against these on a day-to-day basis from a practice perspective.

Quality of care

Position Statement

- We aim to create something special that takes into account ideas from staff, foster carers, children and stakeholders.
- We value each other and celebrate what we can achieve together.
- We strive to create a fostering community where children are central to the service.
- We actively seek to incorporate practice that achieves the best outcomes for individuals.
- Quality must never be compromised, but best value is an important factor.
- We strive to resolve 97% and above of difficulties and pride ourselves in thinking outside the box.
- We stand for responsive, rather than reactive care, giving and seek sensitive solutions.
- Care provided to children who are not able to remain with their families should be provided by well matched, sensitive carers who are able to care for traumatised children effectively.

Ethos

The faces of the agency/service are front line professionals who understand children and young people's services and fostering, amalgamating all of this joint experience from a range of settings to create something with unique features.

Key Elements

- An approach that above all is child centred.
- An understanding of placement needs.
- An understanding of the support required for foster carers.
- Recognition of the need for both staff and foster carers to have on-going growth and development.
- A recognition for when support is best offered and how.
- The core team have identified that services overall, once children are placed, ultimately pool resources around giving carers time away from young people; it is clear that to create stable and appropriate family placements there needs to be a creation of family unit cohesion and family investment, which includes children who are currently placed with the fostering family.

Objectives

- To provide a comprehensive staff/carer induction process.
- To sustain productive communication between staff, carers and management through regular staff meetings/carer group meetings and forums.
- To ensure staff and carers are supervised on a regular basis, at a minimum of monthly, individually.
- Personal Development Plans and Performance Appraisals will be carried out once a year for all staff.
- To identify an overall development/training plan for the service.
- To ensure all staff/carers have the opportunity to voice their individual and/or collective anxieties, concerns, suggestions etc. by whatever means appropriate e.g., group meetings, whistle blowing.
- To ensure that staff/carers provide up to date reports to management and prepare professional reports for other agencies if/when required.
- To ensure that staff/carers recognise, act upon, record, and report at the earliest stage, any signs of tensions or discrimination between either groups or individuals, e.g., bullying, isolation, comments relating to religious, cultural or dietary differences.
- To ensure that appropriate opportunity is available to attend training.
- All staff to adhere to health and safety, fire regulations and all of the Fostering Team's policies and procedures.
- To continually and consistently develop, review and evaluate the quality of service provided. Any shortfalls in practice should be immediately identified and addressed.
- Develop a Code of Practice which identifies best standards of day-to-day practice in accordance with Legislation and National Minimum Standards.
- All policies and procedure will be actively promoted, reviewed and developed. All staff/carers will work in accordance with these and be expected to develop a clear understanding through induction processes and further training.
- External and Internal monitoring of the agency.

Operational Constitution

The Fostering Team is an independent fostering organisation, a private limited company, registered under The Companies Act 1985 (Co. Number 14002897). The Fostering Team operates from its head office based in the Northwest.

Senior management meetings take place weekly with the Registered manager and Responsible individual, to discuss topics such as Safeguarding, foster carer recruitment, training and outcomes for children and young people.

The responsibilities of the SMT are as listed below:

- Oversight of The Fostering Team service provision and adherence to Legislation.
- Overview of policy and procedure across fostering.
- Approval and monitoring of the fostering business plan.
- Approval and review of budgets and financial performance.
- Legal compliance
- Annual Business Plan
- Strategic vision, direction, and goals.
- Culture, values, vision, and mission.
- Financial expenditure, management, and performance.
- Organisational structure and capacity to implement strategic direction.
- Policies and Procedures.
- Quality Assurance.

The Fostering Team also holds meetings on a monthly basis to monitor the service and overall performance, to consider and coordinate the implementation of service developments, business and strategic issues and to benchmark best practice.

Types of Foster Care

Our fostering team offer placements for children and young people from birth to 18 years of age with foster carers who will have had extensive experience of and/or training in working with difficult and challenging behaviour, including the effects of sexual abuse.

Enhanced Fostering

Our fostering service provides therapeutic opportunities for foster carers looking after children that may have additional needs.

At The Fostering Team, we access our clinical support via Bmindful. This includes psychotherapists who undertake bespoke and non-bespoke pieces of work with foster carers and, where appropriate, children and young people placed with them. The Clinical team also provide training to staff and foster carers as well as reflective practice sessions.

The clinicians, alongside the supervising social workers, are responsible for the completion of a range of assessments throughout the duration of a placement (where assessed as appropriate) as well as supporting the foster carers in the delivery of clinical input and training.

All supervising social workers access clinical support to ensure the focus remains on children and young people's progress and improving outcomes as well as to ensure they are supported with reflective practice. We use evidence-based practice to monitor progress over time. Supervising social workers undertake monthly clinical support sessions with psychotherapists to inform an enhanced-informed approach to containing fostering families.

Complex Placements

Children with additional care requirements such as complex behaviours or significant health needs, or those stepping down from residential to foster care, are classed as complex or enhanced placements. Carers are paid at a higher rate to reflect the additional skills and support required.

We work closely with Bmindful Psychology to provide foster carers with additional support. This includes reflective space to consider functions of behaviour and develop strategies to work with children and young people whose behaviour is shaped by trauma.

Long Term

A long-term placement means that the child or children are matched with a foster carer for a permanent arrangement. This means that a child will stay with someone until they become independent as a young adult.

Short Term / Respite

Short term / respite placements can last from one night up to a few years. Short term means that the placement is not a permanent match for a child, but it could lead on to becoming one following a permanent matching process.

Emergency

Many of the children who come into foster care are placed on an emergency basis. This means that a child can be discussed earlier in the day, and by the end of the day be moving into the foster carer's home.

Parent and Child Placements

Parent and child placement are for one or both parents and their children. This placement is where parents may need extra support, supervision or assessment. Extra support is provided by the agency to the carers undertaking these types of placement.

Achieving Outcomes for Children

Achieving Outcomes for Children

- At The Fostering Team, we have a strong commitment to creating sensitive environments for children and young people to develop and grow. By creating the appropriate environment fostering families are enabled to support children and young people in achieving positive outcomes.
- Services we provide are based on the belief that by providing good matches and appropriate environments children will thrive. Carers are supported in developing their ability and skills through a range of techniques and methods with the first step being control and understanding of their own reactions and behaviours. Once this is achieved carers are able to respond rather than react.
- All of our foster carers are made aware that training and development underpin positive family experiences.
- The fostering team work closely with all identified individuals involved in the child's life and care plan. We operate a live and confidential storage system where information can be recorded appropriately.

Be Healthy

- Monthly supervisions will check on and encourage carers' commitment to achieving a healthy lifestyle and diet for themselves and all children within the household.
- Quality Assurance monitors and ensure children are undertaking healthy activities.
- Family activities that provide the opportunity for families to participate together.
- A range of training that looks at developing carers' understanding of attachment; first aid; child development which promote physical and emotional health.
- Daily logs written by foster carers that record elements of lifestyle and diet, this includes health appointments and leisure activities which children undertake.
- Fortnightly, monthly, and Bi-monthly enhanced supervisions take place for foster carers and supervising social workers.

Stay Safe

- 24-hour support line.
- Safe Caring policies: risk assessments and risk management plans, reviewed and updated regularly.
- Minimum of monthly visits by social workers.
- Training programmes for foster carers including Safeguarding and safe caring.
- Monthly support services.
- Unannounced visits.
- Annual health and safety checks.
- Diary logs kept by foster carers.
- Recording accidents; incidents; medication and areas that may be identified in risk management plans.
- Weekly core structure meetings to ensure that the management team has full oversight of the service.
- Activity days which enable staff to have an oversight of carers and children's interactions together.

Enjoy and Achieve

- Careful matching of children to foster families who are able to support a child in achieving their milestones and development.
- Supporting children in enjoying holidays, activities and festivals.
- Supporting a child in achieving academically and positive planning for the future.
- Encouraging children with hobbies and interests to actively discovering these or continue to support a child in undertaking these.
- Logs written by carers that track children's achievements and interests.
- Children's forums and activities.

Make a Positive Contribution

- The service actively seeks the opinions of children; young people and foster carers in how best to develop and improve services.
- The service encourages participation and forum membership and endeavours to involve young people in as many aspects as possible.
- Foster carers are actively encouraged to support young people in having a voice and in their preparation to become a member of the community as an adult.
- Logs written by foster carers incorporate aspects of a child's ability to contribute emotionally and socially.

Achieve Economic Well-being

- Foster carers are paid a sum which incorporates not only pocket money for a child but also an amount that should be saved.
- All young people placed with us should have a bank account and be encouraged to be involved in learning saving skills as well as age-appropriate budgeting, where this is not possible foster carers will keep the savings or this will be supported by the organisation.
- Foster carers are trained in promoting independence skills and this is also promoted in our children's forum.
- Carer Logs, in which foster carers record on a daily (where agreed weekly) basis, include school attendance, pocket money levels and independence and budgeting skills.

Matching

- Placements of children and young people with foster carers will be made in accordance with the Fostering Service Regulations 2011 11 (a) (b) (i & ii).
- The Fostering Team is committed to appropriate matches that consider cultural, religious and personality of both carers and children and that incorporate the wishes and feelings of each individual child.
- All children placed are registered with appropriate health services i.e., dentist, opticians and GPs.
- The Fostering Team strives to involve children and foster carers in the development of services and reviewing the progress of children and young people placed.
- The Fostering Team have experience of handling out of hours emergencies and problematic situations with the aim of resolving these effectively and quickly.

Placement of Children with Foster Carers

- Placements of children and young people with foster carers will be made in accordance with the Fostering Service Regulations 2011.
- Full details of a placement request will be taken, and identification of an appropriate match will be made by liaising with all appropriate authorities and ensuring the area of authority is informed if a placement is made.
- The selection of the most suitable foster carers to match the needs of a child/young person is followed where possible by a visit by the child/young person to the foster home, after which planned introductions are made. If the foster family selected has another foster child or children, the social worker(s) of the children are approached to give their comments on the proposed second placement.
- For planned placements matching will begin with requests for relevant Looked After Children (LAC) documentation and all necessary information on the child. The social worker will meet the foster carer, and this will be followed by a pre-placement planning meeting where plans for introductions are made.

Services for Children and Young People

- Pocket money
- Dedicated bedroom
- Savings account/ facility
- Clothing allowance
- Contact facilitated with birth family.
- Opportunities to participate in forums.
- Opportunities to participate in activities, outings, and events.
- Children's Guide (age appropriate)
- The Fostering Team documents translated into language of choice.

Services for Foster Families

- Fortnightly payment of fee and maintenance allowance
- Individual monthly supervision
- Opportunities to participate in Carers' Forum
- 14 nights per year respite
- 24/7 out of hours on call service (all year round)
- Annual review
- Social events and activities
- Membership of Foster Talk
- Organisational Membership of Fostering Network
- Clinical Consultations

Arrangements for Supporting Cultural, Linguistic and the Religious Needs of Children

As part of the matching process, we will make enquiries about a child/young person's religious beliefs (if any) and discuss with them and their parents/practitioners the arrangements which need to be made to enable the child/young person to follow their religion or receive instruction appropriate to his/her particular religion. We recognise the importance that religion plays in the life of some children/young people and will provide support to ensure that they are able to continue to practice their religion.

We will also ensure that the necessary arrangements are in place to meet a child/young person's cultural and religious needs. We believe that all religions are equal, and no attempt will be made to dissuade or discourage the child/young person from their beliefs. Equally children and young people are entitled to have no belief and to be free from any compulsion to observe any religion or attend church of any sort.

No matter what their personal beliefs, foster carers will not seek to influence children they care for in relation to the issue or religious observance. We provide information on world religions and celebrate festivals and cultural events within activities and functions.

Equal opportunities will be achieved by:

- Providing a family environment which gives all children and young people the opportunity to address the dilemmas and taboos associated with the generational differences they may have experienced in the past.
- Providing culturally specific care and support for children in line with the Quality standards, which meets their cultural, religious, racial, gender and linguistic needs.
- Empowering children to have knowledge of, access to, and respect for their community.
- Supporting self-identity by recognising that a child/young person's ethnicity religion, culture, sexuality, and language are crucial to his/her self-image and self-esteem.
- Ensuring that foster carers and staff training covers equality and diversity, and this is promoted throughout all practice.

Complaints and Compliments

Complaints

To make a complaint you can contact in the first instance the Registered Manager – Anthony Turner on 0161-483-4769 or anthony.turner@thefosteringteam.co.uk. If you are not happy with the outcome, you can contact the Responsible Individual – Mica Douglas on 0161-4769 or mica.douglas@thefosteringteam.co.uk. If your complaint is not dealt with in line with our complaints process below, then you can contact Ofsted on 0300 1234666.

For children and young people, the procedure for making a complaint is outlined in the children's guide which is given when they first come to live with their foster carers.

All complaints are recorded and regularly reviewed to ensure proper implementation of the policy and to address any general issues or concerns which emerge.

Compliments

As well as making complaints, the Fostering Team welcomes compliments on any aspect of the service we provide. As above, if you wish to offer a compliment, please in the first place contact the Registered Manager, Anthony Turner on 0161-483-4769 or Anthony.turner@thefosteringteam.co.uk.

Views, Wishes and Feelings

Participation and Consultation

The Fostering Team actively promotes the involvement of children and their fostering families in the ongoing development and running of the organisation. Not only do we accept the principle of the children's involvement, but it can be seen in practice through a variety of participation and consultation activities within and outside of the home environment.

All care planning processes at The Fostering Team are child centered; from admission children and young people have a placement plan, where appropriate we actively encourage children to participate in this in order to incorporate their wishes and feelings from the outset. Consultation also takes place with children before we formulate other plans such as safe caring policies and risk management plans.

Our role is to assist children and young people to deal successfully with significant changes and challenges; develop positive relationships and display positive behaviour. With foster carers as role models, young people learn to behave in a non-discriminatory manner, they are encouraged to understand the diversity of cultures and beliefs that exist within the foster home as well as local and wider communities.

In terms of participating in their care, children/young people work closely with foster carers, staff and, where appropriate, clinicians on their care plan and are encouraged to discuss what they want for themselves for both the short and long-term future. They discuss how they think they can reach these goals and what they feel they need to do to achieve this.

Objectives

1. Give due consideration to the child/young person's wishes and feelings, having regard to their understanding in relation to decision making.
2. To ensure full participation of both child/young person and parents in the care planning process.
3. To encourage full participation in children and young people's meetings.
4. Involve children in monthly supervision.
5. Ensure children are seen during unannounced visits to the foster home.
6. Encourage children to participate in providing feedback to foster carers' annual reviews.
7. To take into consideration, and actively provide for, religious and cultural differences.
8. Encourage and support children/young people to identify and follow appropriate activities and interests within the community.
9. To give the children and young person continuous feedback on their progress. To give praise at every opportunity no matter how small the achievement.
10. To ensure that positive encouragement is always given, particularly if, and when, the child/young person is facing difficulties.
11. To help children and young people develop into positive members of the community, cultivating intrinsic boundaries and values with the help of outside agencies

Anti-Discriminatory Practice Policy

At The Fostering Team, we strive to ensure that all children receive the same benefits as others in all aspects of life. Any discrimination towards children, young people or adults will be challenged. All staff and foster carers are trained (and participate in regular refresher training) in equality and diversity.

Similarly, we ensure that all foster carers and staff are treated as individuals by providing provision to ensure that everybody has fair access to equal opportunities.

Children and young people will also be encouraged to develop an understanding of their individual roots and culture to support their own identity. We also carry out individual work with children and young people through children's forums to help them gain knowledge of discriminatory factors and to develop their sense of self.

Diversity is celebrated at The Fostering Team and children and young people will be actively encouraged to participate in activities that celebrate differences in people.

Children's Rights

Our principles of practice endorse the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

We believe that all children and young people are equally entitled to have their needs met and to be free from abuse and exploitation. Each child will have their rights as a child looked after explained to them by both their foster carer and the supervising social worker in consultation with the local authority social worker to ensure that these are being consistently met. There will be regular meetings between practitioners and children and young people where the issue of children's rights will be addressed to ensure that they feel that they are being consulted, listened to and treated equally and fairly.

Education

Management of Education

At The Fostering Team, we recognise that all children have the right to education. We also realise the significance of education in a young person's life and its potential to enrich, empower and inspire. We regard qualifications as currency for life and recognise that without them an individual's choice is severely limited. In short, education is a high priority to us.

Every child in our care will be treated as an individual and, as such, their educational needs will be assessed accordingly. They will be supported at their personal education plan (PEP) meetings and LAC reviews which discuss and review their education, achievement and attainment as well as setting realistic targets with action plans on how these will be supported. For children that do not have an education placement, we will actively support the foster carer in directing others to enable this provision to be accessed as soon as possible.

Education Support (outside school hours)

To provide our children and young people with the correct support around their holistic educational needs, the foster carers are encouraged and supported to ensure that education continues outside of school hours by providing extra-curricular activities, including activities and sports, joining clubs, attending educational trips as well as promoting fitness and health through activities each individual child is interested in.

All children and young people are provided with a space whereby they can undertake study or homework. They will have supervised access to a laptop/ computer to enhance their study as well as being provided with additional books and resources to assist them with their studies.

Positive Relationships

Contact

Contact with family and friends, where deemed appropriate for a child, is initially discussed at the referral stage and then formally agreed at the placement planning meeting. Contact arrangements may change over the course of a child's placement, as such we encourage regular contact meetings as well as contact arrangements being discussed at children's reviews.

The Fostering Team support supervised contact as agreed by the child's placing authority and ensure foster carers facilitate this by transporting a child to and from contact and, where deemed appropriate, may supervise contact between children and birth family members.

Protection of Children

Behaviour Support and Management

The Fostering Team are invested in ensuring all children have individualised care. We always strive to look at the reasons for why a child may be presenting in a sensitive manner, this is embedded in our foster carers from the onset of their approval and is discussed with them throughout their career. Training for foster carers is specific to supporting children to learn to manage their behaviours, to ensure they are supported to share their own wishes and feelings, to make informed choices regarding their care planning.

From the outset of us delivering Skills to Foster Training through to Behaviour Management Training, monthly supervisions, children and carer forums and our work with our clinical partners, we place significant emphasis on looking beyond the behaviours to see the child. This enables children to build their own resilience and coping mechanisms and understand acceptable behaviours.

Physical Intervention

The law states that any physical intervention should be consistent with legal obligations and responsibilities of care agencies and the rights and protection afforded to people within the law. The policy of The Fostering Team is therefore that physical intervention should never be used as a means of punishment, or as a matter of course, and should only be used when absolutely necessary and in the best interests of the child. As a standard rule, The Fostering Team operates a NO RESTRAINT POLICY.

Carers, however, have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children in their care. Therefore, there will be times at which physical interventions may have to be used.

Our Approach to Safeguarding

The Fostering Team approach to safeguarding is underpinned by: The Fostering Services Regulations (2011)

Regulation 12 Arrangements for the protection of children;

Regulation 17 Support, training and information for foster parents;

National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services (2011) 4.1:

“Children’s safety and welfare is promoted in all fostering placements. Children are protected from abuse and other forms of significant harm (e.g., sexual or labour exploitation).”

We strive to endorse a culture of protection ensuring rigorous policies and practice are in place and promoted throughout both the fostering households and the staff team. It is our primary responsibility to ensure children and young people are safe when they are in our care. We achieve this by ensuring safe and effective leadership, having detailed policies in place and implementing effective training.

We provide safeguarding training in induction to all staff members as well as in our Skills to Foster Training to applicants being assessed as foster carers. All staff, foster carers and children are aware of our whistleblowing policy. Team meetings, supervisions and clinical reflective supervisions are key opportunities to reflect on safeguarding processes, identify patterns of trends, consider triggers and control measures and to identify areas of concern.

At The Fostering Team, our staff team hold the on-call/out of hours 24/7, this is overseen by the registered manager and responsible individual, who are management back-up ensuring foster carers and children can contact a known person within the staff team at any point. This ensures higher levels of safeguarding and reporting of this so foster carers can seek guidance at any given time.

The Registered Manager is the Designated Safeguarding Children’s Officer (DSO)- Anthony Turner on 0161-483-4769.

Our Approach to Missing From Care

The Fostering Team have a Missing Child Policy which is underpinned by Fostering Services Regulations 2011, Regulation 13 Behaviour management and absence from the foster carer's home.

Schedule 7 Notifications.

National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services 2011, Standard 5 Children Missing from Care. This policy works alongside the policies of the local and placing authorities, the police and is in line with Government Guidance: Children who run away or go missing from home or care.

The areas covered within individual risk management plans include:

- The risk of harm.
- Any medical conditions the child may have.
- Their emotional well-being.
- Previously assessed levels of vulnerability including any known associates.
- Previous patterns of behaviour include criminality, drug/alcohol misuse.

The Fostering Team provide care for children and young people in a manner that minimises the likelihood of them going missing by trying to help them to feel safe and secure to remain in their placement. Foster carers will work with children and young people to educate them about the risks of going missing and they will be helped to identify other solutions than running away, as well as informing them of the help that is available to them in these circumstances.

As part of the referral, placement and ongoing planning process, consideration must be given to the risk of the child becoming absent/missing. If there is a risk, a plan must be drawn up to reduce or prevent it including The Fostering Team Risk Management policy.

Where a child goes missing, the Police and Local Authority Social Worker must be contacted, and a Schedule 7 notification to Ofsted completed. This is viewed by the Registered Manager and is monitored daily across the Fostering Senior Management Group including the Responsible Individual.

Our Approach to Bullying

Bullying is identified as the wilful, conscious desire to hurt, threaten or frighten someone else, putting them under stress. Bullying can occur for many reasons including race, gender, disability, sexual orientation and can take many forms.

The Fostering Team's Anti-Bullying Policy details procedural guidance on countering bullying; however, we acknowledge that bullying may need to be dealt with as a safeguarding issue. At The Fostering Team we deem bullying to be unacceptable in any form. As such, we are all dedicated to creating awareness of this via supervision, training and forums with both children/young people and foster carers.

Staff

Induction and Training

The Fostering Team ensures all new staff members take part in the wider company induction as well as fostering induction. This forms part of the 6-month probationary period and is supported through additional support consultations with management, where required, in addition to regular monthly supervision. Induction involves attending Skills to Foster Training, observing fostering

panel, shadowing colleagues, and undertaking both online and face to face training in line with the ongoing learning and development pathway plan during their employment.

Supervision

To comply with the Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 staff will receive supervision on a regular basis, at least monthly. Supervising social workers are supervised by either senior supervising social workers or the Registered Manager. All social work staff have monthly clinical supervision with our clinical team.

All records of supervisions are stored securely on our Charms Database.

All staff have an annual appraisal that is informed via the usage of 360-degree feedback from a range of stakeholders they are involved with. Personal development plans are formulated at this time.

Quality Assurance & Training

The Fostering Team will adhere to The Fostering Team Quality Assurance policy and Essential Standards. The approach undertaken ensures consistency in how we scrutinise and gauge our self-regulation process. All supervising social workers have access to in-house training as well as outsourced training specific to their role and areas of future identified development.

Panel

The Fostering Team have a central list panel membership consisting of members who are from a wide variety of backgrounds and experiences, including:

- Social workers
- Teachers and Early Years' practitioners
- Care-experienced members
- Legal experience
- Members from fostering families
- Police

The agency also employs an Agency Medical Advisor who is a qualified Doctor and Specialist Consultant in his field.

The panel sits regularly to hear Form F Assessments and Annual Reviews and any other matters which might arise, such as Serious Concerns Reviews.

INITIAL ENQUIRY

After a prospective foster carer has made an enquiry, usually by social media, telephone call or word of mouth, our Carer Liaison Officer will contact them to discuss their wish to foster and their suitability.

INITIAL VISIT

If appropriate, an initial home visit will be booked. This gives the enquirer and the Agency the opportunity to find out more about one and other and for the enquirer to ask any questions they may have. Once completed an Initial Visit report will be compiled.

APPLICATION AND ASSESSMENT

If the enquirers wish to proceed and are deemed to be potential carers, they will be asked to fill out an application form and will be advised of the necessary checks to be carried out.

At this point the enquirers become applicants and are at Stage 1 and Stage 2 (usually run concurrently) of the assessment process.

Their assessment will then begin (known as the Form F process) and will include:

- Six personal references.
- A medical, the results of which will be analysed by Agency Medical Advisor.
- Local Authority checks.
- DBS checks will be carried out on applicants and their household members over 18.
- A Health and Safety check of the applicants' home.
- Ex-partners will be contacted.
- The applicants attend the "Skills to Foster" course.
- An Assessing Social Worker will be allocated who will undertake a Form F report with the applicant. This is a complex assessment, unpicking applicant's life history, health, education, relationships, experiences and includes all household members. The assessment also examines the applicant/s belief systems and personal values. In particular, it is looking for evidence of an ability to provide an appropriate environment, personal attachment styles, ability to empathise and understanding of the expectations of fostering, ability to seek appropriate support and impact they may have on children and young people.

PANEL

On satisfactory completion of the Form F Assessment, the report and accompanying documentation will be presented at the Fostering Panel. Both the applicants and their assessing social worker will need to be present. The Panel will consider all the documentation presented and may will ask the applicants any further questions they might have.

After making their deliberations, the panel will make a collective recommendation on whether to approve or not approved the applicants as foster parents.

APPROVAL

Once the panel has made their recommendation, the Agency Decision Maker (ADM) will consider the panel's recommendations and make the final decision whether to approve.

ANNUAL REVIEW

The annual review is used as a tool to evaluate and monitor both the care afforded to children and young people by foster carers whilst appraising the foster carers practice during the year of fostering and encouraging foster carers continual development.

The foster carers' review is chaired by an Independent Review Officer (IRO) and is subsequently presented to The Fostering Team's Panel for the review of the foster carers' continued registration at first review and in 5th year of approval. Reviews also take place for specific purposes outside of the annual review process timeline, these may be following an allegation or serious concerns being raised.

Foster Carer Training

The Fostering Team work on the premise that fostering is a complex and demanding role. The fostering team is committed to ensuring that their foster carers are trained to the highest standard in order to meet the needs of the children and young people placed in their care. Training is delivered in a variety of ways including face to face, online and virtual training, in order to:

- Ensure foster carers have their skills enhanced in providing for children and young people in their care.
- Improve carers' knowledge base and develop and refine skills.
- Establish a positive framework of values which promotes equality.
- Encourage carers to reflect on issues such as discrimination and its effects on the wider community as well as individuals. To recognise that the children we care for often suffer discrimination and need to be nurtured in such a way as to counter this discrimination.
- Ensure that all foster carers are competent and confident in safe caring and in protecting children and young people from harm.
- Encourage foster carers to take responsibility for their own professional development through training and continuing to build up their portfolio of competencies.
- Support in completing the mandatory Training and Development Standards Support (TDS)

Mandatory training:

- First Aid
- Safeguarding
- Behaviour Management
- Reporting & Recording
- Safe Caring
- Health & Medication
- Equality & Diversity
- Allegations & Complaints
- Health and Safety
- Child Development/Attachment
- Internet safety
- SHADES training

Other training:

- Caring for a Sexually Abused Child
- Parent & Child Placements
- Domestic Violence
- Self-Harm including ligature training
- Caring for Children with Complex Needs
- Working with children who have suffered trauma
- CSE
- Autistic Spectrum
- Foetal Alcohol Syndrome

The Fostering Team also provide online training via The Training Hub, which fully compliments our organisational enhanced-informed approach. Online training is undertaken by carers and staff and enables training accessibility for difficult to reach carers and those unable to attend during daytime. This is further complemented with training being delivered by the supervising social workers and registered manager via Carer Forums and through other online means.