



Parent And Child Fostering Services Ltd

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Statement of Purpose

PACFS



Contents

Page No

Section 1 Introduction	3
Section 2 Other legislative framework governing our approach to excellent service delivery	6
Section 3 Standard and Equality of Care	8
Section 4 Aims	10
Section 5 Objectives	11
Section 6 Principles and Values	12
Section 7 Status and Constitution	13
Section 8 Management Structure and Staff	15
Section 9 Service Provision	19
Section 10 Supporting Children and Young People	21
Section 11 Recruitment, Assessment and Approval	25
Section 12 Training and Development	28
Section 13 Supporting carers to care for children	29
Section 14 System for monitoring & evaluating the service	32
Section 15 Records and Confidentiality	33
Section 16 Complaints and Outcomes	33
Section 17 Contact Details	34



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1.Introduction

This statement of Purpose fulfils the requirements of the Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 and National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services (2011) that all Fostering Services provide a written Statement of Purpose setting out the aims, objectives and details of the service and facilities provided.

This Statement of Purpose provides a framework of those requirements. It states how the service is managed and its fitness to provide fostering services. It also demonstrates the systems we have in place to recruit, train, supervise and support Foster Carers and ensures positive outcomes for children and young people.

Parent and Child Fostering Service is managed by a team of experienced, qualified professionals, skilled and effective in multi-disciplinary tasks. Our common care competencies are the ability to put our skills and knowledge into practice.

Parent and Child Fostering Service is run in accordance with the principles outlined in the following National Legislation and Policy Framework:

- The Children Act 1989 and 2004 (and its later amendments)
- The Care Standards Act 2000
- The Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 and updated 2013
- The National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services (England) 2011
- Children Act Guidance and Regulations Volume 4: Fostering Services 2011
- Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations 2010
- The Disability and Equality Act 2010
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Children Leaving Care Act 2000
- The Children's Workforce Development Council - Training, Support and Development Standards for Foster Care 2007
- Working Together to Safeguard Children - a guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children 2015
- Assessment and approval of foster carers: Amendments to the Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations. Volume 4: Fostering Services July 2013

At Parent and Child Fostering Service, our aim is to provide experienced and committed foster carers who together with its professional staff, undertake a wide variety of specialist work with children and young people in care, as well as giving them the stability and security of a normal, nurturing home environment.

- ❖ We recognise through documented research that a child's needs are best met by a nurturing family and we are committed to placing children who are not able to remain in their own family to a well-matched safe and secure foster placement.
- ❖ We equally services recognise the central importance of foster care as a vehicle for transforming the lives of children placed in our care. Foster carers are regarded as

making a hugely valuable contribution, and should therefore be provided with first rate preparation, training and support to carry out their role to maximum effect.

We specialise in providing parent and child fostering placements, that offers stability, security and a nurturing home environment.

- ❖ This includes placements for:
- ❖ mothers and babies,
- ❖ fathers and babies
- ❖ both parents and their babies.
- ❖ We offer an all year-round service to placing Local Authorities.

We also provide a range of other type of fostering placements listed below:

- ❖ Short Term Placements: This can be for days, weeks or months up to two years while long terms plans are being made.
- ❖ Emergency Placements: are provided at short notice and are supported by a 24-hour response service. These placements can become short or long-term placements.
- ❖ Bridging Placements: are short term, flexible placements focussing on ensuring the most sensitive transition for the child or young person.
- ❖ Permanency: Placements that have been approved to stay with carers until their age of independence.
- ❖ Long Term Placements: This is for placements where the child or young person remain until independent living.

Our foster carers are given a high level of professional 24 hours support plus one to one supervision. We also provide Legal advice if required. We work as part of a team which enables both carers and children alike to feel secure and fully supported. In addition, carers received training on current trends in fostering plus tailored to their individual needs as identified at their supervision and reviews. In line with National Minimum Standards expectations, carers are required to meet the Training Support and Development standards by undertaking formal training and NVQ accreditation.

Carers are provided our 'Foster Carer Handbook' and access to our Policies and Procedures. All carers homes are risk assessed and carers are expected to work within Health and Safety Policy.

The Statement of Purpose has been developed in accordance with appropriate statute law and regulations, including:

- The Fostering Services Regulations (England 2011)
- Sections 22 and 48 of The Care Standard Act (CSA) 2000
- The National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services (England 2011)
- The Children Act 2004
- The Children & Young Persons Act 2008
- The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review and Fostering Service, (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulation 2013
- Children and Families Act 2014
- The Fostering Services Regulations (England 2011)
- Sections 22 and 48 of The Care Standard Act (CSA) 2000
- The National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services (England 2011)
- The Children Act 2004
- The Children & Young Persons Act 2008
- The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review and Fostering Service, (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulation 2013
- Children and Families Act 2014

It aims to provide children, young people, parents, carers, staff and other professionals with information about the agency and the services and facilities we provide, including:

- ❖ A statement of the aims and objectives of Parent and Child Fostering Service Ltd
- ❖ Information about the services and facilities provided by Parent and Child Fostering Service Ltd

A copy of the statement is made available upon request to:

- ❖ OFSTED
- ❖ Purchasers of the service
- ❖ Any person working for or with the fostering service
- ❖ Any foster carer or prospective foster carer
- ❖ Any child (subject to age and understanding) placed within the fostering service. Children and young people are provided with age appropriate welcome guides in suitable formats for their understanding.
- ❖ Any parent or guardian of any child placed with the fostering service

Parent and Child Fostering Service will ensure this document is shared through reading, translation or explanation with anyone who requires support in understanding the Statement of Purpose.

This Statement of Purpose is reviewed and updated annually by the Parent and Child Fostering Service Senior Management Team.

2. Legislative Framework

Parent and Child Fostering Service operates within the Fostering Service Regulations 2011, under sections 22 and 48 of the Care Standard Act (CSA) 2000, and the under the Children Act 1989 (s59).

As an independent fostering agency, we are committed to ensuring we meet the National Minimum Standards, (NMS), laid down by the Department for Education under sections 23 and 49 of the CSA 2000.

Parent and Child Fostering Service aims to achieve and maintain best practice and exceed the NMS wherever possible. We adhere to the statutory requirements of the following legislations.

- **The Children Act 1989**
- **The Children Act 2004**
- **Children & Young Persons Act 2008**
- **Children and Families Act 2014**
- **The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000**
- **Care Leavers Regulations 2010**
- **Human Rights Act 1998**
- **Disability & Equality Act 2010**
- **Race Relations Act 1976 and amendment 2000**
- **The Immigration, Asylum & Nationality Act 2006**
- **Care Standards Act 2000**
- **Fostering Service Regulations 2011**
- **National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services 2011**
- **Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations 2010**
- **The Gender Recognition Act 2004**
- **Health & Safety at Work Act 1974**

We also look to the following legislations for guidance as required: -

- **Every Child Matters: Change for Children 2004**
- **Care Matters: Transforming the Lives of Children and Young People in Care 2006**
- **The National Assessment Framework DH 2001**
- **Children's Safeguarding Boards Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedures for the area in which any child/young person resides**
- **Children's Workforce Development Council: Training, Support & Development Standards for Foster parents 2007**
- **The Equal Opportunities Code of Practice**
- **Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 2: Care Planning, Placement & Case Review**
- **Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 3: Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers**
- **Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 4: Fostering Services**

- **The National Minimum Fostering Allowance and Fostering Payment Systems: Good Practice Guidance**
- **IRO Handbook: Statutory Guidance for Independent Reviewing Officers and Local Authorities on their Functions in Relation to Case Management and review for Children in Care**
- **Sufficiency: Statutory Guidance on Securing Sufficient Accommodation for Children in Care**
- **Short Breaks: Statutory Guidance on How to Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of Disabled Children using Short Breaks**
- **Promoting the Educational Achievement of Children in Care: Statutory Guidance for School Governing Bodies**
- **The Role and Responsibilities of the Designated Teacher for Children in Care: Statutory Guidance for School Governing Bodies**
- **Statutory Guidance on Promoting the Health & Wellbeing of Children in Care**
- **Working together to Safeguard Children**
- **Statutory Guidance on Children Who Run Away or go Missing from Home or Care**

Abimbola Ladipo-Ardegebe, the Responsible Individual, ensures that Parent and Child Fostering Service complies with all the regulatory requirements and standards and is responsible for the management and monitoring of all standards.

Quality Assurance

Monitoring outcomes for Children in Care

- ❖ Parent and Child Fostering Service seeks to monitor its performance by regular reviews and by maintaining records on the outcomes of placements.
- ❖ Parent and Child Fostering Service believes that information gathered by regular monitoring can assist in informing national strategies aimed at improving services for Children in Care.
- ❖ Young people will be encouraged to preserve their relationships with their foster parents when they move on from Parent and Child Fostering Service. By encouraging this contact, Parent and Child Fostering Service can also monitor long-term outcomes for young people leaving care.

Teenage Placements, Preparation for Independence and Aftercare

- ❖ Parent and Child Fostering Service has a commitment to improve outcomes for care leavers. Our ethos is that all children and young people placed in our care are supported into adulthood so that they can reach their potential.
- ❖ Our foster carers are guided, trained and supported to help young people make the transition to independence. We aim to work creatively with Local Authorities, children,

young people and foster carers to ease the transition to independence. The Pathway Plans developed by the placing Local Authority would provide a formal structure for this work.

- ❖ When a child is staying put, Supervising Social Workers ensure that all the necessary arrangements are in place and that support to the child and family continues at the appropriate level.
- ❖ Parent and Child Fostering Services work in Partnership with placing authorities to ensure best outcomes for children and young people based in our care.

3. Standards of Care

At Parent and Child Fostering Service we believe that:

- Everyone has an inherent right to develop their potential, regardless of previous life experiences.
- Children and young people have a right to be looked after by adults who offer them respect, affection and are concerned about their wellbeing.
- Children and young people have the right to achieve the best possible outcomes in line with Every Child Matters, (ECM's) 5 Key Objectives.
- Young people should be suitably prepared for leaving care. They should leave Parent and Child Fostering Service with savings, educational attainment to support their chosen career and suitable independent skills.
- Adults need to respect the significance of the birth family, race, culture and religion for the child.
- Parent and Child Fostering Service is managed in an ethical, effective and efficient manner.
- All our staff, Foster Carers and other adults who come in to contact with children through Parent and Child Fostering Service must be subject to appropriate checks and vetting procedures to ensure safeguarding standards.
- A positive parent-child relationship and strong attachments should always be encouraged.

In addition, Parent and Child Fostering Service will:

- Always comply with all relevant legislation and strive to exceed the National Minimum Standards.
- Ensure the rights of children are promoted in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Ensure that child protection procedures are always followed robustly to ensure

the welfare of the children and young people is safeguarded.

- **Work in partnership with the Local Authority to identify the individual needs of the placed child and then deliver services that will meet those needs.**
- **Ensure its foster carers do not use corporal punishment but are skilled in behavioural management and do not conduct themselves in a manner which demeans, degrades or humiliates the young person in their care.**
- **Ensure that equality and diversity is always promoted, through recruitment, assessment, matching and placement support**

Quality of Standards

The performance of Parent and Child Fostering Service is monitored at a number of levels and in a number of ways:

- ❖ OFSTED will inspect regularly to ensure that Parent and Child Fostering Service complies with legislation and standards (this may be annually or every 3 years depending on compliance).
- ❖ Activity will be monitored at a strategic level against the objectives, performance indicators and tasks as contained in the Business Development Plan.
- ❖ The Registered Manager ensures that necessary checks are completed in the recruitment of staff and foster carers. The manager is responsible for the co-ordination of DBS checks, Local Authority checks, references and all employment safeguards.
- ❖ Foster carers are provided, as far as possible with full information about the children placed with them and are expected to observe high standards of confidentiality. As an agency, records are maintained on carers and Children in Care in accordance with National Minimum Standards and Data Protection legislation. Staff and foster carers are expected to declare any potential conflicts of interest.
- ❖ All children and young people placed with our foster carers are provided with a copy of our children's guide based on their age and level of understanding.
- ❖ Parent and Child Fostering Service has a Parent's Guide for their parent and child placements.
- ❖ Parent and Child Fostering Service has developed a comprehensive, but easy to understand, 'Foster Carer Handbook'. It is issued to every approved foster carer, in order to aid them with the fostering task. The handbook contains information on financial, health and safety matters, fostering law, assessing the needs of children and young people, care planning, health, education, complaints and grievances, training, child protection and record keeping. The handbook is reviewed throughout the year and updates issued annually or as required to foster parents.
- ❖ Panel functioning and evaluation
- ❖ Any child protection matter needs to be reported to the Registered Manager who works closely with the placing authority to ensure the protection of children.

Equality of Care

Parent and Child Fostering Service holds the view that discrimination is unacceptable when judgments are made about people based on their gender, sexuality, colour, religion, race or ethnicity. Staff are expected to actively demonstrate tolerance, understanding and empathy with every individual. Every attempt would be made to combat any occurrence of prejudice and inequality. Any sexist or racist comment, practice “jokes” will render the staff member liable to disciplinary action and possible dismissal.

- ❖ There is a legal requirement for Parent and Child Fostering Service as an employer and for each individual employee not to discriminate against others on the grounds of sex, religion, marital status or race (colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins)
- ❖ Parent and Child Fostering Service will support families irrespective of their religious or cultural persuasion. The agency is unable to support children with significant physical disabilities at present as our carers’ properties are not adapted for this purpose.
- ❖ It is Parent and Child Fostering Service policy that our staff will ensure each young person receives care provision in an environment of anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive practice. Care staff are expected to recognise “difference” and actively support the young person’s culture, ethnic, linguistic and religious needs as part of individual care.
- ❖ To enable successful care practice, the home environment must ensure a safe and caring structure to maximize personal growth and development. It is the responsibility of Parent and Child Fostering Service carers to ensure that children and young people’s care is delivered equally irrespective of their, gender, sexual orientation, background, colour, religion and race. This also applies to Parent and Child Fostering Service employees.
- ❖ Training on equality and diversity is strongly promoted during the preparation process for new foster carers and forms part of the assessment. Ongoing training on equality and diversity is provided to all approved foster carers and our staff. The need to recruit foster carers who are representative of the general population is reflected in the recruitment and retention strategy for foster carers.

The agency has an account with Language Line to ensure that everyone’s voice is heard, that everyone can be communicated with and understood.

4. Aims

“The key aim of Parent and Child Fostering Service is to provide high quality foster care placements in order to deliver the best possible outcomes for children and young people in care”.

- ❖ Parent and Child Fostering Service is an independent fostering provider working in partnership with Local Authorities, Health and Social Services Trusts, parents and carers. Our service is committed to multi-agency working and develops

partnerships and protocols with organisations which can progress the needs of the children and young people in our care.

- ❖ Our aim is to deliver safe, quality family placements that value, support and encourage children and young people who are 'looked after' by the Local Authorities to grow and develop as individuals. As well as promoting their health and general wellbeing, the service is committed to encouraging our foster carers help the children and young people placed with us to reach their maximum educational potential.
- ❖ Our foster parents will provide good parenting for all children who are looked after. Foster parents and children will be consulted and encouraged to actively participate in their care and family life of the fostering household. We are committed to ensuring that the service offered is based on statutory requirements, sound principles, good practice and works within the principles of "Best Value".
- ❖ We aim to provide safety and stability for children in foster placements that closely match their individual needs and offer them the opportunity to form secure attachments.
- ❖ In our parent and child placements, we aim to support and guide the parent to develop good parenting skills, improve their parenting abilities, acquire skills and knowledge on child development and help the parent put the needs of their child first. It is hoped that the parent makes changes, so they could be supported to live independently with their child in the community. Where the parent is unable to make required changes in the child's timescales and adoption is considered in the best interests of the child, we aim to work with the family finder in the permanency team until the child is placed with their adoptive family.
- ❖ We can offer parenting assessments as part of our parent and child placements. These assessment placements usually last between three and six months with a high support package, including a minimum of weekly visits in the period of assessment by the supervising social worker.

5. Objectives

Our main objectives at Parent and Child Fostering Service are:

- ❖ To provide a responsive, supportive professional 24-hour service for foster carers, children/young people and purchasers.
- ❖ To deliver foster care placements that provide Children in Care and young people with a stable and consistent experience of a safe, warm and caring family life in order to enhance and maximise their holistic potential.
- ❖ To promote a child-centred approach throughout our practice, holding the child's welfare as paramount in our entire decision making.
- ❖ To ensure careful matching of a child's/family needs and wishes with the skills and qualities of our foster carer's.

- ❖ To recruit, assess, prepare and train foster carers from diverse backgrounds in a timely manner and in line with statutory guidance; thus, ensuring a choice of appropriate placement options for children and young people.
- ❖ To develop our services in order that children and young people can develop and grow within the five outcomes areas of Every Child Matters:
 - Be Healthy
 - Stay Safe
 - Enjoy and Achieve
 - Make a Positive Contribution
 - Achieve Economic Wellbeing
- ❖ To ensure the cultural and diversity needs of each child and young person are met.
- ❖ To promote the educational achievement of young people, enabling them to benefit from a range of educational opportunities.
- ❖ To enable young people to develop social interests, hobbies and take part in a range of healthy and fun activities.
- ❖ To promote a healthy lifestyle and ensure that every child's emotional and physical health needs are met.
- ❖ To promote contact with the birth family and significant others during a placement in line with the care plan.
- ❖ To ensure a plan for the child's future is acted upon within the timescales at each review
- ❖ Work in close partnership with local authorities to promote and safeguard the best interests and welfare of the child/young person
- ❖ Retain foster parents and staff through a strategy that ensures they are appropriately supervised, supported, rewarded and developed
- ❖ To ensure that all foster carers have access to timely support, training and guidance from suitably qualified Social Workers.
- ❖ To commit to on-going learning and professional development of the agency, foster carers and staff.
- ❖ To commit to developing our practice through user consultation and participation.
- ❖ To deliver best value always for foster carers, children/young people and purchasers.
- ❖ To support effective and evidence-based parenting assessments in our foster placements.
- ❖ To continuously develop the agency specialism in providing parent and child placements
- ❖ To ensure that any decisions are transparent and fair and that any concerns are addressed and information about the complaint's procedure is made available to all.
- ❖ Consult regularly and learn from those that are in receipt of services through comments, compliments or complaints and have regular meetings with foster carers, senior managers and elected members
- ❖ Consult regularly with children who are fostered, using a variety of methods to ensure their voice is heard
- ❖ Commitment to continuous improvement through the provision of wider placement choices for children by continuing pioneering a more innovative approach to foster care that is needs led to deliver packages of care to children in public care.
- ❖ In addition to providing parent and child placements - to develop a range of different types of fostering households that can provide short term, long term, permanency and staying put placements.

6. Principles and Values

The work of Parent and Child Fostering Service is underpinned by the following values and beliefs:

- ❖ Most children and young people are best cared for within their own families. Where this is not possible, for whatever reason, most children and young people are best looked after within family-based placements that will encourage and promote continuing links with their families.
- ❖ Children and young people are entitled to be treated with respect and within an environment where diversity and difference are valued and enjoyed.
- ❖ A child or young person's sense of identity and self-respect needs to be actively promoted through awareness of, and attention to, issues of race, culture, religion, gender and ability.
- ❖ Respect for parents, children and carers to include the right to privacy and personal data
- ❖ Foster carers have a unique contribution to make to a child or young person's growth and development. They should be regarded and respected as professional colleagues.
- ❖ Foster carers are entitled to receive training and support to enhance their skills and personal development and should be expected to demonstrate those skills in their work with children and young people.
- ❖ Parent and Child Fostering Service promotes the profile of children and young people's rights and works collaboratively to empower children and young people
- ❖ Parent and Child Fostering Service operates within an open culture which demands co-operation, collaboration and communication.
- ❖ To respond to feedback from parents, children, families, foster carers, professionals and the public which allows for continued evaluation and monitoring thus improving the Parent and Child Fostering service delivery.

7. Status and Constitution

Parent and Child Fostering Service Ltd; PACFS, is an independent fostering provider. The agency is a private limited company registered in England under the Companies Act 1985.

Company Registration number: 7813869
Date of Registration: 18.10.2011

Parent and Child Fostering Service is Registered and Inspected as a Fostering Service Provider under the Care Standards Act 2000 and Fostering Service Regulations 2011 and is therefore properly constituted to provide foster care placements for 'Looked After' children and young people on behalf of Local Authorities. It is registered with OFSTED to function as an Independent Fostering Agency.

OFSTED Registration number: SC442125
Date of Registration: 11.05.2012

Parent and Child Fostering Service has a director who is also the Registered Individual and is actively involved in the day-to-day running of the service.

Registered Manager:

Position
Wendy Forbes
CQSW

Responsible Individual / Director:

Abimbola Ladipo-Arیدegbe
M.A. (Social Work)

Organisation Information

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Mobile: 07956 924625 (EDS – 24 Hrs.)

Email: referrals@parentandchildfostering.com
enquiries@parentandchildfostering.com

Web: www.parentandchildfostering.com

The Director has undertaken to operate Parent and Child Fostering Service in line with good company and accounting procedures and to abide by the requirements of the Companies Act 1985 and 1989. The management team meets regularly and is responsible for the corporate governance of the company, as well as determining, managing and reviewing the company's:

- Strategic vision, direction and forecasting for the organisation
- Quality Assurance
- Annual Business Plan
- Training and development programmes
- Financial management and expenditure
- Performance targets
- Policies and procedures
- Legal compliance
- Culture, values, vision and mission
- Human resources

In doing this, the Director meets the statutory duties and responsibilities of a registered company and ensures that all matters are reviewed regularly and in a planned manner. Parent and Child Fostering Service has set policies and procedures which are underpinned by the Fostering Regulations, the National Minimum Standards and the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED)

8. Management Structure and Staff

Parent and Child Fostering Service aims to promote cohesion and close communication throughout the agency. There is a team meeting once a quarter which is attended by all staff and foster carers subject to availability. There is also a staff team meeting which is held fortnightly.

Senior Management Team

The Senior Management Team consists of the Registered Manager and the Responsible Individual. Both have considerable social work experience, are suitably qualified and experienced and have both worked within Children Services for many years. The Responsible Individual is a working director of the agency.

Supervising Social Workers (SSW)

Our Supervising Social Workers work within catchment areas and are responsible for supporting and visiting foster carers in their 'patch' on a monthly basis. Their supervisory visits to foster carers are focused on both supporting carers and ensuring the needs of children are being met and their welfare safeguarded. The Supervising Social Worker is also required to routinely see children and young people who are in the placement. Supervising Social Workers conduct foster carer's annual reviews and make recommendations in relation to the carer's ongoing approval. Our Supervising Social Workers are qualified and experienced Social Workers, Health Care Professional Council (HCPC) registered and many have previously worked in Local Authority childcare teams.

Apart from the two managers, the agency presently has one Supervising Social Worker and an Independent Supervising Social Worker.

Responsible Individual – Abimbola Ladipo-Ardegebe – MA Social Work.

Abimbola is a director of Parent and Child Fostering Service which was established in October 2011. She undertakes strategic planning and direction of the service, looking at its business development and partnership working. She has worked with children and young people in Local Authorities before starting her own venture.

Fostering Manager – Wendy Forbes - (CQSW)

Wendy is the Fostering Manager, who has the responsibility for the day to day running of the Agency. Wendy is an experienced, HCPC registered, enthusiastic Fostering Manager who is committed to delivering positive outcomes for children and young people. Wendy is a qualified social worker with over 25 years post-qualifying experience. This has been within children and families' services including fostering, adoption and permanency teams, referral and assessment and long-term teams as a social worker and team manager. Wendy has three years' experience as a fostering manager in an independent fostering agency and has also worked as an independent

assessor and reviewing officer within fostering services. Wendy has worked alongside central and local government agencies, developing policies and systems to ensure the voices of children and young people are heard.

Supervising Social Worker – Rupa Nagi – BSc (Hons) Social Work

Rupa is a social Worker with over 6 years' experience of working with children and families in a statutory, voluntary and the independent sector. Her strengths and knowledge lie in parenting assessments as she has previously worked in a parenting assessment (residential) unit where she provided residents with a direct point of contact within the unit and offered comprehensive support, guidance and training as identified within the placement contract, care plan and the program of support. Rupa is also good at compiling detailed written reports for complex case conferences, planning meetings and care proceedings.

In her role as a Supervising Social Worker, Rupa works closely with foster carers to ensure they are highly skilled in direct and indirect observation and are trained to use their assessment skills to make appropriate interventions whilst ensuring that the safety of the child is paramount in a manner which is firm yet non-threatening.

In addition to providing support and supervision to foster carers, Rupa also does Form F assessments and is also a fostering panel member where she contributes to making recommendations on cases, drawing on both personal and professional knowledge and experience.

Independent Panel Decision Maker – Elaine Pearson – CQSW ASW Practice Teacher ACEVO CEO Program

Elaine is an appropriately skilled independent social worker with more than 25 years' experience across the statutory, voluntary and private sectors. She has a wealth of knowledge, experience and skills working within the care sector. This includes safeguarding, provision of regulated children's services such as Children and Fostering Services and experience as a CEO and provider. Elaine provides a range of services to providers of children services to assist in evidencing their strengths and identifying shortfalls to continuously improve standards in the services they provide. Through her expertise, knowledge and commitment, Elaine is able to support and advice the agencies that engage us to provide this service.

Independent Panel Chair – Jacqueline Rainford-Butler - CQSW ASW Practice Teacher ACEVO CEO Program

Jacqueline is an independent, qualified and registered social worker who has worked in residential settings since 1985, as the registered manager, managing a family assessment centre, semi-independent living home. She is also specialised in children and families working with children from 0 – 18 years, with her experience stemming from nurseries, rehabilitation homes for mother with substance misuse issues as well as working with adults with learning disabilities. She has been the manager within the leaving care team of a Local Authority, has been a Supervising Social Worker for foster carers, have sat on fostering and adoption panels as a member. She was also a foster carer.

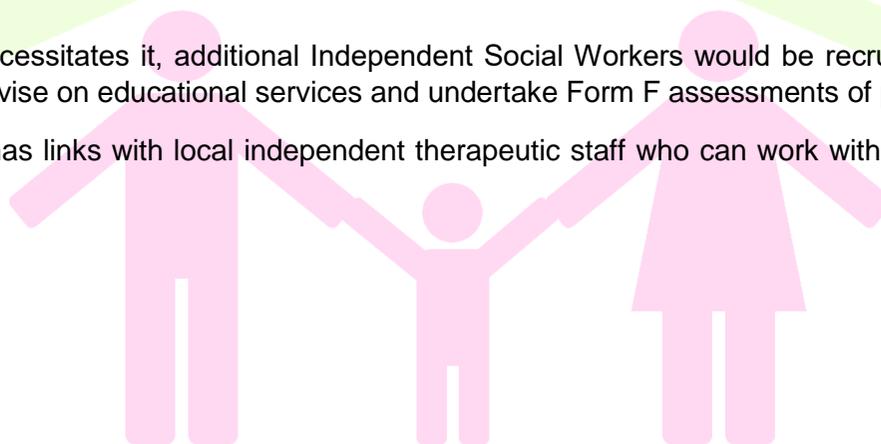
There are plans to recruit additional staff detailed below as the fostering service experiences further growth.

- ❖ **Social Work Assistants & Family Support Workers** -- To support carers and families in a planned way
- ❖ **Placement Duty Officer** -- For ensuring referrals for placements are responded to efficiently.
- ❖ **Marketing Coordinators** - For implementing market strategy and undertaking our advertisements and marketing activities.
- ❖ **Administrative Staff** -To ensure efficient administration support to the team.

Additional Cover

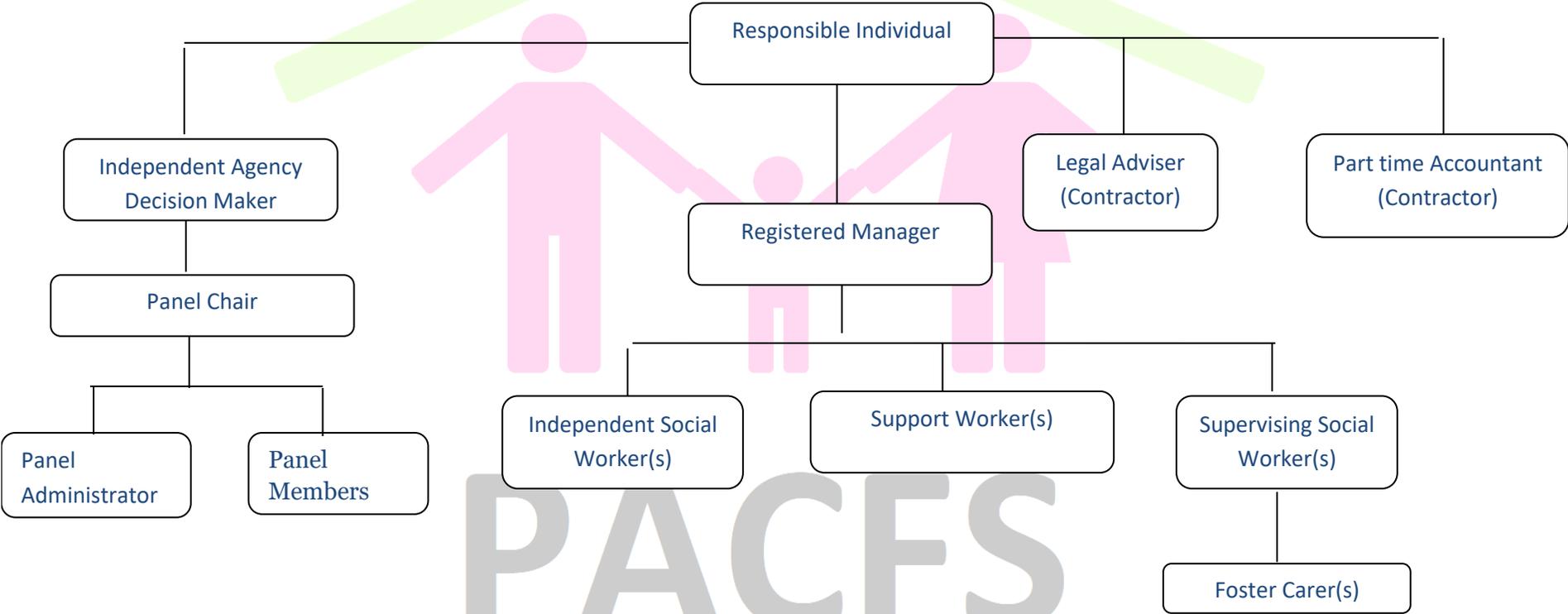
Where the agency's work volume necessitates it, additional Independent Social Workers would be recruited to conduct foster carers' annual reviews, deliver specialist training, advise on educational services and undertake Form F assessments of potential carers.

Parent and Child Fostering Service has links with local independent therapeutic staff who can work with foster carers and families where this agreed with the placing authorities.



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PARENT AND CHILD FOSTERING SERVICES ORGANISATION CHART



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9. Service Provision

Parent and Child Fostering Service have approved carers within London Boroughs and home County. Our carers are from different cultures and backgrounds that is reflective of Britain as a multi-culture society. We aim to work in partnership with Local Authorities to support the provision of children and young people placements with suitable foster carers. We offer a complimentary service to Local Authorities that enables the provision of safe, secure and appropriate foster placements options.

Parent and child placements

The majority of our foster carers are assessed to provide placements for both parents and their children. Our foster carers provide a supportive family environment in which a young parent/parents can develop the necessary parenting skills.

- Detailed monitoring and assessments over a fixed time scale can be undertaken,
- Training in areas of identified need such as:
 - advice,
 - support and counselling on education, career possibilities
 - childcare issues,
 - issues of personal development.

This is a flexible scheme designed to offer a range of options to both local authority and young parents.

In line with the National Fostering Regulations 2011, before Parent and Child Fostering Service agrees a parent and child foster placement, both the placing Local Authority and the agency would have to be satisfied that all proposed arrangements are appropriate. These includes the following:

- foster carer has the necessary skills and abilities to participate in parent and child assessments
- foster carers can uphold the welfare of the family in the placement.
- can provide holistic care based on assessed needs
- on observation complete risk assessment
- complete daily logs and weekly report to be shared with the placing local authority

In addition to the above we offer:

Parenting assessments which usually last between three and six months. This high support package of care includes weekly visits during the period of assessment by an experience social worker. These assessments are modelled on teamwork with all professionals working together to ensure the best possible outcomes are achieved.

Our foster carers are trained to assess parenting skills whilst modelling and imparting parental knowledge and values in the foster placement and helping the parent to change their cognitive pathway, so their child's needs are prioritised.

Our carers provide detailed reports which are evidence and outcome based and these reports contribute to family planning and review meetings. The daily logs produced by the carer are shared with the parents and related professionals as deemed necessary.

Emergency placements

Foster placements are available at short notice and supported by a 24hr emergency response service. An emergency placement ideally should not exceed a few days and it would be anticipated that the child or young person is to be moved to a more suitable placement within a week in a planned way.

Sibling Groups

Our specialist carers are experienced in dealing with such placements and the complex dynamics they create. In addition, we will be developing a buddy system through support group meetings, so foster carers can know each other and develop positive relationships that is vital in support and maintain sibling group placements.

Bridging placements

Placements for children or young people while permanency plans are being formulated. Our foster carers work with children/young people and their families toward reunification or prepare children/young people for joining adoptive or long term/permanent fostering families and/or moving to a semi-independent or an independent living arrangement.

Respite placements

Respite placements are provided to give parents a break or offer additional support if they do not have their own support network. Respite could also be for children for periods of respite from their main place of care, such as children in residential placements and children in other foster placements with other agencies. In addition, respite is also offered to our own foster carers and is available in order to support placement demands and needs.

Disability placements and Short Break

Parent and Child Fostering Service aims to build up a pool of foster carers who have experience and skills in caring for children and young people who are disabled and/or require specialist medical care. In addition, these carers will be able to offer respite care to complement other arrangements that have been made for the child, e.g. residential school placement. Our specialist carers are provided with appropriate training and in-depth support. To ensure high quality care, we will work with specialist services to access optimum provision to achieve their maximum outcomes.

Short term placements

These placements aim at providing holding placements to families. The duration of short-term placements can be from days up to 2 years on average.

Long term placements

These placements are where adoption is not an option, and the foster carer will care for a child/young person up to and into adult independence.

Matching Process

At Parent and Child Fostering Service, we recognise and respect that every child and young person is a unique individual. Therefore, careful consideration is taken to ensure the best possible match for the children and young people with our foster placements.

All referrals are subject to the agency's risk assessments before the decision to place is agreed.

10. Supporting Children and Young People in Foster Placement

There is an expectation that the Supervising Social Worker sees a child or young people at least once during alternate supervisory visits to the placement. We recognize that as part of the Supervising Social Worker role it is important to have sight of children in the placement for reasons of accountability and safeguarding.

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

All children and young people in our placements are supported by a team consisting of the foster carer, Social Workers and other professionals with some involvement such as the health visitor. The 'Team' works collaboratively towards children achieving the five outcomes set out by the government in 'Every Child Matters: Change for Children' paper:

- ❖ Be healthy
- ❖ Stay safe
- ❖ Enjoy and achieve
- ❖ Make a positive contribution
- ❖ Achieve economic well-being

Our services are designed to be flexible and responsive. The range of services available for the children and young people and all our placements include:

- ❖ Providing practical assistance with transport and access to external services/facilities.
- ❖ Ensuring regular reflective conversations with children/young people placed with us in line with their age and level of understanding.
- ❖ Promoting and supporting contact as specified in the care plan.
- ❖ Providing social activities for the sons and daughters of foster carers.

Supporting Our Parent & Child Placements

For our parent and children placements, we believe that appropriate support should be provided in the placement, for parents and their babies to learn and grow, and for parents to gain knowledge about safer parenting knowledge, skill and practice. This is achieved with the help and effective modelling from carers in the placements.

Our carers will offer;

- Key-working: - Offering individual sessions to parents to encourage them to take an active part in contributing to their assessment, giving them the opportunity to reflect on observation, learning and opportunities for change.
- Individual Sessions & reflective conversations: - Focusing on the service users' experiences of parenting and how these impact on their ability to parent with the view to promoting a healthy and positive attitude towards parenting.
- Parenting: - sessions aimed at promoting positive parenting through focusing on the recognition and development of good enough parenting skills.
- Child Development: - Education programs on the various stages of service user's own development which highlight the evolving needs of children.
- Modelling & positive reinforcement: - We believe that experiential learning is an

essential method of supporting vulnerable parents to develop their parenting skills. Carers model the desired behaviour, whilst giving parents the opportunity to ask questions about areas where they lack confidence.

- Play: - We work in partnership with local children centres and other resources to develop parents' awareness on the variety of age appropriate play and stimulation and how this contributes to both their own maturity and their child's development.
- Facilitate life story work and help prepare the child for transition to permanency
- Life skills: - These sessions include the practical elements essential for maintaining a home to a "good enough" standard and managing these. For example: -

1. Cooking
2. Budgeting
3. Health, hygiene & safety
4. Homemaking
5. Nutrition
6. Negotiation skills
7. Sex and Relationships

Promoting Health and Well Being

Parent and Child Fostering Service views the health needs of children and young people in a holistic sense, including not only the physical, but also their emotional, cultural, mental, and sexual health needs. Our Supervising Social Workers will ensure these are monitored and assessed through regular supervision of foster carers, visits to the foster home and liaison with appropriate health professionals.

Physical health needs of all children and young people are addressed by ensuring they will, wherever possible, remain registered with their own GP and dental services. Where this is not appropriate or possible e.g. due to distance, then the child or young person will be registered with health services local to the foster placement. All health assessments checks and immunisations will be carried out in line with legislation (Children Act 1989).

We believe that promoting and providing education on health and related issues, e.g. smoking, substance misuse, diet, etc. will not only improve the health and wellbeing of young people using our service but also their self-esteem. Children and Foster carers will be encouraged to participate in training days, workshops, information sharing, etc. on health issues with the aim of children eventually taking care of their health responsibly.

Foster carers are encouraged to provide a healthy environment, pay attention to a healthy diet and provide opportunities for physical exercise and activities.

The following are important for all placements:

- ❖ Health and development needs are identified
- ❖ Children attend essential health appointments
- ❖ Children and young people are supported to make healthy lifestyle choices
- ❖ Additional help is accessed if required
- ❖ Staff and carers are competent and skilled to identify and respond to early indicators of mental health issues.
- ❖ Review of risk assessments in relation to emotional and mental health needs

Emotional Health, Mental Health and Therapy

Children and young people referred to Parent and Child Fostering Service may have emotional and mental health needs and may have a need for therapeutic input. Parent and Child Fostering Service will work with the placing authority to assess, identify and ensure delivery of the most appropriate type of therapy needed, or the service will endeavour to facilitate completion of therapy already in place.

Promoting Safer Care

At Parent and Child Fostering Service, we believe that all our children, young people and parents should feel and be safe in their placements. The Registered manager will make sure that:

- ❖ Foster carers have Safe Care policies which are updated on an ongoing basis.
- ❖ Risk Assessments on every child to be completed at the time of placement and updated as needed.
- ❖ Foster carers have a good working knowledge of the child protection policy.
- ❖ All carers are monitored, supervised and supported by qualified Social Workers.
- ❖ Children are matched to placements with foster carers who can keep them safe.
- ❖ Excellent recruitment policies are implemented.
- ❖ Children and young people are encouraged to speak out and be a part of the family's safe care policy and risk assessments.
- ❖ Issues of bullying and discrimination are addressed as part of ongoing supervision along with crime, antisocial behaviour, sexual exploitation, episodes of missing from placement, placement stability, security, self-awareness and protection for all.
- ❖ At least two unannounced visits are undertaken annually.
- ❖ Foster carers are provided with detailed information on areas that require improvement.

Parent and Child Fostering Service provides its foster parents and staff training on:

- ❖ First Aid.
- ❖ Child Protection
- ❖ Safer Caring
- ❖ Managing children's behaviour.
- ❖ Health and Safety
- ❖ Working Together
- ❖ Fostering Changes
- ❖ De-escalation and conflict resolution.
- ❖ Internet safety based on **Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre, CEOP.**
- ❖ Missing from Care
- ❖ Female Genital Mutilation
- ❖ Radicalisation

Enjoy and Achieve - Education/Career

Children in Care have often experienced disrupted education and can be disadvantaged educationally. In recognition of this need, Parent and Child Fostering Service foster carers will work in partnership with the local school to offer to a child in care, an environment where

he/she can enhance his/her academic potential. Alongside their Supervising Social Workers, the foster carers would identify at the point of placement, the education needs of the child and work with the professionals involved to meet those identified needs. All carers are expected to attend Personal Education Planning Meetings with young people and, where appropriate, the Supervising Social Worker will also attend. Parent And Child Fostering Service aims to develop excellent links with local schools, further education colleges and with the Adult Education Service

For those children who can sometimes struggle in a school environment when so much else is happening in their lives, Parent and Child Fostering Service would recommend virtual educational support in placement. The carers will also discuss career and employment with parents in placements as part of their parenting assessment under independent living skills. The service will investigate an online educational provision for young parents looking for career choices if this cannot be achieved through other avenues.

Enjoy and Achieve – Leisure and Sport

At Parent and Child Fostering Service, leisure and recreational pursuits are an important part of a child's social education, as well as important in the holistic development of 'self'. Whether the leisure pursuit is just for enjoyment or indeed, one where a young person is particularly gifted, participation in such activities will be encouraged, in line with the child's wishes and potential. Involvement in activities will be monitored, as with the rest of our service, and any health & safety issues will be considered as necessary. Furthermore:

- ❖ Staff and foster carers consider issues of equality and diversity and how they impact on each child by planning for religious, cultural, linguistic, gender and disability needs
- ❖ Ensure children or young people attend and are supported in full time education, training or employment
- ❖ Ensure additional help is accessed if required
- ❖ Encourage children and young people to engage safely in leisure activities of their choice
- ❖ Encourage children to express ambitions for their future
- ❖ Enable staff and foster carers to celebrate the achievement of children and young people

Achieving Economic Well being

The foster carers receive guidance, support and training on assisting young people to achieve economic wellbeing through meeting their educational and developmental needs – this is monitored during supervision. All children and young people will have their own individual savings accounts and foster carers are expected to save weekly agreed amounts for all Children in Care placed.

In consultation with the young person, carers and placing Local Authorities, a transition to independence, or semi-independence timetable will be identified. Parenting and Child Fostering Service would ensure that this is executed in a timely manner. Parent and Child Fostering Service staff will ensure that:

- ❖ Children and young people are supported to attain practical life skills
- ❖ Children and young people as well as parents in a parent and child foster placement are encouraged to save money and learn to manage their finances
- ❖ Children and young people are supported to take up post school training/employment opportunities
- ❖ Young people are supported to use appropriate agencies and networks that help prepare them for independence

- ❖ Children and young people are aware of how to raise concerns or formally make complaints

Cultural and Religious Activities

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

Anti-Oppressive Policy

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

Social Events

Parent and Child Fostering Service regularly organises social events for the families in placements. In addition, the events promote peer support as well as give the children and young people, parents and their babies the opportunity to meet other families in similar situations as themselves, in a relaxed environment.

Placement Progress Report

Parent and Child Fostering Service provides a weekly update on the progress of individual placements to the placing Local Authorities in line with 'Every Child Matters - Five Outcomes' and national minimum standards. Also, at each Children Looked After Review, the Supervising Social Worker, in conjunction with the foster carer and foster child, provides an overview report of the placement.

Life Story Work

All foster carers are required to keep relevant memorabilia for the children they foster and to work with them on understanding their history. Supervising social workers will be providing guidance and support to the foster carers and may also undertake life story work with specific foster children in negotiation with their local authority.

11. Recruitment, Assessment and Approval of Carers.

Parent and Child Fostering Service is committed to the recruitment of foster carers who can meet the needs of children and young people, through the provision of high-quality care. All new enquirers interested in becoming prospective foster carers are subject to a rigorous assessment and vetting procedure. In line with the pre-stage, stage 1 and 2 of the revised fostering processes (2013) the following steps are taken:

Upon contact by an enquirer, an enquiry form is completed with initial details via telephone where we take some initial information on the enquirer and their family, as well as answer any questions they may have.

Following the call, we will send out an Information pack and then follow this up by calling to arrange a visit to the enquirer's home to meet with them (and their partner if married or co-habiting).

Initial Visit to enquirer's home

We will visit the enquirer at home within 7 working days of their initial enquiry, (unless otherwise requested) to discuss fostering in more detail and to satisfy ourselves that their home environment would be suitable for fostering. A brief report is completed about the visit.

Stage 1 (Duration of approximately 1-3months)

The next step would be for the enquirer to attend our **Skills to Foster course which is** designed by the Fostering Network. The course will help the enquirer gain further knowledge about what they need to become a foster carer and provide them with an understanding as to why children and young people come into foster care, explain the role of a foster carer and discuss how fostering may affect their family.

During this stage we also carry out a number of statutory checks including a medical with the enquirer's GP, a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. We will also obtain personal and professional references. The enquirer will be required to sign a consent form to allow Parent and Child Fostering Service to process these checks.

Statutory Checks

- ❖ Proof of identity
- ❖ Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) on all adult household members
- ❖ Children's Services Department's record
- ❖ CAFCASS (if appropriate)
- ❖ OFSTED (if appropriate)
- ❖ Registration and inspection units
- ❖ Previous applications to foster
- ❖ Overseas check (if appropriate)

References

- ❖ Personal x 3, each of whom will be visited by the assessing Social Worker. Ex-partner, where there have been children in common (if possible)
- ❖ Employer's reference (if applicable)
- ❖ Health visitor (if applicable)
- ❖ School (if applicable)

Following satisfactory clearance in relation to all statutory and other checks, as well evidence that the applicant complies with health and safety requirements, a decision is made by the Responsible Individual on whether to proceed to Stage 2 of the process. Should the application be judged as suitable, Stage 1 and 2 may run concurrently e.g. a Teacher already working with children.

Stage 2 – Assessment (Duration of approximately 4 months)

The assessment process is about us getting to know the enquirer/applicant and their family. An assessing Social Worker will visit them to obtain information about their upbringing, their family, parenting capacity and ability to foster.

At the end of the assessment process, the Social Worker carrying out the assessment writes a report with a recommendation to the agency Fostering Panel.

Under the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review and Fostering Services (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2013, if, during an assessment as to the suitability of a prospective foster carer, but before the assessment is complete, information comes to light indicating that the applicant is unlikely to be suitable to foster, a brief report can be compiled setting out details of the assessment completed to date and the reasons for considering the applicant unsuitable. The brief report can be submitted to the Fostering Panel without the need to complete a full assessment.

The prospective foster carer must be notified that the brief report is to be sent to the panel, provided with a copy and given 10 working days from the date of the notification to send their observations to the fostering service provider. The brief report should then be presented to the fostering panel for a recommendation, along with any observations submitted by the applicant and any other relevant information. Considering the fostering panel's recommendation, the Agency Decision Maker must then make a determination about whether to terminate the assessment or whether the full assessment should be completed.

Fostering Panel and Approval

On full completion of the assessment, the applicant will be invited to attend the Fostering Panel with their assessing Social Worker who presents the report known as the BAAF Form F including the competencies and consideration of the applicant's learning and development needs to enable them to achieve the TSD (Training, Support and Development) standards within twelve months. The fostering panel is made up of a range of professionals and chaired by a person independent of Parenting and Child Fostering Service. Copies of brief reports or the completed BAAF Form F report are circulated to the Parent and Child Fostering Service fostering panel members in advance of the panel.

On reading the assessment, associated documents and meeting the foster carer, the fostering panel will make a recommendation regarding the applicant's approval to be a foster carer.

Prospective foster carers will sign the assessment report prior to submission at panel and where applicants suggest changes to the report, the changes are negotiated with the assessing Social Worker. Applicants have the right to add written comments or other information to their report if they wish.

In accordance with the Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011, Parent and Child Fostering Service maintains a central list of persons suitable to sit on fostering panels and has established regular fostering panels whose overriding objectives are to promote and safeguard the welfare of children in foster care. Our central list of suitable panel members includes a teacher, a former foster carer, a GP, a formerly looked after child and qualified Social Workers.

Parent and Child Fostering Service fostering panel makes recommendations about the approval of prospective foster carers and continued approval and deregistration of foster carers. The Agency Decision Maker, ADM, considers the fostering panel's recommendations. Where the decision is to approve the prospective foster carer, the letter will specify any terms of approval.

Following approval, foster carers and Parent and Child Fostering Service sign a written agreement (the Foster Care Agreement) that sets out the terms and conditions of the fostering household's relationship with Parent and Child Fostering Service and can include:

- ❖ Caring appropriately for children and young people in placement, as identified in the foster placement agreement plan;
- ❖ Informing the Registered Manager of any relevant significant changes to their household
- ❖ Following laid down procedures within the agency's Fostering Handbook which all our carers have access to both on their files, at home, on the internet or at the agency's office.

If, following consideration by the fostering panel, and a review of case papers and the final panel minutes, the Decision Maker considers that an applicant is not suitable to act as a foster carer the Decision Maker will write proposing not to approve them together with reasons (a "qualifying determination") and will invite the prospective foster carer to submit written representation within 28 days of the notice or to request a review by an independent review panel through the (IRM) Independent Review Mechanism of which further details can be provided.

If Parent and Child Fostering Service have not received any representation within the above said period with no referral to the IRM, the agency may proceed to make its decision final. If Parent and Child Fostering Service receive written representation, it will refer the case to its fostering panel for further consideration and the Decision Maker will make its decision, taking into account any fresh recommendations made by the fostering panel, and will notify their decision to the applicant in writing.

If Parent and Child Fostering Service receive any recommendations from an independent review panel through the IRM, the Decision Maker will take these into account and then make their decision and will notify their decision to the applicant in writing.

12. Training and Development.

In order to offer children and young people a high standard of care, our foster carers are trained and equipped to meet the demands of fostering. Our training and assessment framework, which incorporates the Children's Training and Support Development (TSD) standards, exceeds the National Minimum Standards and is underpinned within a framework of equal access to training and learning, anti-discriminatory practice and equal opportunity.

Learning and development within Parent and Child Fostering Service is comprised of three tiers: -

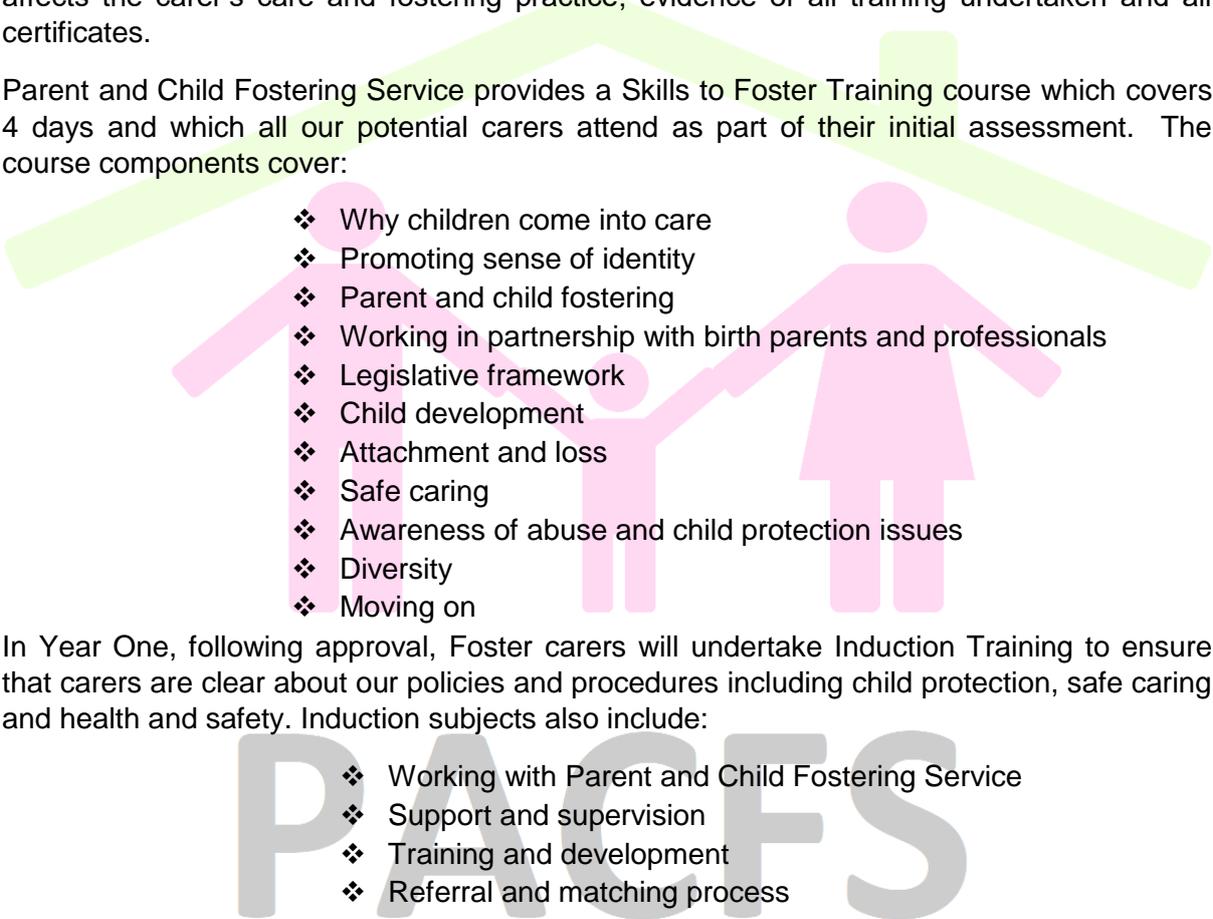
- ❖ Pre-approval
- ❖ Induction
- ❖ Continual personal development

Foster carers' training needs are constantly monitored by Supervising Social Workers and formally evaluated through annual reviews of the carer's terms of approval.

Each foster carer has a Personal Development Plan, PDP, as required within Standard 7 of the TSD Standards, drawn up in conjunction between the Fostering Supervising Social Worker and foster carer. The PDP is reviewed annually at the Foster Carer Review by the Independent Reviewing Officer, the foster carer and the Fostering Supervising Social Worker.

All foster carers will be provided with their own Continual Professional Development Portfolio. This is used to record Initial PDP and their subsequent reviews, record self-reflection regarding what has been learned from each developmental activity and how it affects the carer's care and fostering practice, evidence of all training undertaken and all certificates.

Parent and Child Fostering Service provides a Skills to Foster Training course which covers 4 days and which all our potential carers attend as part of their initial assessment. The course components cover:

- 
- ❖ Why children come into care
 - ❖ Promoting sense of identity
 - ❖ Parent and child fostering
 - ❖ Working in partnership with birth parents and professionals
 - ❖ Legislative framework
 - ❖ Child development
 - ❖ Attachment and loss
 - ❖ Safe caring
 - ❖ Awareness of abuse and child protection issues
 - ❖ Diversity
 - ❖ Moving on

In Year One, following approval, Foster carers will undertake Induction Training to ensure that carers are clear about our policies and procedures including child protection, safe caring and health and safety. Induction subjects also include:

- ❖ Working with Parent and Child Fostering Service
- ❖ Support and supervision
- ❖ Training and development
- ❖ Referral and matching process
- ❖ Finances

All training in Year One is mandatory and a requirement under the National Foster Carer Standards. Carers are to access a minimum of three developmental activities annually.

13. Supporting Foster Carers to Care for Children

At Parent and Child Fostering Service our foster carers have allocated Supervising Social Workers, SSW's.

Each SSW recognises that despite not having case management responsibility for the child, it is their responsibility to ensure that the needs of the child in placement are paramount. The Supervising Social Workers visit carers regularly to monitor the standards of care

provided, assist the carer to play their part in the child's care plan and identify any training needs. Supervising Social Workers are responsible for ensuring that the care offered to children in foster care meets the required standards.

At the start of new placements, the SSW undertakes weekly visits for a month, to ensure that the agreed placement/care plan is meeting the needs of the parent and child in placement. The SSW has weekly reflective conversation with fosters for their weekly placement update throughout the life of a placement. The weekly placement updates are shared with the family and their Social Workers.

Following the month of initial weekly visits, the SSW then visits the placement on a monthly basis or more frequently dependent on placement need for supervisory meetings with the foster carers. The supervision discussion focuses on positive developments for the carers and families in placements, as well as look at areas requiring additional support and improvement. Visits and phone calls can be increased dependent on placement needs. The SSW also undertakes unannounced visits to the placement where they will meet and speak with the children and young people to determine placement progression.

They make sure the carer has all the CIC paperwork for each placement and those statutory checks of carers are updated in a timely fashion. They liaise with other professionals and participate in statutory meetings – CIC reviews, placement planning meetings, etc. They keep accurate records and provide at least weekly updates, to the local authority social workers, of the progress of children/young people in placement

The SSW is also responsible for assisting carers in their career development which includes identifying training needs, improving their competencies, skills and knowledge in fostering. A record of supervision provided to the carers is placed on their files following supervision. Issues raised in supervision are expected to be immediately addressed. They complete the report for the carer's annual review.

The Supervising Social Workers also assist carers in completing their Training Support Development Standards competencies.

Foster Carers' Group Meetings

Foster carers' meetings are held quarterly to enable foster carers to meet and socialise, share good practice ideas, develop peer support and receive information and updates from the agency. The meetings are also always attended by at least one member of the staff team.

Foster Carer Buddy System

Foster carer's buddy system is made up of experienced foster carers who provide support, training and mentoring to other foster carers. As part of their role they will make initial contact with all newly approved carers.

Emergency Support

Parent and Child Fostering Service provide a 24-7, 365 day a year, on-call supervision and advice service to foster carers. This on-call service is also available to Local Authorities for the placement of children and young persons in an emergency. The emergency support number is **07956 924625**

Annual Review

Foster carers have their annual reviews as set out in the Children Act 1989, the Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 and Fostering Services National Minimum Standards (2011). The foster carers' annual review determines their continued registration and approval as foster carers. It looks at the fostering household and if it remains suitable for the fostering task, the foster carers' practice and whether or not there should be any changes in the terms of approval if the carer is deemed suitable to continue fostering. In addition to the requirements to conduct annual reviews, the Parent and Child Fostering Service procedure clearly sets out other situations in which completion of a foster care review would be appropriate, e.g. following a serious complaint or incident.

The review procedure focuses on the core competencies for foster carers that appears in the BAAF Form F assessment format and this includes an appraisal of training and development needs. It reflects the statute law, regulations, National Minimum Standards, good practice guidance and audits the five Every Child Matters outcomes. The Parent and Child Fostering Service Supervising Social Worker ensures that all statutory requirements are fulfilled and that foster carers have the opportunity to reflect in order to fully evaluate their practice and development. Health and Safety checks and the Safer Caring Policies are also reviewed yearly or as and when required. This forum is where goals and action plans for the following year are set.

The foster carer's review will include written reports from the carer's Supervising Social Worker, the Local Authority Social Worker, children and young people in placement, children of the household/carers and the foster carers themselves. Once completed, it is signed by the carers and their Supervising Social Worker. Parent and Child Fostering Service utilises the services of an Independent Fostering Reviewing Officer who chairs the annual review meeting.

The Fostering Regulations asks for the first review of foster carers to be referred to the Fostering Panel for consideration. Parent and Child Fostering Service ensures carers' reviews are referred to the panel every two years following the first review. Foster carers are required to attend the panel when their review is being presented.

Policies and Procedures

Parent and Child Fostering Service foster carers have access to the agency's website. The carers, members of staff including panel members can request for a hard copy of our policies and procedures. Some of our policies are as follows:

- ❖ Allegations against foster carers and staff
- ❖ Standards of Care procedure
- ❖ Child Protection procedure
- ❖ Confidentiality procedures
- ❖ Behaviour management policy
- ❖ Health and safety
- ❖ Support and training
- ❖ Fostering allowance
- ❖ Complaints and appeals
- ❖ Contact details
- ❖ Parent and child management policy
- ❖ Recording and electronic communication policy

- ❖ Promoting independence and staying put policy
- ❖ Pets policy
- ❖ Dog policy

Our policy and procedures document are updated regularly to ensure it remains a relevant reference document and the carers can read the most up-to-date policy and practice guidance in fostering.

Record Keeping

Parent and Child Fostering Service foster carers are expected to maintain records of events and information pertaining to the children and young people placed with the agency. All recordings of day to day activities in placements are now done by carers on our new IT system, Jellybaby. The carers are able from this to provide weekly updates and monthly progress reports to their Supervising Social Workers. The SSW also prepares a quarterly progress tracker for each placement on the Jellybaby.

The foster carers will use their placement log to give account of their placements during Child in Care reviews, core group meetings and child protection meetings.

Foster Carers' own children

Parent and Child Fostering Service recognises the significant contribution birth children of foster carers play in successful placements. Regular events and opportunities are provided for foster carers birth children to come together to discuss the impact, both positive and negative, of sharing their home and families.

Finance

Parent and Child Fostering Service registered foster carers receive an allowance paid every fortnight whilst a child / young person / parent is placed. Foster carers have effective backup arrangements in place, but in an emergency where a carer's backup is not available, the carer can access the family support team for the placement to be covered. All our foster carers are self-employed and have a duty to ensure they pay their own tax and National Insurance contribution.

Having Fun

At Parent and Child Fostering Service, we recognise that taking care of others in one's home is rewarding but can also be challenging and at times stressful. Therefore, we ensure that we get together with our foster carers informally and support them to de-stress. Parent and Child Fostering Service also organises carer's events where carers come together to socialise.

14. System for Monitoring & Evaluating the Service

The Agency has a number of systems in place for monitoring and evaluating the services as follows:

- ❖ Supervising Social Workers, foster carers and other staff receive regular supervision in order to maintain the high standards expected of carers and workers
- ❖ The Fostering Manager monitors the schedule 6 & 7 requirements of the Fostering Service Regulation 2011 which includes incidence, allegations, complaints and missing episodes

- ❖ The Manager also undertakes audits on files and management oversight on cases.
- ❖ All reports are read and signed by the managers, who's signatures represent a check on the quality of the information provided
- ❖ Annual unannounced visits are made to all carers
- ❖ The Agency Decision Maker reviews all Annual Reviews completed by the fostering service for all approved foster carers
- ❖ Tracking systems are in place to monitor timescales from initial enquiry to approval
- ❖ Feedback forms are provided to all enquirers in the information packs, at the information session, and after their preparation training groups
- ❖ Monthly evaluation of Fostering Enquiries informs the development of our recruitment and Enquiry Process
- ❖ Annual consultation with approved foster carer and young people
- ❖ The Fostering Panel routinely ask all prospective/approved carers and social workers presenting to give feedback
- ❖ The Fostering Panel will also be providing feedback to every presenting Social Worker on the quality of their assessments as part of their quality assurance role.
- ❖ The Financial Director operates clear administrative records and financial management systems pertinent to the running of the agency, including the maintenance of comprehensive and up-to-date records on all children placed.

The information gathered through reports, audit, inspection and customer feedback is constantly evaluated by the Fostering Manager and Director to judge its on-going effectiveness, make changes where necessary and use overall for service development.

15. Records and Confidentiality

In accordance with National Minimum Standard – Standard 26. Files of both Looked After Children/young people and Foster Carers are securely kept and protected.

We are governed by the same Legislation as Local Authorities regarding access to files. Looked After children and young people, subject to their social worker's approval, can have access to their files on request. All records and third-party information are kept in the strictest confidence. All staff will receive training on Data protection.

16. Complaints and Outcomes

Parent and Child Fostering Service have a comprehensive complaints procedure, which is made available to children, young people, carers, parents and professionals. The Director

and Fostering Manager monitor all complaints received regarding Parent and Children Fostering Service.

A child, a parent or carer of a child, a Foster Carer or anyone else for whom PACFS has agreed to provide a service can make a complaint under this procedure. Individuals are also able to make complaints on behalf of others if it is considered they have "sufficient interest" to do so. Children will be encouraged to take up issues in the most appropriate way and they will be supported to do this. A complaint from a Child in Care will be referred to the relevant local authority if it is not resolved at Stage 1 of the PACFS Complaints Procedure.

There are three stages to our complaint procedure. At the onset of our complaint's procedure is the informal problem-solving stage. Many issues can be investigated informally in the first instance under Stage 1.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, this should be put in writing and the complaint will then be referred to the Complaint Officer, who is the Registered Manager who will further the complaint for investigation under Stage 2. In these circumstances, the complaint investigation and outcome will be shared with the team manager of the relevant Local Authority, and with OFSTED.

If the complainant is still not satisfied with the outcome, Parent and Child Fostering Service will try to exceed the National Minimum Standards by commissioning an independent Social Worker to investigate the complaint further under Stage 3. If a complaint has been made against a staff member at PACFS, and neither the Registered Manager nor the Responsible Person can resolve this through stages 1 and 2, the investigation will be contracted to an independent social worker from an external agency.

No person who is the subject of a complaint takes any part in its consideration. If the complaint is about the Registered Manager, the Responsible Individual should instead be contacted. The Responsible Individual is based at the same office address.

If the complaint is about the Responsible Individual, the Registered Manager should be contacted as above, but will immediately refer the complaint to an external agency for investigation.

If the complainant is still unsatisfied, they will be referred to the placing authority's Children Services Director, the area ombudsman and The Chief Inspector OFSTED.

For a copy of our Complaints Procedure, please visit our website at www.parentandchildfostering.com where you can also make a complaint. You can contact the Registered Manager on 07956 924625 for the same.

17. Contact Details

For Brent Children Services

Children's Social Care
Brent Civic Centre
Engineers Way
Wembley

HA9 0FD

Tel: 0208 937 1200 Mon-Fri 9am-5pm
0208 863 5250. EDT out of hours

Contact details of other placing authorities are available on request.

The Local Government Ombudsman

PO Box 4771, Coventry
CV4 0EH
0300 061 0614

Office of the Children's Commissioner

Advice and Assistance
Sanctuary Building
Great Smith Street
London, SW1P 3BT
Freephone: 0800 528 0731 Website: www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/
Email: advice.team@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk

The Chief Inspector, OFSTED

National Business Unit
Piccadilly Gate, Store Street
Manchester, M1 2WD
Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
Telephone 0300 123 1231

Other useful contacts:

Coram Voice – 0808 800 5792 www.vcc-uk.org
Childline - 0800 1111 www.childline.org.uk

The Who Cares? Trust – 020 7251 3117 Website: thewhocarestrust.org.uk