

Statement of Purpose

Fostering Ltd

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1. Introduction

Fostering Ltd was formed in November 2014 by Najam Asghar and Caroline Larkin who between them have over 48 years' experience of working in the Social Care field in the Statutory; Voluntary; and Independent Sectors. Between them both Najam and Caroline have worked at Volunteer, Social Worker; Foster Carer; Team Manager; Service Manager and Regional Manager Levels.

The service aim is to work closely with families, foster carers and all other professionals involved in the care of children and young people to ensure that the highest quality of service is being offered.

This Statement of Purpose has been developed in accordance with the following statute law including:

- National Minimum Standards Fostering Services (2011)
- The Fostering Service Regulations (2001)
- The Children's Act Guidance and Regulations
- UK ratification of the UN Convention on the rights of the child
- The Care Standards Act (2000)

This Statement of Purpose produced in accordance with the Fostering Service Regulations includes:

- A statement of the aims and objectives of the Fostering Service
- A statement of the services and facilities provided by the fostering service
- Assessment and approval of Foster Carers
- Training and support for Foster Carers

A copy of the Statement of Purpose is provided to and made available on request to:

- Ofsted
- Any person working for the purpose of the fostering service
- Approved Foster Carers
- Children and Young people in foster care (Subject to age and understanding)
- Parents or any person with parental responsibility
- Any placing authority of any child placed in care

The Statement of Purpose is subject to regular review and whenever staffing changes occur in the provision of the service.

2. Status and Constitution of Fostering Ltd

Fostering Ltd is the trading name of Fostering Ltd which is a registered Limited Company; registration number 9328306. The listed Directors are Najam Asghar and Caroline Larkin.

The provision of a high quality, effective, child centred Foster Care Service is a core objective in Fostering Ltd's strategy for improving outcomes for children and young people and ensuing placement with local communities.

Resources have been allocated to ensure placement choice for children and young people by Fostering Ltd across the North West area.

All staff working within the Fostering Service are employed by Fostering Ltd and are appropriately trained and qualified to undertake the various tasks and responsibilities associated with providing an effective Fostering Service.

There are clear lines of responsibility and agreed levels of accountability throughout the Fostering Service.

Fostering Ltd.'s ethos is underpinned by the following -

- Fostering Ltd is proud of its Independent Status
- Fostering Ltd embraces Diversity
- Fostering Ltd recognises that support, supervision and training of foster carers, as active partners is crucial in providing a safe, caring and transparent service to vulnerable children and young people
- Fostering Ltd provides a highly flexible child centred service, providing for the child's needs throughout child hood and into independence.
- Fostering Ltd recognises the professional, flexible service which keeps the child at the Centre of its work through to independence; and will strive to ensure children and young Peoples voices are heard in developing and planning the service.
- Fostering Ltd continually strives to improve its service and deal with complaints in a fair Professional and child centred manner

3. Responsibility and Staff Team

All Services for children and young people are provided and managed by Fostering Ltd.

The owners of the Company are Najam Asghar and Caroline Larkin. Both Directors are based at the Offices at Suite 8, New Hall Hey Business Centre, New Hall Hey Road, Rawtenstall, BB4 6HL.

The skills, knowledge and experience of Fostering Ltd.'s staff are the cornerstone to providing a safe and effective service to children and young people. All staff employed are appropriately trained and qualified and many have significant experience of dealing with children and fostering services. There is a significant

commitment to ensuring the professional development of all staff working at Fostering Ltd.

All staff are subject to an Annual Appraisal where future training and development needs are identified for the following year.

Managing Director and ADM

Najam Asghar is a qualified Social Worker with a CQSW and a Post Graduate Certificate in Social Services Management. Najam has 30 years' experience in the Social Care field, including direct work with young people; and has worked as a Manager over the last 22 years in Local Authority and for Voluntary Agencies, including The Children's Society and Barnardo's. Najam also previously acted as a Form F Assessor for a number of years.

Fostering Director

Caroline Larkin qualified as a social worker in 2001 after completing her Diploma in Social Work and has many years of previous experience working within social care settings including Young People's Residential Services. She has undertaken social work and Team Manager roles within statutory and Independent settings. Caroline is a skilled assessor and has specialised in undertaking fostering and Special Guardianship Assessments. Caroline is also a Foster Carer herself and has been for many years; this gives her a particular insight of the support needs of Carers. Caroline is trained and qualified to undertake fostering assessments. Caroline was previously the Registered Manager for the Fostering Service but resigned from this in December 2018.

Acting Registered Manager

Sara Nugent who was the Assistant Team Manager in the Team, has now been recruited to the role of Registered Manager. Sara is awaiting approval from Ofsted and is 'acting' in the post until this has taken place. Sara took the position in January 2019.

Administration

We have 1.5 Administrators in the office.

Rachel Cash is an experienced Administrator and Office Manager who has worked for Fostering Agencies previously; and is aware of the roles and responsibilities in terms of ensuring the provision of efficient systems and processes to enable an effective fostering service. Rachel now works part time for the Agency.

Tania Morton is an experienced administrator who has worked in a number of schools in the local area. Tania joined the team in May 2019 and is full time.

Supervising Social Worker Posts

The Agency has 3.5 Supervising Social Worker posts.

Commissioned Services

The Agency commissions independent assessors to complete Form F and Competency based assessments and foster carer reviews. Assessments are also carried out by Fostering Ltd Social Work staff.

The Agency ensures that these assessors have extensive experience and skills within social work and assessment.

Fostering Ltd also commission external trainers to deliver Post Approval training as well as drawing from the depth of experience within the Support team.

The Agency engage with a Medical Advisor to assist in the decision making in relation to health checks for prospective foster carers.

The Agency has recruited and engaged an Independent Panel of members to act as a Panel of approval for prospective foster carers. The Panel includes an ex Care Leaver.

The Agency refer final decision making to the Agency Decision Maker engaged by the Service.

The Agency have engaged an Independent Reviewing Officer.

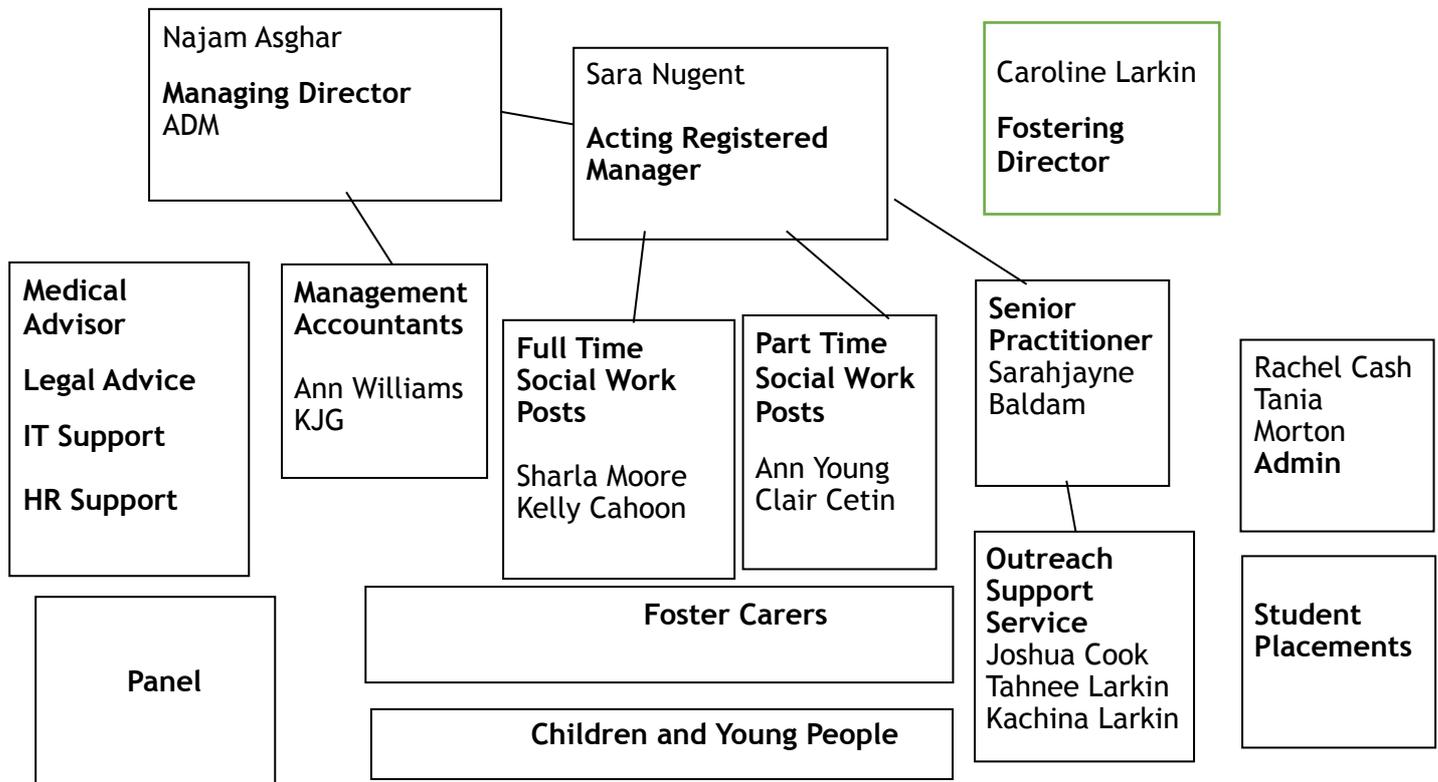
The Agency's HR Consultant is Sharon Griffiths of Watchman Consulting.

The Agency receives legal advice from Nigel Priestley of Ridley and Hall Solicitors in relation to Fostering issues; and from Fiona Chadwick of Fielden, Marshall, Glover, Strut in relation to employment issues.

IT Support is provided by Stonegate IT.

Social Media support is provided by Chris Wolstenholme of Crest Social.

Structure



Both Directors are professionally qualified Social Workers with experience in childcare practice, policy and legislation, the needs of Looked After Children and Foster Carers and their families.

Social Work Staff visit foster carers regularly, on an agreed basis but sometimes call unannounced. The purpose of these visits is to provide supervision, which will support the foster carers in their care of children, identify concerns and support solutions in any matters which impact on the welfare of children placed with the foster family. The frequency of visits reflect reported or anticipated difficulties. For example, in the early part of a placement or when difficulties are being experienced, visits are more frequent. Increased frequency or unannounced visits may reflect reported and shared concerns about the care being offered.

The staff team have mobile phones on which they can be contacted. The service operates an out of hour's duty system which allows foster carers direct access to staff outside normal working hours.

Foster carers, their own children and children placed with them have access to support and recreational groups and activities, reflecting the family model of Fostering Ltd and recognition that there are issues for all parties which can be explored in groups as well as one-to-one settings. This network is designed to facilitate opportunities for relatively seamless respite arrangements, which are agreed with the Agency and the placing Local Authority.

The Directors are responsible for ensuring the service is resourced and managed to meet its aims and objectives and key objectives include:



- Providing a strategic vision, direction and appropriate resource to meet objectives and
Statutory requirements
- Ensuring the provision of holistic services which embrace diversity and promotes equality
Of opportunity
- Promoting good stewardship and ensuring all Staff make a contribution to improving outcomes for children in Care
- The development of quality assurance systems to monitor performance against agreed
Objectives and Outcomes for children and young people
- Ensuring that foster care placements are developed and increased
- Ensuring compliance with relevant standards and legal obligations of the service

4. Fostering Ltd Standards of Care

Fostering Ltd provides a service to children and young people that meets statutory requirements and nationally recognised standards of care and codes of practice which include:

- Arrangements for the Placement of Children Regulations (1991 & 2001)
- The Children's Act (1989 & 2004)
- Working together (DoH 2010)
- Leaving Care Act (2000)
- Assessing Foster Carer's - A social workers guide to competency Assessments (BAAF)
- Engagement of the Voice of the Child in Care, where appropriate
- Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Carers (DoH 2000)
- Fostering Service Regulations (2011)
- National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services (2011)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015)

5. Aims and Objectives of Fostering Ltd

Fostering Ltd works in partnership with all Local Authorities to promote Corporate Parenting and with a wide range of partner agencies in order to achieve the best possible outcomes for children in care. In addition Fostering Ltd aims to continually develop and improve services and ensure high standards of service; with the primary aim to provide the highest quality of substitute family care for children in care.

Aims

- To provide a safe caring environment with Foster Carers who will enable children and young people to develop their full potential
- To provide a Fostering Service managed by professionals with appropriate skills and experience; and to do provide a service effectively and efficiently
- To recruit, support and train a diverse range of Foster Carers across the Northwest



- To provide supervision, support and training for Foster Carers, to ensure they look after the children and young people in their care, safely and appropriately
- To provide a well-resourced foster service that is respected in the community and which delivers excellence by providing a model of good practice enhancing the reputation and image of our Foster Carers
- To ensure that Foster Carers are at the heart of arrangements for children in care
- To provide an Outreach Support Service

Objectives

- To provide Foster Care placements where each child will have stability, security and a warm, safe, nurturing environment in which they can develop and thrive
- To carefully match the needs of children and young people with the skill of Foster Carers
- To ensure the cultural and diverse needs of the children and young people are adequately met
- To enable all children in care to benefit from educational opportunities and are prepared for independence where appropriate
- To ensure a child's physical and emotional health care needs are met and a positive health lifestyle is actively encouraged
- To promote contact with the birth family and significant others during placement and to encourage and facilitate this where appropriate
- To ensure Placement Plans are acted upon
- To work in partnership with Foster Carers, ensuring access to training, guidance and the support of a fully qualified, designated Supervising Social Worker at all times
- To ensure provision for 24 hour support for Foster Carers, Children and Young People
- A commitment to the development of the service, through service user/ stakeholder participation and consultation and the use of advocacy where appropriate
- To ensure the emotional health and wellbeing of all children in care placed in foster care
- To ensure Foster Carers act as a responsible and reasonable parent in promoting the interests and welfare of children and young people in care
- To provide children and young people with a range of social opportunities and experiences that they may not previously have been able to access
- To focus on continuous improvement, quality assurance and high service provision

6. Service Location

Fostering Ltd premises are situated on the outskirts of Rawtenstall town centre, close to the M66 and M60 motorway's and has access to bus transport links to various parts of the Northwest of England and UK. The team is located at Suite 8, New Hall Hey Business Centre, New Hall Hey Road, Rawtenstall, BB4 6HL. There is ample parking within the office complex. Fostering Ltd can be contacted by telephone on 0161 359 5674 or by email on duty@fosteringltd.co.uk

7. Service Provision

Fostering Ltd offers placements to all children in care and young people up to 18 years of age. Children and young people placed will not be expected to share a bedroom with another child in placement or a child of the foster family. The only exceptions to this are for siblings subject to evaluation and risk assessment.

Short-Term Placements

Fostering Ltd offers short-term placements where children are unable to remain at home. Assessments are usually on-going regarding possible rehabilitation home to parents/placement with extended family members. Permanent placements are sought if children cannot return home

Long-Term Placements

Fostering Ltd offers long-term placements for children and young people, where either adoption or rehabilitation to the family is not the preferred plan. Foster Carers who have had experience as short-term carers and have a good understanding of a child, will normally provide these placements or young person's long-term developmental needs.

Long-term placements will provide support for a young person into independence and beyond as a member of the family. Children with a long-term plan are matched to their carer through the Permanency Panel Process.

Sibling Placements

Sibling placements are for brothers and sisters who are placed together in a foster care household. Fostering Ltd strongly advocates that wherever possible, siblings should be placed together within a family environment. Unless it is clearly demonstrated that this would not be in the interest or welfare of either child concerned. Evidence and research shows that if siblings are not placed together at initial placement it is likely to lead to separate placements in future.

Disabled Children and Short Breaks

Fostering Ltd through its Referral System provides placements for disabled children, working in partnership with local authorities, health services and disability services and is committed to providing more effective and accessible services for disabled children and their families.

All carers for disabled children are assessed and attend pre-approval training before being presented to the Panel for recommendation.

Mother and Baby Placements

Fostering Ltd can provide Carers for Mother and Baby Placements who can provide intensive assessment and support for parenting abilities in placement, and with agreed after care support.

Planned Placements

These can be discussed with the Duty Supervising social worker or Fostering Director, followed by a written referral with full details. A Pre-Placement Planning

Meeting will then be convened within agreed timescales to explore the detailed issues for the placement. A meeting involving all parties will then produce a written Individual Placement Agreement.

Emergency Placements

Fostering Ltd endeavour to provide emergency placements and referrals should be discussed in the first instance with the duty supervising social worker in line with good practice; and subsequently the Fostering Director before a placement decision can be made.

All new referrals will be managed by the Team at the Fostering Ltd offices in Bury either by phone or via email.

Once a placement is agreed an Individual Placement Agreement will be drawn up between all parties and consistent with the desired outcomes and the child's Care Plan, prior to the child's move into a planned placement or within a week of an emergency placement. This will include -

- Anticipated period of stay and financial arrangements.
- Educational needs and arrangements.
- Health needs and arrangements.
- Attachment issues.
- Family contact needs and arrangements.
- Cultural, racial, religious, gender and language needs and arrangements.
- Areas of delegated Parental Responsibility.

As an Agency we are aware and ensure that our Carers are aware that young people will need to learn to trust, develop self-esteem and express feelings of anger, guilt and confusion about their lives.

The successful matching of placements involves the balancing of the needs of young people with the competencies, skills, capacity and circumstances of foster carers. Such a decision depends on an open and detailed sharing of the young person's history including their strengths and the requirements for monitoring any behavioural change to ensure that their welfare is compatible with individuals and environment of the foster home.

Outreach Support Service

As an agency through our work we have identified that some children and young people with complex and/or learning needs require additional support, to provide either their carer or parents with short respite. In response to this we have set up an Outreach Support Service with 3 support workers, who can work with children and young people taking them out on activities for a few hours over the course of a week. The service is in its infancy and is developing according to need.

8. Supporting Specialist Services

Many children and young people require specialist services to help them cope with the trauma they have suffered leading to their placement with Foster Carers. Fostering Ltd is able to support referrals to the connected Local Authority Adolescent Mental Health Services for children in care. Consultation and support is

provided to Foster Carers including information and advice in managing the impact of behaviour which may be a consequence of early year's trauma.

9. Behaviour Management

Inappropriate behaviour will be dealt with by positive disciplinary means, agreed with the placing authority and people with parental responsibility. These means will only be used where positive validation and reward has not been effective in modifying behaviours.

Some forms of punishment are not acceptable, for example:

- Corporal punishment.
- Any deprivation of food or drink usually available, affection, sleep, shelter or clothing.
- Restriction on contact or communication with parents, family and friends, people with parental responsibility, solicitor, independent visitor, social worker or other professionals identified in the Care Plan unless a specific requirement of the agreed Care Plan.
- Actions, which could lead to social exclusion or humiliation.
- Withholding/forcing of medical treatment.
- Being locked in a room.
- Discriminatory language or acts.
- Public criticism of the young persons' family or friends.

Some forms of punishment are acceptable but should always be appropriate in relation to the transgression, for example:

- The withholding of a proportion of pocket money to pay towards the cost of damaged or stolen items.
- Restriction on certain leisure activities, which are 'earned' by acceptable behaviours.
- Additional domestic chores or other duties.
- Grounding.
- Confiscation of illegal or dangerous items.
- Helping to mend things, which the young person has broken.
- Apologizing to those who have been harmed by the young person's behaviour.

10. Absences from the Foster Home

Foster carers should inform the placing Local Authority and Agency immediately if they become aware of an unplanned absence which suggests that the young person has run away or been removed from the household. A decision regarding who will inform the police must be made and acted on at this point.

Foster carers are required to inform the Agency in advance of any planned overnight stay away from their household and of any period of time spent in the care of another adult no matter how temporary. The Agency will ensure with the Authority that such plans are in the interests of the child.

In the event of an emergency situation, approval for arrangements should be agreed with the Agency who would consult with the Authority at the earliest opportunity.

Fostering Ltd will keep a detailed record of any such events.

11. Education Support

Education support plays a pivotal role in supporting children, young people and foster carers in promoting educational opportunities and working on a one to one basis to improve education outcomes.

Fostering Ltd will advocate on behalf of the child to ensure their specific educational and inclusion needs are met in recognising the often unique circumstances experienced by the child and the impact this may have on their experience of education and their attainment.

This involvement and support is proactively supported by Fostering Ltd and recognised as a vital tool in helping children in care enjoy and improve their educational experience.

Foster carers are expected to attend all Personal Education Plan meetings (PEP) to promote and support the educational needs of children. Promotion of education and attainment are a significant part of the annual review process of foster carers. Young people will be encouraged and supported to attend school, complete homework and take part in extra-curricular school activities, develop positive peer relationships and appropriate community based activities will be provided in consultation with all parties. Similarly, support will be provided in enjoying positive work experiences, training schemes, dealing with agencies and authorities to achieve employment and independence.

12. Promoting Leisure Activities

The involvement of children and young people in positive leisure pursuits plays a key part in Foster Care provision and helps to promote a sense of self-worth, social integration, independence and achievement. Many younger children placed in foster care are encouraged to join local organisations such as Rainbows, Beavers and youth centre initiatives.

Such activity has enhanced the quality of life of young people and enabled a sense of belonging and achievement. Fostering Ltd promotes the use of other leisure activities such as sport, music and other cultural activities and will encourage Carers to make links with the local Youth Services and facilities available.

13. Placement Matching

This is the process by which the needs of the children and young people are matched to the skills, knowledge, experience and expertise of a particular Foster Carer/s. Fostering Ltd works hard to provide placements to ensure the needs of the children and young people are met by the skills and experience of Foster Carers.



Many of the Foster Carers will have a wealth of experience or specialise in areas to meet the needs of children who have experienced abusive behaviour, have challenging behaviours or for children with very complex needs.

The Duty Officer is the first point of contact for referrals from Local Authorities who require a foster care placement. The Duty Officer will liaise closely with supervising social workers, foster carers and the child's social worker in ensuring the best possible match is made for all children. Children and young people have individual needs and all placements are unique.

Fostering Ltd requires referral information and places great importance on trying to identify the needs of the child or young person. The particular attachment of the child to significant adults will often be a crucial factor in making a good match, particularly if the placement is requested in a short time frame. Accurate matching is known to produce better outcomes and increased placement stability. Following a referral for a placement request, the Duty Supervising Social Worker will consider the available foster carers and will then begin the matching process. The matching process incorporates the Supervising Social Worker and children's Social Worker examining the foster carers Assessment and individual training plans and then considering the strengths and skills of the foster carer. Fostering Ltd believes that good matching is closely linked to a good professional assessment of the Foster Carers in the approval process.

14. Recruitment of Foster Carers

Applications to become a Foster Carer are welcomed from people across the North, regardless of gender, marital status, age, sexuality, race, disability, religion and culture or employment status. The time scale between the initial home visit to applicants and approval will be approximately five months, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Anyone over the age of 21 years may apply to become a foster carer. A welcoming and professional response is given to all enquiries. There is immediate exclusion of any applicant who has been convicted of an offence against a child or any serious offence against an adult.

There is no upper age limit for Foster Carers. Any applicant must be healthy and active, to enable them to care appropriately for a child. It is a minimum requirement that all prospective Foster Carers have at least one spare bedroom, unless the child is young enough to be in a cot, which can be placed in the carer's bedroom. This would only apply to short-term placements.

More places are needed for children and teenagers who require long-term placements with diverse cultural needs, children with disabilities and sibling groups. Fostering Ltd has a website, Facebook and Twitter accounts to encourage potential foster carers to apply. The website can be found at

www.fosteringltd.co.uk

Fostering Ltd is aware of the impact of Social Media in attracting prospective Foster Carers and has developed profiles on both Facebook and Twitter. In addition the Agency will also make use of targeted Radio Adverts utilising stations such as

‘Smooth Radio’ that have an appropriate demographic; use of marketing stalls at local events and shows; and through word of mouth.

Fostering Ltd will make use of the insight it holds in relation to the Fostering role given one Director is a Foster Carer herself and other staff have had experience of undertaking the Foster Carer role previously.

15. Assessment of Foster Carers

Any person contacting Fostering Ltd and expressing an interest in fostering will be able to have an initial discussion with a fostering social worker. At this stage and following the discussion if the enquirer wishes to continue an information pack will be sent out on the same day or as soon as possible. Prospective foster carers may be invited to attend an information event, where they can receive more information.

If the applicant is deemed to have the potential to proceed to Panel an initial visit would be completed and a Supervising Social Worker will undertake an initial screening.

The initial visit is undertaken to assess motivation to foster and discuss the implications of fostering with the applicants and other family members. Home conditions will be discussed and further basic information will be collected to enable an initial evaluation of the application. If all parties agree that fostering could be suitable for the family and the basic criteria are met, an invitation to a preparation-training group is given.

The preparation-training is based upon the Fostering Network - Skills to Foster Training Programme. The training includes:

- Skills to Foster
- Child Development
- Separation and Loss
- Working Together
- Safer Care
- Moving On

16. Statutory Checks

During the assessment Fostering Ltd will undertake a variety of statutory checks to ensure the suitability of applicants and ensure children are protected. These checks will include:

- Enhanced Criminal check - DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service)
- Local Authority Check
- Employer check
- NSPCC Check
- School Health Visitor reports
- Medical reports & assessments
- 2 Personal references (Family members not allowed)
- Domestic violence Check

- Overseas Check (If applicable)
- Ex Partners and children of an appropriate age will be interviewed where possible
- Health & Safety inspection will be undertaken

17. Form F Assessment

If the applicant is successful in their preparation group training, the applicant will be provided with a Fostering Ltd application form. When completed and returned Fostering Ltd will assign a qualified Social Worker to undertake a comprehensive assessment with the prospective carer/s and their family.

The assessing Social Worker will produce a report called a BAAF Form F, which covers individual profiles of applicants, relationships, partnerships, and applicants support network, children in the household, other adult members of the household, childlessness/limitation of family size, description of family life, valuing diversity and parenting capability.

The applicants will need to provide at least two referee's as well as details of any persons they have had a significant relationship with, for the Social Worker to contact and conduct referee interviews.

The assessing Social Worker will usually need to make between six to eight visits to the applicants home in order to spend time working with the applicants on their assessment. The assessment is a joint project and requires full participation from the applicants and their family. The assessment will consider whether an applicant can care for a child or young person in a safe and responsible manner, ensuring that their developmental needs are met and the applicants have the ability to learn new skills. Foster Carers are required to meet the Fostering Service National Minimum Standards 2011.

Once the assessment is completed the applicants will have the opportunity to read and discuss possible amendments contained in the assessment report. The report is then presented to the Fostering Ltd Fostering Panel. An applicant can withdraw their wish to complete the assessment at any time during the process.

If the applicant does not withdraw but the assessment will not be recommending them as Foster Carers, the assessment will be presented to Fostering Ltd Fostering Panel for a recommendation and the Agency Decision Maker will make a Qualifying Determination decision. The applicant can then apply to the Independent Review Mechanism (IRM) within 28 days or follow Fostering Ltd complaints procedure.

The Fostering Panel is independent from Fostering Ltd and consists of a variety of professionals and independent members, including Foster Carers and people with experience of children in care. The Fostering Panel has an experienced Independent Chair ensuring all assessments have been undertaken correctly and in accordance with National Minimum Standards and Regulations. Fostering Ltd has a central list of specialised individuals with experience of fostering and who have an interest in making a difference to children and young people. The individuals will be selected depending upon issues on the Panel agenda.

The Panel will ask applicants and the assessing Social Worker relevant questions regarding the assessment. The Panel will make their recommendation to the Agency Decision Maker whether to approve, defer for further information or not approve the application to foster.

Upon approval as a Foster Carer, a qualified Social Worker will be allocated to support the foster carer in the fostering task.

18. Foster Carer Post Approval Training

The provision of post approval training is central in maintaining high standards of care, by ensuring the personal and professional development of foster carers. Training provides Foster Carers with the necessary skills and knowledge to continue to provide a high quality service to children and young people.

It is also the key to safeguarding children, foster carers and their families. The changing requirements of providing effective and safe foster care, means that even the most experienced foster carers benefit from the opportunity to learn new skill and refresh their previous learning. Fostering Ltd has a clear strategy that highlights safeguarding as the main priority area for foster carer training.

The introduction of Training, Support and Development Standards for foster care will be completed for each foster carer by working in partnership with the Supervising Social Worker.

A rolling programme of training is available to meet the on-going professional development of Foster Carers throughout their fostering career. The introduction of minimum standards reinforces the role of training in respect of developing Foster Carers as professional partners in the care of children and young people. A key aspect of training is the positive involvement of experienced Foster Carers, making the training experience relevant and stimulating. The current training programme is wide ranging and covers:

- Safe care
- Recording
- Attachment
- Managing Behaviour
- Safeguarding and Child protection
- Children's Rights

Additional support for Foster Carers includes:

- Membership to Fostering Network
- Mentoring Scheme
- Foster Carer Forum
- Foster Carer Coffee Mornings
- Foster Carer Newsletter

All approved Foster Carers must undertake the following core training

- Record Keeping
- Safer Care
- Managing Behaviour
- Supporting children and young people on education
- Be healthy
- Safeguarding basic awareness

19. Reviews

An independent reviewing officer will conduct the reviews and some reviews are taken to the Fostering Panel, especially where there is a recommendation/ allegation/refusal of training and also when it is the first annual review following approval.

Concerns regarding Foster Carers progress or change in circumstances can lead to a review being called at any time. All Foster Carers have DBS and Medical reports updated every three years.

Reviews provide an opportunity to positively evaluate progress, development, training and practice over the previous year and plan training and development to support the carer throughout the coming year.

20. Termination of Approval

If on review, Fostering Ltd are not satisfied with the suitability of the foster carer and/or the household, approval will be terminated from a specified date. This will be by written notification to the carers and any Local Authority with children placed with them. Such recommendations must be confirmed by the Panel and ratified by the Agency Decision Maker. The Supervising Social Worker will meet the foster carers and ensure that they are aware of the Agency's complaints procedure including their right to access the Independent Review Mechanism and what this entails and their role.

Foster carers cannot be approved by more than one Agency at any one time and a move to provide a service to another Agency must be preceded by 28 days notice of such intention. Approval with the original Agency must be terminated before approval is granted by another unless there is all-party agreement to a transitional arrangement based on a decision which is made in the best interests of any children placed with the foster carers. Prospective foster carers must provide a copy of their letter of resignation before a new assessment can begin.

21. Managing Complaints and Allegations

The complaints and allegations procedure provides a fair, transparent and effective means of dealing with any concerns raised by 3rd parties regarding the care provided by Foster Carers. At the heart of the procedure is the clear understanding that the protection, welfare and interests of the child or young person must come first.

There is a clear procedure which is set within realistic time frames to ensure any issue is investigated with due respect to the Foster Carer. Fostering Ltd recognises that investigating complaints or allegations made against Foster Carers can be a very daunting and uncertain experience for Foster Carers. The procedure ensures that the supervising Social Worker, who can continue to support the Foster Carer through the process, does not investigate any complaints or allegation.

22. Quality Assurance Mechanisms and Performance Indicators



The overall performance of FOSTERING LTD will be monitored and evaluated by the following:

1. Annual Inspection

Review of Care completed by Directors Najam Asghar and Caroline Larkin prior to inspection and visits by commissioning officers from the Local Authorities

2. The stability of placements within FOSTERING LTD.

3. Statistics regarding referral matching and placements will be collected and Evaluated; FOSTERING LTD will develop a robust IT system so that this information is easily accessible.

4. Statistics regarding new placements - FOSTERING LTD's ability to meet Local Authority requests regarding location, need and accommodation.

5. FOSTERING LTD will have systems to monitor and evaluate the quality of its placements and performance of staff and carers which include -

- FOSTERING LTD Supervision Policy.
 - Evaluation form from placing authorities (end of placement) and Carer Annual Reviews
 - Records held by Fostering Ltd and audited by the Managing Director quarterly.
 - Monitoring and review of child protection matters and notifications
 - Regular audit of complaints.
6. Foster carer recruitment, assessment and review
- FOSTERING LTD commissions independent social workers with expertise and experience in child care to undertake assessments and reviews.
 - FOSTERING LTD has a Specialist Independent Foster Panel that considers all applications and reviews. There is an annual review of panel activity to inform any changes in performance, policies and procedures.
 - FOSTERING LTD has a comprehensive complaints and representation policy.
 - FOSTERING LTD continually reviews and strengthens the recruitment strategy, monitoring applications and developing an IT system to collate information regarding new carer numbers, to ensure we meet the needs of purchasers.

7. Training:

- A comprehensive annual training needs analysis form will be completed by carers.
- Evaluation forms will be completed after every course to ensure the programme is relevant.
- Managing Director prepares the Annual Training report which evaluates and identifies the training needs for the following year.

8. Foster carer and user views will be monitored and evaluated by:

- The Children's Guide
- Carer annual reviews
- Supervision and statutory visits
- Placement evaluations forms from local authorities
- Parental views (as part of the carer annual review process)
- Children and young people's Views are included in carers annual reviews
- Annual General Meeting/Foster Carer Forum (to be developed)
- Support Groups.

9. Feedback from staff:

- End of Placement questionnaires for Children's Service's Social Workers
- Agency Social Work Staff Self-Assessment Forms



FOSTERINGLTD

- Support Team Meetings
- AGM
- Supervision
- Annual Appraisals

23. Registration and Inspection.

Fostering Ltd is registered (SC488290) and inspected under The Care Standards Act 2000 by OFSTED who can be contacted by telephoning 0300 123 1231 or by email at enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk. Or in writing at

OFSTED
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

24. Data Protection

Fostering Ltd adhere to Data Protection Legislation and have an ICO registration - ZA174465

This document was created and approved by Fostering Ltd on the 10th of January 2015 and last amended August 2019.