

POLICY

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

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NB: It is recognised the Statement of Purpose is a 'live' document and is therefore reviewed at monthly Senior Management Meetings

FOUNDATION FOSTERING

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Introduction

This Statement of Purpose is written in accordance with Standard 16 of the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services and Regulation 3 & 4 of the Fostering Regulations 2011.

The Statement of Purpose relates to the Children's Guide which is provided to all children in placement, according to their age and understanding.

The Statement of Purpose is available to all foster carers, prospective foster carers, and children/young people in placement, parents, and colleagues from Local Authorities and other agencies. A copy of the statement is also made available to Ofsted. This Statement of Purpose is reviewed at monthly Senior Management Meetings not just annually. The Statement of Purpose is available on the Foundation Fostering website.

Our Mission

Our mission is to provide children and young people with a happy and safe home life and positive outcomes through looking after the well-being and development of our foster carers with integrity, respect and understanding.

2. Philosophy and Ethos of Foundation Fostering

Foundation Fostering is based upon the principles of integrity, honesty, fairness and openness. The same is expected of staff and foster carers.

The child's welfare, safety and needs are central to their care. We believe children should have an enjoyable childhood, benefitting from excellent parenting and education, enjoying a wide range of opportunities to develop their talents and skills, leading to a successful adult life.

The core elements of the Foundation Fostering model (The Secure Base Model) can be described under three headings which are the cornerstones of the agency: **Understanding the child, understanding self (self-awareness), understanding response to child's needs.** The quality of the relationship between foster carer and child/young person is one of the most accurate predictors of outcomes. A safe and helpful relationship depends on a high level of self-awareness from the foster carer.

Looked after children will have the opportunity for as full as experience of family life and childhood as possible, without unnecessary restrictions.

We believe that children are entitled to grow up in a caring and loving environment that can meet their emotional and physical development needs.

Every child should be valued as an individual and given personalised support in line with their individual needs and background in order to develop their identity, self-confidence, self-esteem in order to promote educational outcomes.

Every child will have his/her wishes or feelings listened to and taken into account.

Disabled children and those with complex needs will be treated as children first, but we will take into account their specific needs and vulnerabilities.

We recognise the importance of safe, positive contact for looked after children, to develop and maintain relationships with birth parents, siblings and the wider family.

We operate an inclusive partnership based approach, which embraces children/young people, families, foster carers, local authorities, and education and health colleagues.

We have a strong belief that, by working together at all levels, we can make a positive contribution by providing opportunities for children/young people to maximise their potential and lead fulfilling lives.

Our foster carers have the right to full information about the child they are caring for and also receive appropriate support, training and development opportunities to help increase their skills, understanding and ability to meet the needs of the children they are caring for.

Our foster carers' welfare is inextricably linked to the welfare of the child.

We are committed to equality of opportunity and this is demonstrated in our policies, procedures and practice and also membership of the Equality Register.

Foundation Fostering has an equal opportunities policy that applies to staff, foster carers and allied professionals. The Equal Opportunity policy is based on the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000, Sex Discrimination Act 1975, The Equality Act 2010, Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and the Geneva Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989. These pieces of legislation help Foundation Fostering to make a clear statement of the intention not to discriminate on grounds of race, gender, religion, language, disability, sexuality, age or on any other grounds. A copy of this policy is available on request.

3. Aims and Objectives of Foundation Fostering

These aims and objectives are all underpinned by the main principle that the welfare of the child or young person is always paramount. They are also underpinned by the recognition that the welfare of the child is inextricably linked to the welfare of the foster carer. Foundation Fostering recognises the central importance of foster care as a vehicle for transforming the lives of children in 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.

The Foundation Fostering aim is to exceed the standards and criteria outlined within Ofsted's framework for inspection and consistently provide a high standard of care. We are committed to working over and above the national minimum standards for fostering. It is our belief that improving the outcomes for looked after children is reliant on recognising that the relationship between foster carer and child/young person is, as outlined in our philosophy, the best predictor of successful outcomes. We welcome the Government's commitment to continuous staff development and increased professional recognition for all those who work within the sector of health and social care.

The aims of the Foundation Fostering service can be summarised as;

- (a) To uphold the safeguarding and welfare of children and young people as being of prime importance.
- (b) All fostered children to be provided with a well planned, stable and high quality placement that will enhance their life chances.
- (c) To recruit, train and retain foster carers, from a range of backgrounds and experiences with the potential to offer a high standard of foster care to children and young people.

(d) To provide excellent support and services to foster carers, by suitably experienced, skilled and qualified social work staff, managers and administrative support staff.

(e) To achieve an 'Outstanding' Ofsted rating in all categories through a commitment to learning lessons and thereby ensuring ongoing improvement.

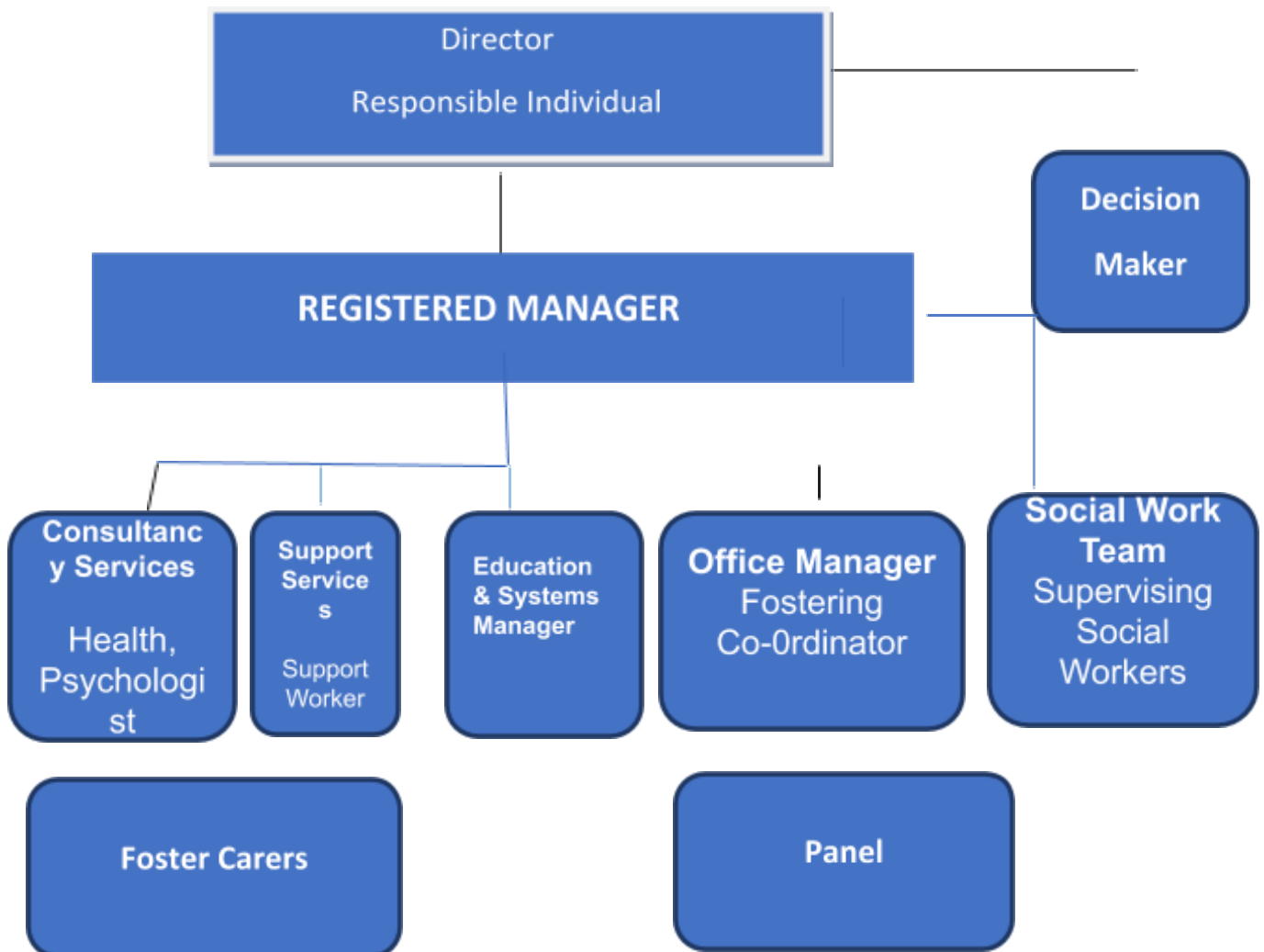
To achieve these aims the service is based on the following objectives:

- Provide a responsive, supportive, professional 24 hour service for foster carers, looked after children and purchasers.
- To deliver foster carer placements that provide looked after children with a stable and consistent experience of a safe, warm and caring family life, to maximise and enhance their potential.
- Promote a child centred approach throughout our practice, having the child's welfare as paramount in all our decisions.
- Ensure careful matching of a child's needs and wishes with the skills and qualities of a foster carer.
- Recruit and retain foster carers from diverse backgrounds ensuring a choice of appropriate placement options for children and young people.
- Ensure the cultural and diversity needs of each child and young person are met.
- Promote the educational achievement of young people enabling them to benefit from a range of educational activities.
- Enable young people to develop social interests, hobbies and take part in a range of activities.
- Promote a healthy lifestyle and ensure that every child's emotional and physical health needs are met.
- Promote contact with the birth family & significant others during a placement.
- To ensure that all foster carers have access to timely support, training and guidance from suitably qualified social workers.
- A commitment to on-going learning and professional development of the agency, foster carers and staff.
- A commitment to developing our practice through user consultation and participation.

- To deliver best value at all times.

4. Management Structure

Foundation Fostering have a Responsible Individual (Nicholas Eadon) and Registered Manager (Dean Temple). Foundation Fostering is a Limited company details as follows; Foundation Fostering Limited. Registered Office:- Acorn Business Centre. Office 7. Roberts End. Hanley Swan. Worcestershire. WR8 0DN. Ofsted registration number:- SC1264335. Company House No:- 10056786



Management and Staff Structure

Foundation Fostering strategic direction is overseen by both the Operations Director and the Agency Decision Maker. The Fostering Manager was registered on 22/12/17 and is responsible for the day to day operations. On 22/12/17 Foundation Fostering became Foundation Fostering Limited. The roles and responsibilities of staff are as follows:

- **Director: Nicholas Eadon. CQSW. BA (Hons) Child/Parental Research. NVQ 4 Management. HCPC Registered**

Nicholas oversees the Agency and how it is run and determines the direction in which it is going. Nicholas is the Responsible Individual and fulfilled the Registered Manager function until December 2017 ensuring that the Agency adhered to regulatory and statutory requirements. The registered manager role transferred to the Fostering Manager, Dean Temple on 22/12/17 who now fulfils that function.

- **The Registered Fostering Manager: Dean Temple. MA. DipSW**

Day to day management and operations of fostering service. To provide leadership and management to secure the outcomes of safeguarding standards, ensuring agreement, understanding, and implementation and monitoring throughout. Ensure compliance with regulations and legislation. Directing development of fostering service and the 'Experience and progress' of each individual child/young person. Manage and supervise staff including recruitment, selection, induction, training, staff development and staff appraisal processes. Manage the allocation of work.

- **The Agency Decision Maker: Tom Gormley. CQSW.** The Agency Decision Maker makes timely, quality and appropriate decisions in relation to the panel's recommendations in line with the overriding objective to promote the welfare of children in foster care. The Agency Decision Maker is professionally qualified and a highly effective Children's Services Manager with a wealth of experience.

- **Education & Systems Manager.** This is a new role and has a dual purpose. The Education & Systems Manager ensures Regulation 16(1), NMS 8 are adhered to and there is effective liaison with schools/colleges and virtual heads. Promoting the wellbeing of children in placement.

The role also has a high focus on the management of improving all office systems, communications, processes and systematic reminders and providing additional levels of Q&A to ensure overall efficiency and effectiveness of the agency.

- **The Office Manager** is responsible for all areas of administrative responsibility, supervising Administrative Assistants and coordinating panel meetings.

- **Administrative Assistant.** This is a part-time role and currently there is a vacancy to provide important administration support to the Team from Auditing files to recording, referrals, IT to general administrative support.

- **Supervising Social Workers.** There are two qualified social workers who undertake the recruitment, approval, training and support functions related to foster carers. The supervising social workers are qualified and HCPC registered.

- **Support Workers.**

There are two sessional support workers available to support children in their foster home and promote placement stability. They do not carry out social work tasks. This is a non-statutory role within an agreed placement plan. The support workers undertake outreach work and are responsible for assisting in the promotion of good childcare practice in accordance with Foundation Fostering policy and procedures and National Minimum Standards (Fostering). They are also

responsible for identifying and utilising activity centres and community resources to ensure that young people have access to excellent leisure opportunities.

- **The Psychologist** provides advice, guidance and support to foster carers and staff. This includes support to the service by way of planning, training and development.
- **Panel:** In accordance with the Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011, Foundation Fostering has established a fostering panel whose overriding objective is to promote and safeguard the welfare of children in foster care. Our Fostering Panel meets in Worcestershire on a regular basis. The Panel has a balance of gender, ethnicity and qualifications and reflects our commitment to bring together individuals from different backgrounds. The panel has access to specialist legal and medical advice as required. The Independent Chair has more than 30 years' experience of working with children and young people in a variety of roles. The Vice Chair is a qualified teacher and a Director of a special needs organisation. Our central list of suitable panel members includes a teacher, a foster carer, a psychotherapist, a qualified nurse, a formerly looked after child and qualified social workers.

5. Equal Opportunities

Foundation Fostering shall adopt a policy to comply with its statutory obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and with all regulations and Codes of Practice, made under the Equality Act 2010. Foundation Fostering shall set out its policy to comply with its statutory obligations under the Equality Act 2010 in a) instructions to those concerned with recruitment, training and promotion; and b) in documents available to employees.

6. Service Provision

Foundation Fostering offers family placements to all looked after children and young people aged up to 18 years of age. Children and young people placed, will not, under any circumstances, 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.

Foundation Fostering is also able to offer placements that are not regarded as 'mainstream', and will work in partnership with local authority staff in order to identify suitable placements for, as examples, parent and baby/child, placements for children with disability and/or identified special needs, young people with drug dependency issues or other issues that require more specialist knowledge and care. Where necessary we would source specialist training.

Emergency and Unplanned Placements

Where ever possible placements are planned, but there are circumstances where a child may need to be placed in an emergency. Such placements will be made on a 28 day basis in order to assess suitability for foster care and the immediate needs of the child or young person. This will be combined with a written assessment of needs with recommendations to meet those needs. During this period we would provide additional support where necessary.

Respite Placements

Respite placements offer families, children and young people respite or a break from complex family dynamics. Well planned breaks may prevent disruptions to a placement or problems becoming too difficult to manage in the future. Respite can be offered to our own foster carers and is available to support placement demands and needs.

Bridging Placements

Bridging placements can be for a period of a few days, weeks or months, whilst plans are made for the child's future by the local authority. Bridging placements are for children or young people while permanency plans are being formulated. In such placements, Foundation Fostering 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, or for moving to a semi-independent or an independent living arrangement.

Long-Term Placements

Foundation Fostering offers permanent placements for children and young people, where either adoption or rehabilitation to family is not an option. These placements will normally be provided by foster carers who have had experience as task-centred carers and have a good understanding of a child or young person's long term developmental needs. Long term placements will provide support for a young person up to gaining independence and beyond.

Specialist Support Services

Foundation Fostering offers Psycho-social activity support tailored to the needs of the child or young person. Foundation Fostering provides support from a UKCP accredited psychotherapist with expertise in attachment difficulties using a range of skills and approaches, and is able to offer support to carers and staff. Foster carers are supported in managing their feelings and responses arising from caring for children who display challenging behaviour. The psychotherapist offers workshops and individual consultations with foster carers and staff to address these issues and to offer strategies in managing behaviour.

7. Recruitment and Approval of Foster Carers

Foundation Fostering's approach to the assessment of foster carers is guided by its overall objective of achieving successful placements and the ultimate safety, security and long-term happiness of young people. We aim, therefore, to recruit foster carers with the appropriate skills, experience, family circumstance and inner resources to be able to meet the needs of children and young people with complex emotional problems and attachment disorders. We look for an ability to see beyond children's behaviour, and to link it to past trauma, where applicable.

We welcome applications for assessment to become a foster carer from people regardless of gender, marital status, sexuality, race, disability, religion, and culture or employment status. We aim that the timescale between the initial visit and approval will be within six months and no longer than eight months, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

We do take into account geographical considerations for new applicants, and whether we can realistically support them.

There is immediate exclusion of any applicant who has been convicted of an offence against a child, or any serious offences against an adult.

All foster carers who have offences against their name will have a conviction risk assessment in place.

It is a minimum requirement that all prospective foster carers must have at least one spare bedroom.

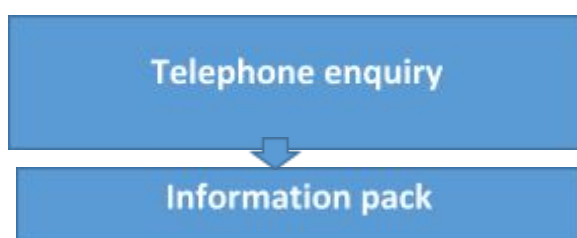
During the assessment, we will undertake a variety of statutory checks, which include;

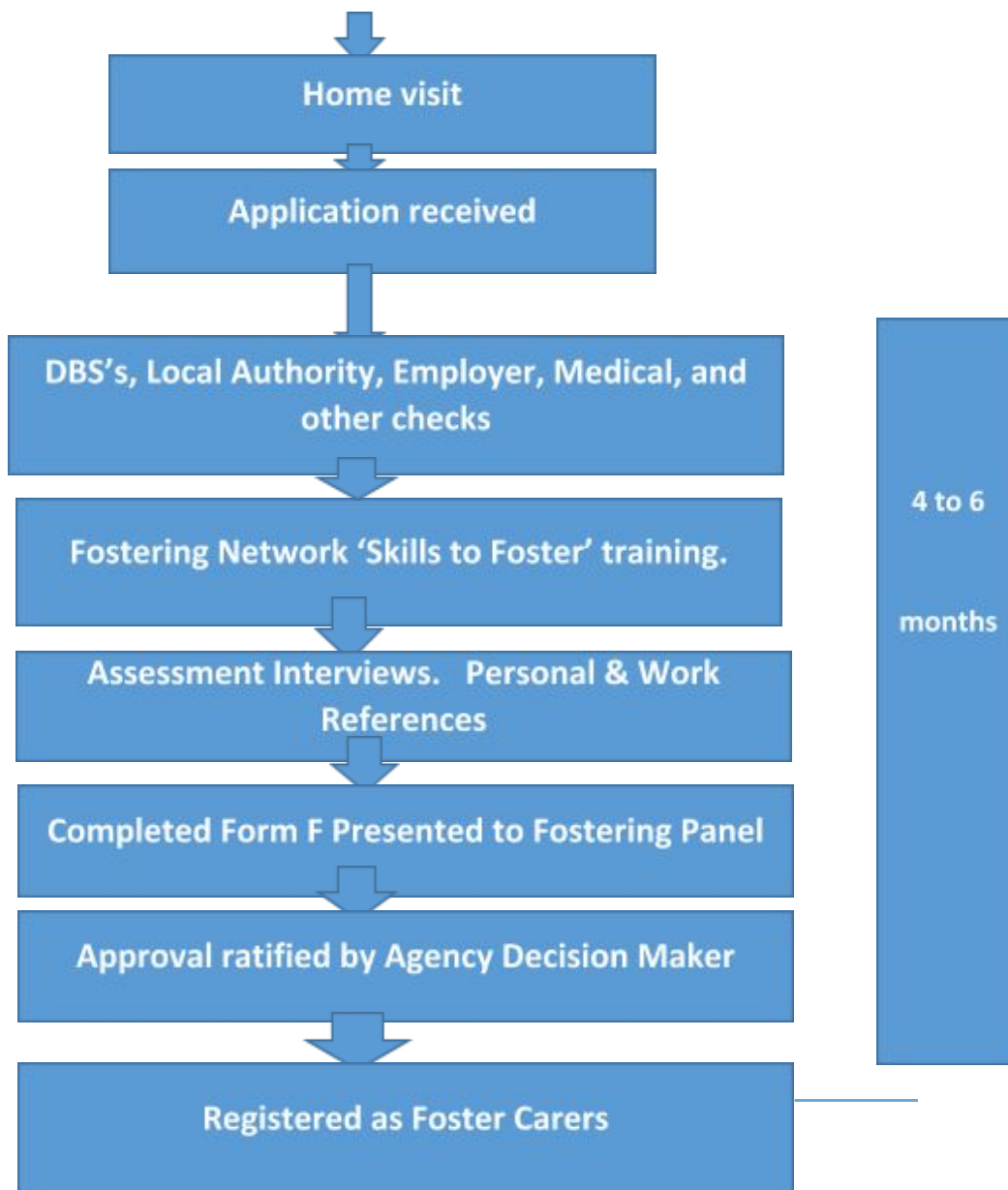
- Enhanced Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) check
- Local authority checks
- Employer and/or current fostering organisation references
- School/health visitor reports
- Medical Reports
- At least two personal references plus one life-time referee where possible

A Home Safety check will also be carried out.

During the assessment the applicants will be required to attend a two-day training course called “Skills to Foster”. They are also required to complete four online training courses and an appropriate First Aid course within six weeks of approval before any child/young person is placed. Occasionally foster carers who are transferring from another agency will be approved without attending the Skills to Foster if sufficient previous training has been evidenced and verified through their existing agency, but they would be required to go through an induction process.

Foundation Fostering - Assessment and Approval Process





8. Training For Foster Carers

Foundation Fostering expects approved foster carers to maintain an up to date training portfolio of internal training attendance and evidence of current knowledge, through reading, research and supervision. This ensures carers are maintaining skills and developing in areas of need of the young person in placement, and their own individual interests related to social care in the wider context. Online training in addition to face to face training has now been introduced and commenced.

9. Arrangements for Staff Supervision, Training and Development

All staff have a named supervisor and line manager. The required standard for supervision is monthly for all staff. This is always recorded, timed and signed. All staff are required to have an Annual Appraisal.

10. Systems for Monitoring and Evaluating the Service

Whilst there have been systems in place to monitor the Foundation Fostering service recent actions have taken place to make improvements and other actions currently in process and implementation. These quality assurance improvements are a combination of a more sophisticated means of measurement and some are simply additional levels of monitoring.

The Registered Manager oversees a comprehensive monitoring system in accordance with regulatory requirements. Safeguarding matters are a key priority and the Registered Manager has lead responsibility. Patterns of concern are identified within reporting structures of the agency and action taken. An Independent Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Committee has been recently formed which meets quarterly. Its purpose is to oversee all safeguarding matters which the Registered Manager reports to.

The outcomes and progress of children and young people are monitored and understood by narrative and qualitative measures.

A Complaints, Compliments and Feedback log records communications from Foster carers, Children and local authorities no matter how major or minor.

A monthly management report is produced by the Registered Manager outlining in detail regulatory matters and further issues.

Fostering Panels are chaired by an independent person and regular liaison takes place between the Chair of the Panel and the fostering service to identify any quality assurance issues and training requirements.

Feedback forms are completed by prospective and approved foster carers attending panel.

Reviews of foster carers are undertaken by an experienced Independent Social Worker.

Progress of agreed objectives within each of the five outcomes is monitored.

All papers presented to the Panel are quality assured and signed off by the Registered Fostering manager.

Foster carers have access to a complaints procedure.

Monthly file audits are undertaken by the Fostering Manager within a Quality Assurance Framework.

A new Senior Management weekly reporting safeguarding Tool has been devised and will be implemented January 2019.

An annual 'Organisational/Regulatory Health Check Report' is commissioned by the agency to an independent professional consultancy the first undertaken December 2018.

Foundation Fostering will undertake periodic satisfaction surveys of foster carers, children and local authorities.

The views, wishes and feelings of children and young people placed will be sought via a variety of communication channels

All staff will have regular supervision and annual Performance Development Reviews.

11. Policies and Procedures

Foundation Fostering policies and procedures are created in line with current legislation, regulations, National Minimum Standards and guidance. Foundation Fostering has a foster carer handbook containing policies, procedures and practice matters. It is issued to every approved foster carer. The handbook contains information on fostering law, safeguarding, child protection, health and safety matters, assessing the needs of children and young people, care planning, health, education, complaints, training, record keeping, outcomes and expectations.

The handbook is reviewed throughout the year and updates issued annually or more regularly as required to foster carers. Foundation Fostering believes in consulting with all individuals, groups and organisations in terms of on-going improvement. This consultation will, importantly, include the children and young people cared for by the Fostering Service and their parents, as well as foster carers and their families. A variety of formats will be used to encourage feedback from Children and young people and the Agency will be sensitive to the child's normal means of communication, to avoid discrimination.

12. Complaints

All children and young people placed with Foundation Fostering will be advised on the comments and complaints procedure. The Children's Guide provides a list of numbers which includes Ofsted and the Children's Right Director and appropriate helplines, including details of the child or young person's social worker and Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO).

Foster Carers will have access to the Agency's Complaints Policy and Procedure and the contact number of Ofsted will be made available to them. The Foundation Fostering Quality System shall record oral and written complaints received on the performance of its service, and the action taken in respect of each such complaint. Foundation Fostering will deal with all complaints in a prompt, courteous and efficient manner.

The complaints policy is made available to all staff of the agency and upon request to others wishing to make a comment or complaint.

The complaints procedure has 3 stages – Stage one is informal, stages two and three are formal. Foundation Fostering will endeavour in the first instance to deal with complaints informally. If a complaint is not resolved informally the agency will have access to independent investigation and a full response provided as detailed in the agency procedure. The registered manager is notified of all complaints.

13. Premises

The agency has been based at Acorn Business Centre, Roberts End, Hanley Swan, near Malvern. Worcestershire, WR8 0DN since 1st October 2013. The premises comprise of four secure working offices providing appropriate back office resources and also a training/meeting room. There is ample car parking space.

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