

POLICY

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

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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. Whilst the Statement of Purpose is reviewed annually by the senior management team reviews are undertaken when changes occur ensuring this document is kept up to date. 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 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.

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.

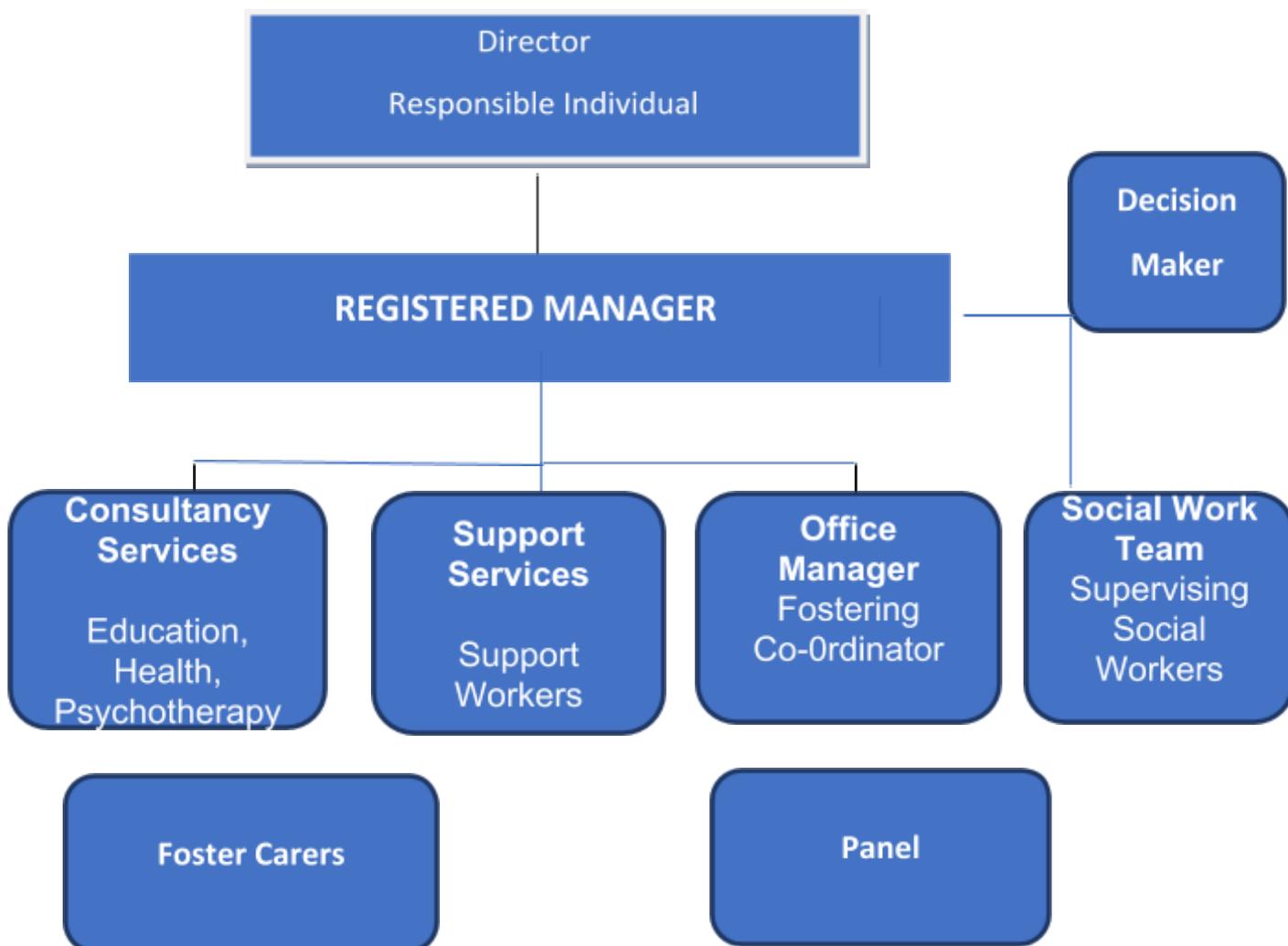
The Foundation Fostering aim is to meet and exceed the standards outlined within Ofsted legislation and consistently provide a high standard of care. We are committed to working over and above the national minimum standards for fostering. It is our belief that improving the outcomes for looked after 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.

- Foundation Fostering aims to provide foster placements that offer a safe, healthy and nurturing environment for the young people placed, where they can be enabled to form appropriate attachments and to make sense of their past experiences with the support of a good role model.
- Foundation Fostering aims to provide foster carers to local authorities on the basis that they represent appropriate matches for a child and are capable of meeting his/her assessed needs.
- Ensure that children are appropriately matched and placed with approved carers able to offer a high standard of safe, consistent and effective care. In pursuing these aims Foundation Fostering expects all of its carers to understand the dimensions of a child's developmental needs, to provide optimum care along the various dimensions of parenting capacity, and , acknowledging the child's environment, to work in partnership with the child, the child's family and professionals to secure the objectives of the child's care plan.

- Foundation Fostering provides a family placement service to children and young people with complicated histories, traumatic life experiences, disability and special needs and with a range of complex attachment disorders, with associated emotional and behavioural issues of problems. These young people may have already experienced several foster care and other placement disruptions. We aim to provide intensive support to our foster carers to enable them to sustain such placements.
- We adopt a highly individualised approach to providing a support plan, monitor, review and evidence agreed outcomes to meet the needs of the child or young person in placement.
- We will use qualitative and quantitative techniques through interviews, observations and professional documentation combined with professional consultation to explore, understand and gain insight into the 'story' behind the child/young person: thus supporting our understanding of the responses needed to achieve desired outcomes.
- We will regularly ascertain the wishes and feelings of a child or young person in placement to ensure their participation in decisions affecting them, in a way which is understood and communicated by them.
- Foundation Fostering is committed to a child and young person-centred approach, where all decisions made in relation to the child or young person will hold their best interests and welfare as the first and paramount consideration.

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:

- **The Operations 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.

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

- **Administrative Assistants.** There are two part-time assistant administrators who 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.

- **Social Work Assistant.** To provide on-going practical support and advice on fostering issues and standards to approved foster carers, their families, and children in care to meet the needs of the children in placement.

Undertakes the role of 'allocated worker' supporting foster carers, as assigned by Team Manager/Supervising Social Worker. Assists in the processes associated with the recruitment of carers under the supervision of a Social Worker / Team Manager. Works in partnership with Service Users, Service Providers and the Voluntary Sector. Provides one to one support to young people, and provides some necessary respite for the carers. Assists with and facilitates the Children and Young Persons Ambassador scheme and assists in collating children's feedback or their engagement in participation projects.

- **Support Workers.**

There are three 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 Psychotherapist** 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.

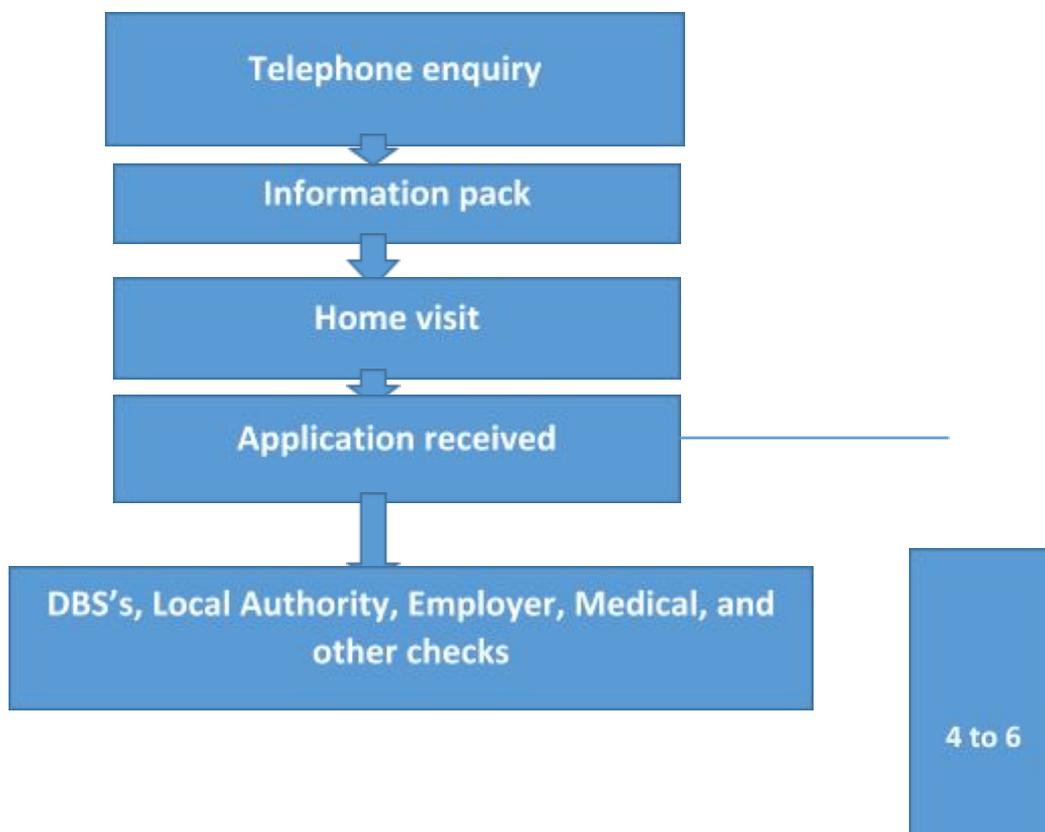
During the assessment, we will undertake a variety of statutory checks, which include;

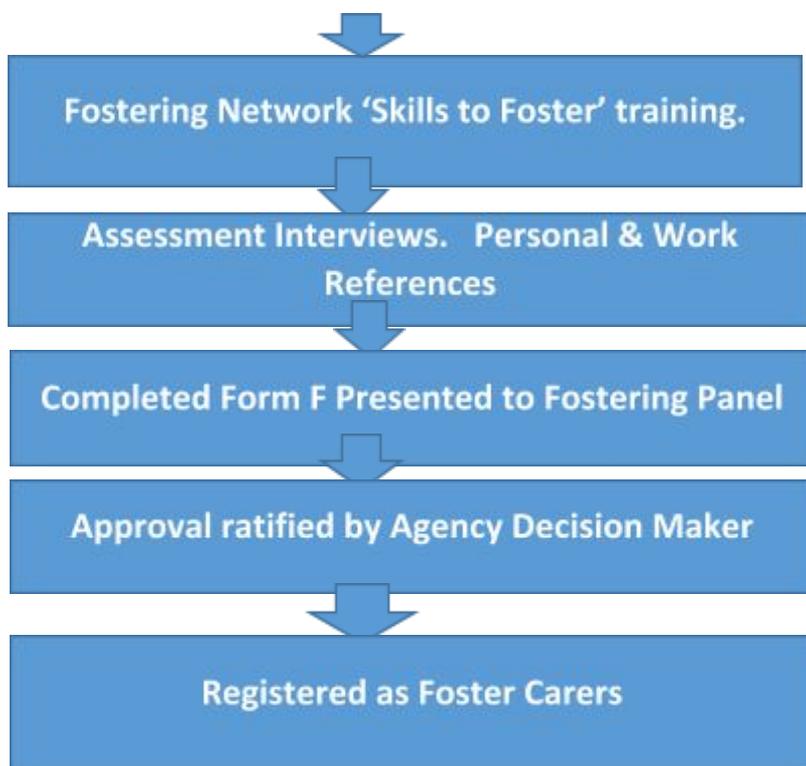
- Enhanced Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) check
- Local authority checks
- Employer and/or current fostering organisation references
- School/health visitor reports
- Medical Reports
- At least two personal references plus one life-time referee where possible

A Home Safety check will also be carried out.

During the assessment or as soon as possible after the assessment the applicants will be required to attend a two-day training course called “Skills to Foster”. 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 and 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. Quality Assurance

Foundation Fostering shall maintain a properly documented system of quality control designed to ensure that the service is supplied in accordance with the Fostering Service Regulations, National Minimum Standards and the Children Act 1989. Such systems shall include daily supervision and a carrying out of inspections at least once every month.

A number of quality assurance measures are in place to regularly and diligently monitor the performance of the Foundation Fostering service.

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.

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 by the Operations Director.

Foster carers have access to a complaints procedure.

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

A Supervision Performance Audit Tool has been devised and is placed on the front of each foster carer's file to ensure relevant checks are up-to-date and that actions from reviews have been completed.

Foundation Fostering will undertake periodic satisfaction surveys of foster carers.

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 three secure working offices providing appropriate back office resources and also a training/meeting room. There is ample car parking space.

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