Statement of Purpose 2020-2021

Fostering Service

Children, Young People & Families

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Introduction

Our Statement of Purpose has been developed in accordance with, and produced to meet, the requirements of:

- Fostering Services Regulations 2011
- The Children Act 1989
- The Care Standards Act 2000

Decision making and arrangements for management of the service, including the appointment of the Fostering Service Manager, under Regulation 10, and approval of Foster Carer registrations, under Regulations 27 and 28 of the Fostering Services Regulations 2011, are delegated through the Director of Children's Services to the Service Director of Children's Social Care.

The Statement of Purpose outlines the service we provide to Foster Carers, children and young people, parents and other professionals. The Statement of Purpose is reviewed annually and is available to download from our website on request.

About Us

We are a local authority fostering service which recognises that children and young people in care should be provided with the very best of care, nurture, support and opportunities to meet their full potential.

We believe that children should not have to change schools or lose friendship groups by having to move out of area. We aim to recruit and develop the skill base of our carers locally to provide the least disruption for our children and young people.

We are committed to matching children to carers who meet individual needs, including those relating to sibling groups, disabilities, complex emotional and behavioural needs and cultural or religious origins.

We believe that all children have the right to stability in placement to be cared for by carers who are skilled and supported in their own right.

We believe that all our foster placements should be healing environments for children with an emphasis on therapeutic care in which skilled carers are able to use techniques from PACE, Theraplay and NVR and Life Story Work.

We believe that our Foster Carers have one of the most important jobs in the world and must be respected as professionals. Our Foster Carers should be fully included in in the team around the child and be offered a timely and responsive service.

As a fostering service, we have been entrusted the care of children and young people who have the right to be safe, learn, achieve, feel loved and experience joy and we are committed to this.

Objectives & Values

- To offer local family placements where relationships with birth family, friends and community are maintained and continuity of education, cultural links and activities are ensured.

- To provide high-quality, family based therapeutic care for all children in need to family-based placement.

- To promote attachment-style parenting that focuses on a child centred approach and therapeutic care.

- To recruit and retain foster carers from a range of backgrounds to ensure appropriate matches for the children being placed.

- To match Foster Carer's abilities and skills with the assessed needs of the children placed and ensuring that our Foster Carers have full information make informed decisions regarding children being placed and wherever possible a pre-planning meeting and introductions with the child.

- To provide a responsive fostering service to offer timely support to Foster Carers and Looked After Children which promotes placement stability.

- To ensure that all Foster Carers have access to a broad range of training opportunities.

Services Provided

The Fostering Service aims to meet a diverse range of need by providing:

- Short break care/shared care to support families when a child or parent has a disability or long-term illness
- Short-term foster care placements
- Long-term foster care placements
- Solo placements
- Sibling group placements
- Assessment and support for friends and family carers
- Staying put placements for previously looked after young people who wish to remain in their former foster placement beyond 18 years of age
- Supported Lodgings Placements
- Parent & child assessment placements
- Resilience placements
- Unaccompanied Children Seeking Asylum placements
- Step Down from residential placements
- Foster to Adopt/Early Permanence placements
- Respite (for foster carers) placements

All Placements are made, undertaken and monitored in accordance with the Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011.

Organisational Structure

Bournemouth Christchurch & Poole (BCP) Fostering Service united under one manager in October 2019. Since that time there has been a significant amount of work undertaken to align the service.

Team Manager: Rubina Payne (appt Jul-2015)			
ATM	ATM	ATM	ATM PT
Accommodation Worker	SSW	SSW	SSW
SL Worker	SSW	SSW	SSW
SL Worker	SSW	SSW	SSW
SL Worker	SSW	SSW	SSW
SL Worker	SSW	SSW	SSW
SL Worker	SSW	SSW PT	
SL Worker PT	FSP	FSP	FSP
	FSP		
Training & Development Officer			
Pod Admin	Pod Admin	Pod Admin	Pod Admin
Panel Admin			

All members of the service are suitably qualified and receive monthly supervision and annual appraisals.

Supervising Social Workers/Fostering Placement Social Workers are qualified and HCPC registered.

The majority of the team, including Family Support Practitioners/Social care Support Workers have front line childcare experience and bring a wealth of knowledge and skill to the service. All staff undertake mandatory training in safeguarding, equality and diversity and data protection. All staff are required to keep their training up to date and have working knowledge of the therapeutic support tools used in the team.

Within the team there are trained champions and coaches in the following areas:

- Theraplay
- Non-Violence Resistance training
- Life Story Work
- PACE
- Reparative work
- Attachment Style Parenting
- Escape the Trap
- Skills to Foster Facilitators
- Counselling
- Motivational Interviewing

- NLP
- Lego: 'Think Bricks'– Therapeutic Approaches Supporting Social & Emotional MH
- Certified Autism Specialist

In addition, the Supervising Social Workers receive regular clinical supervision with a psychologist to reflect on complex practice issues.

Supervising Social Workers/Fostering Placement Social Workers

- Provide high quality and responsive care to our Foster Carers
- Promote attachment style parenting and therapeutic support for children and young people in placement
- Are actively involved in the development of the placement agreement and plan through regular supervisory and support visits
- Monitor and assess the needs of the whole fostering family for support services and arranging for additional support or respite where appropriate
- Undertake all Statutory Duties

Family Support Practitioners/Social Care Support Worker

Offer one to one support for Children and young people through:

- Life Story work
- Theraplay
- Befriending and support for isolated young people
- Escape the Trap work with young people

Support for Foster Carers & Family through:

- Embedding principles of NVR
- Reparative work with children and young people and their carers
- One-to-one support for children of Foster Carers & running of the dedicated Funky Monkey Group
- Facilitate Forums and support groups
- Offer one to one training for Foster Carers

Recruitment, Assessment, Approval & Reviews of Carers

We are committed to recruiting carers who can meet the needs of children and young people by providing high quality care. All prospective foster carers who make an enquiry are subject to a rigorous assessment and vetting procedure.

Recruitment of Foster Carers from a wide range of backgrounds is promoted to meet the diverse needs of local children. This includes recruitment targeted at specific ethnic and religious groups.

The assessment process for carers follows the requirements of The Fostering Services Regulations 2011 (Regulation 26 and Schedule 3), and recent requirements and procedures concerning Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks. NMS 2011

We aim to complete fostering assessments within five months. This is a two-stage process in line with regulations and includes: -

- DBS checks and checks with other relevant agencies
- At least two refences
- Previous partner references
- Six to Eight interviews with applicants and household members
- Medical report
- Identify Checks, enhanced DBS
- Pet Assessment
- Employment Reference
- Probation Reference
- Health and Safety Assessments
- A two-stage assessment process
- Skills to foster course is undertaken while the applicants are being assessed and overs a range of topics including: safeguarding, safe caring childcare Law, Life Story Work, anti-discriminatory practice. There is also an evening event for the children of prospective foster carers
- Full BAAF assessments
- a second opinion visit is completed by a Practice Manager

Assessment of prospective carers are carried out in accordance with the requirements of The Care Standards Regulations (20011). The assessments process takes up to Five months and every effort is made to ensure that there is no avoidable delay.

All information obtained is held on file in accordance with the Fostering Service Regulations (2011) and Data Protection Act.

The completed assessment report is presented to the Fostering Panel. A panel has been established in accordance with Regulation 23 of The Fostering Services Regulations 2011 and there is a Central List of Panel Members for BCP. The Panel considers and makes recommendations on all fostering applications. The completed assessment report is presented to the Panel by the assessing social worker. The applicants are invited to attend.

The Panel is chaired by an independent member, who has substantial experience of chairing panels related to children's welfare. The panel is made up of at least six members who have a variety of experience and knowledge including health and education, being foster carers, or care experience themselves. A qualified social worker with three years' experience also sits on panel. The function of the panel is to provide an independent quality assurance role, consider the approval of the application and continuation of foster carer's approval.

The Panel makes recommendations regarding approval and the Agency Decision maker makes the final decision about approval and terms and conditions of registration.

Foster Carer Annual Review

All Foster Carers have an annual review to ensure that they continue to be suitable to be approved as foster carers. The annual review report is undertaken by the Supervising Social worker and Foster carers. Feedback is received from the child or young person placed and all other professionals involved.
Bournemouth based carers annual reviews are presented at the Fostering Panel. Poole based carers initial annual review is presented at Panel and subsequent three yearly review. As part of establishing the new fostering service this will be reviewed.

If the decision of the Agency Decision Maker is not to approve a prospective foster carer, or not to continue the registration of an existing foster carer, those affected have two options.

- They can either apply to the Independent Review Mechanism (IRM) for a review of fostering service provider's qualifying determination or,
- they can make direct representations to their fostering service provider.

The IRM is a review process conducted by a Review Panel which is independent of fostering service provider.

Support for Foster Carers

The Fostering Service is committing to recruiting carers who are able to provide a therapeutic family environment where children are:

- able to experience family life without unnecessary restrictions
- safe and their needs are prioritised
- included, valued and respected as an individual
- emotionally supported
- listened to and understood
- praised for their achievements
- given appropriate boundaries and control
- able to make choices
- able to have any disabilities or complex needs recognised and taken into account
- given reasonable privacy and personal space
- offered good standards of nutrition, physical care, health care and hygiene
- able to achieve their full potential educationally
- offered opportunities for leisure and social activity
- able to maintain contact with their family, religious and cultural ties

We recognise that meet these aims and principles foster carers need the full support of a robust and supportive fostering service. Our commitment that that all foster carers will be appropriately:

- recruited and assessed regarding their suitability to care for vulnerable children
- committed to anti-discriminatory values and to promoting children's family ties and cultural, religious and ethnic identity
- supported by skilled supervising social workers and other specialist services
- informed about the child/ren in their care
- informed and involved in planning and decision making
- trained and competent
- valued as equal partners
- rewarded for their skills and commitment
- supervised and supported by qualified social workers

Support provided to our Foster Carers and their family

- Monthly supervision with an allocated Supervising Social Worker/Fostering Placement Social Worker and regular contact through email and telephone. If additional support is needed this is increased and enhanced and Resilience Placements receive fortnightly supervision visits.
- Home visit and support package from Family Support Practitioners/Children Support Worker for Looked After Children, birth/adopted children and Foster Carers.
- A dedicated Fostering Service available to support.
- Access to Fostering management and expectation of a prompt response.

- Foster Carers receive an additional respite fee in their fortnightly payments (equivalent to two weeks fostering fee). Foster carers are encouraged to take respite when needed and work with their Supervising Social Worker/Fostering Placement Social Worker and Child's social worker to plan this around the needs of the child.
- Day Care support is offered. Foster carers are also encouraged to develop support networks in the fostering community.
- All Foster Carers receive a fee and allowance paid fortnightly during the placement. The level of this allowance is dependent on the type of placement and experience of the foster carer. In addition, Foster Carers are also paid birthday and religious festival payment made for any child placed and a mileage allowance.
- Provides a team of social workers, who are available outside office hours to offer emergency social work support.
- There is a team of clinical psychologists who offer a dedicated consultation service to Foster Carers. Foster Carers have access to fast tracked consultations for support and advice regarding behaviour management or help with understanding specific issues. A Clinical psychologist also facilitates support groups and regular training events for Foster Carers.
- Virtual School Educational Worker/Educational Psychologists are based locally and offer our carers support with any concerns regarding education.
- Foster Carers can access the support and advice (face to face and via telephone) from one of our Looked After Children's Nurses regarding any health issues or concerns.
- Once approved Foster Carers automatically become members of Foster Talk (Bournemouth Based) & Fostering Network (Poole Based). Foster Talk/Fostering Network provides carers and their families with financial and legal advice.
- Funky Monkeys support group for carers own children and young people. The group meets during the school holidays and at half term. They have been involved in some creative projects such as making a film about living in a foster family. It offers an opportunity for children of Foster Carers to explore the issues relating to them. Training is also offered to the group.

Training

We are very proud of our comprehensive post approval training programme. We believe that our carers need the opportunity to reflect on practice and develop their knowledge and skill base. The key aim is to ensure that the training being offered is transforming practice and making a difference in the lives of the children and young people placed.

Training opportunities have been developed to ensure that all carers, regardless of ability or skill level can have the opportunities to fully participate in developing their skills and knowledge base. We take a person-centred approach to all training plans and are mindful in respects to individual needs, such as dyslexia or when English is not the first language.

- Dedicated Training and Development Officer
- Personalised training portfolio for each Carer
- Broad and extensive range of training opportunities including face-to-face and online
- Dedicated Training & Development Officer
- Opportunities for extended training events
- Transitions support group facilitated by a Clinical Psychologist
- Opportunities for Carers to become champions and coaches
- Day/Evening Monthly Foster Care Forum
- Bespoke training package for newly approved foster carers
- PACE support group Facilitated by a Clinical Psychologist
- Monthly Training Standards Development Work Shop
- Parent & Child Reflection Group
- Resilience Carers Support Group

Face-to-face training offered in 2019

- Advanced Equality and Diversity
- Attachment (1 day)
- Attachment (12 weeks)
- Caring for Separated & Trafficked Children
- Child Development
- Conduct Disorders
- Court Skills
- De-escalation & Managing Challenging Behaviour
- Escape the Trap
- First Aid Paediatric
- Global Developmental Delay
- Internet Safety & Social Media
- Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual & Transgender
- Mental Health & ASD (Speaker)
- Mental Health First Aid for Youth
- Mindfulness
- NVR (4 days)
- NVR (5 sessions)
- P&C Reflection Group
- PACE (6 session Course)
- Parenting following Domestic Violence
- Resilience Support Group
- Safeguarding
- Safer Foster Care
- Stress Management
- Substance Misuse
- The Great Behaviour Breakdown
- Therapeutic Parenting (4-Week Course)
- Theraplay
- Total Respect Group (LAC Children)
- Transitions Support Group
- Working with Child Sexual Abuse
- Working with Emotional Abuse and Neglect
- Yoga & Mindfulness

Training offered at Forums

- Adoption with Aspire Manager
- Arts Council Children's Workshop
- CSE with Dorset Police
- De-escalation
- Diaries
- Foster Talk
- Fostering Team Manager
- Impact of Domestic Violence
- CIC Process with Experienced CIC Social Worker
- Meet Bournemouth's Service Manager
- Mental Health and ASD
- Parenting Assessments
- Training Focus Group

Online Training Courses

- ADHD & Autism Advanced Level Fostering
- Adoption Fostering
- Alcohol Awareness Advanced
- Anti-Bullying Advanced
- Attachment & Bonding
- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Caring for Asylum Seeking & Refugee Children
- Caring for Sexually Abused
- Caring for Traumatized Children
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Child Trafficking
- Children & Domestic Violence Fostering
- Cognitive Behaviour Therapy Fostering
- Communicating with Children
- Complex Trauma
- Conduct Disorders
- Contact and Birth Families
- Counselling for Foster Carers
- Court Skills
- Cyber Bullying
- Data Protection & Confidentiality
- Delusional Paranoid Schizophrenia
- Depression & Suicide
- Drugs & Alcohol Awareness
- Eating Disorders
- Equality and Diversity
- Female Genital Mutilation Aware
- Fire Safety
- Foetal Alcohol Syndrome
- Food Safety Global Development Delay Fostering
- Health & Nutrition
- Healing Environments
- Human Rights in Social Care Fostering
- Internet Safety
- Learning Disabilities
- Legal and Care Systems
- Managing Allegations
- Managing Challenging Behaviour
- Managing Placement Breakdowns
- Men who Foster
- Missing from Care
- Moving Forward with Delegated Authority
- Play Therapy
- Positive Identity & Self-Esteem
- Promoting Resilience
- Radicalisation & Extremism
- Religion & Culture
- Reporting & Recording
- Restorative Practice
- Risk Assessment
- Risk Management and Safer Caring
- Self-Harming Behaviours
- Therapeutic Care
- Transitions & Vulnerability
- Understanding Children's Play
- Understanding HIV and AIDS
- Using Basic Theraplay Techniques
- Youth Justice System

Support Groups:

- Resilience Carer Support Group
- UCSA Carer Support Group
- Carers Supporting Young People who self-harm Support Group
- Carers Supporting Young with addictions Support Group
- Parent and Child Carer Reflective Supervision with Clinical Psychologist Support group
- Supported Lodgings Enhanced Carer Support Group
- NVR Support/Refresher Group
- TSD Workbook Support Group/Workshop
- Monthly Skype Group with Fostering Team Manager
- Twice Yearly Coffee morning/Skype discussion with Fostering
- Team Manager & BCP Service Director & Corporate Director

Events:

- Annual Carer Awards Evening
- Annual Funky Monkey Family Event
- Summer Foster Carer Picnic
- Breakfast Club
- Coffee Mornings
- Sewing Club
- Running Club
- Carer Christmas Party
- Annual Participation on the Bournemouth Festival Run

Complaints

All Carers, children and their families are supplied with information regarding the Local Authority's complaints procedures. Children can seek support through the Advocacy service or Mind of My Own if they wish to raise concerns or make a complaint. Carers can seek independent support through Foster Talk Network membership.

In respect of Child Protection concerns raised about carers, the Directorate follows Local Safeguarding Children's Boards procedures which apply specifically to allegations against carers. This includes the involvement of the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) in any strategy discussions and investigations.

Contacts

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