

Statement of Purpose 1 January – 31 December 2025

1. Introduction

- 1.1 It is a requirement of the Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011, and the Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards 2011, that each Fostering Service produces a Statement of Purpose, including its aims and objectives, and a description of the services and facilities it provides.
- 1.2 This statement of purpose covers the period from 1st January 2025 to 31st December 2025. It is a key document against which the Fostering Service is inspected by Ofsted. The Statement of Purpose is reviewed annually by the Practice, Policy and Procedure Group (Children's Services)

2. Background

- 2.1 Dorset Council's Fostering Service is part of the Children in Care Service within the Children's Services Directorate. The outcomes for children and young people, which underpins every aspect of the work within Children's Services, are for them to:
- be safe wherever they are and know what it is to be healthy and adopt lifestyles that promote it
 - enjoy positive relationships and have a good awareness of their personal strengths and qualities, knowing that their voice is heard and listened to on matters that affect them
 - be confident and successful learners who can achieve personal success as they grow into adulthood
- 2.2 Dorset Council's Fostering Service plays a key role in the Children's Services Directorate, in relation to:
- children and young people in care
 - children in need of safe alternative 'family' with Foster Carers or Kinship carers
 - children in need of permanence such as long-term fostering or Special Guardianship or Early Permanence (Foster to Adopt) and private fostering
- 2.3 The principles of the Children Act 1989, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Charter of Human Rights underpin the work of the Fostering Service.

- 2.4 The Children's Services Directorate recognises that living in a foster family home is the preferred option for meeting the needs of children and young people who are unable to live with their own families. Family attachments, cultural and ethical identity, and ties to communities through schools, religious groups, leisure activities, and friends are best promoted through living in a foster family home wherever possible.
- 2.5 The service aims to provide safe, secure, high-quality care. As a minimum, this will be achieved to the standards laid out in:
- The Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011, as amended by The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review and Fostering Services (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2013
 - The Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards 2011
 - The Care Planning and Fostering (Miscellaneous Amendments) (England) Regulations 2015
 - the Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 4: Fostering Services 2011
 - Assessment and approval of foster carers: Amendments to the Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Jul 2013
 - the Training Support and Development Standards 2012

3. Aims and objectives of the Fostering Service

- 3.1 The aim of Dorset Council Children's Services Directorate and the Fostering Service is to promote the wellbeing and development of each child and young person in care throughout his or her childhood.
- 3.2 The Fostering Service aims to achieve good outcomes for children by:
- recruiting, assessing, training, supervising, and supporting foster carers from diverse backgrounds to reflect the needs of children and young people who are looked after by Dorset Council.
 - seeking foster carers from a wide range of backgrounds. We will promote diversity, inclusion, and equity with respect to ethnicity, culture, disability, faith/religion, gender, sexuality.
 - recruit foster carers with an ability to keep children and young people safe, and with the skills to meet a wide range of physical, social, and emotional needs to promote good outcomes for all children and young people
 - assess the suitability of kinship carers who seek to foster children and young people they know
 - implement the Training, Support and Development Standards (TSDS) for all foster carers and ensure all foster carers are provided with training and

development opportunities to enable them to gain sufficient skills and knowledge to care for children

- provide a skills-based fees scheme with a clear skills and competency framework which sets out the expectations for foster carers and offers a career progression pathway
- promote anti-discriminatory practice throughout the service by means of training and by challenging discrimination from any source, so that children and young people in care can be protected from prejudice
- provide a range of living options that can meet children and young people's needs and focus on good short-term and long-term outcomes through:
 - emergency short breaks
 - short breaks
 - bridging families
 - parent and child fostering
 - concurrency via special guardianship, long-term foster care, and family with kinship carers who are the friends or extended family members of the child and young person
- promote children and young people's physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development through the provision of good physical and emotional health care, active educational support, and opportunities for leisure and cultural activities
- ensure that the voice of children and young people is heard through providing them with access to advocacy, independent visitors, to the Comments, Compliments and Complaints procedure, to the Children in Care Council and youth voice team
- ensure that children and young people can actively participate and contribute to their children in care statutory review, the foster carer annual review, other consultation processes, and that their feedback is listened to and acted upon
- to ensure children and young people live close to their birth family wherever possible, for siblings to live together if appropriate, and to provide choice to facilitate good matching
- continue to develop the short break scheme to enable children and young people who are disabled to access short breaks when they need them, in order that they can be supported to grow up successfully within their birth family

- provide young people with the option of 'staying put' with their carers beyond their eighteenth birthday, so they continue to be supported in their transition to adulthood
- work in partnership with children and young people, parents, other family members, foster carers, fostering social workers, and other involved professionals from Children's Services and other agencies, to ensure a common and consistent focus on successful outcomes for children and young people in care and care leavers
- ensure children and young people can stay connected with their birth family, and maintain their family, religious, and cultural ties, provided this aligns with their wishes and interests
- maximise stability through effective matching of carers and children, permanence planning, and the provision of support to children, young people, and foster carers. Where we identify difficulties that impact on the success of the family, we call a stability meeting so that we can implement specific support to enable the family to continue successfully
- help children and young people to have lasting family homes as soon as possible through proactive permanence planning

4. Fostering Panel

- 4.1 The Fostering Panel scrutinises the assessments of prospective foster carers undertaken by the Fostering Service and recommends whether applications should be approved, and the terms on which any approval should be given.
- 4.2 The Fostering Panel also scrutinises the first annual review conducted on newly approved foster carers, reviews that follow from the conclusion of the Managing of Allegations procedure, reviews that request changes of approval. All other reviews are conducted internally.
- 4.3 The Fostering Panel recommends whether the foster carer remains suitable to continue fostering and, if so, whether the terms of approval remain appropriate or need to be varied.
- 4.4 The Fostering Panel is advised on operational matters by the Panel Adviser. The Fostering Panel has an independent Chair.

5. Expertise and Progression within the Fostering Service

- 5.1 All foster carers are approved to foster children aged 0 to 18 or 5 to 18 years. with consideration given to any identified preferred age range (an age they are currently most experienced to foster). They are also approved for a set number of children.

5.2 Dorset Council operates a skills-based scheme which has five levels linked to a skills and competency framework. It also sets out the practice requirements, training and development expectations and support group attendance requirements at each level:

- Level 1 carers are newly approved mainstream foster carers and Kinship carers
- Level 2 Skilled carers are both mainstream and Kinship carers who have been approved for a year, have completed their Training, Support and Development Standards workbook, induction and mandatory training and have gained experience in providing quality fostering
- Level 3 Advanced carers are Kinship carers and mainstream foster carers who are experienced at providing successful care for children and young people with more complex needs, including challenging behaviour and disabilities, and have attended and implemented relevant training as evidenced in their Personal Development Plan.
- Level 4 Specialist carers have evidenced a high level of experience, range of competencies and skill set to enable their deliverance of fostering that they must undertake, for example, supporting parents and children, young people and children with identified higher care needs or children with the highest level of disabilities. In return they are paid a higher fee level.
- Level 5 Specialist carers are those who work at the Harbour, or as Mockingbird Hub home carers. These are roles that support young people with the most complex needs and give support to family members or other carers.

5.3 Foster carers can progress to the next level if they are able to evidence that they have met the criteria for that level (save for Level 5, which is only available to Harbour and Mockingbird Hub carers, on account of the significant additional responsibilities they undertake) and continue to evidence working at this skill level in their review period. The Fostering Service pays foster carers a fee appropriate to their assessed Skill Level, alongside an age-related All-Inclusive Allowance.

6. Types of Foster Care

Foster carers are approved to offer care for one or more of the following roles:

6.1 Short-term fostering

Mainstream short-term foster families offering temporary full-time care are for children and young people who may be returning to their own families, or who are moving to alternative family options including long-term fostering, adoption, or special guardianship.

Short-term care provides the opportunity to assess the needs of the child/young person and prepare them for their return home or for their move to a permanent foster family. The duration can vary according to the needs of the child or young person and each child and young person's journey in achieving permanence will be different.

6.2 Long-term or permanent fostering

Long-term or permanent fostering is for children and young people who cannot return to their own families. Where adoption or special guardianship are not suitable options, a mainstream permanent care arrangement can be achieved through long-term fostering.

The role of the carer is to offer a nurturing family environment with the potential for the young person to remain with their foster family beyond their eighteenth birthday under 'Staying Put' arrangements.

6.3 Kinship carers

Short or long-term care for children and young people who are already known to the carer.

6.4 Short breaks (also known as respite care or sleep overs)

Foster carers who offer short, time-limited breaks for children with additional needs to their families or other foster carers.

6.5 Parent and child fostering

Parent and child fostering offers the opportunity for parents to continue to be the primary carer for their child in a foster family whilst a full assessment of their parenting capacity is undertaken.

The foster carer will contribute towards the parenting assessment as well as provide supervision and support to the parent(s) and direct care to the child if the parent is unable to do so. This support is time limited. The foster carers will be Level 4 carers.

6.6 Birth to settled adulthood (B2SA)

The Fostering Service provides short breaks, short-term and long-term care for children and young people who are disabled.

There are three levels of family type within this scheme which reflect both the needs of the child or young person, and the level of care required from the foster carer. Specialist training of foster carers will be provided to meet the needs of the children and young people within the scheme, for example:

- feeding
- medication
- moving and handling
- use of equipment suitable to the child and young person's needs

B2SA Level 1 relates to those children and young people with a lower level of needs who may require assistance with mobility, personal care, communication, supervision and/or their health needs and medical condition. The foster carers can be Level 1 or 2 (or above).

B2SA Level 2 relates to children and young people with specific and moderate levels of need who may require assistance with mobility and communication, support and constant supervision in personal care and education, and full support to manage their safety, health needs and medical condition. Specific training for foster carers may be necessary in medical and health procedures, communication methods, equipment and in areas such as moving and handling. The foster carers are likely to be at Level 2 or Level 3.

B2SA Level 3 relates to children and young people who have the highest level of needs and require full support and supervision in all aspects of their care. These children and young people require the highest level of skills as they have complex needs requiring specialised health and care training. The foster carers will be at Level 3 or 4.

6.7 Emergency short breaks

The Fostering Service has carers who can provide emergency short breaks for children and young people who, for a variety of reasons, need to be accommodated at short notice, including out of office hours.

5.8 Bridging Family

There are occasions where a child or young person cannot be matched to a foster family that fully meets their needs, for example where:

- a child has just come into care and his/her needs are not fully known
- a child must be moved within a short timescale from a family and an alternative suitable match is not immediately available
- a suitable match has been identified but the family is not immediately available

On these occasions, the child will be placed in a 'bridging family.' The matching process will identify both the positives and the gaps in the family and how the gaps will be met. An active search will remain in place to find a more suitable family.

6.9 Concurrency or Foster to Adopt

Early permanence (EP) is an umbrella term including both Fostering for Adoption (FfA) and Concurrent Planning Placements (CPP). Both approaches support children where the courts are considering whether they can safely return to the care of their family or whether they might need to be adopted.

Concurrency will mean carers are prospective adopters who have been prepared and assessed as suitable to undertake a temporary fostering role for a specific child and will then go on to adopt the child if the court decides that adoption should be the plan for that child.

At the time the child joins the foster family there is still a possibility they will be reunited with their birth family. If the court decides that the child's future is best protected by adoption, the child already has a secure attachment to their carers who are now able to adopt the child.

Early permanence carers are allocated a Fostering Social Worker, along with their Adoption Social Worker and are paid a fostering allowance until the court has made their decision about the adoption.

6.10 Independent Fostering Agencies

The Children's Services Directorate also works with independent fostering agencies to ensure positive and good matches are made for children and young people with foster carers. The Directorate will ensure that these agencies are registered and appropriately approved by Ofsted. We will check the most recent Inspection Report provided by Ofsted before using an independent agency.

7. In-house fostering services provided

Dorset Council provides the following services directly:

7.1 Fostering social work support

Every approved foster carer is allocated a supervising social worker who will provide supervision, support, and guidance to the carer. It is the role of the supervising social worker to ensure that the standard of foster care provided meets the needs of the children and young people in their care and contributes positively to the achievement of successful outcomes for them.

Fostering social workers facilitate support groups for foster carers and ensure that foster carers are accessing appropriate training, have successfully completed their Training, Support and Development (TSD) workbook following their approval, and are maintaining their own Personal Development Portfolios to evidence their skills level.

The fostering social workers will also prepare the required documentation for the foster carer's annual review in conjunction with the fostering reviewing officer.

7.2 Social work support for the Child in Care

Every child in care has an allocated social worker. The social worker has the overall responsibility for the child's wellbeing whilst in foster care, and for ensuring that the outcomes in the child's Care Plan, or young person's Pathway Plan, are being achieved.

The social worker is required to visit the child or young person in their foster family in line with statutory guidance and to maintain links with the family of the child. When visiting the child or young person in their foster family, the social worker will see them alone, and with the carers, and will need to see their bedroom.

The fostering social worker supports the foster family, nonetheless their primary role is to ensure that the needs of the child are met consistently and safely.

The Fostering Service is further supported by fostering support workers.

7.3 Quality Assurance Reviewing Officers

All children and young people in care are allocated a Quality Assurance Reviewing Officer (QARO). They are qualified and experienced social workers who are independent of the case management structure.

The QARO's role is to chair the Child in Care Reviews which occur within 20 working days of the child becoming looked after. The second review is held within three months (90 days) of the initial review and after this the reviews are six monthly, unless a significant change suggests that the review should be brought forward. The purpose is to:

- review the Care Plan for the child
- ensure that plans are child centred and take account of the wishes and feelings of the child, parents, other key relatives, and professionals
- ensure plans are being implemented and are progressing towards identified outcomes

The review also focuses on the quality of care provided to each child, ensures the family is meeting the child's needs and considers the Permanence Plan for the child and the question of whether there is a continuing need for the child to be looked after.

7.4 Support for Care Leavers

The Care Leavers team is responsible for children and young people who have been in the care of Dorset Council or another local authority.

The Pathway Plan, which details how the young person will be supported towards independence and adulthood, is developed with the young person following their last statutory Review before their sixteenth birthday.

The young person is allocated a Personal Advisor who will work with them from their sixteenth birthday until the age of 21 and will continue to offer support until their 25th birthday.

The Personal Advisor can provide advice and support on subjects including:

- health and wellbeing
- education, training, and employment
- relationships
- accommodation
- financial matters

The Fostering Team oversees the Supported Lodgings scheme (see the separate Supported Lodgings Statement of Purpose) whereby a young person rents a room in a family (or individual's) home, and they support the young person to gain the skills needed for them to live independently.

7.5 Staying Put

The Fostering Team will also support young people to remain within their foster family, if they and their carers agree to this. This can be until the age of 21. The Team have links with supported housing providers and can also support a young person to live in their own accommodation if they wish to do this.

7.6 Delegated authority

Foster carers will have their delegated authority (that is, the powers they have to make decisions on behalf of a child) set out in each child's Fostering Plan (Placement Agreement), and this will include authorities for the child's day to

day health visits, immunisation, education, as well as helping them to keep safe from harm outside the home (contextual safeguarding).

7.7 Health care

All initial health assessments are undertaken by one of Dorset's specialist paediatricians for children and young people in care. They complete and monitor health care plans and make referrals to specialist services where required. Subsequent health reviews are undertaken by the health visitor for children under five or by the Specialist Nurses for children over the age of five.

7.8 Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)

This service offers therapeutic support to children and young people who experience mental ill-health. This may be via the CAMHS social worker, psychologist, or other therapeutic specialists. Psychiatric input is available for more severe mental health difficulties. Specialist advice, consultation, and support is also offered directly to foster carers and fostering social workers by psychologists as required.

7.9 Education

Foster carers are expected to support and advocate for children and young people in their family so that they achieve good school attendance, assist them with their homework and, together with parents, participate in Parent-Teacher events at the school, especially where young people are moving from one Key Stage to another; transferring from primary to secondary school; deciding on GCSE options and making other important decisions such as sixth form and college applications.

7.10 Dorset Virtual School

Dorset has a specialist team of workers from the 'Virtual School' who ensure that the individual strengths and needs of the looked after child are prioritised through Personal Education Plans (PEPs).

Staff from the Virtual School ensure that looked after children's readiness for learning is assessed, their progress monitored, and that there is support where there is a need for accelerated progress to be made.

There is a designated teacher in every Dorset school with responsibilities for liaison, educational monitoring and pastoral care for children and young people in care. They draw up the Personal Education Plan in partnership with the young person, foster carers, social worker, and Virtual School team member.

Pupil Premium funding and the Higher Needs budget can be used to purchase equipment or services to support the young person's learning. Both funding streams are managed by the Virtual School.

7.10 Advocacy and Independent visiting for young people

National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) provide the independent advocacy service (for children over 8 years) and independent visitors (for children over 12) for Dorset's children in care. The advocates work with children and young people on a one-to-one basis to help them access their rights and express their point of view.

Children in our care may also choose to have an Independent Visitor; a trained volunteer who will provide them with friendship and support.

7.11 Children and young people's participation

Dorset Council's Youth Voice project works with children and young people to deliver:

- the Children in Care Council
- Young Researchers and Young Inspectors
- UK Youth Parliament
- Dorset Youth Council

They also provide training to Dorset Council staff and deliver a session on the Journey to Foster training for prospective foster carers.

8. Recruitment and Assessment of Foster Carers

8.1 Dorset Council welcomes enquiries from all members of the community regardless of:

- relationship status
- employment situation
- class
- gender
- sexuality
- culture
- ethnicity
- religion

8.2 We will respond to enquiries from prospective foster carers by the next working day, usually by phone call, to establish that they are potentially appropriate to foster, this means that they:

- are over the age of 18

- have not been convicted of any offence against a child
 - have appropriate accommodation, including a spare bedroom
- 8.3 A Fostering Enquiries officer will offer a home visit within 72 hours of a formal enquiry to undertake a more in-depth assessment of suitability for foster caring. Applicants whose initial assessment is positive will then be referred to our Fostering Service to commence Stage 1 of the full assessment process.
- 8.4 At Stage 1 basic information is gathered and statutory checks and references are conducted. At the end of stage 1, a decision is made by both the Fostering Service and the prospective foster carer whether to progress to Stage 2 of the assessment process.
- 8.5 Stage 2 consists of a detailed and thorough assessment of the prospective foster carer. Regulations state that the assessment should be concluded within 8 months; we aim to complete the assessment in 18 weeks.
- 8.6 The full assessment across Stage 1 and 2 will include:
- each applicant receiving clear information about the process of the assessment along with details about fostering fees and allowances
 - the assessment conducted by an appropriately qualified social worker
 - the assessment of all members of the applicant's household
 - DBS checks on all members of the household aged 16 or over and checks on social care and local agency records
 - full medical assessments with the applicant's GP, reviewed by the agency medical advisor
 - at least three personal references for each applicant in writing, one of which may be a family member, with follow up personal interviews at least two of these
 - an employer's reference is taken where applicable
 - the completion of a full employment record and personal history
 - attendance on the Journey to Fostering course
 - a clearly evidenced recommendation on the applicant's suitability to foster and type of fostering with age, number, and gender of children
 - each applicant sees a copy of the non-confidential sections of the report before presentation to foster panel and can add their comments and signatures, both individually, and together where a couple is applying
 - interviews with children living in the home, children living elsewhere and adult children of applicants, where appropriate
 - contact will be made with former partners where appropriate
 - the applicant's birth, marriage or civil partnership, divorce and other forms of identification are seen

- 8.7 Regulation 24 and Schedule 4 of the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations (England) (2010) set out the time frames and matters which need to be considered when assessing the suitability of Connected Persons to be foster carers. A Connected Person is a friend or family member (other than birth parent) of the child or young person.
- 8.8 Assessments should be completed within 16 weeks of the date of a child moving in with a Connected Person, although there is the provision to extend this by a further 8 weeks under certain circumstances outlined in Regulation 25. Connected Persons are invited to attend the Journey to Fostering training alongside mainstream applicants.

9. Approval of foster carers by Dorset Council

- 9.1 The Fostering Panel is established in accordance with Regulation 25 of the Fostering Services Regulations 2011 and has an independent Chair. There is a central list of members as required by the regulations.
- 9.2 The Panel Adviser, who is part of the Fostering Service, quality assures all assessments and reports prior to them being sent out to Panel members. They also attend Panel meetings to offer technical advice and support to Panel members.
- 9.3 The Panel considers all fostering assessments, including those for Kinship carers, and makes a recommendation as to whether the applicants are suitable to be approved as foster carers. The Panel also makes recommendations regarding the terms of the approval, such as the ages of the children, the number of children and their genders.
- 9.4 The recommendation is then passed on to the Agency Decision Maker (ADM) to make the final decision as to whether to approve the applicants.
- 9.5 The Fostering Panel will also receive the first review of newly approved carers and will recommend whether they are suitable to continue to act as foster carers and whether the terms of their approval should change.
- 9.6 The Panel will receive subsequent reviews where there is a request for a change of status of the carer, or where there have been substantiated allegations and/or concerns about their standards of care, to consider and recommend whether the applicants are suitable to continue to act as foster carers. The Agency Decision Maker will make the final decision.

- 9.7 The Panel also has a quality assurance role and offers recommendations and advice to the Fostering Service on assessments and other matters which it oversees.
- 9.8 If the Agency Decision Maker does not approve an application to foster, the applicants will be informed and invited to make written and/or personal representations, which will be further considered by the Panel. Alternatively, applicants can ask the Independent Review Mechanism to review their application. The Independent Review Mechanism is an independent body which makes recommendations to Fostering Agencies in such circumstances. The recommendations of the Panel or the Independent Review Mechanism will be considered by the Director for Children's Services, who will make a final decision.

10. Training and support for foster carers

- 10.1 All applicants must attend the Journey to Foster preparation and training programme as part of their assessment and approval as foster carers. In the case of applicants who are couples, both partners are required to attend.
- 10.2 All foster carers have access to the Foster Carer Training Handbook which details all courses which have been organised specifically for foster carers. Additionally, foster carers can access online training provided by Dorset Council and register for a Nexus account with Dorset Council to enable them to access training which is available to Dorset Council staff and partnership agencies.
- 10.3 All foster carers will be offered support to achieve their Training and Development Standards within 12 months of their approval, or 18 months if they are Kinship carers. Foster carers are expected to maintain an up-to-date record of evidence of their training.
- 10.4 Foster carers will be provided with a link to the Fostering Together website, where they can access information about:
- relevant policies
 - fostering terms and conditions
 - guidance about requirements concerning care and control of children and young people
 - contacting the Out of Hours Service
 - record keeping
 - the complaints procedure
 - child protection procedures
 - Meet the teams
 - Support group information

- Mockingbird
 - National minimum standards
 - Training handbook
 - Foster carer forums
- 10.5 Every foster carer, including Kinship carers, will sign a Foster Carer Agreement upon approval, in line with Schedule 5 of the Fostering Services Regulations 2011.
- 10.6 When a child joins a foster family, a Planning Meeting will be held to discuss how they will be supported by the foster family and involved professionals. This meeting will include:
- the foster carers
 - the child (if age appropriate)
 - the parent(s) where appropriate
 - the fostering social worker
 - the child's social worker
- 10.7 A Fostering Agreement (placement agreement), Delegated Authority, placement information, risk assessment, medical consent and care plan will be drawn up by the childcare team and provided to the fostering family and supervising worker, all parties will be invited to sign. These agreements will include details for:
- contact
 - dietary requirements
 - schooling
 - transport (if appropriate)
 - hobbies and leisure activities
 - bedtimes
 - use of the mobile phone
 - Pocket money/savings
 - other such living/significant arrangements for day-to-day decisions by the foster carers
- 10.8 Once carers are approved, they receive supervision visits minimum six weekly, regular telephone contact and additional support visits as needed. Details of the supervision and support visits will be recorded and placed upon the foster carer's file.
- 10.9 All foster carers will receive at least one unannounced visit during a rolling twelve-month period (review period). The support and supervision visits continue whether or not there is a foster child in their home.

10.10 If the foster carers have a child living within them long term, the frequency of supervision will remain the same.

10.11 Through the supervision and support visits, fostering social workers will provide information and advice to enable the carer to develop a consistent and quality approach to the role of caring for the children and young people living within the family.

10.12 Wider support will also be available to the carers through:

- Support groups
- the Foster Carer Forum which meets on a quarterly basis

Fostering team including

- Duty Social Worker
- Children's Social Work Teams
- Out of Hours Service
- Social events such as the Fostering Fair and Picnic, Awards ceremony
- Other events which may be organised through the year
- Foster Talk membership
- Mockingbird Hub home carers
- Fostering Psychologist direct or indirect advice

10.13 The Fostering Service is also able to help fund equipment, for example:

- Cots
- Beds
- Bedding
- Baby equipment
- Fireguards

10.14 The Directorate can also offer the assistance of sessional workers where there is a particular need for additional direct support to the family.

11. Fostering comments, compliments, and complaints procedure

11.1 Dorset Council has a Comments, Compliments and Complaints procedure which all foster carers may use. The Children's Services Directorate is committed to approaching the investigation of complaints with a genuine wish to resolve matters and a belief that there will always be something that can be learnt when things do not go according to plan. We are also keen to hear how we can improve our services and are pleased to receive any compliments about our service or staff.

Please tell us if you found this document helpful - [Foster Carers' Library Feedback](#)

