



Red Kite Fostering Service 2023
Statement of Purpose
OFSTED Registration: URN – SC417504

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Introduction

This statement has been produced in accordance with the Fostering Services Regulations 2011 and National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services. The statement outlines the aims and objectives of the Fostering Service and the services and facilities provided by the Fostering Service.

The Statement of Purpose also links with the Children's Guide which is provided to all children, appropriate to the child's age and understanding when first placed.

The Statement of Purpose is available to Ofsted.

It is made available to staff of the organisation, foster carers, children and young people, parents and other professionals. It is reviewed on an annual basis and revised to reflect any changes as necessary.

What the fostering service aims to do (objectives)

In 2019, Red Kite Fostering experienced some instability resulting from various internal operational difficulties. Learning from this experience and inspections, we are determined to develop and provide a high quality, comprehensive and integrated service using monitoring and quality assurance processes that deliver excellent outcomes for children and young people in our care.

- To ensure that children can be encouraged and enabled to develop secure attachments to their carers, capable of providing safe, warm and nurturing care for the duration of their childhood into early adulthood.

- To ensure that carers are trained and supported to ensure that children are protected from emotional, physical and sexual abuse and neglect.
- To ensure children receive the education, health and social care they need to maximise their potential.
- To ensure that the services provided are flexible, responsive to and supportive of carers.

What the fostering service aims to do (objectives)

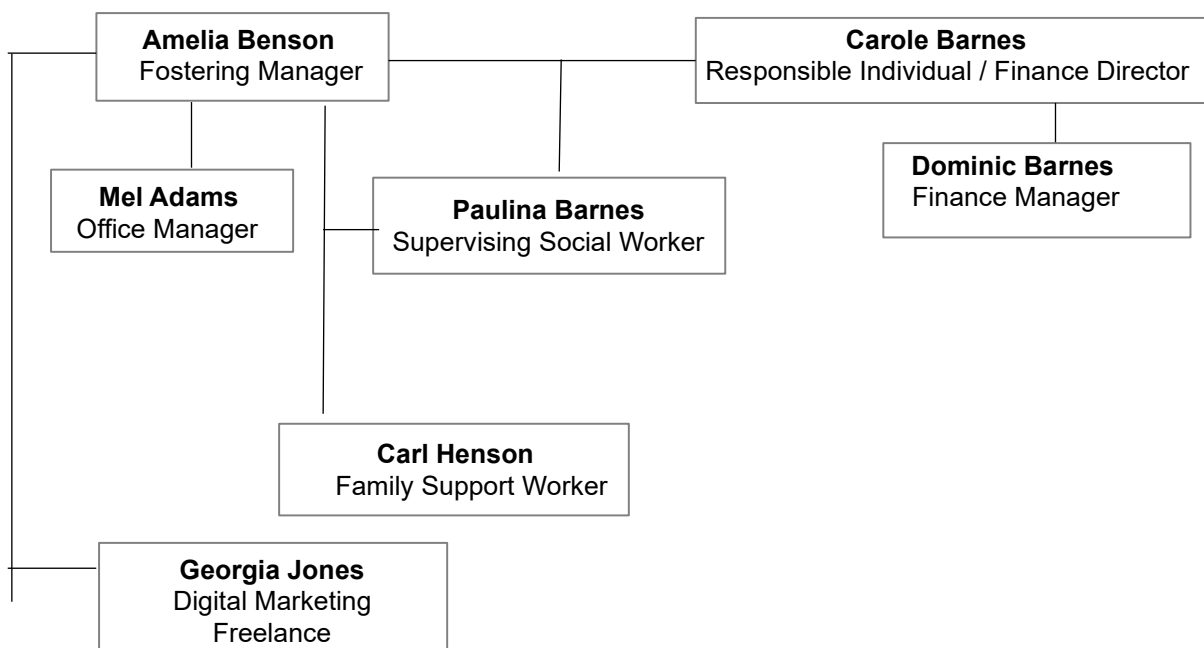
Our aims are underpinned by the National Minimum Standards for fostering to provide looked after children with appropriate foster placement provision, as close to their own home where possible.

- To ensure the views of children, parents and carers are sought and taken into account, having regard for their age and understanding, in the continuous development and improvement of the service.
- To take the wishes and views of children and young people seriously and to enable them to be part of any decision-making process that affects them.
- To recognise the importance of and support appropriate levels of contact with family and community as is consistent with their welfare and care plan.
- To recognise and value the nature of the community it serves and proactively engage with the local community to identify potential carers.
- To ensure there is a sufficient range of safe and appropriate placements available for the Looked after Children in the county's that Red Kite serves.
- To actively monitor and supervise all placements to ensure children are safe, their needs are met, and they are making progress to achieve positive outcomes.
- To contribute to and ensure effective multi-disciplinary and partnership working to meet the health, educational and social needs of children within placements.
- The service operates within the framework of equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice. Children will not be discriminated against on the grounds of race, culture, religion, language, age, gender, sexuality, disability or social class in terms of service provision. Wherever possible children are matched within their own cultural, racial, linguistic and religious communities, and where this is not possible, plans must be put in place to keep the child's culture alive for them.
- Children with disabilities are to be placed in an environment that recognises and caters for their disability, and at the same time promotes their social inclusion.
- To ensure staff and carers are well trained and competent in delivering a quality Fostering Service, including opportunities for continued learning and professional development. To ensure all staff and carers have completed safeguarding checks and have a valid DBS.

- To provide all staff and carers support and supervision with clear lines of accountability and management.
- To provide each Foster Carer a named allocated Supervising Social Worker and a family support worker.
- To operate clear administrative records and financial management systems pertinent to the running of the service, including the maintenance of comprehensive and up-to-date records on all children placed.
- To ensure all complaints and allegations against carers/staff are investigated under departmental procedures in a timely fashion and lessons learned filter to improvements in future practice.
- The Fostering Service operates a Fostering Panel that provides a quality assurance role with regards to the recruitment and review of Foster Carers and Foster placements. The panel will ensure the welfare and safety of children is paramount in all decision making.
- Through specific training and supervision, foster carers are expected, with support, to give each child placed the best life chances available to them and an opportunity to be safe and secure, achieve in education, health, relationships and transitions to independence or moves back home to birth families.
- To ensure permanence planning wherever possible, and to ensure that a care plan incorporates options for care leavers, incorporating Pathway Plans and the option to Stay Put.

Who makes up the fostering team

Organisational Structure



What types of fostering do we provide?

Short term or long term care

A child might come into care because of an illness or accident or a serious incident at home. Whatever the reasons, social services will be working with the family to resolve the issues so that the child can return home as soon as possible.

Brothers and sisters

Wherever possible siblings should be placed together. For many foster children, the relationship with their brothers and sisters is what they value most when separated from their family and staying together is very important.

Children with disabilities/ additional needs

We need carers with experience of caring for children with physical or learning difficulties and other additional needs.

Long term fostering

Some children are unable to return to their families. They will require a stable, long term fostering placement until they reach the age of 18 and beyond.

Staying Put

Staying Put arrangements are slowly increasing – where young people at 18 remain with their former foster carers until 21+ years of age. Former carers continue to be supported by the Fostering service, as are young people e.g. by the 16+ team.

Fostering Panel and Recruitment

The Fostering Panel

Red Kite operates its own Fostering Panel for the approval, review, registration and deregistration of carers.

The Fostering Duty Service

A Duty Social Worker is available throughout and out of office hours. The purpose of this service is to provide a response to enquiries and referrals and to support carers, usually but not always at a time of crisis.

Fostering Family Support Worker

Red Kite has a FSW role, who are available to provide support outcome focused, direct work with children, young people and their carers.

Preparation training is carried out over three full days and covers basic underpinning knowledge and experiential learning relevant to the task of fostering. The course is underpinned by the seven Training Standards that carers are expected to meet in the first year of their approval, these standards are:

1. Understand Principles and Values
2. Understand your role as a foster carer
3. Health, Safety and Healthy care
4. Know how to communicate effectively
5. Understand the development of children and young people
6. Safeguard children and young people
7. Develop yourself

Carers are expected to meet with their supervising social worker and develop their Personal Development Plan in line with the Training, Support and Development Standards. It is at this stage that carers will discuss with their supervising social worker what they need to do to meet the standards within the first year of their approval. Carer induction includes practicalities such as recording, how to claim mileage and providing information about who's who within the Team, and detailed expectations about their role.

The training programme currently offers the following (online and in practice)

- Paediatric First Aid
- Safeguarding
- Record Keeping and reflective practices
- Safe Caring
- Behaviour Management
- Working as part of a team
- Life story work and Keeping Memories Alive
- Contact
- Drug and Alcohol awareness
- Foetal Alcohol Syndrome
- ADHD and Autistic Spectrum
- Social Networking
- Sexual Health Awareness
- Allegations
- Prevent Duty
- Data Protection
- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
- The Impact of Domestic Abuse, violence and Sexual Abuse.
- Pathway planning for older teens
- Attachment in teens & Trauma Attachment and Learning
- Dealing with Anger
- Caring for Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers (UASC)

- Safety and social media
- Self-care and wellbeing for foster carers
- Literacy Difficulties and Dyslexia Attention Concentration and ADHD
- Attachment and Learning
- Dealing with Anger

Carers are expected to undertake Mandatory courses and will be expected to attend a refresher course at least once every two years for certain training.

Any individual training identified for carers within their supervision will be considered by the fostering service manager and where appropriate to meet the needs of the placement, carers will be given the opportunity to attend individual training events.

Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services

A Clinical Psychologist provides advice to foster carers and social work staff on all aspects of behaviour, attachment and mental well-being through the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service relating to the local authority the child originates from.

Education

All children are encouraged to access educational opportunities and develop to their maximum potential. All children in foster care should have access to a home computer and relevant educational software.

Health

The physical health needs of children are monitored by the Medical Advisor to the Local Authority. Each child placed is registered with a General Practitioner. Every Local Authority has a specialist LAC nurse to assist in meeting the health needs of Looked after Children.

Complaints, Monitoring

Complaints, Compliments and Comments

All organisations are required to have complaint procedures under the Children Act 1989.

We want everyone to be satisfied with the service they receive from Red Kite Fostering Service and the complaints procedure in this organisation can be instigated by anyone who is dissatisfied with the service they receive. Young people can also enlist the assistance of the National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS)

All organisations have a complaints procedure, which is communicated to all service users and to foster carers, Looked After children and their families.

Allegations

All allegations of abuse made by children against foster carers or members of a foster carer family will be thoroughly investigated. The particular authority LSCB procedures for handling allegations are followed in all cases. The investigation of allegations against foster carers will be evidence-based and the decision of how best to proceed will be made in the best interests of the child. An independent worker from Foster Talk is made available to support foster carers throughout the process. A clear distinction is made between an allegation of harm and a concern regarding standards of care.

Confidentiality and Conflicts of Interest

Foster carers are provided with information about the children placed with them and expected to observe high standards of confidentiality. As an agency we maintain records on both foster carers and Looked after Children who are subject to national standards and Data Protection legislation. Staff and foster carers are expected to declare any potential conflicts of interest.

Foster Carers Charter

Red Kite Fostering is committed to providing and promoting safe, stable and nurturing placements where the outcomes and life chances are positive for looked after children. In order to achieve this, it is important to have a working relationship which is based on trust and respect among all children services that are involved in the care of the child.

The service has worked in partnership with foster carers to achieve the charter which was launched in 2012. The charter explains what the roles and responsibilities of the service and the carers towards each other and the children we care for.

Monitoring

Red Kite Fostering Service produce quarterly and annual reports. These are sent to OFSTED.

Other monitoring includes staff supervision linked to the appraisal system, 12 formal supervisions a year to foster carers, annual reviews, fostering panel, feedback from training sessions, case recording and practise audits.

Evaluating the Service

The information gathered through annual reports, audits, inspections and customer feedback is evaluated by the managers of the fostering service, to judge its ongoing effectiveness and make changes where necessary.

The Fostering Service is also subject to formal inspection by Ofsted and inspections usually take place every three years.

Bullying

Bullying can disrupt an individual's personal, social and educational achievements. It is recognised that Looked After Children, because of their circumstances, are particularly vulnerable and the Fostering Service requires that steps are taken to

prevent bullying by ensuring that foster carers and social workers understand what bullying is and the impact it can have on a child / young person's life. It provides advice and guidance on how best to deal with situations where bullying is occurring in order to help everyone involved with the child / young person remain alert to bullying behaviour both inside and outside the foster home.

Behaviour Management

Guidance on managing behaviour is made available to all foster carers through training and. No form of corporal punishment is permitted to be used on any child placed with a foster parent. No child placed with foster parents is subject to any measure of control, restraint or discipline which is excessive or unreasonable. Physical restraint is used on a child only when it is a last resort and is necessary to prevent likely injury to the child or other persons or likely serious damage to property. If such a risk is identified appropriate training in physical restraint is provided to the foster carer. All carers are to be trained in positive handling, with an emphasis on de-escalation

Recruitment, Pre-Approval Training and Support of Prospective Foster Carers

The Fostering Service provides a range of services to local people who enquire about becoming foster carers.

The following is a summary of the recruitment, assessment and approval process:

- Publicity and promotion of foster care to attract new foster carers is continuous throughout the year.
- Prospective carers are provided with information about foster care within 48 hours of making the request.
- Prospective carers who wish to have further information will be visited by a Fostering Social Worker within 7 days. This agency run Stage 1 and 2 concurrently. Stage 1 checks are completed and if concerns arise the Team manager must respond within 10 days of receiving stage 1 checks to inform prospective applicants their application will not progress to Stage 2 assessment, outlining why.
- Full statutory checks and references are undertaken on all applicants and DBS checks on any other adult in the household over the age of 16 years.
- All applicants complete a full medical questionnaire (British Agencies for Adoption and Fostering (BAAF) Form AH), which is made available to the agency Medical Advisor for comment.
- Applicants are enrolled in pre-approval training, which occurs prior to or concurrently with the Form F assessment, whichever provides the timeliest service.

- Assessments are undertaken by a qualified Social Worker in accordance with fostering service regulations and are completed using BAAF Form F.
- All applicants are invited to attend the Fostering Panel, which makes a recommendation to the Agency Decision Maker on the terms of their approval.

Support and Supervision

Carers are supported and assisted by supervising social workers to manage the complexities of caring for a looked after child which includes support to attend any professional meetings, advice and guidance on attachment issues, managing difficult behaviour and placement issues. Supervising social workers will help carers to manage contact issues with birth families and support any contact where appropriate. All new foster carers have an allocated family support worker.

Support and supervision to Approved Carers

Approved carers are allocated to a Fostering/Supervising social worker who supports and supervises the carer and their family. This supervision is underpinned by relevant legislation, the standards and the Fostering Regulations

Formal supervision will take place with every approved carer once a month. A record will be kept on their file, signed by the carer, social worker and team manager. Regulations require an unannounced visit is undertaken annually.

Throughout the carers' first year, reports and progress are recorded: an annual report is prepared by the supervising social worker which is presented to panel for consideration. Subsequent years are undertaken as part of a home review with return to panel every 3-4 years or if areas of concern require Panel scrutiny. In all cases a recommendation is then made by the panel for the carer in relation to their approval status.

All foster carers have access to support groups. The fostering team provides carers with the opportunity to attend support groups which are facilitated by a fostering social worker and provides a forum for debate, guest speakers and informal support.

A Duty Fostering Social Worker is available throughout office hours. This is the first point of contact for all enquiries for fostering and requirements for placements.

- Foster carers who require respite on a planned basis can access respite services from other foster carers.
- A 'buddying' system is facilitated by Fostering Social Workers between experienced carers and newly approved carers.
- Foster carers are provided with the Foster Carers' Handbook covering all aspects of fostering, together with a diary and the equipment required to record and store confidential records about individual children.

- Red Kite hosts social activities for carers and children. We have a celebration in the Summer and at Christmastime. We hope to have an awards ceremony annually to reward children and carers from 2020 onwards.

Ongoing Reviews of Foster Carers

All carers are reviewed annually, and their continued registration is considered by the Fostering Panel, which makes recommendation to the agency decision maker as to the terms of their continued registration. Minutes of home reviews are noted at the fostering panel.

Approval and Review of Statement of Purpose

This Statement of Purpose has been formally reviewed and updated as of July 2022. It has been distributed, (we will distribute) to the following agencies/departments:

- OFSTED.
- Red Kite website.
- Foster Carers.

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APPENDIX A: Legislative and Regulatory background:

Principles and Standards of care

The Fostering Service seeks to ensure that its policies, procedures and practice comply with the following:

- Children Act 2004.
- Children Act 1989.
- National Minimum Standards 2011 (Care Standards Act 2000).

- Fostering Services Regulations 2011
- U.K. National Standards for Foster Care (Fostering Network 1999).
- Care Planning Regulations 2010.
- Care Planning, Placement and Case Review and fostering Services (Misc amendments) Regulations 2013
- Code of Practice on the recruitment, training, management and support of foster carers (Fostering Network 1999).
- Training, Support and Development Standards
- Foster Carers Charter

Appendix B: Aims and Principles of the Fostering service:

The Fostering Service:

- Seeks to provide a sufficient choice of placements for all Looked After children wherever possible.
- Seeks to provide or commission placements with foster carers for all Looked After children who require placements in a family setting.
- Respects the ethnic origin, cultural background, religion and language of children and foster carers.

- Seeks to work in partnership with all those involved in the care of Looked After children, including children, their families, foster carers and Social Workers.
- Recognises that children with disabilities may have additional special needs for placement.
- Recognises and seeks resources and specialist provisions for those children who need it.
- The central importance of the child's relationship with their foster carer should be acknowledged and foster carers should be recognised as core members of the team working with the child.
- Children in foster care deserve to be treated as a good parent would treat their own child/ren and to have the opportunity for as full an experience of family life and childhood as possible without unnecessary restrictions.
- Seeks to ensure that the Fostering Service and the 16 plus Team work in partnership to maximise life chances for young people leaving care.
- Seeks the views and opinions of young people and carers when planning and reviewing services.
- Seeks to recruit, train and assess carers to the highest standard in order to meet the needs of local children for local placements.
- Values the child as an individual and give personalised support in line with individual needs and background, in order to develop their identity, self-confidence and self-worth.