

Statement of Purpose



Unit 8 Watermill Wharf
Canal Road, Strood
Rochester
Kent ME2 4DT

The Company

People Who Foster Ltd is an independent fostering agency providing a range of services for looked after children. The Agency is run in accordance with all current legislation.

The Registered Manager is Katie Wright and the Responsible Individual is Graham Bartram both have several years' experience working in Fostering and children's services

Copies of this Statement of Purpose are available to Children, their Parents, Foster Carers Social Workers, Local Authorities and Ofsted.

This Statement of Purpose will be updated from time to time whenever there are changes to the services we provide and whenever there are changes within the organisation.

Introduction

The Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 requires every fostering service provider to compile a written statement of the aims and objectives of the fostering service and the services and facilities (including any parent and child arrangements) provided by the fostering service.

In compiling this Statement of Purpose, we have considered the following Legislation and Guidance which are outlined below:

- The Children Act 1989/2004
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Fostering Services Regulations 2011
- Education Acts 1944-1998
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- Race Relations Act 1976
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions Order 1975)
- Human Rights Act 2000
- Access to Personal Information Act 1989
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Care Standards Act 2000
- National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services 2011
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018

Our Vision

At People Who Foster our Vision is to help and support children and young people to feel more confident about their future.

Mission

To do this we will make sure that we recruit Staff and Foster Carers who are as enthusiastic as we are about offering and giving opportunities to the children and young people we care for.

We will of course work to ensure that the Five Outcomes are met which are set out below and we shall do this by working in partnership with our colleagues in Local Authorities Children's Services, Health, Education, Police and the wider community, this of course includes the Parents and Family members of the children and young people.

The Five Outcomes

1. Physical and mental health and emotional well being
2. Protection from Harm and neglect
3. Education training and recreation
4. The contribution made by them to society
5. Social and Economic well being

The safety and welfare of the children we look after is at the heart of what we do and we make sure this is in place by ensuring professional training courses are available to both staff and carers so they understand and are prepared for any eventuality.

It is important that our Carers have the right support and we will make sure that the staff that offer that support are also supported well and given every opportunity to develop their own skills and knowledge through internal and external training.

We know the importance of safe recruitment strategies and we have in place a robust mechanism to ensure the right people are recruited for all areas.

We would like everyone to feel part of People Who Foster and hope that everyone can contribute to the growth, we will be ensuring that there are times where children and young people can get together and have their say about how they are looked after and have an opportunity to change.

Values

- To ensure safeguarding children and young people is at the heart of our service to achieve better outcomes for those in foster care.
- Investing in, supporting and valuing staff and carers at People Who Foster to ensure high quality performance and care of children and young people.
- Celebrating the success and achievements of our children and young people and giving them the recognition they deserve.
- Supporting young people to independence and beyond to enable them to achieve their hopes, ambitions and dreams.
- Promoting equality amongst our children and young people in society and challenging attitudes and barriers they may face to enable them to reach their full potential.
- Recognising the importance of support for the whole fostering family and its wider community which enables our aims for children and young people to be successful.

Equality and diversity

At People Who Foster everything we do is carried out with respect and regard to similarities and differences across individuals and groups, this would include age, gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, ability, disability, religion, culture, language and personal and family circumstances. This means that everyone that works for and with People Who Foster must always avoid prejudice, stereotyping, exclusion and discrimination against children and young people. We value diversity and this is reflected in our staff members, foster carers and the children placed with us.

Types of Placements we offer

Long Term including Permanency
Emergency & Respite
Short Term
Bridging
Pre-Adoption
Parent and Child Arrangements
Care for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children
Children with Learning Disabilities
Children with Physical Disabilities

Placement Matching Process

At People Who Foster we will take care to ensure that all our placements are carefully matched identifying the needs of the children and young people and matching these with the skills, experience and training of the Foster Carers. Children and Young People have clear care plans set out by their Local Authority Social Workers and as an agency we will work together to ensure these plans are implemented.

We know from experience that if we can get this right by working with our colleagues in the Local Authority's referral teams then we have a great opportunity to ensure that the placement is stable and that we have few placement breakdowns. This allows the children and young people to feel safe and secure for the period they stay with us.

Services for Children and Young People

The children placed with People Who Foster are at the centre of what we do and their needs are our priority. We therefore aim to tailor our service to meet those individual needs in partnership with the child/young person's social worker from the placing authority.

Promoting Health and Well Being (Physical and Emotional)

Many children and young people who become looked after by our foster carers will have experienced separation and loss and other traumatic events within their short lives. We recognise that they may benefit from professional therapeutic support to help them come to terms with their experiences and the situation they find themselves in. Where this is assessed as a need, we will support this in conjunction with the placing authority in commissioning services.

Physical health can also be linked to emotional health and sport can play a very important part in this. Not only is it proven that physical exercise can have a positive impact on an individual's mental health, being part of a team or club and that sense of belonging can be enormously therapeutic in itself. At People Who Foster we want our children and young people to feel good about themselves and will actively encourage and support any interests they have or may wish to explore.

Life Story Work

Many children who become looked after will have experienced separation and loss and may have a limited understanding of their past and where they have come from. Life Story work is an important part of ensuring that a child has the key information about their past to enable them some sense of identity in order that they can move on and look to the future. Where this work is required, People Who Foster will seek to conduct this work or commission an independent social worker to complete where necessary.

Educational Support

We recognise that for many Looked After Children who have experienced disruption, their education has been adversely affected and traditional education settings can be a challenging environment for them without the correct help and support. We will look to provide additional educational support where required and liaise closely with the children/young person(s)' school/education provider. We have access to an education consultant and their services if this is required.

Independence Preparation

In conjunction with the Local Authority and the foster carers, an independence plan will be drawn up to assist in preparing our young people to live independently and enabling them to develop the skills and knowledge required for them to do so successfully. This will be done alongside the Local Authority's pathway planning and will identify the key areas of strengths and needs to enable a smooth transition.

People Who Foster will provide guidance and support both practically and emotionally to assist the young person to achieve their aims and objectives.

Services for Foster Carers

At People Who Foster we believe that our foster carers deserve the best support. Being a foster carer can be so positive and rewarding, yet we recognise there can be times where it feels challenging, demanding and overwhelming. In our experience, foster carers who feel supported and valued say that they are more able to manage challenges they are faced with and this then ensures consistency, stability and continuity of care for the children and young people, which is what we seek to achieve.

Support and Advice

Each of our Foster Carers will be allocated a fully qualified and experienced Supervising Social Worker who will be their first port of call for advice and support and who will visit the placement regularly and be able to build a relationship with the family. At People Who Foster, the ratios of Foster Carers to Supervising Social Workers is kept low to ensure that each Supervising Social Worker has the time to dedicate to each of their Foster Carers and this resource is not overstretched.

24 Hour Support

The roles and responsibilities of our Foster Carers continue 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year and to feel supported at all times, not just within office hours is vital. We therefore have an on-call system which ensures that advice and support can be offered around the clock. This also enables Local Authorities to contact People Who Foster with referrals for placements outside normal office hours.

Training & Continued Professional Development

People Who Foster are committed to providing a comprehensive training programme for all our Foster Carers and it is a condition of approval that a commitment to attending a minimum number of courses is maintained. The annual review process will seek to identify areas for further development and which training courses need to be attended.

People Who Foster will provide the necessary training to support Foster Carers to complete the Training, Support and Development (TSD) standards which form part of the National Minimum Standards within 12 -18 months of approval. Alongside this a rolling programme of core training is provided along with the addition of more advanced training.

We appreciate that our Foster Carers lead very busy lives and therefore we are flexible with our approach to facilitating training to ensure it is achievable. We will provide training facilitated both by staff at People Who Foster and external providers, all of whom work in a non-judgemental way allowing and encouraging healthy discussions and providing a forum for our carers to develop and also share the wealth of their experience. For Foster Carers who for good reasons are unable to

attend and/or miss the training provided we will also have online training available to all.

Allowances, Expenses & Respite

There is a clear structure outlining allowances for Foster Carers along with expenses that can be claimed. Payment of which is made promptly.

All carers will receive 21 days of paid respite per annum.

The Process of Recruitment and Assessment for Foster Carers

At People Who Foster we will recruit Foster Carers from a range of backgrounds to make sure we can match the needs of the Local Authorities Children's Services. We will do this by ensuring we have in place a fair and rigorous recruitment strategy.

Enquiry

Our advertising campaigns will outline exactly what criteria we are looking for and how to make an inquiry. At the point of enquiry, we will gather information from the applicant relating to their family, child care experience, if any, and their specific interest in fostering. We will also share further information about People Who Foster and fostering in general.

Initial Visit

Following an initial enquiry, our social workers will arrange to visit the family within their own home. The purpose of this visit is to share further information about the nature of fostering, the process of assessment and what services and support People Who Foster will provide. This visit will also seek to determine whether the family meet our basic expectations and will equally provide the family with information to enable them to contemplate whether fostering would be right for them.

Skills to Foster

Prospective foster carers will then be invited to attend the `Skills to Foster` training course compiled by the Fostering Network, which will provide an introduction to fostering and to the knowledge and skills required as a foster carer. This is an intensive preparation course involving assessment and reflection.

Assessment

Alongside the Skills to foster course, People Who Foster will begin gathering further information to commence stage 1 of the assessment process. Applicants will be required to consent to People Who Foster obtaining enhanced checks with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) for all members of the household over the age of 16 years old, Local Authority checks where the applicants have lived within the past 10 years will also be carried out.

References will be sought from Current and possibly past employers. Applicants will be asked to provide personal references from people who can comment on their

suitability to care for children. A medical examination with their GP will also be required.

Stage 2 of the assessment process will involve the allocation of a fully qualified Social Worker to undertake the British Association of Adoption and Fostering (CoramBAAF) Form F report. This involves outlining the skills and experience of the prospective carers and making a recommendation on their suitability to become foster carers with People Who Foster.

Panel

Once Stage 1 and 2 are completed, the Form F report along with all statutory checks are presented to our Fostering Panel. Prospective carers will be present and able to contribute to the Panel which consists of individuals with a vast range of childcare expertise and experience from different fields, including education, health and social work along with foster carers and people who have first-hand experience of the care system.

Together the applicant(s) suitability to foster will be considered and a recommendation will then be made as to whether they are approved as foster carers. This recommendation is then put to the Agency Decision Maker (ADM) who will make a final decision based on the assessment and the panel discussion minutes. This decision will then be provided in writing to the Foster Carer(s) including their matching criteria.

Annual Foster Carers Reviews

The abilities and performance of our foster carers is reviewed each year. This involves a report being prepared by the Supervising Social Worker outlining the competencies of the foster carer(s) paying particular attention to the following:

- The understanding of the needs of children they are looking after and ability to meet them;
- Ability to work with other professionals within the child's network, the birth family and within the care plan;
- Awareness of and sensitivity to background, culture and origin;
- Personal development over the past 12 months including training and additional learning opportunities;
- Support from the agency and feedback

Recruitment and Supervision of Staff

To ensure the welfare of children is safeguarded, our recruitment is governed by the agency's policy and procedures for safer recruitment. Enhanced DBS checks and references are required for everyone who works in whatever capacity for People Who Foster. Everyone is required to hold appropriate qualifications and have experience which is relevant to the work they are undertaking.

All staff will have regular professional supervision and annual appraisals, there will be training provided whether this be internal, external and or online.

Fostering Panel

The Fostering panel play a very important role in terms of quality assurance, providing objectivity and having the ability to challenge practice that they feel falls short of the Fostering Service Regulations (2011) or the National Minimum Standards (2011).

They bring a degree of independence from the fostering service and although they cannot make decisions themselves, they can make recommendations that the fostering service decision maker must consider. They also give us regular feedback regarding the quality of all assessments. Below is a list of the functions of our Fostering Panel:

- To consider applications for approval and recommend whether or not a person is suitable to act as a foster carer. and if so the terms on which they should be approved for instance the number and age of children to be placed.
- To consider the first review of newly-approved foster carers, and any subsequent reviews referred to it by the fostering service, and recommend whether they remain suitable to act as foster carers. and, if the terms of the approval remain appropriate.
- To oversee the conduct of assessments carried out by the fostering service.
- To monitor and advise on the procedures for undertaking reviews of foster carers.
- To consider any case where written representations have been received regarding qualifying determinations about approvals, reviews or terminations of approval.
- To give advice and make recommendations on any other matters or cases referred to the panel by the fostering service.

Our Panel Members come from various backgrounds that have a relevance to Fostering for example:

Individuals who were formerly Looked After as young people

Foster Carers (who foster with another agency or Local Authority)

Health professionals (including a counsellor and former General Practitioner)

Children's social worker

Independent Reviewing Officer (Child's IRO)

Education specialists

Former Police officer

Complaints

When we receive a complaint that does not involve harm to a child, we have a formal complaints procedure. It is made available to children, their families and all foster carers. Additionally, The Children's Guide explains how a child or young person can complain we also give some useful numbers and websites young people can access should they need independent support and advice.

Any complaints should be made by contacting the Registered Manager, Katie Wright, who can be contacted by telephone, email or by writing to the address below:

Katie Wright
Registered Manager
People Who Foster
Unit 8 Watermill Wharf
Canal Road
Strood
Rochester
KENT
ME2 4DT

Telephone: 01634 775816

Email: katie.wright@peoplewhofoster.co.uk

Should the complaint be in relation to the Registered Manager or the Responsible Individual then complaints should be made to Ofsted:

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester

M1 2WD

Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Telephone: 0300 123 1231.