



Statement of Purpose 2020



Registered Office:

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Introduction

Family Fostering is an Independent Fostering Provider established in 2014 by Debi Atkin and Teresa Morgan, both professionally qualified, registered social workers, with 36 years of collective experience in Fostering. A shared vision and passion for empowering foster carers and improving outcomes for children and young people was their inspiration for setting up their own bespoke fostering service based in Kent. They are both actively involved in the day to day running of the service, Debi as the Registered Manager and Teresa as the Service Manager and Responsible Individual.

Family Fostering is a small, family orientated fostering service with a therapeutic ethos committed to staying small to ensure personalised, high quality, practical, emotional and therapeutic support is provided. Family Fostering recognises the complexities involved in fostering and fully acknowledges the invaluable role foster carers play in caring for children and young people.

Mission Statement

To provide our fostering families with a secure base within which they are equipped and enabled to provide safe, nurturing and loving homes to young people unable to live with their birth families. Working holistically with a therapeutic ethos, we will ensure that each child/young person is fully supported through their psychological recovery and enabled to build their resilience and realise their unique potential.

National Legislative & Policy framework

This Statement of Purpose has been developed in accordance with the Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 and associated statutory guidance (both as amended) and the National Minimum Standards 2011.

Family Fostering Ltd is registered (URN: SC477723) with and inspected by Ofsted. Family Fostering Limited has organisational membership with Fostering Network. Individual membership with Foster Talk is provided for all approved foster carers.

Aims and Objectives

- To maintain a core team of qualified, experienced and committed staff who can holistically support foster carers in the fostering task.
- Provide therapeutic support, supervision, training and resources to assist foster carers in caring for children who have experienced trauma.
- To access external resources to support these children post trauma recovery and meet their developmental needs.
- To ensure our work is underpinned by the most recent research around trauma and developing resilience in young people.
- To focus on enabling each individual child to develop positive aspirations and begin to realise their unique potential at a pace tailored to them.
- To further develop the Service in collaboration with our foster families, our young people and commissioning authorities to continually improve outcomes.

Family Fostering seek to deliver on its aims by:

- Having a therapeutic approach underpinning the service.
- Continually developing the service to ensure foster carers deliver effective therapeutic re-parenting to enable children to experience a positive and restorative family experience.
- Supporting children to engage in developing important life skills through education and socially constructive opportunities.
- Ensuring children and young people benefit from the support and encouragement they receive to achieve a more stable, secure and resilient developmental path to adulthood.
- Striving to deliver long term stability through therapeutic fostering.
- Recruiting and retaining individuals/families with the skillset and desire to deliver therapeutic fostering and a commitment to working in partnership with Family Fostering.
- Working with Local Authorities to achieve the best outcomes for each child in relation to health and wellbeing, education and skills and preparedness for adulthood.
- Advocating for each child in relation to meeting their needs and supporting their aspirations. Equally, encouraging and empowering each child to engage in their own planning and decision-making process.

- Continually develop links with therapeutic practitioners to provide the highest quality foster care service responsive to the identified recovery needs of the child.
- Promoting safer caring through robust policies & procedures, quality training, partnership working with other professionals and the use of 'Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018).'
- Ensuring that foster carers have an easily accessible support structure that is professional and provides additional resources as necessary to support the foster placements.
- Respecting and promoting the rights of each individual irrespective of their race, culture, sexual orientation, gender, ability, religion and linguistic background and to challenge any discriminatory practice.
- Commitment to the professional development of both staff and foster carers by providing statutory, mandatory and specialist training which equips foster carers and their families in their role.
- Continually maintaining, reviewing and updating policies and procedures to comply with legislative and statutory requirements and good practice.

Caring For Children and Young People



Our vision is to strive for longevity and permanency in placements, recognising stability is fundamental to effectively supporting children and young people in their psychological recovery, unless the plan is for them to return home. This is achieved through stringent matching; ensuring children are matched with a foster family capable of meeting their needs. Our commitment to working in close partnership with all agencies involved in children's care will ensure care planning is rigorous and each child is fully supported.

We accept the following placement types:

- Emergency
- Short term
- Long term
- Shared care
- Solo placements
- Sibling group placements
- Children/young people differently abled
- Short Breaks

We also provide the following services:

- Supervision of contact
- Escort and transport for professional appointments
- Psychological and therapeutic services
- Life Story Work
- Life Coach/ Outreach Worker
- Autism Specialist Support
- Health Promotion Specialist

Safeguarding Children



Family Fostering's Safeguarding Procedures lay down a clear format for the reporting of any child protection matter to the Registered Manager. The overriding aim is to ensure the protection of children/young people. The Registered Manager will seek to ascertain accurate details of any allegation and will liaise with the child's placing authority, the Local Authority Designated Officer and the area authority in which the foster carer(s) reside. A joint decision will be made about whether there is a need for further safeguarding action in respect to protecting the child or children.

As a preventative measure, stringent checks are completed prior to foster carer's approval and employment of all staff and updated within legislative timescales. For full details please request a copy of our Safeguarding Policy.

Children's & Young People's Guide to Foster Care

In recognition that children and young people are differently abled our children and young people's guides are not age specific. In cooperation with the child's/young person's social worker, we will determine which guide is most appropriate and how best to provide it to them.

Children and Young People's Participation in the Service

We are committed to ensuring children and young people's voices are heard and that their views are taken into account when decisions are made about them. We are passionate about involving our young people in the development of our service and we seek to ascertain their views in the following ways:

- Initial and Annual Feedback Forms
- Foster Carers review of approval.
- Social activities and participation groups
- A dedicated email address, speakup@familyfostering.org
- Social Worker Visits
- Unannounced visits
- Reviews/ Personal Education Plan Meetings.

Foster Carers



We recognise that foster carers have skills and expertise and make the biggest difference to the everyday lives of children and young people in care.

We will:

- Value foster carers' skills and expertise equally to those of other professionals
- Recognise that foster carers are the people who live with the children and young people every day and know them best.
- Wherever possible, include foster carers in all meetings that affect them and the children/young people that they care for.
- Treat foster carers without discrimination and respect them as colleagues.
- Respect confidentiality.

As a fostering provider, we recognise the Foster Carer's Charter and integrate it into everything we do to make a positive difference in the lives of the children who are placed within our service.

Fair Treatment

We believe that open and honest dialogue is the key to a good relationship and recognise that foster carers have a right to be treated fairly, no matter what the circumstances.

We will:

- Consult with foster carers before changing terms and conditions and ensure openness in all our discussions and communications.
- Ensure that foster carers are treated with respect, kept informed and provided with emotional support should they be subject to an allegation.
- Provide a framework for dealing with allegations and adhere to our agreed timescales which is in line with the Local Authority Designated Officer Procedures.
- Ensure that foster carers know the arrangements for the payment of fees and allowances if they are not able to foster while the subject of an allegation.

Recruitment

We have an on-going programme of recruitment, predominantly using word of mouth, the internet and local advertisement. Enquiries and applications to foster are welcomed from people regardless of gender, marital status, sexuality, race, disability, religion, and culture or employment status. We aim to recruit foster carers who share our therapeutic ethos and demonstrate the key skills needed to holistically meet the needs of looked after

young people. Our assessment and approval process fully comply with the Assessment and Approval of Foster Carers: Amendments to the Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations. Volume 4: Fostering Services July 2013.

Review of Approval

All foster carers are reviewed at panel within a year of their approval. Thereafter a review will occur as a minimum annually. All reviews are undertaken by an experienced independent social worker. Review of approvals will be presented to the fostering panel as a minimum every three years or in the following circumstances.

- Placement disruptions within foster families
- Medical Concerns regarding foster carers
- Serious breach of foster carers' agreements
- Culminated concerns about foster carers' practice
- Allegations
- Resignations
- Significant changes in household composition

Support

Whilst Fostering can greatly enrich the lives of fostering families, it is also recognised that it can at times be an isolating and challenging task. We aim to ensure the most appropriate and timely support is always provided and utilise the T.R.U.E model of support and intervention in delivering this.

The T.R.U.E model provides an effective framework of meaningful support and proactively seeks to alleviate/prevent blocked care/compassion fatigue.

Using this framework, we will provide for all our foster families:

- A named, experienced and qualified Supervising Social Worker providing monthly supervision and weekly phone contact as a minimum.
- An experienced, independent foster carer as an empathic Attachment Worker
- A designated Children's Champion

Complementing this, foster cares will also have access to:

- Therapeutic supervision from a highly skilled psychotherapist
- One to one support from our Therapeutic Parenting Specialist

- 24-hour support 365 days a year from a qualified/experienced Social Worker with fostering expertise

In addition to this, we will provide:

- Regular support groups and a monthly forum where foster carers can find support and share experiences with other fostering families
- Regular therapeutic workshops and specialist training to develop therapeutic insight into caring for children and young people who have experienced trauma.
- High quality training and support to enable foster carers to achieve the Training Support and Development Standards
- Support at all meetings
- Peer support
- Social events for all the family
- Honest and open feedback to foster carers enabling effective partnership working
- Full pay during foster carers' short breaks from fostering (14 nights minimum)
- Payments for up to 6 weeks when no child is in placement
- Provide a fee that fully reflects the fostering task in a timely manner
- Provide exceptional needs payments when needed
- Provide membership to Foster Talk
- Provide a comprehensive set of policies and procedures and induction to ensure these are effectively understood.

Training & Therapeutic Parenting Workshops

To ensure Therapeutic Parenting is embedded in practice, all foster carers will attend a series of core workshops within the first year of their approval and specialist therapeutic parenting workshops thereafter tailored to their individual Personal Development Plans.

In addition to this, all Foster Carers must complete Statutory Training ensuring they are able to effectively undertake the fostering task and comply with legislative requirements. Where there are two foster carers in the household at least one must complete Mandatory courses/workshops, however both will be fully encouraged and supported to attend/complete together. Foster Carers will be encouraged and fully supported to attend workshops to continually develop their therapeutic insight into caring for children. Specialist and Identified training courses will also be identified by the supervising social worker and/or foster carer. A large resource library is also available to ensure we have a trained workforce in understanding attachment, trauma and loss and how to care for children to build their resilience and reach their potential.

Learning and development

Family Fostering consider training and support as essential to equip staff and foster carers with the knowledge and skills they need to offer effective and therapeutic foster care in order that they can help transform the lives of the children/young people that they foster. We provide a statutory and mandatory training package for all as well as identifying individual and tailored training. All foster carers will be fully supported to complete their Training, Support and Development Standards portfolio within the legislated timescales.

Compliments and Complaints

All comments, compliments and complaints provide vital information to inform the future policy, planning and development of the service as well as identifying the areas of the service which are successful and valued. They help to identify any gaps in service provision and should lead to the development of improved services. When something goes particularly well, or particularly badly, we need to know so that we can repeat successes and correct mistakes.

Family Fostering has a clear complaints procedure which is made available to staff, foster carers, young people and all stakeholders. All complaints and outcomes will be addressed thoroughly and recorded.

Allegations

In all cases with allegations of abuse or neglect, the Local Authority Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership procedures will be followed. The staff member or foster carer accused will be informed of the substance of an allegation as soon as possible and following advice from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). However, there are circumstances when information cannot be shared as it may compromise the investigation. Foster carers are strongly advised to access Fostering Network for support/advice in the event of an allegation. Details of the allegation must be entered onto the Complaints/Concerns log. When a foster carer has had an allegation, they will be referred to the fostering panel for a review. The Registered Manager will confirm in writing to the foster carer the recommendation that will be made to the panel along with a copy of the report. The foster carer will be invited to attend the panel meeting.

Providing support for the foster carer's birth children will also be provided, regardless of whether the allegation has been made against them. Independent support should continue

to be available until consideration of the case by the fostering panel has been completed. Support offered will include helping foster carers to understand the process, ensuring that they are given all appropriate information and assisting them in their communication with other agencies. Where a serious allegation is substantiated, due consideration will be given to whether this should be referred to Disclosure and Barring Service.

Company Structure

Teresa Morgan- Service Manager & Responsible Individual

Teresa has been working within the independent fostering sector since 2001. Having had parents who were foster carers, she has real insight into the valuable role birth children play and the impact fostering can have on them. She is passionate about ensuring everyone in the fostering family is fully supported. Teresa previously held the position of Supervising Social Worker and Senior Practitioner and has been managing fostering services for 9 years. She is a CEOP Ambassador and a Qualified Trainer in Skills to Foster.

Prior to working within fostering Teresa set up and managed services for parents and children. She pioneered a mediation/support service for children and families which was rolled out across Kent as a primary service to prevent young people coming into the care system. The service received an award for innovation.

Debi Atkin- Registered Manager

Debi holds a Level 7 Diploma in Management and is a Qualified Trainer in Skills to Foster. She has been working within the independent fostering sector since 2001. She has been managing fostering services since 2006 and has been a Registered Manager since 2011. Debi has strong leadership skills and ensures her team has access to high levels of management, support and supervision in order to fulfil their responsibilities and meet the expectations of the agency and their profession. Debi was also an approved foster carer and has valuable insight into the realities of fostering and a heart for supporting foster families in the complex work they do.

Prior to working within fostering Debi had extensive experience of working with young people and families since 1989. Previous roles include direct work with children in a residential setting, Deputy Manager in residential child care, Area Manager of a Community Service setting up and providing projects for vulnerable 10-21 year olds and their families and Service Manager responsible for setting up and providing services for approximately 1500 unaccompanied minors. She has extensive experience of managing teams, working in partnership with councils and commissioners as well as managing substantial financial budgets, writing bids and securing funding.

Chantelle Lacey – Supervising Social Worker

A qualified and highly motivated social worker with a BA hons degree in Social Work. Chantelle is passionate about ensuring all young people within the service achieve the best possible outcomes. Chantelle is also fully committed to supporting foster carers, their birth children and extended families in understanding fostering is a whole family venture.

Chantal Wayman – Supervision Social Worker

Chantal is a qualified Social Worker with 9 years' experience working as a Supervising Social Worker within Therapeutic Fostering Agencies. She works with professionalism, energy, empathy and humour. Chantal has a thorough understanding of Panel and the legislation behind it and has been a Panel member for two different Agencies. She is committed to ensuring the quality of care provided to looked after young people is the best it can be.

Jayde Storey – Children's Champion

Jayde has a Degree in Childhood Studies and a Health and Social Care Diploma Level 3. She has a wealth of experience working with children and families and has experience of working with differently abled children including those with Autism, Epilepsy, Down Syndrome, Sensory and Speech and Language difficulties. She has also been a young carer for her brother and a respite carer for a sibling group of three young children. Jayde is empathetic, creative and energetic and always strives to help others in any way she can.

Krista McAllister – Office /Finance Manager

Krista is a highly experienced fostering administrator with a Bachelor of Arts Degree and a 3-year Business Administration/Human Resources Diploma. Her previous experience has been in accounting, human resource management and office administration. Krista is also qualified as a Teacher of English to Speakers of Other Languages and is experienced in conversing with people from different nationalities. Krista has a firm grasp on all aspects of the fostering service and the service users. Her warmth, empathy and humour help to create an office environment of respect, acceptance, understanding and care.

Lauren Hollands – Administrator

Having successfully completed a level 3 Business and Administration BTEC as an Apprentice with Family Fostering, Lauren is our very experienced Administrative Assistant. She is friendly and approachable, highly organised and always prepared to provide help where possible.

Tracy Bennett – Independent Therapeutic Parenting Practitioner

Tracy is a qualified and highly experienced Social Worker with a Level 3 Diploma in Therapeutic Parenting who has worked in the independent fostering sector since 2006 as a Supervising Social Worker, Senior Practitioner, Form F assessor, Trainer and Reviewing Officer. Tracy has extensive knowledge of attachment, trauma and loss and is committed to ensuring foster carers and the children they care for receive the therapeutic support they need to build resilience and help the children through their psychological recovery. Having established, co-ordinated and facilitated empathic workshops for foster carers and staff she has fully embedded therapeutic parenting in this service equipping foster carers with practical ways to work therapeutically with young people. She has organised these workshops in such a way as to also establish informal support networks amongst foster carers and develop peer support/mentoring recognising how invaluable this support is.

Sharon Kailou – Attachment Worker

Sharon is an experienced foster carer for Kent County Council. She is also an experienced panel member. Prior to this she was a Nurse for many years and learning Support worker in a primary school. Her role as Attachment Worker is to provide affective empathic support to foster carers within the service (this is needs led by the foster carer), working as part of a team of professionals to ensure a comprehensive support package. Sharon plays a key role in building resilience in foster carers and sustaining placements. This role ensures affective empathy is extended and available to foster carers in their role as therapeutic parents.

Independent Reviewing Officer/Form F Assessor - Adelle Rothenberg - A qualified Social Worker with vast experience working within a Local Authority Adoption Team. Adelle also undertakes independent pieces of work for other Fostering Agencies. Adelle worked with young offenders before qualifying as a Social Worker. She then started her Social Work career in child protection and safeguarding, before moving into adoption and fostering in 2013. Adelle is passionate about children and young people achieving positive outcomes. Adelle has a good grasp of therapeutic parenting, secure base model and the effects of trauma and harm. She assesses and reviews prospective adopters and foster carers.

Panel (Central List)

Medical Advisor – Dr. Matthew Orr MBChB (Hons), MRCP, MRCGP - A General Practitioner, registered with the General Medical Council. Dr. Orr provides medical advice to staff and panel members in regard to foster carer reports being presented to panel as well as assessing and ratifying their Adult Health Report.

Panel Chair - Patricia Burgess - A Family Magistrate in the East Kent Bench since 2008. Patricia also sits on the Family Panel as a Judge within the Canterbury Combined Court. She is qualified to Chair both the Adult and the Family Panel courts and has been appointed Deputy Chair of the Family Panel Bench for East Kent. Patricia is an experienced fostering panel member and is currently the Panel Chair of two fostering services and Vice Chair for three more. In addition to this she sits on a Fostering Advisory Committee, where decisions are taken with regard to policy and direction of the Foster Agency with particular regard to new legislation and development.

Vice Chair/Legal Advisor - Sarah Stubberfield - A qualified solicitor specialising in matrimonial and family law. Sarah has a passion for children's rights including supporting and promoting welfare issues.

Care Leavers Advisor - Karen Branning - Karen has worked with young people for nearly 30 years and brings varied experiences of the challenges that young people face in their personal and educational lives. As a Care Leaver herself she has first-hand experience of living within the fostering system, which gives her a better understanding of what a young person needs when considering prospective foster carers.

Independent Panel Member - Linda Underwood - Previously a Lecturer in Health and Social Care and Childcare at South Kent College for over 25 years. A course leader for the NVQ 3 in Caring for Children and Young People and the NVQ 2, 3 & 4 in Community Work. Linda also taught the BTEC National Diploma Health Studies and Society Health and Development. Linda is also the Manager for an accredited contact centre.

Independent Panel Member - Karen Healy - A fully qualified, state registered nurse with over 35 years of experience. Karen specialises in mental health and has been practising as a community Mental Health Nurse for 16 years.

Independent Panel Member - Martin Meah - An experienced foster carer with 14 years of experience caring for other people's children. He is passionate about achieving the best possible outcomes for the children and young people and understands the needs of both foster carers and the children and young people they care for.

Independent Panel Member - Mark Buck - Mark is an experienced and current foster carer. He was, until he retired, a Detective Sergeant, responsible for managing the Combined Safeguarding Team, managing the safeguarding of high-risk victims of domestic abuse and investigating allegations of serious abuse against children and vulnerable adults. This involved a high level of risk management and effective working with partner agencies including Social Services, Education & Health. His work-based and fostering training have given him a sound knowledge base around the effects of trauma, separation and loss.

Independent Panel Member - Craig Prentice – An Independent Social Worker with over 16 years' experience working with children and families. His experience includes working as a supervising social worker and youth offending SW and Intensive Family Support Worker. Previous to that he was a Team Leader for a children's charity for 10 years managing a team of 12 staff and oversaw the delivery of a community youth work project, parenting support project, pre-school and counselling service.

Craig grew up in a children's home where his parents were house parents. His parents and his wife's parents were also foster carers for many years.

Independent Panel Member - Laura Moor - An Independent Social Worker. Qualified in 2010, with extensive experience working with independent and local authority fostering services. Laura is experienced in fostering training and recruitment and the assessment of foster carers. Her work is centered on the Secure Base Model and firmly believes placement stability and security for a child underpins all other practice within fostering. Laura is passionate about collaborating with foster carers and fostering applicants, as they undertake one of the most challenging and rewarding vocations.

Consultants & Therapists

Nicola Bond – Advanced Diploma Integrative Counselling

Geraldine Brown - AQA CSCT Diploma in Therapeutic Counselling

Jan Dalglish - DipSW, BSc (psych), MSc in Mental Health

Jacqueline Freeston - Post Graduate Certificate in Aspergers and Autism. Level 3 Health & Social Care, C Card registered to support young people with sex and relationships. OU Certificate in Understanding Nutrition