



Statement of Purpose

FOCUS FOSTER CARE

URN: SC1249881

January 2018

Revised January 2019

Reviewed January 2020

Updated 28th July 2020

November 2021, May 2022



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Statement of Purpose & Function

Introduction

Focus Foster Care's overriding aim is to provide high quality foster care placements for looked after children and young people between the ages of 0 – 18 years old and in doing so we will promote individuals social, emotional, health and educational needs, enabling them to achieve their full potential and best possible outcomes. We aim to ensure the outcomes for children and young people are improved by receipt of better care, services and education. Improved outcomes can only be improved if children and young people are safe from harm. Therefore, safeguarding the welfare of children and young people is our core business.

Focus Foster Care is registered with and inspected by OFSTED, as required under the Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011. Our URN is SC1249881

Focus Foster Care Statement of Purpose has been developed in accordance with the following statutory law requirements and regulations:

- Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards 2011
- Children Act Guidance and Regulations Volume 4: Fostering Service 2011
- Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011
- The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review and Fostering Services (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2013
- The Care Planning and Fostering (Miscellaneous Amendments) (England) Regulations 2015
- The Children Act 1989 Guidance & Regulations Volume 2 Care Planning Placement & Case Review 2010

Our Statement of Purpose aims to provide children, young people, parents, carers, staff and other professionals with information about the agency and the services and facilities we provide, including:

- A statement of the aims and objectives of Focus Foster Care
- Information about the services and facilities provided by Focus Foster Care

A copy of the statement is made available upon request to:

- Purchasers of the Service
- Foster Carers and Prospective Foster Carers
- Children & Young People who are placed with Focus Foster Care Agency

- Colleagues from other Social Care Agencies
- Any person working for or with the fostering service
- Any parent or guardian of any child placed with the fostering service
- Ofsted

Children and young people are also provided with age appropriate welcome guides which are in more suitable formats for them to understand.

This Statement of Purpose is reviewed and updated at least annually by the Registered Manager.

1. Our Aims

Focus Foster Care is an independent fostering provider working in partnership with Local Authorities, parents and carers, our aim is to deliver high quality family placements to children and young people aged birth to 18 years old who are 'looked after' by the Local Authorities. We are committed to working using a child/young person centred approach to achieve stability in children and young people's lives to enable them to achieve the best possible outcomes. We have a commitment to the recruitment of foster carers from diverse backgrounds to enable us to offer the best placement matches for children and young people. We aim to support and promote the racial, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds of children and young people in our care.

"Under the Embracing Lives ethos our primary focus is to provide high quality foster care placements and deliver the best possible outcomes for Looked After Children".

2. Our Objectives

- To provide foster care placements for looked after children and young people where they can experience a safe, warm and caring family life.
- To enhance and maximise the outcomes for looked after children and young people.
- To recruit and retain foster carers from diverse backgrounds to ensure that the cultural needs of each child and young person are met.
- To demonstrate a commitment to on-going learning and professional development of the agency, foster carers and staff.
- To ensure that all foster carers have access to a support and guidance from an experienced qualified Supervising Social Worker.
- To promote and encourage ongoing learning and training opportunities to all our foster carers and staff team.
- To provide a responsive, supportive professional 24-hour service for foster carers, children and young people and Local Authorities.
- To ensure careful matching of a child or young person's needs with the skills and qualities of a foster carer.
- To promote a child centred approach throughout our practice, having the child or young person's welfare and wishes evident in all our decisions.
- To place children and young people with local foster carers to enable them to maintain links with their families (where appropriate), school and their local community.

- To enable children and young people to develop social interests, hobbies and take part in a range of activities in the community.
- To promote a healthy lifestyle and ensure that every child or young person's emotional and physical health needs are met.
- To promote children and young people's contact with the birth families and significant others.
- A commitment to developing our practice through user consultation and participation.
- To deliver best value and outcomes for children and young people in our care at all times.

3. Status & Constitution

Focus Foster Care is a Limited Independent Organisation registered under the Companies Act 1985. (Company Number 09437356)

FOCUS FOSTER CARE LTD
Chamberlain House
Stoneleigh Park
Kenilworth
CV8 2LG

4. Management Structure

The Management Team responsible for delivering the fostering services comprises:

Christopher Aristidou	Company Director
Bryan Orchard	Company Director
Kevin Reynolds	Company Director
Emma Hargrove	Team Manager (registration in progress)

Emma Hargrove Team Manager (registration in progress)
10 years' experience within the fostering sector, supporting foster carers, young people, and social work students. • Childcare experience within early years, private sector • Practice Educator Level 1 award • BA (Hons) in social work • Currently completing Level 5 in Business Management.

Kevin Reynolds Responsible Individual (incoming)
Over 20 years' experience in working with vulnerable children and young people. • Experienced in working in the Independent sector (fostering and residential) as a Registered Manager • NVQ Level 4 in Business Management • Diploma in Social Work

Christopher Aristidou Responsible Individual (outgoing)
Experience in Local Authority Front Line Children's Services • Experienced in working in the Independent Residential Sector as a Registered Manager and Responsible Individual • BA (Hons) in Social Work

5. Quality Assurance

Focus Foster Care aims to provide services to individuals that exceed National Standards. To enable us to achieve this aim, and to ensure that the children and young people placed within our agency are provided with a high level of care we have rigorous Quality Assurance systems in place.

Each child or young person's progress is tracked and monitored throughout the time that they are placed with us. This is undertaken to ensure that the objectives set out in individual Care Plans are being met, and that our foster carers are equipped to help the children and young people in their care achieve their full potential.

The Registered Manager is responsible for auditing all records relating to the agency to ensure that regulatory and organisational compliance is being maintained. The findings of these audits are examined by the management team on a quarterly basis in order to identify areas where further development can be made.

Monitoring is also achieved through our database which ensures that all appropriate records and checks are up to date, through formal and informal supervision of staff, auditing of individual case files and standing agendas at team and management meetings. Furthermore, the Directors and Registered Manager meet on a quarterly basis in relation to improving the quality of service provided by the organisation.

6. Staffing

The Registered Manager is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the agency including the development of services to children and young people and our foster carers. The supervision of the Supervising Social Workers and the Office Manager is conducted by the Registered Manager.

Supervising Social Workers each have a case load of foster carers that they supervise and are responsible for visiting regularly, attending meetings, spending time with children and young people in placement as appropriate and making recommendations for the Annual Foster Carer Review. In addition, they will complete assessments of prospective foster cares. All Supervising Social Workers are qualified and registered with Social Work England.

In addition to permanent staff, as required we may employ Independent Social Workers on a temporary basis to complete Form F Assessments. All staff, foster carers and other adults who come into contact with children and young people through Focus Foster Care are subject to appropriate checks and vetting procedures to ensure appropriate safeguarding.

7. Standard of Care

At Focus Foster Care we believe that an inclusive partnership approach which embraces children and young people, their families, foster carers and Local Authorities is vital to the success of placements. We offer a child centred approach, which encourages placement stability enabling children and young people to achieve the best outcomes in relation to the Every Child Matters Agenda 2003 five national key outcomes:

- Be Healthy - We will promote the child or young person's physical, mental and emotional health & healthy lifestyle needs
- Stay Safe - We will safeguard the child or young person safety from neglect, violence and sexual exploitation, bullying and discrimination
- Enjoy and Achieve - We will promote the child or young person's education, school attendance, personal and social
- Make a Positive Contribution - We will promote engagement of the child or young person in decision-making, law-abiding activities and developing self-confidence
- Achieve Economic Well-being - We will support the child or young person's independent and development needs

Focus Foster Care believes that:

- Each child and young person has the right to develop their potential, regardless of previous life experience
- Children and young people have a right to be looked after by foster carers and staff who offer them respect, concern and promote their race, culture, religion and contact with their birth family
- Young people should be appropriately prepared for leaving their foster placement and moving on to independence, with savings, educational attainment to support their chosen career and suitable, independent skills

8. Service Provision

Focus Foster Care works in line with all relevant national legislation and regulations relating to the placement of looked after children in foster care. Focus Foster Care is able to provide a wide range of placement options for all age groups, including:

- **Emergency Placements;** Provided at short notice and supported by our 24hr on-call emergency response service.
- **Short-Term Placements;** Where a foster placement is required for a few days / months while plans are made for the child or young person's long term future.
- **Bridging Placements;** A short-term foster placement, which focuses on ensuring the most sensitive transition for the child or young person into and from the placement.
- **Long-Term Placements;** where a foster placement is required to provide permanent care for a child or young person up to and into adult independence where adoption is not an option.

- **Permanency Placement;** Which offers permanent placements for a child or young person within their foster family.
- **Solo Placements;** For children and young people whose complex needs require a higher level of support and supervision, which precludes the placement of any other placement. If requested, and by agreement with the placing authority, additional support services can be made available to support the placement.
- **Short Break/Respite Placements;** Providing a break for parents and additional support where they may not have appropriate support networks. This can be anything from an overnight stay to a couple of weeks.
- **Sibling Placements;** Either placed together or separately. Facilitating and supervising contact between siblings.
- **Parent and Child Placements;** Foster Carers offering parent and child placements will be trained in providing these specialist placements.

9. Placement Matching

At Focus Foster Care all potential placements are carefully matched at the point of referral to ensure that the needs of individual children and young people can be met by the foster carers. We use our comprehensive matching process in conjunction with our Placement Planning and Safer Caring processes to safeguard children and young people and ensure that they are appropriately placed. Focus Foster Care attaches great importance to the matching process and views the process as vital to best practice. Children and young people placed with our carers can be assured that they are being cared for by committed and well-trained individuals, who are in turn supported by experienced and dedicated Supervising Social Workers.

Referrals are considered by the Registered Manager, Social Work team, Placing Authority and Foster Carers; this process ensures that the child or young person's needs can be met through offering the best possible match.

10. Working in Partnership

Focus Foster Care offers a high standard of service provision and seeks to work in full partnership with Placing Authorities in order to monitor and further develop our services. Focus Foster Care understands its responsibility to support Local Authority social work staff in regard to their responsibilities relating to statutory Looked After Children processes.

Focus Foster Care will endeavour to obtain feedback from Placing Authorities, with the intention of managing and developing services that exceed national standards. Focus Foster Care expects all carers to work fully in partnership with the agency, Placing Authorities social work staff and where appropriate with the families of looked after children and young people. We believe that this is vital to ensure the success of placements and the welfare, stability and development of looked after children and young people.

Focus Foster Care undertakes to recruit and approve carers who have demonstrated a commitment and ability to training and development which in turn enables them to offer the standards of care that we believe in.

11. Supporting Foster Carers

Supervision and support

Whilst we recognise that we do not hold case management responsibility for individual children and young people, we believe that it is our responsibility to ensure that the needs of individuals are paramount, and that the carers' developmental needs are met. To ensure this, we provide monthly supervision between the Supervising Social Worker's and Foster Carers. A record of supervision is provided to the carer and a copy is held on their fostering file with any issues actioned immediately following the supervision.

In addition, Focus Foster Care provides the following support to all our foster carers:

- Access to out of hours support services, 24 hours a day, 7 days per week, 365 days per year
- Minimum of one monthly visit from Supervising Social Workers
- Regular phone support (minimum weekly) from Supervising Social Workers
- Support in meeting relating to children and young people's educational needs.
- Support at any professional's meetings.
- Regular support group meetings.
- Organised activities for children.
- A comprehensive post approval mandatory training and development programme, including access to the Level 3 Children's Workforce Diploma which is underpinned by the TSD Standards
- A competitive allowance paid every week during placement. All Foster Carers are self-employed and as such must pay their own tax and NI. Detailed financial guidance, alongside details of a specialist Accountant to assist with tax issues, is provided in our Fostering Handbook
- Membership of Foster Talk, including access to their support and legal advice line
- Educational assistance and support

Policies and Procedures

All foster carers receive a comprehensive foster carers' handbook which provides guidance and support to carers about the agencies policy and procedures and their role and responsibilities which is updated regularly and is a point of reference for foster carers and staff.

12. Recruitment, Assessment and Approval Process

Focus Foster Care is committed to the recruitment of foster carers, who are trained, supported and supervised to meet the needs of children and young people. All prospective foster carers who make

an enquiry are subject to a rigorous assessment and vetting procedure. Focus Foster Care endeavours to recruit foster carers from a diverse range of backgrounds, ethnicities, geographical locations, economic situations and from differing family compositions. This strategy will ensure that we can provide the most suitable match to meet the needs of children referred to the agency. Potential applicants will not be discriminated against on grounds of ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion, age or economic status.

Focus Foster Care carries out rigorous assessments of prospective foster carers and uses the CoramBAAF Form F as the primary foster carer assessment tool. The process will include a detailed assessment of the candidates' background including their childhood, their educational experiences, their own life experiences, their upbringing, their own parenting experiences, their values and attitudes to diversity and any specific skills they may have e.g. working with disabilities & working with adolescents. Full checks such as DBS, Local Authority checks and references will be obtained.

To process an application to approve a foster carer/s takes between 6-8 visits and is generally completed in 4-6 months.

Foster Panel

The role of the Foster Panel is to make a recommendation on the approval of new Foster Carer applicants, to make a recommendation on the statutory review of approved Foster Carers, to make a recommendation on the de-registration of Foster Carers and to act as part of the appeal process on complaints against the Agency or any of its representatives. Following a recommendation from the Panel the Agency Decision Maker will review all of the information linked to the recommendation before reaching a final decision. If foster carers are unhappy with the final decision they have a right to appeal. This can be made to the agency or directly to the Independent Review Mechanism.

The Foster Panel plays a major part in the Quality Assurance process. Each member is required to complete a Quality Assurance Form for each panel application. The panel liaises closely with Registered Manager through the Panel Chair. This is an essential Quality Assurance element and all prospective foster carers are expected to attend our Fostering Panel with their Assessing Social Worker.

Carer Annual Reviews

Focus Foster Care will ensure that reviews of carers' approval are undertaken in respect of all carers on an annual basis in line with statutory requirements. The intention of such reviews will be to continually improve the services offered by the organisation and to ensure that all carers receive the support and training that is required to allow ongoing improvement in standards of service. Focus Foster Care will consult fully with Placing Authorities in order to gain relevant feedback and information in regard to placements and carers at review times. Focus Foster Care will also consult with children and young people in placement and children who foster. Reviews of carers will be held more frequently where in our opinion it is deemed necessary to do so.

13. Foster Care Agreements and Undertaking

Following approval our foster carers are required to sign a Foster Care Agreement which covers a range of contractual information and undertakings including:

- To care appropriately for children and young people in placement, as identified in the foster placement agreement
- To follow procedures laid down within the agency's handbook and Policy & Procedures which details our Child Protection procedures, foster carer roles & responsibilities, behaviour management support
- To inform Focus Foster Care of any relevant significant changes to their household or details

14. Training of Foster Carers

In order to provide children and young people a high standard of care and the demands of fostering prospective foster carers are required to complete the pre-approval "**Skills to Foster**" training course. This involves an initial three day training course to enable applicants to prepare the foster carer in the task of caring for looked after children and young people with diverse needs.

Post Approval training:

- Legislation/Policies and Procedures
- Safer caring, Safeguarding, Child Protection & complaints and allegations
- Risk Assessment
- Understanding & Managing Challenging Behaviour
- First Aid/Administration of medication
- Missing Children
- Parenting a child who displays sexualised behaviour or has experienced abuse
- Sexual Exploitation
- Working with children and young people who self-harm
- Education & Health Care of Looked After Children
- Record Keeping
- Valuing Diversity & Equality
- Attachment
- Identity & Self Esteem
- Life Story Work
- Preparing Young People moving on and achieving Adult Independence
- Drug awareness training
- Parent and child assessment training (for carers caring Parent and child placements)
- Safeguarding disabled children (for carers caring for disabled children)
- Caring for children with complex needs (for carers caring for children with complex needs who require clinical intervention)

We also offer further training for foster carers to complete the Level 3 Children's Workforce Diploma.

Training is viewed as an important part of the Agency's support in respect of foster carers continued learning and development to:

- Assist foster carers and staff to maintain and develop their competence in the role they perform
- Improve knowledge and develop individual skills and strengths
- Ensure foster carers are competent and confident in safeguarding and promoting the well-being of children and young people and in protecting them from harm
- Encourage foster carers to reflect and look at the effects of discrimination in all parts of the community, recognising that they care for children and young people in the wider context of societal values, and that discrimination is a fact of everyday life for many looked after children
- Encourage foster carers to take responsibility for their own professional development through individual training profiles
- Our training is designed to reflect the Every Child Matters Agenda to enable us to achieve the best positive placement outcomes

15. Children's Guide

Focus Foster Care believes that children have a right to information and support throughout the fostering process. We will undertake regular consultation in regards to the care they receive for us to continually look at developing our services. All children, allowing for age and understanding will be provided with a copy of our 'Children's Guide' on placement.

This guide will give simple but clear information around what it is like to live in foster care and explains:

- The role of the child or young person's Social Worker
- The role of the foster carer
- Reviews and meetings
- Some of the feelings children and young people may have about being in foster care
- Advice for children and young people if they have a problem or need help
- Who to contact in case of an emergency or complaint, as well as contact details for organisations that support children and young people

16. Complaints & Outcomes

Focus Foster Care has a comprehensive complaints procedure, which is available for children & young people, carers, parents, professionals and the public.

Focus Foster Care will manage complaints and representations properly and in a timely manner. We will try to resolve issues informally and, where possible directly between the complainant and the subject of the complaint but where formal process is instigated, we aim to resolve issues in a thorough and timely manner.

For a copy of our Comments, Compliments and Complaints Procedure, please contact the Registered Manager.

Due to Data Protection Regulations full details of management structure and staffing is not held on the Statement of Purpose but can be requested as a separate document.

Contact Us

Please contact us for any further information.