



Foster Care Values

Foster Care Values

Statement of Purpose



1. – Introduction

This document sets out the Statement of Purpose of Foster Care Values

It relates to the operations of Foster Care Values as an Independent Fostering Provider within the six North Wales Counties area.

This Statement of Purpose has been developed in accordance with appropriate statute law and regulations, including:

- Care Standards Act 2000
- Fostering Services National Minimum Standards Wales
- Fostering Services (Wales Regulations 2003)
- The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 4: Fostering Services
- The Placement of Children (Wales) Regulations 2007
- The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 Working Together to Safeguard Children
- Prevent duty Guidance for England and Wales
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
- Rights of Children and Young People (Wales) Measure 2010

Foster Care Values Statement of Purpose provides a comprehensive range of information, which is intended for a wide group of stake holders to include:

- Foster Care Values staff

- Foster Carers and Prospective Foster Carers
- Children & Young People who are placed with Foster Care Values and their families.
- Local Authorities who place or are considering placing children & young people with Foster Care Values Carers
- Other Social Care Agencies
- The General Public

This Statement of Purpose will be reviewed and updated by the Senior Management Team on an annual basis.



Section 2 – Equality & Diversity

Foster Care Values is committed to equality of opportunity. Our vision recognises the benefits of diversity and equality and places them centrally in our approach to policy making, service development and recruitment. We are committed to identifying, understanding and eliminating all barriers that prevent access to services, information and employment.



Foster Care Values welcomes applicants from all sections of the community and this will be reflected in our recruitment activity and literature.



Section 3 – Aims & Objectives



3.1 Aims

Foster Care Values aim to become a leading local Independent Fostering Service Provider within the six North Wales counties who are recognised by all stake holders as providing family placements that achieve excellent outcomes for children placed with us through working in genuine co-operation with our local authority partners.

Foster Care Values aim to recruit, train and support a cohort of foster carers who are committed, confident and capable of providing outstanding care to vulnerable children and young people which respects and acknowledges their racial, cultural, religious and linguistic heritage and gives appropriate consideration to their gender, sexuality and any disability they might experience.

3.2 Objectives

To deliver a service that is predicated on the imperative that the child's welfare is paramount in all the decisions we make.

To deliver foster care placements that ensure children and young people, who are placed with us by local authorities, enjoy a stable and consistent experience of safe, warm and caring family life offered by skilled and well supported foster carers.

To provide a responsive, supportive and professional 24 hour service for Foster Carers, children & young people and local authorities.

To ensure that high quality care is provided for children & young people, within supportive foster homes where the needs of every child are central in determining the conduct of the placement.

To deliver foster care placements that are underpinned by a child centred approach and which promote an environment that encourages every child to maximise their potential.

To provide a comprehensive support service to our carers in the knowledge that to do so has a direct influence on achieving successful placement outcomes.

To achieve careful matching of a child's needs and wishes with the skills, experience and individual qualities of our foster carers.



To endeavour to recruit and retain foster carers from as diverse backgrounds as possible to enable a choice of appropriate placement options for children & young people to be made.

To promote the educational engagement of young people placed to allow them to benefit from the range of educational opportunities offered within the six county area.

To encourage and enable young people to pursue both existing and new social interests and hobbies safely and to take part in a range of leisure activities.

To promote a healthy lifestyle through access to a healthy diet and exercise opportunities.

To ensure that every child's emotional and physical health needs are met by accessing all appropriate community health resources.

To promote and facilitate contact, as appropriate and consistent with the care plan, with birth family and significant others, for every fostered child and young person, during their foster placement.

To work within an inclusive partnership model to include children and young people, their families, Foster Carers, local authorities and other stakeholders in the belief that collaborative working provides the best foundation for achieving successful placement outcomes.

To realise a commitment to the ongoing learning, training and professional developments of both Foster Carers and staff which will allow us to develop a corporate body of knowledge and shared experience which can be deployed to the benefit of all stakeholders.

To provide comprehensive annual training programme for Foster Carers which realises both a sound basic skills and knowledge base but also encourages carers and staff to invest in learning which enhances their development as professionals within this field.

To constantly endeavour to deliver best value for our customers in financially constrained times and to pursue an agenda of continuous improvement in all areas.

To complete an annual review of the quality of care by consulting with all stakeholders and to use the findings of this review to inform our service offer in order improve the services we offer by taking heed of what our stakeholders are telling us. Furthermore we will publicise to those stakeholders how we have listened to them, what we intend to do and confirm when we have done it.



Section 4 – Status & Constitution

Foster Care Values is an Independent Fostering Provider established in 2013 with the aim of becoming a successful local provider of high quality fostering services focussed within the six North Wales counties by offering resilient, skilled placements where the needs of the individual child placed are the central determinant of all activity.

Foster Care Values is a Limited Company (Company Registration No: 08405979) owned by two Directors Mick Sams and Ian Jones who have both worked in the childcare social work field within the six county area for a combined total of over 54 years. Foster Care Values has an office base at Tir Llwyd Enterprise Park, Kinmel Bay.

Foster Care Values is Registered and Inspected as a Fostering Provider under the Care Standards Act 2000 and Fostering Regulations (Wales 2003) and is therefore properly constituted to provide foster care placements for ‘Looked After’ children and young people on behalf of Local Authorities.

Foster Care Values is also registered on the All Wales Fostering Framework as a Tier 1 provider.

The company’s directors meet formally together on a quarterly basis and as well as being responsible for all matters relating to corporate governance they also regularly discuss:

- The Business Plan
- Legal and operational compliance
- Strategic vision, direction, outcomes and goals
- Culture, values, vision and mission
- Financial expenditure, management and performance
- Organisational structure and capacity to implement strategic direction
- Policies & Procedures
- Our quality performance assessment as part of the “All Wales Fostering Framework”
- Quality Assurance and quality of care



Section 5 – Management Structure

The Management Team consists of Mick Sams (Responsible Individual) and Ian Jones (Registered Manager) who both have considerable experience in social work, management, practice and development roles. The management structure is purposefully flat to reflect the ethos and status as a new agency. In order to bring an increased level of scrutiny and independence the agency has decided to engage an experienced senior manager as the agency decision maker thereby adding a further dimension of independence to the approval, review and termination processes within the agency. The senior managers will also meet on a quarterly basis with the Agency Decision Maker (ADM). The ADM will act in the role of “Critical Friend” to the agency and we will collectively focus on developing our continual improvement agenda with the benefit of the additional rigour their overview will provide. The managerial structure of the organisation will be under constant review to ensure we have sufficient management capacity to service the needs of the agency and reflects its size and development.



6. Foster Care Values Staff Team





Section 6 – Foster Care Values Staff Team

Foster Care Values, size, structure and ethos, promotes cohesion, close communication and clarity throughout the company and allows the managers to have a clear line of sight to the point of service delivery ie carers homes. The agency currently has two other employee's Ursula Hillier, Senior Supervising Social Worker and Tracey Young, General Manager. Both these members of the team have considerable experience of working within the Independent Care Sector. To reflect an increase in our foster carer numbers, we have also secured the part time services (three days a week) of a very experienced Senior Supervising Social Worker - Jayne Greening, to ensure that we have sufficient capacity within the staff team to offer the support necessary to deliver a high quality service.

Foster Care Values hold monthly meetings to include the whole staff team and ensure that the combined knowledge and experience available to the company can be deployed to consider the range of strategic and practice issues that may present which can include:

- Monitoring and make decisions on service development and service delivery
- Receive and consider information on contracts, finance, personnel, marketing, recruitment and quality assurance
- Receive record and act upon representations and feedback from within the foster carer compliment
- Consider reports in relation to specific Foster Care Values services
- Consider, act upon and move forward the work of Foster Care Values against significant and relevant changes in external environment

In addition to the four permanent team members social work staff and general manager, Foster Care Values has access to a pool of four experienced self-employed sessional support staff who work directly into placement and with young people. The most senior support worker also has the role of Participation Officer. The remit for this role will be developed over the coming twelve months but the starting point for 2017 /2018 will be an expectation that the officer will meet individually with every young person in our care at least three times in the twelve month period. Both the product of this activity and the frequency of these meetings will be reviewed and recorded as part of our annual Section 42 Quality of Care Report. The agency also has a relationship with other staff who work on an independent, self-employed basis across a variety of



roles e.g Agency Decision Maker; Assessment Manager, Independent Form F Assessors; Independent Investigators for formal complaints, Therapeutic Support; Education Support; Medical Advisor and Trainers.

All Foster Care Values Therapists hold appropriate qualifications and hold membership of a nationally recognised organisation relevant to their work. They have extensive experience in understanding the emotional needs of children and young people, especially those in care.

For all self-employed staff verification of formal qualifications is assured and Foster Care Values carries out the required checks and enquiries, comparable to those of permanent staff, to ensure that the welfare of children and young people is safeguarded and promoted at all times.

All staff who undertake work in any capacity for Foster Care Values are covered by appropriate professional indemnity insurance and have contracts of employment and job descriptions or contractual briefs.





Section 7 – Standards of Care

Our Mission Statement

'We aim to provide the highest standard of family based care for vulnerable children and young people which will secure their immediate safety and welfare and provide an environment which will allow them the opportunity to develop as individuals to reach their full potential and prepare them for successful adult lives.'



Core Values

Our ten core values are:

- **Integrity** – As a company we behave in a manner that embodies the highest standards of probity and professionalism.
- **Honesty** – As a company we will carry on all our relationships and dealings in a truthful and open manner which represents and promotes our value base.
- **Respect** – As a company we behave in a way that values all those with whom we enter into a relationship, children, customers, carers and staff. We will always respect the origins of the young people who are looked after by our carers.
- **Compassion** – As a company we will always recognise the emotionally charged atmosphere within which we operate and we will always show an appropriate level of empathy and sensitivity in all our activity.
- **Ambition** – As a company we will always be ambitious for the children and young people in our care ensuring that they will always be encouraged and supported to develop to their maximum potential. We will be ambitious for our company ensuring that we strive for excellence and realise our vision.
- **Mindfulness** – As a company we will always ensure that we take time to reflect on our successes and our failures to ensure that we can learn all necessary lessons and implement our change agenda in a timely considered and effect manner.
- **Diversity** – As a company we will always endeavour to value diversity and recognise the benefits it brings.
- **Equality** – As a company we will not accept discrimination in relation to any group or individual for whatever reason and will actively seek to undertake all of our activities in an inclusive manner.
- **Co-operation** – As a company we will endeavour to work in genuine co-operation with all interested parties to the benefit of those young people for whom we all share responsibility.
- **Pride** – As a company and as a group of professional colleagues we will always endeavour to act in a manner which means that we can be proud of what we are, the company we represent and the thing we collectively achieve.



Foster Care Values define our standards blueprint throughout all of our documentation, in particular our:

- Policies & Procedures
- Foster Carer Handbook
- Foster Care Agreement

At Foster Care Values, we believe that:

- Each individual has an inherent right to have the opportunity to develop their true potential, regardless of their previous life experiences.
- Children and young people have a right to be looked after by adults who offer them support, encouragement, respect, reassurance and affection.
- All those engaged by the agency in whatever capacity must respect the significance of children and young people's birth family, race, culture, linguistic heritage and religion. This must also reflect the "the active offer" in terms of the Welsh Language.
- All children and young people have the right to achieve the best possible outcomes in line with "The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014"
- Young people should be appropriately supported to prepare for leaving care in line with the "When I am ready" principles. They should have the opportunity to save, be supported and encouraged to achieve the necessary educational attainment to support their chosen career and be offered the opportunity to acquire and rehearse appropriate independence skills.
- Foster Care Values will be managed in an ethical, effective and efficient manner.
- All staff, foster carers and other adults who come into contact with the children fostered by foster Care Values will be subject to appropriate checks and vetting procedures.

In addition Foster Care Values will:

- Comply with all relevant legislation and strive to exceed the National Minimum Standards at all times.
- Ensure that the rights of the children fostered with Foster Care Values are promoted in line with the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child and the Rights of Children and Young People (Wales) Measure 2010
- Ensure that child protection procedures are followed robustly at all times to ensure that young people placed with the agency are safeguarded.
- Work in partnership with local authorities to identify the individual needs of the child placed and then to deliver the care required.
- Ensure that Foster Carers are trained in appropriate behavioural management techniques and do not ever resort to physical chastisement or other forms of inappropriate behaviour to manage the care environment.
- Ensure that the benefits of equality and diversity are promoted at all times particularly within the recruitment, assessment and matching process and that this approach is carried through to supporting placements.



8. Service Provision





Foster Care Values aim to work in partnership with local authorities to ensure that we provide a wide range of safe, secure and appropriate foster care placements for children and young people of all ages. These placements will be offered by appropriately matched and approved Foster Carers who are able to meet the individual needs of the young person. All referrals are received and processed by our very experienced General Manager in consultation with our social work staff.

All placements are negotiated between the placing authority and the general manager to ensure that all the appropriate placement resources are offered to the placing authority in respect of the young person. This ensures that the young person is placed with Foster Care Values Foster Carers who have the appropriate skills and knowledge set which may include training in specialised areas such as managing challenging behaviour, caring for adolescents or caring for children with disabilities.





8.1 – Placement Regulations

All placements of children and young people with Foster Care Values Foster Carers are made and monitored in accordance with the Fostering Service Regulations (Wales 2003).

In practice means that:

- All Foster Carers are appropriately approved, reviewed and have signed their Foster Care Agreement.
- Wherever possible, a pre-placement planning meeting is undertaken, including introductions between the Foster Carer and the child/young person.
- All placements are made using our Risk Assessment relating to the Children and Young People, which is undertaken either before or at the point of placement. The assessment is undertaken by the Foster Care Values Supervising Social Worker in conjunction with the child's local authority Social Worker and the Social Worker of any child already in placement.
- Either before, or at the point of placement, essential professional information is shared to include Care Plans, medical consent and clarity around delegation to the Foster Carer(s).

In the event of an emergency placement, immediate placement planning is undertaken and achieving placement stability receives priority attention.



8.2 – Matching

All placements are carefully matched to ensure that the needs of children and young people can be best met by the Foster Carers put forward in relation to their knowledge and skill set and their experiences.

Once a referral is received, close communication takes place between Foster Care Values, our local authority colleagues and our Foster Carers, to ensure that the child's needs will be fully met through making the best possible match.

At Foster Care Values we take the decision to place a child extremely seriously and all decisions to place are overseen by the Registered Manager to ensure that we make the best possible match for the child and Foster Carer.

Children and young people placed with Foster Care Values will never be expected to share a bedroom with another fostered child or child of the Foster Carers, other than if they are siblings and it is appropriate to do so.



8.3 – Fostering Placements

Foster Care Values offers the following range of placements for children and young people of all ages with Foster Carers:

- **Emergency** – Placements are provided by Foster Care Values at short notice to react to unforeseen emergencies where a placement is required for a child/young person with no prior plan. Foster Care Values operates a 24 hour service therefore emergency placements can be identified and made out of usual working hours.
- **Respite** – providing foster care as a break for parents/carers and as additional support where their support networks are lacking.
- **Short Term** - Short term planned placements can be open ended where the long term plan for the child/young person's future has not yet been determined. Care is usually provided for a few days/months while plans are made for the child's long term future.
- **Bridging** – This is a short term flexible placement, focusing on ensuring the most sensitive transition for the child into and from the placement.
- **Long Term** – A placement that is planned (prior to placement commencing or subsequently) to provide long term care for a child/young person up to and into adult independence.
- **Permanency** – A placement where the care plan has been approved as a permanency placement by the Local Authority and the FCV carer has been subsequently matched.
- **Sibling Group** – Sibling placement either placed together or separately. Foster Care Values will be involved in facilitating contact between siblings as necessary and appropriate.



- **Parent & Child** – Placements are available for a parent and their child, where Foster Carers can provide support to a parent in developing their parenting skills. Additional training is provided for Foster Carers wishing to provide parent & child placements due to the specific nature of their role in working in partnership with other professionals.
- **Teenagers** – Placements with Foster Carer Values Foster Carers who are experienced in meeting the needs of challenging teenagers.
- **Children who experience disabilities** – Dedicated and experienced Foster Carers providing specific and individual care for children and young people who experience disabilities.
- **Solo** – Placements are available to care for children and young people whose needs are so complex that they require higher level of support and supervision, which precludes the placement of any other child or young person within the foster home. If requested and by arrangement with the placing authority, additional support services are made available to such placements.
- **Task Centred** – FCV Foster Carers can undertake ‘task centred work’ with children and young people and their families where the purpose of the placement and the intended duration are made explicit or determined with relative accuracy during the placing authorities care planning process.
- **Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Young People** – placement for children and young people who are deemed to be unaccompanied asylum seekers and where their residency status within the UK is yet to be determined. Foster Care Values is able to provide additional support for its Foster Cares to address any issues in relation to immigration, religion, language and cultural needs and integration within the community and local faith groups.
- **Pre-adoption** – Placements can be offered to children who are within the adoption process and need transitional care until their long term future can be determined. Carers will also in such circumstances be available to support the prospective adopters. Additional training and support can be offered to carers in relation to such placements.
- **Transitional** – Placements can be offered in relation to a planned move from a residential setting to a family foster care setting. Additional training and support will be offered to carers who are interested in offering this type of placement.
- **Bespoke packages of care** – Foster Care Values is committed to working in genuine partnership with our local authority colleagues, children and their families. Towards this end and in an effort to ensure that the services we offer are both relevant and sufficiently flexible to meet the needs of our partners we are able to discuss planning unique care packages where appropriate, to meet the increasingly complex range of circumstances presenting within the public care arena.



9. Recruitment, Assessment, Approval & Review



9.1 – Recruitment

If we wish to achieve the outcomes for ‘Looked After’ children that we as an agency aspire to, then it is essential in the first instance that we recruit only the right type of people to become foster carers as well as providing the right levels of training, support and supervision for them once they are approved as carers. This makes the recruitment and assessment processes a crucial area of work to Foster Carer Values.

We believe prospective foster carers have the right to be treated with dignity and respect within our process and that young people have the right to expect that Foster Care Values is committed to the recruitment and approval of prospective carers who have the potential to provide a uniformly high standard of care.

Foster Care Values periodically review management information relating to referrals of children and can shape its recruitment strategy and activity to service any identified trends that may emerge. The recruitment strategy will take account of the age, ethnicity, linguistic heritage, disability, location and other relevant factors (e.g. asylum seeking children, Parent & child placements) that emerge through this analysis.

- **Initial Enquiry** – All prospective foster carers who make an enquiry are subject to a rigorous assessment and vetting procedures. When there is an enquiry from a potential foster carer, the Agency undertakes telephone contact where information gathering is completed by a member of the team. If the enquirer meets the initial set of criteria an initial visit can be arranged.
- **Initial Visit** – An initial visit takes place in the home of the prospective foster carer(s). The initial visit will be booked within 3 working days from the completion of the telephone call to the prospective foster carer(s). If the initial visit is successful and both parties wish to proceed, the relevant documentation is discussed and initial visit form completed. The prospective carers will then be moved into the application process.
- **Application Paperwork** – the prospective foster carer(s) must complete an application form, giving detailed information about themselves and their family and consent to Foster Care Values undertaking further checks and enquiries to determine their suitability to foster. These include:-
- **Enhanced DBS** checks on all members of the household over 16 years. This will involve disclosure of information about any criminal convictions or cautions and other information, which may be held by the Police or Government Agencies relevant to the protection of children.



- **Enquiries** to also include the following checks and references: CSSIW, Probation Services, NSPCC, the Local Community Health Services, General Practitioner, Social Services, Armed Forces, School, Landlord, Employer, Current or previous Fostering Agency and Health Visitor plus financial checks including bank references, in connection with the application to become foster carers/respice carers for Foster Care Values and for the Agency to make subsequent checks on a regular basis thereafter.
- **Medical Check** – The applicant(s) is/are required to have a full medical assessment completed by their GP and the report is made available to our Agency Medical Advisor for comment about the applicant(s) health and any impact this may have on their fostering potential.
- **References** – The applicant(s) is/are asked to identify three personal referees who will provide written references and are willing to be interviewed in relation to the reference provided as part of the assessment process. One of the referees must be a relative of the applicant. When applicants have had previous partners the agency will require their details as well in the likelihood that references will be sought from them, particularly when there are children from the relationship. References are also taken from past employers.

References are taken in confidence but may not remain so: there may be a need to disclose the contents of a reference if it forms the basis of any agency decision not to approve a prospective carer.

Training – All applicant(s) are invited to Skills to Foster Training which is mandatory learning, covering the responsibilities of being a Foster Carer and working with Foster Care Values. All prospective Foster Carers must attend this training. In order to strengthen this pre approval training phase and in recognition to our commitment to exceed the National Minimum Standards, FCV have determined that prospective carers must undertake two pieces of additional training – an accredited Paediatric First Aid course and an Introduction to Therapy Course before they can take their first placement post approval.

9.2 – Form F Assessment

Following the Initial Visit, if the assessment is to proceed, an Assessor will be allocated to the prospective Foster Carer by the management team within three working days. The Assessor will be an experienced Social Worker who is allocated to undertake a full competence based assessment. Once allocated the prospective Foster Carers assessment will usually be completed for presentation to Panel within 16 weeks although this timescale can be either longer or shorter to reflect individual circumstances.

All of our assessments are subject to continuous quality checks throughout the process. Assessors receive three supervision sessions during the process one at the beginning, one mid-point and at the end. This supervision is undertaken by a very experienced assessment manager.

The Form F Assessor will visit the applicant(s) home, approximately 8 – 10 times, to meet and collect the information about all members of the household and the applicant(s) skills and experiences in relation to fostering. The information obtained forms the basis of an assessment report. Foster Care Values uses the British Association for Adoption and Fostering (BAAF) Form F (2008) Competence Form Section F. During the assessment process prospective Foster Carers will be helped to compile a portfolio of written material which will help evidence relevant skills and experience.

With the exception of private references, the completed Form F is shared with the prospective Foster Carers prior to being presented to the Foster Care Values Fostering Panel. The report will be signed by the Assessment Manager, who confirms it distinguishes appropriately between fact and opinion and complies with legislation and the exception of robust evidence gathering an analysis outlined in the relevant policies.

Before being submitted to Panel the completed Form F report must be accurate, complete and signed by the applicants, the Assessor and the Assessment Manager. A report must only be signed when all parties are happy with its content.

As part of the quality assurance function the General Manager will gate keep the paperwork to be presented to Panel to ensure completeness, accuracy and compliance, every effort will be made to ensure there is no avoidable delay.

All information obtained about prospective Foster Carers is held on file in accordance with the Fostering Services Regulations (Wales 2003) and the Data Protection Act 1998. Upon request some of this information can be viewed. References from external agencies and personal references, which are given in confidence, cannot be accessed without the consent of both the subject and the relevant referee(s).

9.3 – Fostering Panel & Approval

The assessment report is presented to the Foster Care Values Fostering Panel which consists of members with a variety of expertise and knowledge including education, medical and experience of being in Care. Foster Care Values implements clear written policies and procedures on the recruitment to, and maintenance of, the list of persons considered to be suitable members of a Fostering Panel. There is an expectation that all prospective Foster Carers attend Panel with their assessing Social Worker.

Panel makes recommendations about the suitability of applicant(s) to be approved as Foster Carers(s) with Foster Care Values and reasons for their recommendation. The final decision for approval is made by the Agency Decision Maker. In order to ensure that decisions receive an appropriate level of objective scrutiny the agency employs the services of an independent



and very experienced senior manager to undertake this role. The Agency Decision Maker must take account of the Fostering Panel's recommendations and any recommendations by the IRM before deciding whether or not to approve a person as a Foster Carer, continue to approve a person as a Foster Carers, and if so on what terms. Their decision must be made within seven working days of receipt of the Panel's recommendation via the minutes. The ADM should also record their reasons for their recommendation. Once the decision is made the prospective Foster Carer should be informed orally within two working days and confirmation is sent in writing to them within 5 working days.

If the Foster Carers are unhappy with the final decision they have a right to appeal. This can be made direct to the Agency or via the Independent Review Mechanism.

Foster Care Agreement and Undertaking

A Foster Care Agreement is completed following approval, covering a range of contractual information and undertakings, including:

- To Care appropriately for children and young people in placement
- To inform Foster Care Values of any significant changes to their household or details
- To follow the procedures laid down in the Agency's handbook

All Foster Care Values Foster Carers have access to our Foster Carer Handbook, which gives information on:

- Standards of Care
- Support & Training
- Child Protection
- Annual Foster Carer review process
- Children's Advocacy
- Foster Carer responsibilities regarding education
- Health Information
- Birth children information
- Foster Care Values policies
- Complaints and Appeals

9.4 – Review of Foster Carers

Foster Care Values has a detailed procedure in relation to conducting reviews of Foster Carers which complies with the Fostering Services National Minimum Standards and Regulations 2003 and The Independent Review of Determinations (Adoption and Fostering) Regulations Wales 2010, the Fostering Services (Amendment) Wales Regulations 2010, and focuses on the core competences a Foster Carer must demonstrate, in accordance with the BAAF form F.

The Foster Carer Review provides an excellent opportunity to ensure that the quality of Care provided meets the standards demanded by Foster Care Values. To be effective, the review has to be based upon reliable evidence regarding the standard of Care that has been provided. The Foster Carer Review should be seen as a process rather than an event, which considers anew the Foster Carer's approval and ongoing suitability and any significant changes in the household and support network. In this way, the Foster Review is a key part of Foster Care Value's approach to quality assurance.

The Foster Carer Review also provides an opportunity for the Foster Carer to provide feedback upon the quality of supervision and support they have received and to reflect upon the learning and development needs of Foster Carers and their individual training profiles. Such information will be used overtime to develop the training strategy of the service as a whole.

Reviews take place by Foster Care Values, in line with regulatory requirements of a Foster Carer (Regulation 29). A first review must take place not more than a year after approval. Subsequent reviews take place within twelve months of the previous review, and every twelve months thereafter. Foster Care Values must be satisfied that the Foster Carers continue to meet the required Standards and as a result of this reviews may be held within the 12 month period, for the following reasons:

-) Following a serious complaint, allegation of abuse, or other matters of serious concern
 - In response to significant change of circumstances, such as a carer's adult child returning home, relationship problems or separations, significant health issues, pregnancy etc.
 - At the request of the Fostering Panel
 - At the Foster Carer's request
 - Where the Foster Carer is taking on a new type of fostering (e.g parent & child placements or changing significantly the age range they will be fostering) thus requiring a change in their terms of approval.

Prior to the Review consultation and feedback will be required from the following:



- The Foster Carer
- Any child currently placed with the Foster Carer or having lived with them during the previous 12 months – subject to their age and understanding.
- Any placing local authority which has, within the preceding year placed a child with the Foster Carer.
- Birth Children
- All members of the fostering household
- Birth parents of any fostered child, if appropriate
- Any other enquiries will also be made to ensure that Foster Care Values obtain all relevant information as they consider necessary in order to review whether the Foster Carer and their household continue to be suitable.

The Supervising Social Worker prepares a report for the Review which must evaluate and weigh up the evidence gathered from formal supervisions undertaken during the period under review. A Foster Carer Review meeting takes place to consider the evidence gathered from the consultation/feedback. This meeting is attended by the Supervising Social Worker, Reviewing Officer and Foster Carers. The subsequent report completed by the Reviewing Officer is considered by the ADM and, where appropriate, Fostering Panel.

If having considered the Annual Review, the Agency Decision Maker decides that approval should continue they will write to the Foster Carer(s) informing them of the decision and the terms of approval (Regulation 29 (6)). All first reviews are required by the regulations to be considered by the Fostering Panel.

10. Training





In order to offer children and young people the highest standard of Care, our Foster Carers are trained and equipped to meet the demands of their role. Foster Care Values is committed to providing high quality training that is accessible and relevant to all our Foster Cares, as part of our ongoing support.

A comprehensive mandatory core programme of training and development is made available to all Foster Carers.

Training is provided to:

- Ensure Foster Carers maintain competence in the role they perform
- Improve knowledge and develop and refine skills
- Ensure Foster Carers are competent and confident in safeguarding and promoting the well-being of children and young people and protecting them from harm
- Encourage Foster Carers to reflect on and look at the effects of discrimination in all parts of the community
- Encourage Foster Carers to take responsibility for their own professional development through further reading and research

The aim of the training programme is to provide Foster Carers with the skills and knowledge to become the catalyst through which children and young people can grow and meet their full potential. It provides Foster Cares with the skills, knowledge and attitudes to help children when they are at their most challenging.

Skills to Foster Training is mandatory for all prospective carers and covers the responsibilities of being a Foster Carer and working with Foster Care Values.

This is a three day course, subjects covered include:

- What do Foster Carers do?
- Why children come into care?
- Promoting a sense of identity
- Working in partnership with birth parents and professionals
- Legislative framework
- Child development
- Attachment and loss
- Safe caring
- Understanding behaviour
- Awareness of abuse and child protection issues
- Diversity
- Moving on

Applicants will also complete a paediatric first aid course (refreshed every 3 years) and an access to therapy course during the assessment and preparation process.

Post Approval Induction

Following assessment all Foster Carers receive thorough an induction. This includes ensuring that Carers are clear about policies and procedures, including Child Protection, Safe Care and Health & Safety. Induction also includes the following areas:

- Working with Foster Care Values
- Support and Supervision
- Training and development
- Referral and matching



- Finance

Continuous Training and Professional Development

There is an ongoing comprehensive training programme accessible to every Foster Carer within Foster Care Values. It is an expectation that each Foster Carer attends six training sessions as a minimum per year which include safeguarding. Specific courses can be arranged to allow focus on particular areas of specific needs e.g. in relation to Foetal Alcohol syndrome

Foster Care Values provides a rolling programme of mandatory training, which includes:

- Paediatric First Aid
- Safeguarding
- Promoting Positive Behaviour/or other such equivalent behaviour management approach

Foster Care Values offers training across the following broad areas (this list is not exhaustive and is open to regular review):

- Safeguarding
- CSE & Radicalisation
- Caring for Children who have been abused
- Bonding and Attachment
- Working with Birth Parents and Promoting Contact
- Identity and Self Esteem
- Valuing Diversity
- Education and Health Care of Looked After Children
- Sexualised Behaviour
- Autism
- Brain Trauma
- Sleep
- Drugs and Alcohol
- Mindfulness
- Self-Harming Behaviour
- Internet Safety

- Health & Safety
- Preparing Young People for Moving On and Achieving Adult Independence
- Legislation (e.g. Social Care & Well Being Act Wales, Child Protection, Protection of Children Act, Care Standards and Fostering Services Regulations)



11. Support Foster Carers to Care for Children





Foster Care Values greatly respects and values the work Foster Carers do and the contributions they make to looked after children's lives. It is vitally important to provide appropriate levels of support to foster care families to ensure a positive and successful placement. Foster Care Values aims to provide a creative and flexible package of support to Foster Carers and the children and young people in the care. Identifying and arranging the necessary level of support required takes place when a Foster Carer and child/young person are "matched" at the placement planning stages. Support is then monitored and tailored accordingly, during the course of the placement.

All Foster Care Values Foster Carers have a named, qualified and experienced Supervising Social Worker allocated to them. Despite not having case management responsibility for the young people in placement, Foster Care Values Supervising Social Workers constantly ensure that the needs of the young people are paramount.

Foster Care Values provide the following support to all our Foster Carers:

- Monthly supervision visits to every Foster Care Values Foster Carer and visits to new carers every two weeks on commencement of a placement
- Frequent contact with Foster Carers and children in placement through support, visits, emails and telephone calls
- Guidance and advice to the Foster Carers in relation to their care of the children and young people
- Liaison with other professionals who may be involved in the care of the child or young person and contribute to formal Care Plans
- The right response to Foster Carers' bespoke training needs
- Accurate records of the progress of all matters relating to the Foster Carer and the child/young person placed, including outcomes

Supervision and Support – monthly supervision meetings take place between the Supervising Social Worker and Foster Carer. Supervision meetings focus on positive developments for the Foster Carer and young person in placement, as well as any areas of concern. The Supervising Social Worker also has responsibility for assessing the carers and identifying training and

development needs and methods for developing the carer's skills and knowledge. Supervision sessions also enable the carer to ensure that the child's assessed needs are being met and the Care Plan is being adhered to. A record of supervision is provided to the Foster Carer and placed on their file following the supervision.

Foster Carer Forums – Regular formal and informal group sessions take place to enable Foster Care Values Foster Carers to meet, socialise, share good practice, develop peer support and receive training information from the Agency.

Emergency Support – Foster Care Values provides 24/7, 365 days a year, on call service and support to our Foster Carers. This service is staffed by experienced staff with access to a Manager, if required.

Foster Carer Reviews – all Foster Carers have an annual review to ensure that they continue to meet the standards demanded by Foster Care Values, to be suitable to hold registration and approval as a Foster Carer. The carer review is a process, to consider anew, the Foster Carer's approval and any significant changes in the household and support network. It also provides an opportunity for the Foster Carer to feedback on the quality of supervision and support that they have received from Foster Care Values and to reflect on the learning and development needs of the Foster Carers. The review is a key part of Foster Care Value's approach to quality assurance.

The Independent Reviewing Officer ensures that all statutory requirements are fulfilled and that foster carers have the opportunity to evaluate their practice and development, and to set new goals and action plans for the following year.

Policies and Procedures – All Foster Care Values carers have access to a comprehensive Foster Carer Handbook which provides access to the company's Policies and Procedures, together with information and guidance on all aspects of fostering. All information is regularly updated to comply with standards and regulations.

Foster Care Values Website – Foster Care Values Foster Carers have access to the website where they can orientate themselves around key documents and information regarding the agency.

Record Keeping – Foster Carers are expected to maintain records of events and information pertaining to the child/young person in placement. Foster Care Values provides templates for Foster Carers to access and complete. Foster Carers are also duty bound to complete at least monthly reports on the child/young person in placement. Often more frequent recording is required to reflect individual placement circumstances and this is negotiated on an individual basis between the carers Local authority social workers and FCV staff



Support Work Service-The agency will continually monitor the number of support work hours available to ensure that we retain sufficient capacity to meet the needs of our looked after young people and their carers. As a result of this activity we have increased the number of self-employed support workers available to us for deployment from two to four.

Supporting Children who Foster – Foster Care Values recognise the significant contribution that Foster Carer’s children play in successful placements. Regular opportunities are provided within our activity days for Foster Carer’s children to come together to discuss with the Agency’s staff, and their peers, the impact – positives and negatives – of sharing their home and family with a fostered child.

Fostering Network Membership – All Foster Care Values Foster Carers will have their annual membership of the Fostering Network, paid for by the Agency, which provides advice and guidance as well as access to legal advice, mediation and insurance. Independent Support to Foster Carers subject to allegations, this support is to be provided by an independent social worker.

BAAF/Coram – All Foster Carers are able to access BAAF for information and guidance on all aspects of fostering and the agency will hold corporate membership status.

Finance – All Foster Care Values Foster Carers receive an allowance paid monthly in arrears. Foster carers are entitled to 2 weeks paid respite and receive a mileage allowance for excessive mileage undertaken. Additional Financial support can as appropriate be negotiated with the commissioning authority.

Tax and NI – All Foster Carers are self-employed and as such must pay their own tax and NI.

Promoting Positive Behaviour

Foster Care Values has identified Promoting Positive Behaviour as the proposed method underpinning all behaviour management in its placements. Our Foster Carers receive an annual one day refresher.

Unannounced Visit – All Foster Care Values Foster Carers receive at least one unannounced visit a year.

Therapeutic Support – Foster Care Values believe that support from a skilled Therapist is an invaluable means of supporting young people, carers and placements. Towards this end we have retained the services of a qualified and experienced Therapist. The Therapist is able to work with

individual children and or carers and also offer collective support to groups of carers around such issues as attachment and trauma if required. The amount of Therapist hours available will be continually reviewed to ensure that we retain sufficient capacity to meet the needs of the carer compliment going forward.

If it is determined that individual therapy for a child or young person would be beneficial to meeting their needs, this will be supported by the Agency, who will prepare a report to the Placing Authority, with suggestions about which approach is recommended and the implications of this. Should the Agency recommend individual therapy for a child, Foster Care Values may be able to identify and appoint the appropriate Therapist at an additional cost.

Additional Support – this may include:

- More frequent visits and telephone calls from a Foster Care Values Supervising Social Worker
- Additional respite offered on a needs-led basis
- Bespoke training beyond the standard programme to support further learning, skill acquisition and general personal development to reflect individual circumstances.

Having fun – Foster Care Values recognise that taking care of other people’s children is a serious business and can be challenging and at times stressful. We believe that it’s important to come together informally to share experiences, socialise and ensure Foster Carers remain able to manage the everyday stresses of the carer role.

At Foster Care Values we endeavour to support our carer’s in a number of ways to ensure they remain positive and focused and that they feel valued and respected in order that they can express themselves fully as carers and enjoy and gain satisfaction from the vital work that they undertake.

Through consultation with young people and the support of carers the agency will organise a curriculum of activities over the year which will offer young people, carers and staff the opportunity to come together socially and contribute to the development of an agency ethos and collective identity of which we can all be proud.

Foster Care Values views this package as a positive way of ensuring that Foster Carers are fully supported and placements have the best possible chance of being successful. Children and young people placed within Foster Care Values may have experienced a number of rejections and very



negative life events and Foster Care Values recognise the contribution of high quality, relevant and responsive support, in both helping establish a compensatory environment and in ensuring that we minimise the risk of this happening again.

12. Supporting Children & Young People





All children and young people in placement with Foster Care Values are visited regularly as part of the role of the Supervising Social Worker. Foster Care Values also have access to Support Workers who can contribute to a complete needs led and joined up professional package of support being available for the children and young people in our care.

The agency will continually monitor the number of support work hours available to ensure that we retain sufficient capacity to meet the needs of our looked after young people and their carers. As a result of this activity we have increased the number of self-employed support workers available to us for to four.

Foster Care Values believes that, with appropriate and targeted packages of support for Foster Carer, children and young people are able to live more comfortably in a family based care environment. Foster Care Values believe that it is important to remain flexible, responsive and creative in our thinking. To achieve this we have a range of services available which includes:

- Assistance to pursue a hobby or interest, including holiday activities
- An allocated Social Worker from the Placing Authority, who will maintain contact with them throughout placement, conduct statutory visits and make care planning decisions with and for them
- Foster Care Values Social Workers may undertake specific roles where requested to and funded appropriately by the Placing Authority
- Individual or group work, including structured activities for children when out of school
- Social activities for the children of Foster Carers
- Access to National organisations for looked after children and young people
- Support to attend any such participatory activities as provided by the placing local authorities
- Practical assistance with transport and access to external facilities and services
- Supervised contact with families as appropriate
- Life story work in consultation with the placing authority
- Young Persons' guide



Foster Care Values has a general commitment to developing a child centred service through the promotion of a broader understanding of the emotional needs of children and young people and the implications these may have for their Foster Carers.

Additional Events:

Foster Care Values will arrange regular consultation and participation groups for young people. This commitment is intended to encompass both 'looked after' children and the children of foster carers. Foster Care Values wish to acknowledge and support the invaluable contribution to the fostering task by the children of the fostering family who agree to both share their home and their parents with other children and young people who need support. These events will also play a key role in informing our review of the quality of our care.

13. Statistical Information





Foster Care Values intend to record a basket of statistical information to include:

- Number of Registered Foster Carers, approved for a range of placements aged 0 – 18 years
- Number of Welsh speaking staff, Carers and Young People
- Number of Young People placed with our Foster Carers
- Number of these children and young people have been in placement for less than six months
- Number of these children and young people have been in placement for between six and twelve months
- Number of these children and young people have been in placement for over twelve months
- Number of these children and young people are of black or ethnic minority origin
- Number of these children and young people are female
- Number of these children and young people are male
- Number of these children and young people are aged 0 – 5 years
- Number of these children and young people are aged 6 – 10 years
- Number of these children and young people are aged 11 – 15 years
- Number of these children and young people are aged 16+ years

As the number of referrals of children and young people needing foster placements always outweighs the number of approved Foster Carers with suitable vacancies, Foster Care Values is continually active in relation to the recruitment and assessment of Prospective Foster Carers.

Number of prospective Foster Carers families who are at various stages of the assessment process.

14. Outcomes





Foster Care Values is committed to achieving the best possible outcomes for the children and young people in our care and will continually ensure that:

- Children and young people are appropriately matched into a suitable foster family
- Children and young people are healthy and access leisure and health services
- Any health needs are understood and monitored
- Children and young people are safe
- Foster Carers are appropriately recruited, trained, monitored and supervised
- Children and young people achieve their full potential
- All children in our Care enjoy their experiences and develop self-confidence
- All children in our Care attend education and achieve to the best of their ability
- The recruitment of staff and Foster Carers is focused on children and young people ☐ Children and young people in Care are involved in decisions regarding their life ☐ Children and young people are prepared for their future.

15. Quality Assurance





Foster Care Values operates a quality assurance and continuous improvement framework, which involves ongoing review of policies and procedures and the suite of documents used to put our services into operation. This is also captured within our annual quality of care report.

Performance and objectives across the organisation are, recorded, monitored and evaluated through the collection of relevant data. This activity will result in a robust and clear evaluation of day to day operational matters, best practice, consistency and equity and support the achievement of positive outcomes.

The promotion of continuous improvement throughout all aspects of the service increases quality awareness within our staff group, foster carers and with the children placed with Foster Care Values, who are supported to achieve positive outcomes.

The Foster Care Values commitment to implementing a quality management framework ensures that Foster Care Values strives constantly to meet or exceed the National Minimum Standards and Regulations across all areas of activity.

16. Complaints & Compliments





At their most extreme, complaints may raise safeguarding concerns that require immediate statutory investigation. At a lower level, they provide valuable feedback about how services to children and young people can be improved. All complaints are treated seriously and proportionately. They must be reported and recorded clearly and passed on to a manager for their urgent consideration at the first opportunity.

Who can make a complaint?

Foster Care Values will accept complaints from:

- Any child or young person who is, or has been, a foster child
- The parent of a child or young person who is, or has been, a foster child
- Any Foster Care Values Foster Carer
- Any placing authority, school or external agency involved with a looked after child or young person
- Any independent worker commissioned by Foster Care Values

When a complaint is received from a person not listed above, a Senior Manager will decide whether it should be accepted. An anonymous complaint may be accepted if a Senior Manager feels that it is appropriate to do so.



Foster Care Values acknowledge that it can be very difficult for a young person to make a complaint about a service they are currently receiving. They may lack the confidence to speak out for themselves, or through previous damaging experiences they may be worried about reprisals. Alternatively, they may have had experiences where the complaints or concerns they have expressed have not been responded to appropriately, making them hesitant about raising issues again.

Nationally, the number of complaints made by young people in the Care system remains relatively low.

Foster Care Values is committed to the following principles in its response to the investigation of complaints:

- Issues raised about the quality of Care provided will be regarded as complaints
- All complaints will be taken seriously and investigated thoroughly
- All children and young people making complaints will be provided with access to advocacy to support them raising and progressing the complaint
- All complaints will be investigated in a timely way, with appropriate feedback about the progress of the investigation provided to the complainant in a format of their choosing.

Foster Care Values places an emphasis on resolving complaints at a local level, i.e. Stage One – Informal resolution when this is both appropriate and proportionate.

Records of investigations and outcomes of complaints resolved informally will be made and retained.

All children and young people placed with Foster Care Values are informed of the Complaints Procedure on commencement of placement by the Foster Care Values Supervising Social Worker. They are also provided with a Children’s guide giving details of who to contact to talk about any aspect of their Care.

All Foster Carers, Staff and Placing Authority Social Workers are provided with information about Foster Care Values Complaints Policy through documentation, induction and placement agreements.



When it is not possible to resolve a complaint at Stage One, or where a person has elected to invoke Stage Two – Formal Investigation, these are dealt with by the Registered Manager to undertake formal investigations. Where a complaint is not satisfied with the response received at Stage Two then the matter is referred to Stage Three – Review, of the procedure.

At Stage Three the complaint will be passed to an Independent Investigation Officer (An Independent Senior Manager in the field) who will address the matter in a timely, effective and sensitive manner.

The Agency reserves the right to decide which level the complaint should be investigated and may, in the interests of the parties involved, pass the matter immediately to our Independent Complaints Officer for the matter to be investigated using Stage Three of the Complaints Procedure.

The outcomes of all complaint investigations at whatever stage will be forwarded for consideration by the Responsible Individual.

Carer Allegation

Children can be subjected to abuse by those who work with them in any and every setting. All allegations of abuse or maltreatment of children by a professional, staff member, Foster Carer, or any other person in contact with children will be taken seriously by Foster Care Values and will be dealt with in accordance with current procedures. Foster Care Values has a clear Carer Allegation support system.

Whistle-Blowing

All staff and Foster Carers are made aware of the organisations whistle blowing policy and should feel confident to voice concerns about the attitude or actions of colleagues.

Compliments

All compliments received from young people, Foster Carers, Local Authorities and any other body, are recorded by Foster Care Values and monitored on a regular basis to ensure that all parties are aware that a compliment has been received and that as an Agency we are able to reflect and learn from both positive and negative representations.

17. Contact

Details





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